

**ILC AFRICA 2019**  
**Land Forum and Regional Assembly of Members**

**Report**

**Introduction**

The Regional Land Forum and Assembly of Africa took place in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) on 21-24 November 2019 focusing on the theme:

**Strengthening the land sector in Africa:  
How transparency in land governance can support development efforts**

This theme enabled members of the Africa platform and partners to discuss and generate specific policy recommendations to inform continental land policy processes.



**Platform building**  
**Women land rights**  
**Community land protection**  
**Data**  
**MSPs**

The Forum and the Assembly offered a space for members and land actors to debate, while developing ideas around pertinent issues in the continent. In addition, this year's event offered a space to build innovations and learn about action driven approaches that can bring about change on the ground. Innovations around platform building, women land rights, community land protection and data were mainstreamed.

The event featured forums on gender justice, women land rights and feminist land and community land protection. A high-level forum on Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs), and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (MAPs) and a land data training for French speaking country MSPs was also part of the event.

The meetings addressed ILC Africa's progress in recent years, its strategic priorities and developed ideas on how to apply learning from its experiences.

While approaches vary throughout the continent, all ILC members and partners seem to draw on the same common will. The principles of gender justice remain a central commitment to the Coalition, even if members recognise that their actions have not always challenged discriminatory processes. The Coalition used this event to question how it works to eliminate inequality. It thus identified women and community land rights as a better method to address some of the underlying injustices that occur at local levels. Via this approach, ILC members and partners want to continue to translate their commitments into concrete actions for a fairer, more equitable Africa, where land governance is inspired by these principles.

The theme identified for the Africa Land Forum 2019 is part of the continent's search in fighting corruption, held right before the Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA) with its 2019 theme focusing on the fight against corruption in the continent.

ILC Africa's intended contribution to development efforts in Africa is focused on providing specific recommendations that instigates future land policies that satisfies the agenda of the African Union. ILC Africa aims to offer its platform as a place to develop ideas on relevant questions for the continent and a space to build innovation around multi-actor platforms. Specifically, a Community of Practice will be initiated for everyone to build capacity, the implementation of a Charter for Women will be supported, and viable solutions to strengthen the rights of communities will be identified, while building the capacity of ILC platforms using the LANDex tools.

This is an ambitious and rich agenda for a radiant future on the continental platform.

### Specific objectives.

**Multi-Stakeholder Platforms.** Deepen exchange among relevant practitioners and Strategic Support Institutions working on the formation and strengthening of national-level Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) on land and natural resource governance;

**Community of Practice.** Launch a community of practice open to all MSP / MAP facilitators and practitioners to increase the transformative capacities of national platforms and to build a shared evidence base of challenges, lessons, and outcomes;

**Gender Justice Charter.** Support the implementation of ILC Africa's Gender Justice Charter in the continent by building skills of all members to apply gender justice principles to their work;

**Community Land Rights.** Identify workable solutions to strengthen community land rights and contribute to making national and regional land laws and policies more just;

**Accountability.** Provide space for ILC's member led platforms to discuss how to promote accountability in land governance;

**LANDex.** Build the capacity of ILC supported platforms in francophone National Engagement Strategy countries on monitoring and evaluation using the [LANDex](#) tool;

**Share & Learn.** Provide space for members to share and learn from each other; and

**ILC's Governance.** Deliberate on ILC's governance related matters.

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## **IDRC Partners' Meeting**

**21 November 2019**

Following the 2017 launch of the research process on [Using Action Research to Improve Land Rights and Governance for Communities, Women and Vulnerable Groups](#), IDRC partners met to share their findings. Projects in six (6) sub-Saharan African countries (Cameroon, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone) aimed to identify solutions that empower communities, women and vulnerable groups to claim land rights, manage lands and natural resources, negotiate just deals, and challenge unfair decisions, laws and policies.

Building on previous work, the research projects seek to provide greater evidence on two fronts:

- Identify what works to protect communities, women and vulnerable groups in the face of large-scale acquisitions or threats to community lands; and
- Contribute to making national and regional laws and policies more just.

During this one-day exchange, the group of partners shared emerging findings and strategised on possible opportunities for using those results to feed national and regional policy engagement.

## Common challenges & opportunities across countries

Introducing their case study, a first group presented the contexts and main dynamics they encountered, which enabled to draw a picture of common challenges and opportunities across countries.

### Main Challenges

**Environmental degradation.** Land degradation is more significant where communities are not involved in processes. Companies have the social responsibility to restore the land, but its implementation of agreed principles proves to be often deficient.

**Capturing of process and power by local and village leaders.** Communities usually don't benefit from adequate and useful information. Moreover, when information is actually transmitted, it reaches largely to leaders and/or male members.

**Poor respect of the rules, laws and policies.** Even when laws exist, they are not respected and implemented. State interests regularly remain at the top of the hierarchy, which sometimes cause great conflicts.

**Poor awareness of community members of their rights.** For many countries of the region, customary dispute resolution and land rights systems, often shared through an oral tradition, are not formally recognised in the national legal system. However, new trends – such as in Mali – aim at recognising customary land rights. This process allows for increased sensitisation, which enables greater community awareness of land processes.

**Overlapping resource grabs with poor or no recognition of community rights, and State desire to exploit natural resources for short term gains through deals with investors.** In a country like Cameroon, frequent overlaps of land concessions create endless land conflicts. With growing state concessions for forestry, agro-industries and mining, there is little space left for communities.

**Non-transformative women's participation.** Shifting power dynamics in communities that restrict women's access to land remains a central challenges. Certain initiatives – like a quota system with the objective of ensuring a minimum threshold for women's participation – risk creating a ceiling in reality, as illustrated in the case of Senegal. Moreover, collective access was discussed as being an alternative

### Women's Participation

Meaningful participation of women is about more than numerical presence:

The selection of women should be done democratically, in particular to ensure that the voices of the most disadvantaged women are heard (pastoralists, migrants, older women, etc.).

Women should be educated about their roles and responsibilities in the system.

Otherwise, it becomes difficult for women to participate meaningfully.

that often excludes the more vulnerable women. Indeed, experiences demonstrate that the same women who already occupy positions of power or influence access the land, to the detriment of others.

While it is easy to increase representation of women in municipal councils, through quotas or other measures, their physical presence of a woman does not guarantee effective participation in the process. The main challenge for women remains their access to leadership and governance.

**Youth.** Discussions showed that youth are left out to a point that they are no longer interested in farming. Inclusion of young people through trainings and allowing them a seat at the table is seen as crucial to keep them active in the community.

**Speed of investments and resistance to reforms.** In areas of growing land concessions, and resulting scarcity, like illustrated by the Cameroon team, community lands risk being allocated to investment projects at a far faster pace than land reform processes and strategies to defend affected populations rights can keep up with.

### Youth's access to land

There is no easy answer for strengthening youth's access to land.

While taking into account their heterogeneity (sex, marital status, stage in life cycle, etc.), it becomes necessary to look at potential strategies to strengthen local institutions and youth organisations, foster off-farm activities, give targeted economic incentives, raise the youth's awareness and support policy dialogue.

### Opportunities

**Community land rights support: community building and awareness raising, drafting laws and support by paralegals.** When communities are empowered, they are able to better protect their land. With their collaboration, by-laws were developed for communities in Kenya, offering them

### Communal Land

Communal lands provide important resources to local people who may not have access to individual land, particularly to herders, landless people and women.

While they are of particular importance for the most poor and vulnerable groups, communally used and managed lands as well as common pool of resources remain marginally captured in existing land reforms.

documented rules on how to guide the use, management and registration of their land. This process increased participation of youth and women, creating a change in attitude and leading to a shared leadership.

In Nigeria, for example, studies on community land rights documented an approach which communities used to strategically create a local "land allocation commission". A document is currently under

deliberation which is in itself a milestone.

**Negotiations with companies (*does it really help/is it really possible?*).** Studies showed the critical need to empower communities on how to communicate and negotiate with the investors in a context of informational asymmetry. When communities are empowered upstream, they are able to protect themselves. Namati Sierra Leone showcased an inspiring example of a community that was able to seek redress where an investor failed to fulfil the conditions of a land deal in the video “Lifting a Curse”. In that case, the community won a court decision against investor companies which led to restoring of grabbed or conceded lands and compensation for damages to the people. Even when laws exist, they can be discarded in some contexts, not respected or implemented in others. Training members of the community on their rights and additional techniques for engaging with investors will impact positively the resolution of justice disputes. Another example from Cameroon displayed how a dialogue was put in place between a community and a company, reshaping the power balance. In this case, while the company agreed to a zero-deforestation objective, the community won the possibility to use a portion of the land.

**Community platforms & committees allow for empowerment.** In Nigeria, some communities got together and organised themselves into the creation of a Community Forest Watch that is described as “collaborative and confrontational”. Nigeria’s media is very active and became involved in showcasing land appropriation cases. This led to companies being summoned to the parliament for explanation. This provided an opportunity for women and communities to be heard by the parliament, allowing them to discuss workers’ rights and wages.

## Focus on Community Dynamics

### Strategies for Improving Rights, Participation and Voice of Women and Minorities at Community Level

Participants shared existing and past lessons, and reflected on the following question: *What strategies have worked in working with communities? What catalysed them? Sustained them? What has this meant concretely for community members? What are the key challenges? What would you have done differently? Who gets to speak on behalf of whom, and why? What strategies for ensuring women, men and youth are positive leaders and change agents? What research tools and strategies do you use to capture experiences?*

### Strategies

**Quota and collective access.** Very often, experience showed that a required quota becomes a ‘ceiling’ rather than a minimum threshold or ‘floor’ for women. Accompanying measures are important, otherwise women do not have what is needed to exploit the land and must in any case let go of a large part of the land to men.

**Communal access to land needs to be mindful of women elites vs. most excluded.** Power dynamics between women add to gender inequalities. In Senegal, for example, women

leadership is highly discussed, but there are very few women in positions of power. Where they do hold those positions, further, power tends to be concentrated in a small group of women. Strategies are designed to work with these women, but also to reach the most vulnerable women. Gender dynamics around land extends to crucial power relations between women.

**Women's land committees with allies and national steering committee: national level advocacy, dialogues between women leaders and customary leaders. *What is the custom saying? (Overlap between the religion and political rules).*** In Cameroon efforts have been made to set up a national steering committee, allowing for multi-stakeholder dialogue. Women's land rights cannot be improved without promoting the inclusion of women in governance. Advocacy can be done at the local and at the national levels, and international agencies can support in bringing the authorities to legislate on women's rights. In Senegal, local committees constitute local consultation frameworks at the community level, where most women are elected.

**Training and capacity-building on women's rights.** When women are identified to be part of a committee, additional capacity-support can help ensure they are well prepared beforehand, and are aware of their rights. Working groups composed strictly of women, without the presence of the leaders, are another strategy – like a General Assembly for Women, so that they can speak freely.

**Involving all groups/voices in debates (women, leaders, non-indigenous members).** It was expressed during the session that in most contexts of the region, a woman's point of view might only be acknowledged or taken into account where it is supported or echoed by a man. Strategies to encourage this type of support from leaders, like naming them champions and congratulating their support to women members' views, have been found to help.

**Largest pressures/urgency on communities: *Are leaders more open to including women? Lose it all vs. inclusion of women.*** A larger space is allocated to women in situations of emergency or threats to entire communities. Faced with the risk of losing everything, leaders recognise the need and are willing to give a larger place to women, and to recognise women and indigenous' rights.

**Strategies for engaging men (recognising cultural backdrop).** Culture is still evolving, and tolerance is key. One should be sensitive to the fact that this is a relatively new issue in many contexts. Multi-stakeholder strategic alliances in each municipality can be a crucial strategy. Community allies can be young people, men, customary leaders, and elected officials.

**Catalyse African traditional authorities as forum for addressing women's land rights at continental level.** It is also very useful for the traditional leaders to be targeted and ensure that they have a structured mechanism. The Forum of African Traditional Authorities<sup>1</sup> includes women, and its 2020 edition is coming up. Discussing the forum and its upcoming engagement, participants raised the following questions: *Is it possible to use this forum to demand for traditional leaders to discuss how to deal with access to land rights? Or to force them to discuss*

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<sup>1</sup> The Forum of African Traditional Authorities (FATA) was put in place by the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), now Africa Land Policy Center (ALPC) in 2017.

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*the issues of engaging women and youth?* The conclusion was that that it would be valuable to build a case and make recommendations to the forum.

In Cameroon, discussion sessions between women and traditional leaders were organised. To avoid confrontation, people from different regions were brought to the table, allowing debates on principles rather than specific cases. During those meetings, the chiefs held that the traditional authority is not against women's land rights, since customs were already protecting women. *However, further debates questioned the content of cultural arrangements and how it protected women's land rights.* In Cameroon, for example, two scenarios were identified. The first seems to be a very strong collective customary right, where everyone is protected under the same umbrella. The second is focused on individualisation of land rights with a large marketing capacity. In these two cases, women's rights are protected differently. While the first regards women as part of the community and their land access is provided via traditional arrangements, the latter offers for women to own title deeds on lands, which they could market.

**Find right moment (e.g. informal, not public forums) & target key voices.** Sometimes, it can be decisive to cease the discussion for a moment in order to stop the heat. Outside the arena, it becomes easier to identify key voices and to start discussing with them and appeal to their senses. In a formal set up, it might be chaotic, and a topic could inflame the entire forum – and the opportunity will be lost.

**Terms of engagement with community: equal participation of women in all meetings.** Requesting for an equal participation of women in all the meetings sets the tone and the expectations for future ones.

**General sessions vs. focused group discussions (e.g. youth, women) and know the community to ensure meaningful participation and list to keep track over time.** Focus groups where women are allowed to sit by themselves result in great ideas. That blend of having general meetings and focus groups help foster women participation and allows them to come up with the best ideas. For example, Namati (Sierra Leone) showed that during a brainstorming activity, the best idea on what to do with available environment compensation funds came from groups of women.

Otherwise, dominant voices suppress all alternative ones. In Sierra Leone, where this strategy was adopted, it became clear that when the government is represented during discussions on issues of land governance, the voices of all the other actors will be suppressed.

**General sessions: women in front and speaking order (men, women, youth):** In a successful attempt to reduce the imbalances with regard to speaking opportunities in a group, the Sierra Leone team attempted successfully to introduce a new rule: participants need to follow the speaking cycle of one man, one woman, one youth – repeat. This imposes a mix of voices by shifting regular dynamics of meetings which facilitates women's participation.

**Timing for meetings is crucial so that all members of the community can attend (not on hunting, gardening days, etc.).** When appropriate attention is devoted to the community calendar, setting up a meeting at the right moment ensures wide participation from all actors of the community.

**Management back to communities.** *Why not allow the communities to develop their own rules, in their own convenient spaces?* Instead of going somewhere with government officials that might have their own agenda, it is suggested to allow drafting of rules exercises to be at community level, using a democratic process.

**Engagement/negotiation with customary leaders (and addressing/understanding their fear of losing control/power status).** Understanding that elders can fear to lose their control in a community suggests the need to adopt a strategy that includes them. Change can be introduced and managed while ensuring that people with authority understand their role in governance. Early identification of potential troubles and partnership with allies is key.

**Draw on national law and policies : gender equity.** Taking advantage of the power of the law, of what is already a requirement or what is already legislated offers a concrete foundation on which to expand.

**Avoid competitive pro vs. anti-women's land rights, debates.** The importance of not making debates a situation of competition was highlighted; no 'for or against' discourse about women's land rights. Creating 'sides' risks generating resistance. Joining groups together is crucial.

### Questions\Challenges

- *How to get women meaningfully involved in decision-making?* While bearing in mind men might not be involved in processes such as investments.
- *How to capture changing customary rules what custom is saying?*
- *How to tackle inter-generational dimension and inheritance matters?*
- *How to scale & sustain interventions?*
- *How to ensure we address different social & economic categories/situations of women?*
- *How to focus on collective rights & women rights, with risks of privatisation as a backdrop?*

## Focus on tenure security tools and scaling efforts

Participants shared existing and past lessons, while reflecting on the following questions: *What strategies and tools have been successful in assisting communities' members to gain more secure land tenure using: (i) formal rights and legal processes, and (ii) informal processes? (iii) in respect to government, (iv) actors in the community, and (v) private actors/investors? What are some of the limits of these strategies in confronting power or other dynamics? How to overcome them? How do strategies usefully combine with other strategies for engagement, participation and advocacy?*

### Strategies

**Community land protection model: capacity support roles of paralegals are transferred to community mobilisers, to work with community members through a mapping process and to reduce costs.** The objective of mapping is to increase security of tenure but a mapping of all villages will not be feasible (overly expensive and time consuming) without strategies to scale up results, for instance, equivalent to mapping approximately 100 villages at once.

*How could this be achieved without cutting into the methodology? How could the costs of mapping be brought down, while ensuring that the mapping exercise remains accurate? How to remain realistic? Would it be possible to group the communities instead of going one by one? Since paralegals are not enough and cannot cover an entire country, would it be possible to put the community members in charge instead of the paralegals?*

The team in Sierra Leone is currently experimenting with different models or “light touch” versions of community land protection to answer those basic question or potential trade-offs about scaling. The exercise suggests that there could be a lighter version of the approach, sacrificing some aspects of the methodology, without compromising it. For example, the team is currently assessing whether community members could be trained to proceed to the mapping exercise themselves, albeit remote support would always be available.

**Mapping kits to communities.** Participants discussed that often, governments don't have the means to meet their ambitions. However, they are interested in knowing what territory is under their state domain. The Mali team demonstrated a mapping methodology it tested, where villages can benefit from the resources of the town halls benefiting from GPS tools. Mapped villages can therefore lead to the mapping of communes, a product that the government can benefit from and approve. This community led mapping exercise can therefore be used by the community to protect itself from the inside.

**Mapping as a default for any investment.** Rather than attempting to map all villages and all communities (which often amounts as an impossible endeavour), it was suggested by the Cameroon delegation that states could impose on companies to perform and/or support participatory mapping with affected populations. A new investor would have the obligation to map the space and no right would be given up without this participatory mapping.

**To map or not to map.** For mapping to be a solution, it must ensure that existing rights are clearly defined, recognised and that the rights they describe are respected. Otherwise, it gives opportunities to the people who want to grab the land to take the land. Discussion on whether to map collective or individual land rights didn't result to a consensus on one approach.

**Where individual titles are not the answer, work on community security more generally.** While it is often argued that securing land with individual land titles automatically provides with investment security, the numerous debates on this issue illustrates how this equation is oversimplified and inadequately reflects realities on the ground. Opinions expressed during the session highlighted the complexity of the discussion taking place in a mosaic of realities, each associated with their particular context and appropriate option. Further assessments and studies would allow for a comprehensive overview of the contrasting realities on the ground, and the appropriate approaches to offer communities.

**Return to traditional rules regarding use and access of collective/communal lands (“espaces vitaux”).** Certain communities chose to ask for collective rights on their village territory. Collective lands are therefore understood to be the property of the village and cannot be sold. At the core of this arrangement, families keep their land and it's in this context that questions of women's or indigenous' rights are discussed. In Mali, the concept of “living space” (“espace vital” in French) has been included in the law – and this land is part of a village territory. A registration to the town hall will provide legitimacy to the cadastres. However, a problem arises when discussing the number of community members on a single title.

**Mix of individual and communal rights.** In larger traditional village lands, a mix of individual and communal rights can be a solution.

**The need for registration to back-up claims and titles recognition remains.** It is essential to work with local officials and ensure that they have the required capacity. Titling needs to be backed up by legitimacy and institutional capacity.

**Media and social mobilisation to push governments to act.** In Kenya, communities went to Nairobi and matched with the media along them. They went to the Ministry of Land and all their efforts were publicised. This action forced the ministry to look into the issues, and the government has put in place a committee to set up a registry at the local level. When communities show up to their government – and not only with the support of organisations, it was argued that governments tend to respond positively.

## **Challenges**

Challenges should be viewed as uniform across contexts, given cultural differences and their understandings of what secure land rights is, especially between peasants and pastoralists.

Even with mapping comes difficulties: *Will the mapping be recognised by others?* It needs to be recognised and protected. *How to get the legitimacy and the respect of whatever rights, both by customary and the modern systems?* Putting communities with government together can bring more security.

Some of the main challenges highlighted are the following:

- Companies/investors don't want to adjust existing maps or remap land of an area, in case inaccurate details have consequences with communities;
- Resolving conflicts with communities can be complex and time consuming, and this needs to be done prior to mapping;
- Cost and number of communities involved (e.g. surveyors) as well as diversity of contexts we need to adapt to;
- Titles don't necessarily bring security: companies also can't operate where communities don't have security;
- Decentralisation can lead to multiple, overlapping concessions;
- Shifting power dynamics to avoid abuse of titles/cadastrés and ensure legitimacy of titles;
- Competing and conflicting legal frameworks, e.g. mining and agriculture (sub-surface vs. surface rights);

## Strategies for Public Advocacy

**Engaging policy and political actors and obstacles; mobilising collective action of residents for positive change**

Participants shared existing and past lessons, reflecting on the following questions: *What are some main recommendations for reform you see emerging from your research efforts? What strategies have worked to bring about reforms or action by government? What was the catalyst? Who leads these efforts? Who is left out? How are you trying to link research and action when engaging with policy actors? What challenges remain? How to sustain successes over time?*

### Policy reform strategies and recommendations

**Harmonise provisions of parallel laws concession processes touching land rights and compensation (mining, land use and ownership, forestry, indigenous peoples, environment...).** Mining laws and forest laws can provide with different types of rights to communities. For example, in Cameroon, compensation for forest land is allocated to communities, while compensation under mining regulations is attributed to the customary owner of the land, defined as a person exploiting the land prior to 1974. Not only this creates a competition of legal claims over a same territory, but compensation under mining regulation excludes young people as well as collective lands.

**Positive engagement over time builds relationships of trust for policy reform processes. Tenure security strategy: in pilots, ensure that the government is a partner (multi-sectoral) from start (e.g. mapping process, research, launching results).** Delegates stressed the importance of avoiding the design of CSO-only initiatives, but rather to include the government as a partner from the start. For example, when the government is involved in the mapping of an area, the

exercise becomes partly theirs, as they are part of the process, which highly facilitates its formal approval and legitimisation. While it is argued that governments often don't have the capacity for major reforms, including them early in the processes offers greater potential for positive and long-lasting impact.

**Build coalitions, don't do it alone. Communities are the most powerful part of the equation.** It is recommended to build coalitions with people sharing a desire to support similar objectives, which maximises voices. It is very important not to forget "the people" as they are the most important part of the equation. Making sure that members of a community are knowledgeable and involved is crucial.

**Seize windows of opportunities (e.g. election campaigns).** Delegates illustrated how, in a certain context, it is possible to bring community members to politicians and to directly interact with them for action and impact. For example, the Sierra Leone team took advantage of upcoming elections and prepared a petition signed by 6000 people, followed by a match to the capital covered by national television. Given the urgency of the issues in the country, the Sierra Leone team captured this opportunity to approach the parties running for presidency and succeeded to make them sign some engagements towards communities of the country. Once one of those politicians are elected, the civil society can stress their earlier engagement and ask for actions.

The Sierra Leone's representative highlighted that opportunities don't come too often, but it is important to recognise them and to seize them.

**Emphasise international obligations and engage partners from the outside, e.g. Tenure Guidelines, SDGs, and Paris Agreement.** All countries and regions have particular political contexts and not everybody agrees on definitions. Therefore, facing one particular challenge, *which solution and strategy should be applied?* In this context, it was recommended to look at international policies such as the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (Tenure Guidelines), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement. This allows to remind governments of what they committed to.

**Weigh risks/opportunities, cost-benefits of policy options (employment, domestic food security).** If policies allow land to be too easily sold off, it is argued that rural communities will be forced to migrate to the cities, creating or increasing the problem of food insecurity. When rural communities can no longer feed themselves or the national population, including in cities, societies engage in cycles of food importation, which adds to their own challenges.

### Questions linked to conflicts and overall insecurity

**How to operate in conditions of insecurity and armed conflict?** In a country like Mali where all regions are engulfed in war, communities sometimes have no choice but to collaborate with the armed jihadists who are very present in the country. The topic being highly sensitive, necessitating time and consideration, it was decided to continue the discussion within another setting.

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***How can we use the situation of conflict and war in our advocacy to protect the poorest and most insecure communities?*** In Cameroon, for example, it is argued that conflicts take place in the poorest regions of the country where communities face global insecurity. The discussion ended with this open question for further consideration: *How can we use and frame this connection to argue that with better recognised land rights, the situation could be better for the whole community, and conflict would be less present?*

During the ILC Africa Regional Land Forum, the group shared their perspectives and findings with members of the Coalition in plenary and breakout sessions. More specifically, successes and challenges in promoting community land rights and mainstreaming gender in the land sector was discussed with members and partners of the coalition.

### **ILC members and partners generated the following recommendations during Assembly sessions**

**Migration.** Internal and international migration and their effects on the dynamics and community rights need further discussions and solutions. In a generalised context where internal displacements are increasing, *how can community land rights accommodate with this reality?*

**Climate change.** It becomes clear that land tenure is central in the fight against climate change. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently shared in their report [Climate Change and Land](#) which clearly demonstrates that “land tenure is a key dimension in any discussion of land-climate interactions.” *How could the discourse on securing land tenure as a key factor to fight climate change be used to the advantage of communities in securing their rights?*

**Discussion on definitions.** One major challenge comes on definitions: *How do you define “community land”, “community rights”?*

**Access to other natural resources.** When discussing community land, pastoralists rights and mobility, it is crucial to also take into consideration that it links to the right to access water and other natural resources. *How can we empower communities to shape their own processes relevant to their own needs and challenges?*

### **Key Concerns & Recommendations from the IDRC partner's exchange:**

**Sensitise actors to customary rights.** Sensitisation processes are key for legally recognised customary rights.

**Eliminate legislative contradictions.** Where land rights overlap in national legislative frameworks, a review and alignment of different and contradictory laws would reduce conflicts over land rights drastically.

**Improve women's participation.** The selection of women should be done democratically, in particular to ensure that the voices of the most disadvantaged women are heard and reduce the risks of elite capture.

**Create discursive spaces for women.** Spaces need to be created specifically for local women to discuss among themselves, and propose solutions, such as elements of land regulation, that are important to them as women.

**Impose speaking order and list of participants.** Introducing a rule enforcing a speaking order of one man, one woman, and one young person imposes a mix of voices by shifting regular dynamics of meetings.

**Choose wisely the timing for community meetings.** Ensure that the time allocated for a meeting is not infringing on members of the community's obligations, such as hunting or gardening days.

**Target specifically women and youth.** Women and youth need to be targeted more systematically so that they are re-empowered in law and policy.

**Train and raise awareness for women and youth.** Women and youth should be educated about their roles and responsibilities in the systems – so should the men.

**Empower communities.** Communities should be empowered to better protect their land.

**Allow for fair negotiations with companies.** Empowered communities trained about their rights and options can restore a fair balance of power and contribute positively to the negotiations with companies.

**Create alliances between all members of a community.** Joining forces between Traditional Leaders and members of a community, including women and youth, allow for a stronger voice and impact. For example, leaders can be congratulated in their support to women with gifts, named "champions" to glorify them and encourage this behaviour. Making sure that members of a community are knowledgeable and involved is crucial.

**Take advantage of forums such as the Forum of African Traditional Authorities.** A case should be built by the ILC community of members and partners and recommendations

should be formulated to the ATA Forum for a strengthened engagement with women and youth.

**Chose the right moment.** It can sometimes be decisive to identify a less formalised context to discuss more sensitive issues.

**Seize windows of opportunities and take advantage of media coverage.** The attention offered by political transitions and/or media can be decisive to the conclusion of a positive outcome.

**Emphasise international obligations and engage partners from the outside.** This allows to remind governments of what they committed to.

## Community Land Rights Protection and Transparency

22 November 2019

Community lands represent the highest stock of land in Africa, but most of them are not registered which creates difficulties. Land is the major source of livelihood for communities and must be protected. Where governments are keen to obtain foreign direct investments (FDI), challenges arise on to how to engage and negotiate with communities and investors from a position of equality. *What strategies communities can use when negotiating with investors to ensure their lands are secured and investors can also benefit from their investments?*

**1 – Communities need to understand their legal rights and be able to use the law to protect their interests.** It is crucial to ensure that the promises made by the companies during the negotiations are actually translated into the investment contract; otherwise the company can argue that it will only abide by the content of the agreement. Communities need to be taught to understand the laws and to use it to defend their properties. Moreover, contracts can be renegotiated – it is important to bringing in competent actors to put the right pressure and to conclude equitable deals.

**2 – Monitoring is highly important.** A tool produced by CED (Cameroon) helps communities to monitor the company's operations based on a set of questions the communities can answer based on scorecards. Media can also be involved as a monitoring tool as companies dislike published information that would discredit them.

**3 – Communities can be trained on what their rights are, and how to get mobilised and engage with the media.** This process could compel companies to reach out to communities for dialogue. Communities need to know that they can exercise their right to say no to an invitation to meet with the company if they are not allocated an appropriate time to adequately prepare. A meeting with a company can be used as a means to tell a community that it has been consulted, informed and that it participated.

***How to ensure that companies can be held accountable regardless of whether they are following the law?***

Law enforcement is critical: NAMATI presented a sound approach where communities are educated on land registration to ensure their solid background understanding.

### Opportunities:

- Commitment to participation and inclusion;
- Community governance and accountability as a key part of the framework;
- Collective governance under community, bylaws and accountability as key components, emphasising local level accountability.

### Challenges:

- Exclusion of certain actors. However, there is some possibility that opening up avenues for dialogue and bylaws create opportunities for others with direct interest to join;
- Declining boundaries of pastoral lands. There are possibilities of having lands in another community;
- State responsiveness;
- Registration process. A number of steps can discourage registration on many levels. Moreover, even if registration processes exist, adequate infrastructures are needed to receive and process the registration applications.
- Recognition of customary rights. It is important to recognise customary rights, and not to make it solely dependent on registration;
- Importance of informal CSOs;
- System sustainability. The sustainability of the process of land registration is a real challenge.

## **Land Data and Transparency for Community**

### **LANDex Training for Africa Francophone NES and CBIs**

**21-22 November 2019**

The objective of the training was to transmit knowledge on the LANDex tool with francophone NESs and CBIs and other partners.

The tool promotes the democratisation of monitoring of land governance. This tool was tested in Colombia, Nepal and Senegal.

The LANDex indicators correspond to the 10 objectives/commitments of the ILC, while taking into account perceptions, impacts and results.

A = legal level

B = implementation

C = results

4 types of methodology: (i) People-based indicators; (ii) Calculation-based indicators; (iii) Indicators based on surveys; and (iv) Indicators based on crowdsourcing.

LANDex aims at promoting evidence-based decision making at country level via 33 indicators. Some are people-led, while others are based on calculations using data from national and international datasets.

LANDex was designed to empower ILC members to collect and use people-centred data. Indicators were defined in a consultative process and serve as a reflection of member priorities while data is collected in a participatory manner and rooted in existing multi-stakeholder platforms such as the National Engagement Strategy (NES). LANDex creates a platform for people-centred data that members can leverage for evidence-based advocacy.

Transparency is one of ILC's commitments (n°8). LANDex allows to monitor transparency by using indicators on corruption developed with partners. Therefore, monitoring and creation of data on transparency and corruption in the land sector is possible.

The tool also allows the creation of data on legal frameworks and the implementation of these frameworks. Through this creation of data, all can contribute to transparency.

*Who will use LANDex?*

Can be used as a Contributor to make our voices heard and bring forward something that happens in our communities (a problem or threat). It can also be used to access data on land governance at the global level. This data can be taken advantage of to strengthen the ability to base decisions on evidence. It is hoped that all types of actors will use LANDex, up to the government and statistics officials.

As contributions to these national data expand, it is expected that governments and national statistical offices will use this tool and supplement their data sources – which are mostly coming from governmental sources.

The workshop in Abidjan was a training for French speaking Africa, in order to: i) to present and train participants, and ii) prepare for implementation of LANDex. All countries present showed interest, with most of them willing to implement LANDex in 2020.

## Women Land Rights

22 November 2019

### Global Platform on Women's Land Rights

#### Community Based Initiative (CBI) 4 // Platform Africa 2019-2020

In ILC'S 2016-2021 Strategy, it committed to giving a voice to women. Under this commitment initiatives have been formed around three areas. They include the Feminist platform, the Kilimanjaro movement and the Gender Justice initiative. All three focusing on advancing the rights of women.

In Africa, the three ideas have worked symbiotically to create a strategy, under an umbrella platform. The [Platform on Women's Land Rights](#) is an initiative of women leaders which works to challenge inequalities and create opportunities for securing land rights for women. WILDAF is hosting the platform. It will organise, facilitate and ensure the implementation of CBI 4. A technical facilitator will be hosted at WILDAF to link with ILC Secretariat.

While land & transparency and community land rights were at the center of the exchanges between ILC members during the session, key discussion highlights include:

- **Post Kilimanjaro approach.** Following the rural women's symbolic climb of Mount Kilimanjaro in 2016, the Rural Women's Charter of demands was developed and approved by the African Union Commission. Discussions showcased what women land initiatives supported by the ILC have been doing to ensure the uptake and implementation of this policy in regional countries.
- ***How to use research-based methods to support women's land rights?*** Debates revealed how research projects empower communities, women and vulnerable groups to claim land rights.
- **Africa Women's Land Rights Strategy.** Members launched the Africa Women Land Rights Strategy, a document that brings together ideas from across ILC supported initiatives and platforms.
- **Women's Land Rights Advocacy in the African Continent.** The Women's Land Platform discussed how ILC Africa members can take advantage of the momentum created at global levels with the platform to enable that there is gender equality in the continent.

### Financing strategy – Call to ILC members

Land advocates are the major focus of the work that will be implemented by the governance platform. The amount of political will in the institution to give members the power to drive the agenda is a significant gain that needs to be built on. A momentum was created around the [Kilimanjaro Initiative](#), the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and the African Union 2063 Agenda of Leaving no one behind. Significant awareness is palpable, but it doesn't mean that enough resources are going to the women's agenda.

In Africa, land-based investments are continuing to grow, and the land is becoming very important for investors in and outside of the continent. However, at the same time, investments and commitments to finance women movements are slowing down.

As a 3-year budget is elaborated, the amount of 1.6 million USD is to be raised with the following breakdown:

- 30% member in kind and partners;
- 20% ILC;
- 50% to be raised, for which the ILC members are called to participate.

### Strategy of the Women's Land Rights Platform

*What exactly is expected to take place in Africa?* As members of the ILC, the new model of operations led to the development of a new strategy within focused on Connect, Mobilise and Influence.

**Connect.** Women land rights organisations will connect at the grassroots levels within themselves, at the national, subnational, continental and international levels. A data base of women rights organisations and allies will be created.

Grassroots women meetings are planned as the following on a yearly basis: two (2) meetings in every country, two (2) meetings in every sub-region, and one (1) meeting at the continental level.

**Mobilise.** The mobilisation will include knowledge sharing, empowerment and acquiring new skills to make sure that rural women – the leaders at the core of the platform – are sensitised to be strategic, to build allies with other strategic partners and ongoing land reforms to empower rural women and land organisations. A database will be put in place to strengthen the capacity of women land rights organisations on data generation, creating a very strong monitoring and evaluation system. The development of a resource mobilisation strategy is crucial.

**Influence.** Actors will influence the power holders of both the visible and the invisible authorities. There will be a database and efforts to convene policy dialogue through regional and

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global decision-making platforms. The objective is to make sure that the [Beijing +25](#) is influenced, and that land based investors are accountable.

## Examples and Lessons Learnt from the ILC Members on Women's Land Rights

Globally, members observed that it remains difficult to reconcile community land rights – usually associated with excluding women rights to land and seen by many as inequitable, with women's rights to land.

Amidst the search for a balance between the individual and the collective, and since socio-economic divisions exist even inside a community. Work at the community level is required to allow for a conversation to take place about specific groups. Gender rights are also about engaging men and leaders in the community and finding the good moments to discuss with them. As part of the strategies put in place to formalise community rights, groups are developing by-laws through community processes. These create opportunities to harmonise and reconcile traditional customary ways with legal formal ways.

Members shared the following best practices and lessons learnt during lively sessions:

**Women's Land Rights & Traditional Leaders: the experience of the Women Land Rights Initiative (WLRI).** With the support of the ILC, it becomes possible to link field work with the advocacy at the international level. Based on traditional leaders' requests, a training was developed by WLRI to teach them about relevant legislative instruments. While some resistance to women's rights is often interpreted from traditional leaders' discourses and actions, adequate training and knowledge sharing allow them for a better understanding of international policies and best practices as well as national laws. This knowledge background grants them with concrete information and arguments, useful when discussing with the people coming to them to challenge discriminatory traditions. During training sessions, traditional leaders discover the opportunities offered by international conventions; this programme works on capacity building and advocacy.

**Women Land Rights for Inclusive Development and Growth in Africa (WIDGRA)** also showcased concrete successes with their 3-year project ending in August 2020, implemented in eight (8) countries. An extension is currently expected. With the objective to ensure that women have access and control over their land resources, the project also wishes to develop its specific angle on large scale land-based investments and aspires to a higher participation from women in decision making during this time of high interest for land investment in the continent. Moreover, tackling the issue of compensation, the project puts in place tools to ensure that CSOs are recognised as part of the process.

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One of the key achievement of the project is certainly the "[Women Land Rights Score Card](#)", a simple tool that communities can use to score how continental commitments are being implemented. The project was able to engage with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) parliamentarians on gender equality, investment in agriculture and food security to address impediments to achieve sustainable agriculture in the region, while arguing that addressing inequalities between men and women is essential to achieve the Zero Hunger goal.

The project developed a training manual on [Gender Sensitive Community Engagement in Large-Scale Land Based Investments in Agriculture](#), which prove to be a real success. It also enabled partners to engage, and the continental engagement is to be continued while targeting policy makers.

**Example from DRC on the advancement of women's land rights.** Even though a country like DRC ratified international conventions on women's land rights, the implementation of this type of instruments remains problematic. It's been drawn from the process that rural women capture less of the shared information since the communication mechanisms are not adapted to their needs. Those rural women are therefore refused the possibility to have strong arguments in order to defend their rights. To target education as a key entry point allows for women to speak for themselves and to defend their voice.

**Lessons Learnt form IDRC Funded Projects on the role of participatory research in advancing women's land rights in Africa.** One of the key solutions highlighted through this research initiative is the one of "Engagement". Engage in dialogues, solutions, to share a calendar and to manage to change the rules of the game to walk towards the realisation of women's land rights. Negotiation is clearly described as a strategy that works. This is true not only with local decision-makers, but also with the traditional leaders.

**Challenges from the IDRC funded projects.** It became clear throughout the research that the increase of the number of women in decision-making bodies is a real challenge. The question then becomes: *Is the number of women important in itself or is it the capacity of those women to bring about transformation that should be prioritised? What should be put in place in order to perpetuate the changes that are put in place? How can we ensure the continued existence of this exercise?* It was concluded by the participants of the discussion that no answers are to be provided to these questions at this time.

The discussion is also generational and should be taking into consideration that "women" does not refer to a homogeneous entity. Indeed, it is often recognised that the same women are represented. Women include very diverse categories, such as girls, urban and rural, ethnicity, social class and cast. There are several perspectives of exclusion. Then the questions become: *How to take those differences into account so that all women can benefit from the advances? How to reinforce the capacities of the young people? How to scale them?*

**Advocating for gender equitable investment in agriculture: bold initiatives from Parliamentarians.** The initiative targeted the promotion of responsible investment in agriculture in the East African communities. A dialogue was eased by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) between the parliamentarians, civil society and research actors, with evidences and facts from the affected population. The **East African Community Model Contract for Agribusiness: A Review of Individual Countries Laws and Regulations** was drafted as a tool to respond to the issues around large-scale land investments.

A first activity was organised in Rwanda in 2019 for the parliamentarians to meet and assess the policies in place and the barriers to their implementation. Trainings on key concepts were organised as well as some site visits to cooperatives allowing to exchange with farmers on the integration of gender equality issues. The initiative will be replicated in five (5) pilot countries: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Niger, and Sierra Leone. This dialogue between the parliamentarians and the actors of civil society, including the women, is meant to ignite a real transformation, complementing the legislative role of national parliamentarians.

The West African community rather targeted the question of gender equality in land investment. With the support of the ECOWAS, a network of parliamentarians was set up to allow for a permanent dialogue between the ECOWAS Commission, civil society, peasants and women. An advisory group was set up and housed by the ECOWAS, supported by OXFAM, FAO and WILDAF as a consultation group acting as a facilitator.

Key matters to keep in mind:

**Language remains highly important.** When discussing this issue, panellists are referring to “consistent women land rights” and stay far from the limited concept of “access”, or use “access, control and maintaining”.

**Engagement with parliamentarians.** Engagement with regional parliamentarians has proven to be difficult for many actors; people in the room are looking for advices on how to initiate a strong engagement, and plan on surfing on the success discussed by IISD.

**IDRC.** IDRC has also been praised for their presence; members are confident that using research to empower rural women will prove to be successful. The guiding question that continues to arise is: *How to shift the power of research so that communities themselves are at the center of the research process?*

**Women heterogeneity.** Finally, the issues of unpacking the homogeneity of the “women” concept, and especially the particular need of girls was highly valued. Indeed, girls might not have the same concerns as older women, and the strategies should be targeting them specifically also. Research focusing on young girls are recommended.

## GENDER JUSTICE FORUM

23 November 2019

In 2014, members of the ILC Africa platform signed a charter that expressed a [bold commitment to gender justice](#)<sup>2</sup>. Signatories pledged to develop action plans in consultation with other platform members, to jointly develop a system to check progress on the charter's implementation, and to learn from each other on what strategies could help achieve gender justice.

As the first and only regional platform to have a Gender Justice Charter, ILC Africa has the potential to lead by example. The aim of this forum is to renew commitment and ownership of the charter through an interactive session. In addition, the ILC's first gender audit and resulting action plan for 2019-2021 offers opportunities for members to become involved in advancing gender justice in the network.

This session explored relevant gender concepts, as well as the ILC's gender action plan and opportunities for members. Participants reflected on the Charter as a shared commitment of the Africa platform, sharing ideas, doubts, fears and challenges faced in applying gender justice to ILC members' work, and discuss how to work together to transform the coalition by ensuring attention to gender justice in all areas of ILC's work.

Based on some of the questions asked by the organisers of the session, the room discussed definitions and ideas through lively and controversial exchanges.

### **Some of the main challenges and needs shared during the discussions are the following:**

Need for regional South-South learning on gender justice and climate change;

Need to share initiatives of the Platform on climate change and women;

Climate change impacts and experience will differ based on the given opportunities, privileges and status of a woman;

Women and men are impacted differently by climate change;

Natural calamities affect particularly poor and vulnerable women. However, women are not visible in the climate debate, and they are not recognised as active agents of the solution;

Women's knowledge in addressing climate change is not harnessed.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.landcoalition.org/en/gender-justice-0>

## **Multi-Stakeholder Platforms & Multi-actor Partnerships**

### **Building Synergies to Strengthen Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships on Land Governance in Africa**

23 November 2019

#### **Second Forum on the Contribution of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms to Land Governance in Africa**

2019 has been a pivotal year for ILC as it embarked on re-thinking its approach to support MSPs transformational country-level agenda. It included thinking through the main features of a Community of Practice (CoP), as a means to strengthen the effectiveness and impacts of MSPs and identify the leverage points to influence the MSP ecosystem at country level. The CoP-consultations with ILC regional coordinators and MSP national facilitators, as well as an in-person CoP partners workshop in October in Rome 2019 culminated in the Africa Continental Forum on the Contribution of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms to Land Governance, at the occasion of the third edition of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA) held in Abidjan in November 2019.

This second Forum, organised by ILC in collaboration with the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), Welthungerhilfe (WHH), Collaborating for Resilience (CoRE), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), brought together around 80 participants from international financial institutions and development cooperation agencies (the World Bank, the French Development Agency, MSP practitioners, international organisations promoting MSP and donors that provide funding for MSP-initiatives.

*What can we learn from the experiences in countries such as Togo, South Africa, Senegal or Liberia, where MSP processes are supported by more than one organisation? How do national actors perceive the synchronisation of the different interventions? How can we further strengthen synergies to optimise the use of resources, enhance impact and avoid an overburdening of national actors and structures?*

## **Global Community of Practice**

### **Strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms for people-centred land governance**

The Rome gathering in October 2019 allowed to share the idea of a Community of Practice (CoP) more broadly, to explore the scope for collaboration, and more specifically, to enrich and sharpen the vision ILC had developed jointly with Collaborating for Resilience.

Partners shared that there is a real need to bring about more changes in land governance. A multi-stakeholder platform would be a learning and capacity building space to harvest the lessons

learned and to promote documented evidence. Building on the needs and experiences of practitioners who are at the center of the multi-stakeholder platforms, the CoP would foster exchange and capacity building, serve as a 'hub' to share tools and relevant other resources, and contribute to creating an enabling environment for national-level MSP by engaging prominently in relevant policy circles at the international level. Strengthened MSPs will be able to act as drivers for changes in policies and practice on the ground.

At the Rome gathering, an initial mapping of efforts by different actors to strengthen MSP was undertaken. Out of this mapping, ILC and WHH came up with a joint list of supported MSPs (32 in total) as a first step of a deeper analytical mapping that will also comprise MSP supported by other organisations, such as FAO and the Forest Dialogue. Furthermore, an open and light CoP Coordinating Group comprising WHH, CoRe and ILC was established.

Already prior to the Rome gathering, a number of gaps, which correspond to key capability areas had been identified in consultation with NES facilitators; in Abidjan, practitioners' most pressing needs were mapped in collaboration with WHH. The latter unanimously revealed, and confirmed that the following key capabilities will be prioritised throughout 2020, both virtually and in-person:

Private sector engagement & conflict management; Alliance building, M&E and policy influencing.

### Call for Interest

Each ILC Member, individually and institutionally, is a great source of experiences regarding the effectiveness of MSP for land governance.

All the CoP partners are invited to contribute to the participatory development of practitioners-centred resources for effective MSP in land governance.

If you have any interest in building synergies at the country level and being part of the working groups around those two capabilities areas, you are invited to contact the CoP coordination group.

## Multi-Stakeholder Platform Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the discussions during the Forum:

### **BUILDING SYNERGIES TO STRENGTHEN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS ON LAND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA**

*Second Forum on the Contribution of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms to Land Governance in Africa*

NOVOTEL Abidjan Hotel – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2019

#### **Recommendations**

On the occasion of the Second Forum on the Contribution of Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSP) to Land Governance in Africa in Abidjan in November 2019, MSP stakeholders at large, including **practitioners** and **Strategic Support Institutions** of MSP came together to reflect on the way forward for the broader MSP community to improve coordination for the strengthening of country-level MSP processes.

Pursuing greater synergies and harmonised engagements at country-level will optimise the use of available resources, enhance impact, avoid overburdening national actors and straining fragile institutional structures.

Our support to the formation and strengthening of MSP is led by the conviction that such processes, if adequately and coherently supported, can make a significant contribution to land governance reform processes, owned, led and championed by national actors as referenced in internationally agreed policy frameworks, such as the VGGTs, the SDGs (as far as they related to land) and the Framework & Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa.

We acknowledge differences of organisational mandates as well as conditions for engagements at country-level. However, based on a practical assessment of collaborative experiences in selected countries at the occasion of this Forum, we have developed a set of recommendations that provide the ground for stronger synergies, coordination and impact.

#### **Definitions**

**Practitioners:** These are facilitators or coordinators of national-level MSPs. In addition to the ILC NES network covering 30+ countries, these include WHH Land for Life coordinators in 4 countries, and FAO/VGGT WG coordinators in approx. 10 countries.

**Strategic Support Institutions** include the following key actors:

**Promoters:** These are the institutions actively promoting MSP as an approach to people-centred land governance, VGGT and F&G implementation, and achieving food security. They include ILC, FAO, WHH, IGAD among others.

**Capacity/Knowledge Partners:** These are research institutions with an interest in investigating MSP dynamics and developing tools and methodologies as well as capacity building partners, such as: IPAR; IISD; IIED; ODI; Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment; University of Wageningen; CGIAR Program on Policies, Institutions and Markets; the Global Land Programme; Global Land Tool Network; Civil Society Academy; and MDF Training & Consultancy.

**Resource Partners:** These are agencies typically investing in improving land governance. They could include a range of members of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development / Land Governance.

**Recommendations for harmonizing support to MSP processes at country-level:**

1. MSP Promoters and Resource Partners to proactively assess and map whether there any ongoing efforts at country-level to form and/or strengthen MSP on land governance, prior to launching any new initiative. This should lead to the development of an open-source database for each country which clarifies who is doing what, where and how.
2. In countries where there are already efforts underway to form or respectively strengthen a land governance MSP, Promoters, Resource Partners and Practitioners to proactively pursue closer coordination and complementarity of efforts to strengthen MSP, including, but not limited to the following concrete actions:
  - 1.1. Develop MoUs on MSP strengthening at country level, including key principles for support to MSP, such as inclusivity and transparency; the principles must provide for the meaningful participation of legitimate community representatives in policy dialogue at all levels, including all relevant interest groups (such as women, youth, and people with disabilities);
  - 1.2. Use existing MSP structures at country-level as entry point to share information about new significant or strategic land programmes, research initiatives, and assessments;
  - 1.3. Share and exchange information on efforts to strengthen MSP and coordinate support activities (such as sharing of training and capacity building programmes for actors involved in MSP; support to the

development of an MSP resource mobilisation strategy which promotes sustainability or support to strengthen MSP communication and outreach);

- 1.4. Coordinate support for the elaboration and review of MSP strategies, roadmaps, and work plans; including efforts to harmonise reporting requirements and formats;
- 1.5. Agree on indicators and frameworks to monitor progress and evaluate impacts achieved by MSP, such as LANDex and Land Matrix;
- 1.6. Use MSP to jointly assess possibilities to scale up best practices at the national, sub-regional and regional levels and collectively reach out to further relevant actors to widen the base of participation, including the communication with other platforms;

**Recommendations for harmonising support to MSP processes at international level:**

1. Create a Global Community of Learning on MSP for Land Governance as a viable and effective mechanism to improve information sharing, learning and joint programming among technical and resource partners, leading to better understanding and supporting MSP ecosystem at country level; including the development of MSP Guides;
2. Develop Collaboration Protocols between Promoters, as well as between Promoters and Resource Partners at international level, and ensure that existing Protocols for country-level coordination – such as the Global Donor Working Group on Land ‘Code of Conduct’ – are implemented;
3. Resource Partners to consider the establishment of a joint MSP fund to provide support to country-level MSP processes;
4. Facilitate effective regional and international engagement to connect country-level MSP with relevant programmes and initiatives at international level in order to scale up their implementation, such as the Land Rights Now Campaign, ILC’s Commitment-Based Initiatives (CBIs), the Network of African Land Institutions for Community Rights (ALIN), the IGAD regional MSP and the Africa Land Policy Centre (ALPC).

## ILC AFRICA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

24 November 2019

The opening remarks of the Africa General Assembly put the emphasis on women's presence and voice in the ILC Africa Platform. While celebrating the participation of 38% of women to the 2019 Africa General Assembly, the importance of women and men's right to live a life without violence, physical or spiritual, and a life without sexual harassment was highlighted. Efforts to reach parity to the next assembly are commended.

Since the 2018 Assembly, the ILC Africa Platform is testing a new operational model, putting members at the frontline and giving them the autonomy to find answers to land problems. This new orientation, despite the multiple discussions around how to use it, continue to be a challenge for teams. It is in this context that the steering committee worked in close collaboration with the members and the Regional Coordination Unit. The stability of the coordinating team is crucial to meet the Africa Platform challenges. Looking at where to focus in the future, it becomes important for members to start thinking about the 2021 Strategic Plans.

The ILC Africa Steering Committee has charged the NES Facilitators to deliver the new ILC Model; and they have succeeded. Moreover, out of the 10 active NES in Africa, 7 are facilitated by young women.

### Panel discussion on key achievements and challenges of 2019 (Cross country platforms)

National platforms shared results based on their 2019 activities. Key results that ILC intends to implement and share as a network and with the wide land sector are the following:

- **Youth.** While youth network often benefits from large representation, their role might not be recognised formally in laws. NES Platform can support the advocacy with leaders and reach to youth everywhere. (NES Malawi)
- **Collective rights.** Capacity building workshops on community and collective rights, where ministries and government representatives from various countries are invited, allow for exchange and confrontation of ideas. (NES Cameroon)
- **Political opportunity.** At the dawn of presidential elections, a NES Platform benefiting from popular legitimacy and credibility can send a convocation to the candidates for them to come and present their agenda on the issue of land governance and on people-centred land matters. This allows to reconvene with the elected President or its representative and to ask questions based on his previous statements, to remind him of commitments

made during election period. A tracking mechanism that has not yet been developed. (NES Senegal)

- **NES Decentralisation.** When there is a process at the local level between the different actors – including the local government authorities, it becomes possible to mainstream its successes at the national level. Working groups can be actively involved in preparing a good working environment for these actors to come together and debate, reach consensus, and then bring identified issues to the national level. (NES Tanzania; Land Based Investment Working Group and Rangelands Working Group)

Traditional leadership was praised to be amongst the ILC constituency. When local grassroots movements are created and supported, they have the power to craft new norms and change practices. Very often, the community leader is the focal point allowing to get in touch with the members of the community.

## ILC's new operating model tools and the development of transformational strategies

**Word from Michael Taylor, Director of the ILC.** The Director of the ILC was present at the Africa Regional Assembly and shared updates with ILC members and other delegates. From his discussions here is what can be retained:

2019 is the first year of the second half of the new ILC strategy; 2019-2021 is a strategic cycle for the Coalition. ILC, as a network, is hopefully helping its members to be more impactful and create real change in its efforts to Connect, Mobilise and Influence. ILC's objective is to advance people centred land governance; governance that meets the needs of the people.

At the end of the first triennium, a mid-term review was asked by the council to assess how the strategy is implemented and what needs to be modified. The strategy was assessed as being good and answering a desire from people. The goal is also good and very ambitious, success is measured by how government and companies act; ILC is influencing millions of people. It was recommended to keep the strategy, while building on a new reality, being that ILC now has 63-member lead platforms, with at its core the idea of partnerships around a particular strategy and towards an end. This really is the importance of what the network is. The new operating model is resulting from the mid-term review. The way that it brings change is through these platforms, and the best way is by giving every opportunity for these platforms to achieve the impact that they aim to achieve.

ILC is 260 members – but the platforms of the members that came together is actually the power of ILC. 193 members are involved in member driven platforms, and over 800 organisations are part of the platforms with a growing diversity of members, including private sector (2%).

**Change in the Operation Model.** With this new model, it no longer makes sense to plan actions for one year. ILC members are involved in processes that are unpredictable and it is very difficult to see the change in one year, as it takes time. Budgets will therefore be planned for 3 years.

*How do we decide on whether a strategy is good or not?* Based on the last three (3) years of experience, nine (9) transformative criteria can be highlighted: participatory & democratic, equity promotion, financially sustainable, relevant, strategic, realistic, results oriented, measurable and competent.

Every proposal should meet these criteria. It is already clear that many proposals will make it through the process, but some NES will not; some of them served their purpose already and there is no reason to continue. Africa represents the largest part of the ILC. It has more platforms than the other regions and has made the most progress. It reached 50% target to transition all platforms to the new operating model and was the only region to reach it.

Finally, as ILC transitions into this new model, we see that there is less funds available for the work that needs to be done. While the African Guidelines and the Tenure Guidelines gave us a lot of visibility for the work that we do on land governance and land rights, the world is now chasing different issues like climate and migration. ILC needs to think about how its work is presented so that those new challenges are met. If this cannot be explained to the outside world, ILC's work will not be appreciated and there will be no funding. It becomes a harder job to raise the budget than ever before. As new activities come on board in the future, we might not be able to fund them right away – we now work in a very unpredictable world. Africa has the biggest interest in raising funds than any other region – it's important to remain realistic, but not pessimistic. If work is done effectively, amazing things can be achieved. Otherwise, ILC will get side-lined and will be forgotten about.

The process has been difficult, but good. ILC Council wishes to increase the role of community-based organisations and women's organisation. The only way that both can be achieved is to invest in the capacity of constituency-based organisations.

**One example of the new Operating Model, at regional level is CBI 5: Secure Territorial Rights for Indigenous Peoples.** The new model allowed to bring more indigenous people on board. Friends and partners provide with great support to improve and secure tenure rights. CBI5 is now targeting the voices that will be consolidated: IP organisations at the grass root level, key institutions, Human Rights institutions on land and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

## ILC Strategy beyond 2021

The Council will meet in January 2020 to define the strategy of 2021 and beyond. The next General Assembly will be held in Jordan in October 2021 and that assembly will adopt a new strategy for 2022; the proposition will be that it goes until 2030, aligning it to the SDGs. To prepare, we need to ask ourselves: *What are the most important issues that we need to take into account?* The question is: *What are the big issues for our work in Africa and coming to the new decade?* As we redefine who ILC is, and what needs to be taken into account to prepare for the future.

Main ideas mentioned during the brainstorming session:

- **Link between land and climate change.** *What impact will that have on how we are going to manage land, whether in the hands of investors or in the hands of small-scale producers?* Land is central to all human activities and it is those human activities that are creating this climate crisis. *Where do we stand?*
- **The people behind land is us.** Positions are going to be more and more polarised. Tensions are going to be much higher. *How do we, as an African platform, ensure that the people that are engaged can still use their land? What is it that ILC can do?*
- **Titling of customary land.** As ILC, we need to consider increasing the discussion around the risks of titling customary land and what safeguards should be put in place.
- **Intensification around discussion on land governance.** We need to create spaces for more dialogue where consensus is built, and people move forward. That space needs to be provided.
- **Capacity building for communities, especially for women and youth.** At the ground level, increase the awareness and knowledge of this segment of the population so that they can leave their position of victims. *How women and girls benefit from the fruits of the land?*
- **Youth.** The laws are legislating youth out of existence. *Are we also contributing to the generational gap? 75% of the population is under 25. So how do we help them to cease opportunities?* We should focus on advocacy and how we support actions on the ground, while strategically engaging with the public sector.
- **Mineral and natural resources.** It's not clear but it's like we are evading the issue of minerals.
- **Agroecology.** We need to look at agroecology as a sustainable long-term solution. A climate smart solution & policy.
- **Policies.** *How do we conduct periodic and benchmark studies?* Monitoring & evaluation is very important. While assessing ILC, we should look at what were our targets and how do we respond to it.
- **Large land investments.** Looking at the trend, Africa is seen by many as the last frontier for large land investments. There are major development projects going on in all countries. Lots of countries are doing all kinds of reforms: reforming the land laws and developing progressive legislations.

- **Public funding.** *How could we increase the capacity of members so that governments could also finance their work within the framework of land governance?*
- **Conflicts.** We already work on conflict sensitivity, but we want to see work on conflict programming.
- **Reporting.** For many of us, programming and reporting is difficult; this affects our ability to raise funds.
- **Debts.** There is an increase of debts in the African community.
- **Rights for communities to say no.** We are speaking of land grabbing, but in many countries, the communities don't have the right to say no.
- **ILC should not be considered as a donor.** We must consider that our strategies and actions be carried at regional and international levels.
- **Decade of family farming.** *How can we seize this opportunity in countries so that our voice is stronger?*
- **Issue of the operating environment.** We should not go without thinking the space of Civil Society and the Human Rights defenders. In June 2019, the government in Tanzania tried to restrict the Civil Society Organisations' rights in Tanzania. *How can we best support the members in those countries, so that their work is not impacted by these kinds of new laws and regulations?*
- **Conflict sensitivity plans and risk plans.** Security trainings and conflict planning should be provided, especially for the land rights advocates.
- **Monitoring governments.** *How could the members be supported to monitor programmes of governments and try to find out their motives and interests?*

## Presentation of the Feminist Platform

Much emphasis has been placed on gender justice and women's rights. A new global platform is born, the Feminist Platform. This initiative is a global movement and is completely independent. Following a first meeting in Rome in January 2019, the members expressed their desire to have a "constituency-based organisation", which is a completely different concept than a "community-based organisation". The Feminist Platform is representing women, and it holds a feminist approach. It is global and has members from all the regions. The Platform wants to be an open space for discussion. The reason behind the Platform can be explained by the fact that the situation of women, regardless of where they are, is not getting any better.

## Abidjan Declaration

The [Abidjan Declaration](#) was adopted by the ILC Africa members.

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