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HIGH LEVEL REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON CUSTOMARY TENURE RIGHTS IN EASTERN AFRICA

Tuesday 17TH - Thursday 19TH OCTOBER 2023
NAIROBI-KENYA

THEME: *Making Land Policy Reforms Work for Communal Tenure Rights in Eastern Africa*

Concept Note

Background

The quest for land reforms in Eastern Africa region gathered momentum over the past two decades with the adoption of new policies, enactment of new laws and establishment of new institutions to strengthen democratic governance of the land sector and secure communal land rights. The new policy and legal frameworks include National Land Policies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda; and the Community Land Act in Kenya, the Land Act in Uganda and the Village Land Act in Tanzania among other policy instruments. A common thread running through these new policies and laws is the recognition of communal land tenure and customary laws and institutions. Yet throughout the region, communities are yet to enjoy the full benefits of these reforms. In fact, there is evidence that of increasing weakening of tenure security for indigenous peoples, pastoralists, women and other minority and vulnerable groups.

A Regional conference

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) & European Union (EU) through the Digital Land Governance Programme, RECONCILE through the Christensen Fund, and Welthungerhilfe (WHH) have jointly organized a regional conference themed; *"Making Land Policy Reforms work for Communal land Rights,"*. Also, part of the partnership is; Mercy Corps through the regional program and the International Land Coalition (ILC). Also included are the Technical Units of AU the Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), IGAD Center for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD) and IGAD-Land Governance Program.

The Conference will take place in Kenya for three days bringing together community representatives, practitioners, government stakeholders, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), development partners, UN agencies and other stakeholders to reflect and articulate strategies for ensuring that communities benefit fully from land governance reforms. The conference is scheduled to take place from Tuesday 17th to Thursday 19th October 2023 in Nairobi. It is also expected to shape conversations around challenges, opportunities and strategies of policy reforms within the Eastern Africa. This shall be purposely for knowledge exchange and skills transfer and will focus on bringing on different stakeholders and actors together to share experiences and learn from the challenges, opportunities and good practices of land policy reforms.

Among the products are the interventions from the EU-FAO Digital Land Governance Programme, RECONCILE's CoP Action research, and case studies from participating partners. These will constitute key input into the conference.





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Expectations and Focus

The conference expectation is to provide an opportunity for robust policy advocacy and dissemination of existing materials for learning and experience sharing across countries. The conference as designed, shall provide a forum for in-depth discussion around land tenure from research outputs, synthesis papers and case studies on status of policy implementation across the region. This will result into broader policy discussions with policy makers, regional advocacy and engagement by other partners including regional bodies. The conference shall include a one afternoon session for exhibition of videos, films and policy briefs for learning and experience/knowledge sharing. Overall, the conference shall enable participants to:

- Deepen understanding of the dynamics of communal tenure rights in Eastern Africa: Identify key threats to communal land rights through case studies for example on the impacts of conservation on pastoralism in the case of Loliondo, Northern Tanzania;
- Reflect on regional initiatives for promotion of communal land rights, including those of pastoralists and other indigenous communities;
- Understand the dynamics of land-related conflicts in the region and their implications for livelihoods security of pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and other resource-dependent communities, and make appropriate policy recommendations for managing the conflicts;
- Reflect on the opportunities and challenges to implementation of regional instruments that promote communal land rights, including the IGAD Transhumance Protocol, the AU Policy Framework on Pastoralism, and the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa, the FAO's Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) and articulate strategies for mainstreaming these in national policies.

Delivery Mechanism

As organized, this conference targets 3 days of exchange, sharing and learning among different stakeholders working on the Land, Agriculture, Natural resources, Livestock, Climate change, conflict, Pastoralism and Environment. The first day of the conference targets community participation and capturing community voices on how and whether the available policies and guidelines are working for them and showcasing good practices through an exhibition and documentaries. Day 2 targets a technical conversation on available research papers and policy frameworks and guidelines with practitioners, development partners, Donors, CSOs and relevant stakeholders to develop a synthesis or issues paper as well as Key messages for uptake for further policy advocacy and to inform discussion on day 3. In addition, day 3 will involve a panel discussion on challenges, opportunities and strategies of Land policy Reform in Eastern Africa with the policy makers, learning institutions, CSOs and duty bearers, donors and development organizations. It is also envisaged that both donors and development partners will have the opportunity to share their reflections around the key issues that shall emerge.





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Target Participants

Target institutions among others are;

- Government institutions e.g. Ministry of Lands, Environment and Natural Resources, Agriculture, Livestock and fisheries, National Land Commission (NLC)
- Regional bodies such as, AU, AU-IBAR, IGAD and EAC
- UN Agencies, Embassies and development partners
- International Organizations working on Land, Environment, Livestock, Natural Resources and Agriculture
- International and National platforms/Coalitions such Land Sector Non-State Actors (LSNSA), National Land Coalition (NLC), Land Alliance (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), International Land Coalition, Landesa
- Research and Learning Institutions
- Community representation from the region

Co-Organizers, Hosts And Partners

This conference has been organized and hosted by FAO/EU, RECONCILE and WHH regional. Other co-host and partners include Mercy Corps and ILC.

About Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Kenya

FAO's Representation in Kenya was established in 1977. FAO's mission is to work with the Government of Kenya (GoK) to help build a food-secure country, free of hunger and malnutrition, where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner.

FAO has a Country Programming Framework (CPF, 2022-2026) that sets out to support the realization of Government priority aspirations through two strategic anchors namely:

1. Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Nutrition-sensitive Agri-food Systems; and
2. Governance and Social Inclusion in Agri-food Systems

The anchors are being delivered through five result areas described below:

1. Climate-Smart Crop, Livestock Fisheries and Aquaculture Production Systems;
2. Enhanced Inclusiveness and Efficiency in Agri-food value Chains;
3. Enhanced Climate Actions across Agri-food Systems;
4. Sustainable use of Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management; and
5. Mainstreaming Inclusivity and Institutional Strengthening to reduce inequalities and exclusion in Agri-food systems.

A strategic enabler that FAO leverages throughout the implementation of the CPF is partnerships. Multi-Stakeholder partnerships is critical in driving a greater amount and diversity of public and private financing and investment that accelerates realization of sustainable and inclusive food systems.





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About Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE)

Resource Conflict Institute (RECONCILE) is a non – governmental organization. Registered in Kenya in 2001, with its headquarters in Nakuru, the organization works in the broader Eastern Africa Region, implementing programs in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Sudan, through strategic partnerships.

The Institute conducts policy and legal research on land, environmental and natural resources governance, environmental education and advocates for policies, laws and practices that empower resource dependent communities to influence policy processes and institutions.

Recognizing that competition for use, access and management of shared resources results often time to resource based conflicts, strengthens capacities of resource users how to negotiate conflict free, and community empowering investments on natural resources. All its activities have a bearing on securing access, use, ownership and management of natural resource.

Currently, RECONCILE hosts and coordinates activities of Rangelands Initiative Africa a global programme of the International Land Coalition (ILC) supporting members and partners working on rangelands in Africa. This has increased the numbers of partners and members the organization engages, and expanded its area of operations to include West and Central Africa.

About Welthungerhilfe (WHH)

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) is one of the largest private aid agencies in Germany; politically and religiously independent. The organization fights for “Zero Hunger by 2030”. Since being founded in 1962, it has provided funding of EUR 4.75 billion for more than 11,498 overseas projects in 70 countries.

In 2022 alone, WHH supported about 18.8 million people with its 603 overseas projects in 37 countries. In real terms, that means: Many people now harvest more and can therefore improve their diets. They now have clean drinking water or toilets at home, which leaves them less susceptible to illness. Others are earning or producing more and can begin an education. For the children, WHH’s support means a chance of improved physical and mental development.

WHH bases its efforts on the principle of empowering people to help themselves, which it implements with measures ranging from rapid disaster relief to rehabilitation to long-term development cooperation projects with national and international partner organizations.

For further inquiries reach out to

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