

The True Value of Land: Smallholders, Pastoralists, and Food Security in Africa

Fifth Conference on Climate and Development in Africa (CCDA-V)

Elephant Hills Safari Lodge, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

27 October 2015 * 16:00 – 17:30

This workshop, to be held on 27 October 2015, at Victoria Falls, will bring together scholars, practitioners, activists, and others with an interest in understanding **how global markets assign monetary value to agricultural and pastoral land; whether those valuations take adequate account of the land's economic utility to those who use it, as well as its abundant contributions to social and cultural life and environmental sustainability; and whether it is desirable (or even possible) to arrive at a "fair" market price reflecting its true worth.**

Across the African continent, as stressed food systems come under additional pressure from climate change and large-scale acquisitions of territory by outside actors, the efforts of land rights activists and NGOs have focused to a significant degree on reforming tenure systems and governance regimes. Activists argue that without some form of legal recognition of their land rights, smallholders and pastoralists are virtually powerless to protect their land when outside buyers—often in league with governments—move in to acquire real estate at a fraction of its actual value. Rural food producers commonly find themselves relocated—following pro forma “consultations” in lieu of legitimate opportunities to participate in land use and ownership decision-making—to less desirable land. Broad experience suggests that women are particularly disadvantaged in such circumstances, since in many African societies women are the principal farmers of agricultural land, while men may have alternative sources of income.

Would a clearer sense of the “true” value of agricultural and pastoral land change the market dynamic in favor of small-scale food-producers? Would it potentially strengthen their access to better land and open up forms of innovative financing? Are there specific questions of gender that we should consider? These are the chief topics of this workshop. The organizers believe that discussion of valuation models, and the inputs into such models, will provide insights into policy and impacts of legal regimes and create space for developing more equitable transactions.

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

1. Alongside the other barriers that obstruct those who have traditionally exercised rights of use over agricultural or pastoral land from claiming title over that land (including not only tenure regimes but also security concerns and/or cultural norms), is it true that smallholders and pastoralists lack accurate and comprehensive data about the value of the land from which they derive their livelihoods?

2. Forms of land value are not measured equally. How can alternative narratives be developed to interrogate the nature, control, and beneficial ownership of assets accessed via land to ensure equitable compensation? Such an interrogation may venture beyond land and mineral laws and include consideration of intellectual property attaching to particular uses of physical assets, as well as cultural and heritage rights and environmental impact.
3. Assuming it is possible to assign monetary values to these other forms of land use, will these valuations be credible to all relevant actors?
4. The sale of land often requires the involvement of several professionals to measure, evaluate and document the size and value of the asset(s). The costs for these services can be prohibitive for individual or community owners, but arguably should not justify inherently unfair transactions. In what ways can the value of the underlying asset be applied to transaction costs?
5. Assuming improved forms of land valuation could be generated, how would this data be shared with the communities most directly affected?
6. Ultimately, if the outcome of an intervention of this sort is to raise the market price of agricultural and pastoral land for outside investors (or the state), should that be viewed as a net gain for improving food security and protecting smallholder/pastoralist rights?
7. To what extent can efforts to increase valuation of land be divorced from the complex questions surrounding appropriate legal regimes for land tenure? Can progress be made on increasing the bargaining power of those who currently use land but do not have formal legal title without wholesale land law reform?
8. What would be the best way of increasing the bargaining power of those disadvantaged when land is expropriated (using legislative powers to do so) and land is not individually titled? If this is the case, then negotiation would be on behalf of a “community.” Who represents the “community”? How can one ensure that decisions represent a genuine consensus (including of women), and compensation for land is equitably shared (including to women)?

PARTICIPANTS:

Chair: **James Murombedzi**, Senior Climate Governance Expert at UN Economic Commission for Africa;
Open Society Fellow

Rudo Gaidzanwa, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Zimbabwe

Euclides Goncalves, Open Society Fellow, co-founder and director, Kaleidoscopio (Mozambique)

Prosper Matondi, Managing Director, Ruzivo Trust (Zimbabwe)

***Jennifer Mohamed-Katerere**, Chair, Natural Resource Governance Framework Working Group,
International Union for Conservation of Nature

Sam Moyo, Professor of Agrarian Studies, Rhodes University, Executive Director of the African Institute for
Agrarian Studies (AIAS)

Makaulule Mphatheleni, Founder, DZOMO LA MUPO Foundation (South Africa)

Patience Mutopo, Researcher, Chinhoyi University of Technology (Zimbabwe)

Marilyn Ossome, Researcher and Policy Specialist, Makerere University (Uganda)

Matt Sommerville, Chief of Party for Tenure and Global Climate Change Project, TetraTech (Zambia)

*invited

From the Open Society Foundations

Francis Akorikin, Program Officer, Food Security Program, OSIEA

Akwe Amosu, Regional Director for Africa, Open Society Foundations

Stephen Hubbell, Senior Public Affairs Officer, Open Society Fellowships

Masego Madzwamuse, Program Manager, Economic Justice, OSISA

Richard Mugisha, Uganda Country Manager, OSIEA

Joanita Okedi, Program Assistant, Food Security, OSIEA

Erica Razook, Legal Officer, Open Society Justice Initiative

AGENDA

1600-1610: Introduction from James Murombedzi

1610-1635: Each panelist will be asked to state a specific question which he/she feels needs to be
addressed in a discussion of land valuation.

1635-1700: The conversation will be structured in a Davos-style facilitation, with the chair posing
questions to each of the panelists.

1700-1730: Open Discussion

1900+ Dinner with panelists and Open Society colleagues.