



Responsible Land Governance Key to Vulnerable Countries' Adaptive Capacity

Critical to the outcome of COP24 is finalizing the Implementation Guidelines and commitments within Parties' Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs. Enshrining land governance and land tenure security policies within these frameworks is essential to providing a foundation to support women and men smallholder farmers, and indigenous and local communities across the Global South sustainably manage their lands and better adapt to the effects of climate change. Doing so is also critical for governments to effectively manage climate displacement to prevent further poverty, inequality, conflict and land degradation.

ABOUT LANDESA

Landesa is an international non-governmental organization that fights poverty and provides opportunity & security for poor rural women and men through the power of land rights. Insecure land rights are a leading factor in extreme poverty, food insecurity, gender inequality, conflict, environmental destruction, and sluggish economic growth. Additionally, more than one billion poor rural people around the world lack legal rights to the land on which they depend to survive.

Landesa has partnered with governments and civil society to develop pro-poor and gender-sensitive laws, policies & programs to help secure land rights for 120+ million families in over 50 countries.

CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENS FOOD & ECONOMIC SECURITY IN MOST VULNERABLE REGIONS

Rural communities throughout the Global South, where many rely on rain-fed agricultural systems, are hardest hit by climate change. Drought alone affects a striking 52% of agricultural land, causing or exacerbating food and economic insecurity for rural populations; the majority already lives in poverty ([Agostini & Connor 2017](#)).

- More than 820 million people are chronically undernourished; 2/3 live in countries with high exposure to climate extremes ([FAO et al 2018](#))
- Estimated 2.5 billion rural people derive their livelihoods from agriculture and natural resources ([FAO et al 2018](#))
- Yields from rain-fed agriculture estimated to fall by up to 50% in some countries and by an average of 22% across all Sub-Saharan Africa by 2020 ([FAO 2018](#))

SECURE LAND TENURE → SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT & STRENGTHENED ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Land, resource and property rights can help promote and protect investments in land ([Lawry et al 2017](#)) and incentivize sustainable land management practices ([FAO et al 2017](#)), bolstering the adaptive capacity for rural communities across the Global South. But these same communities are often vulnerable to land tenure insecurity.

- A systematic review across West Africa revealed significant linkages between tenure and frequency of fallowing land ([Fenske 2011](#))
- In Vietnam, households with insecure land rights were found to be less likely to pursue agroforestry ([Saint-Macary et al. 2010](#))
- Studies from East Africa report that land tenure is linked to soil conservation practices ([Adimassu et al 2016](#); [Ali et al 2014](#))
- From Indonesia to Zimbabwe, insecurity of tenure has been identified as a barrier to water technology investments ([Grimm and Klasen 2015](#); [Nyamadzawo et al. 2013](#))

RESPONSIBLE LAND GOVERNANCE → EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT

While adaptation efforts to sustain lands and support livelihoods are essential, rapid- and slow-onset disasters may ultimately lead to unproductive or uninhabitable lands, spurring climate-related displacement.

- Climate-induced internal and trans-border migration is anticipated to rise to 200 million people annually by 2050 ([IOM 2018](#))

The UNFCCC 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework emphasizes the need for planned relocation, but insufficient attention has been given to land governance within the broader climate agenda.

- Displacement and migration disrupt patterns of land access, use and tenure ([Quan & Dyer 2008](#))
- People without secure tenure may be reluctant or unable to leave their lands, even when they become too dangerous to inhabit, fearing they cannot return or will not be compensated ([Landesa & BRAC 2017](#))
- Relocation may increase insecurity among existing residents, particularly those whose tenure is insecure to begin with, and contribute to rising conflict ([Beyani 2014](#); [Mitchell 2011](#))

GENDERED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE & INSECURITY OF TENURE REQUIRE EXPLICIT ATTENTION TO WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS & ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

- Women own, manage and have access to substantially less land and resources than men, a compounded deficit when the links between land rights and adaptive capacity are considered ([FAO 2017](#))
- Women are more likely than men to be affected by food insecurity ([FAO et al 2018](#))
- Women's insecure tenure and lack of access to resources ([Quisumbing et al 2010](#)) impede agricultural productivity and climate adaptation investments ([Monchuk and Boudreaux 2015](#))
- Women are more likely to stay behind when men migrate, adding economic burdens and constraining critical adaptation strategies; women often cannot make land-related decisions without male family members' approval ([Landesa & BRAC 2017](#))
- Women are less likely to be compensated when displaced or resettled because they are not recognized as landowners (Enarson 2014)

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The Paris Rule Book should reference land tenure concerning vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning processes; ensure the scope of land rights for all tenure arrangements is clearly defined, particularly for women, local communities and indigenous peoples; and endorse land rights standards including FPIC and grievance mechanisms.
- ▶ 127 Parties list agriculture as a priority for adaptation within their NDCs, but very few address issues of tenure security and land governance. Parties' should include explicit, gender-responsive land management commitments, including recognition and strengthening of tenure for vulnerable communities, in their NDCs and National Adaptation Plans.
- ▶ Funders and researchers should commit resources to better understanding the links between land tenure, gender, climate adaptation and human mobility to inform climate policies and practices.