2019 CONFERENCE ON LAND POLICY IN AFRICA

Winning the Fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathway for Africa’s Transformation

Concept Note

I. BACKGROUND

The African Land Policy Centre (ALPC), a joint initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) was launched in 2017 as a predecessor to the Land Policy Initiative (LPI). The Land Policy Initiative was established in 2006. Key achievements of the LPI include the development of the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa (F&G), prepared to provide guidance on the development and implementation of sound national land policies and the Guiding Principles on Large-scale Land based Investments (GPs) availed to AU member states in support of the negotiation of fairer and more sustainable land investments. The F&G was adopted by the African Ministers responsible for Land in April 2009 and further endorsed by the African Heads of State and Government through a Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa during the 13th Assembly of the African Union in July 2009. The GPs were endorsed by the AU joint Conference of Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries and Aquaculture in April 2014. In 2014, the Land Policy Initiative, through a Memorandum of Understanding between ECA and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, agreed to implement the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa in coherence with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security (VGGT). The VGGT serves as a reference to provide guidance to improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

The ALPC is facilitating and coordinating the implementation of the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges as outlined in the AU Agenda on Land. In this endeavour, the ALPC is building on the work of the LPI continuing to implement its strategic plan in line with the key thematic areas of work established by the LPI: 1) Enhance the capacity of the ALPC to facilitate the implementation of the AU Declaration on Land; 2) Mainstream land in the
agenda for Africa’s development; 3) Enhance synergies and coordination and mobilize resources in support of the implementation of the AU Agenda on Land; 4) Improve communication, advocacy and outreach in support of the implementation of the AU Agenda on Land; 5) Enhance knowledge generation and dissemination to raise awareness and build evidence in support of land policy development and implementation; 6) Enhance capacity and skills in support of land policy development and implementation; 7) Enhance knowledge management in support of land policy development and implementation in Africa; and 8) Enhance monitoring and evaluation in support of land policy development and implementation in Africa. The work of ALPC is focused on ensuring: (1) Increased and improved generation and dissemination of knowledge, wherein policymakers and key stakeholders are adequately furnished with important and relevant data and knowledge on land issues obtaining on the continent; (2) Increased and sustained political will is generated through enhanced advocacy initiatives; (3) Policymakers and stakeholders central to the land question are enhanced with requisite skills and expertise through capacity development initiatives; (4) Institutions and systems central to dealing with land governance and administration are strengthened such that they are well resourced and effective in their delivery; and (5) Coherent and effective partnerships are forged with actors central to the improvement of land governance and administration in Africa.

The holding of a periodic (biennial) conference on land policy is part of the above mentioned strategic plan with an overarching goal of knowledge management to promote advocacy and outreach in support of implementation of the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges. The Conference on Land Policy in Africa is convened every two years as a policy dialogue platform for African stakeholders on land governance, land policy and promoting knowledge for evidence based land policy development, review, implementation and monitoring. The initiative of holding such a conference in Africa meets the needs expressed by African policymakers and stakeholders, and complement existing initiatives. The inaugural Conference on Land Policy in Africa took place in 2014, and was followed by the second Conference held in November 2017 which gathered 450 participants representing government, traditional leaders, CSOs, practitioners, parliamentarians, development partners, Academia and research institutions. Ninety five (95) papers were presented and discussed during the Conference which has been rated as being highly useful by participants.

The 2019 Conference on Land Policy in Africa
The forthcoming third edition of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa is scheduled to take place on 25-29- November 2019 in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire under the theme: “Winning the fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathways for Africa’s transformation”. The theme of the Conference is aligned to the African Union Declaration of 2018 as African’s Anti-Corruption Year. This Declaration is realized through the theme “Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”. The African Union recognises that corruption is a key factor hampering efforts at promoting governance, socio-economic transformation, peace and security, and the enjoyment of
human rights in the Member States. In many corruption perception indices, Africa is perceived as the most corrupt region in the world, and coincidentally also the most underdeveloped region. It is therefore evident that corruption has deleterious effects on the socio-economic development, peace and stability of the African continent. Tackling corruption in the land sector, through improving good land governance and building robust land governance institutions, will contribute towards the attainment of the “The Africa We Want” as envisioned in Agenda 2063. The Conference is expected to have a catalytic effect on land policy development and implementation in Africa through creating space for presenting research findings on land policy and governance and drawing the attention of African researchers, governments, parliamentarians, civil society, traditional authorities, private sector and development partners on emerging land issues and challenges that need specific attention in order to achieve the objectives of Agenda 2063.

The Conference on Land Policy in Africa is a major policy dialogue, information sharing and learning event. Its overall goal is to deepen capacity for land policy development and implementation with specific focus on emerging issues and AU commitments including tackling corruption in the land sector through: i) improved access to knowledge and information in support of evidence based land policymaking; ii) showcasing promising practices in the field of land policy and governance and; iii) facilitating networking amongst land actors in Africa.

The Conference will adopt a scientific approach through establishing a Scientific Committee, involving research and Academia from across the Continent and other parts of the world. It is designed to also capture a broad range of land-related local knowledge and know-how, and generate interest from CSOs, Women’s Organizations, Farmers Organizations, Traditional Leaders and private sector. Selected papers from the Conference will be peer-reviewed and published in a special issue of the Journal of African Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Overall Objective
The overall objective of the Conference is to deepen commitment and strengthen capacity for land policy development, implementation and monitoring in Africa through improved access to knowledge and information in support of evidence-based land policymaking.

Specific Objectives
The specific objectives of the Conference are to:
   1. Share and exchange knowledge on:
      a) Issues related to land rights, with specific attention to tackling corruption in the administration of land rights;
      b) Use of technologies and innovation to enhance transparency and accountability in
land governance;
2. Provide space for informed policy dialogue among stakeholders on policy options to fight corruption and enhance land governance, strengthen access to land by all land users including youth and women, and recognize the customary based land rights of African communities; and

The Conference will also provide an opportunity for advocacy and resource mobilization in support of national and regional land policy initiatives geared towards enhanced land governance in Africa.

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

**Outcomes**

a) Improved knowledge in support of evidence-based land policy development, implementation and monitoring in Africa;
b) Enhanced and deepened consensus amongst African policymakers and stakeholders on promising avenues for addressing land governance challenges with a focus on corruption in the land sector; and
c) Improved networking on land governance and land policy in Africa.

**Outputs**

Key outputs of the Biennial Conference will include the following:

- Conference papers
- Documentary on progress in land policy in Africa
- Web articles
- Conference Report
- Press Releases
- Conference Proceedings
- Special issue of the “Journal of African Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences”

IV. DISCUSSION THEME

The theme of the 2019 Conference is: “*Winning the fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathway for Africa’s transformation*”.

The main theme shall be complemented by the following sub-themes:

- Strengthening land administration institutions both at local and national levels including the adoption of technology and innovations to support anti-corruption
efforts in the land sector;
• Women’s land access rights and gender equality – addressing persisting bottlenecks;
• Transparent, accountable and sustainable land based investments, economic justice and environmental monitoring;
• Rapid urbanization, land use and spatial planning policy and development control;
• Planning, monitoring and evaluation experiences and emerging best practices in developing and implementing land policies (rural and urban);
• Empowerment of youth through strengthening their land rights - impact of corruption in the land sector;
• Migration, youth employment, regional insecurity and corruption in the land sector nexus; and
• Challenges and opportunities of implementing land reforms in Africa.

In order to ensure alignment of Conference contributions to these themes, a Call for Abstracts will be sent out as the basis for selecting contributions. This will be carried out by a Scientific Committee which will guide the scientific substance and focus of the Conference. The Committee is comprised of experts on land policy, land administration, gender and development in Africa.

V. STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The 3rd Edition of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa will be hosted by the African Development Bank. It will be organized by the African Land Policy Centre in close collaboration with its key partners including inter-governmental organizations, government agencies, academia, regional economic communities, and African centres of excellence, CSOs and African private sector associations.

VI. DATES AND VENUE
Date: 25 – 29 November, 2019,
Venue: Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire

VII. CONTACT
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