

World Bank to hold a Conference on Land and Poverty in April

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The World Bank will hold a conference on Land and Poverty on **8-11 April, 2013** at its Washington DC Head Office. This is an annual event which brings together representatives from governments, the development community, civil society, academia and the private sector to discuss issues of concern to communities, land practitioners and policy makers worldwide and aims to foster dialogue, share good practices and experiences in the land sector from around the world (see

<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTPROGRAMS/EXTIE/0,,contentMDK:23278099~pagePK:64168182~piPK:64168060~theSitePK:475520,00.html>

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This theme to this year's conference will be "Moving towards transparent land governance: Evidence-based next steps" and will provide a forum for an evidence-based discussion of innovative approaches to follow up on recent global and regional initiatives. It will provide concrete steps to improve land governance at country level in a way that contributes to poverty reduction, gender equality, and sustainable economic growth. Papers have been prepared by presenters from around the world centered on six thematic areas namely: -

1. Securing land rights and improving land use at the grassroots;
2. Adjusting laws and institutions to address urban expansion and governance;

3. Innovative approaches towards spatially enabling land administration and management;
4. Supporting a continuum of rights in a decentralized environment;
5. Mobilizing the private sector to improve land governance; and
6. Sharing benefits from exploitation of land- based resources.

I will be making a presentation on the first theme, *Securing land rights and improving land use at the grassroots*, under the title “**Steps**

towards Enhancing Land Tenure Security: The Kenya Case-Gains and Challenges

’ during the second day of the Conference in a session which will be chaired by Joan Kagwanja Chief of the Land Policy Initiative of UNECA which is charged with implementation of the African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges based on the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa.

This paper discusses the implementation of Kenya’s land reforms based on the national land policy and the new constitution. It provides highlights of the progress made in the implementation process, including the enactment of some new land laws, capacity building, civic education, the establishment of a national land commission and new environment and land courts and progress in preparing a land use policy and developing a land information management system. It further discusses prevailing challenges including resistance to change, limited political goodwill and budget, capacity constraints, lack of an implementation plan and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The paper also discusses the politics of implementation, particularly highlighting various actor interests. Opportunities opened in national development, possible partnerships and convergence with regional and global initiatives and lessons learnt are highlighted. The paper makes concludes that with continuous vigilance to ensure that current challenges are addressed, land reforms in Kenya will help promote social-economic development and reduce poverty.

It is a follow up to another which I presented in the 2010 conference under the title: ‘**The Contribution of land to the recent violence in Kenya : Implications for the ongoing policy dialogue**’,

which largely dwelt on Kenya’s land question and the policy interventions put in place in

response as of then, including the formulation of a national land policy whose process details are highlighted in the first paper.

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