

# SECURING LAND TENURE FOR IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY IN SELECT AREAS IN UGANDA



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Land is central to most people's lives in Uganda, where approximately 78 per cent of the people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for survival. Access to land and security of tenure are the main means through which food security, livelihood generation and poverty reduction can be realized. Land also offers an opportunity for the poor to leverage their resources and chart a more stable and secure existence.

Food security and poverty reduction cannot be achieved unless issues of access to land, security of tenure and the capacity to use land productively and sustainably are addressed. Any attempt to reduce poverty must focus on strengthening land rights recognition and agricultural productivity.



## KEY CHALLENGES

A multi-stakeholder group that included the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda commissioned a study of land tenure and food security in the following areas of Uganda: the eastern region (Mbale, Tororo and Butalejja), the Rwenzori region, south-western region (Kabale, Kisoro, Mbarara, Kiruhura, Isingiro) and Wakiso district in the central region. The study revealed the following key challenges:

- ❑ Approximately 73 per cent of farmers hold land under customary tenure without any form of documentation;
- ❑ With the increasing scarcity of land, the majority (about 55 per cent) of farmers rent additional land for agricultural production on verbal, short-term contracts;
- ❑ Women do not hold equal rights with men to access and control land, or to make key decisions on land;
- ❑ There is widespread land fragmentation in the districts of Kabale, Kisoro, Tororo, Iganga, Mbale, Butalejja and Wakiso where smallholder farming is predominant. The average land parcel size is becoming too small for any viable, large-scale commercial agriculture;
- ❑ A significant percentage (23 per cent) of farmers have had land disputes - predominantly boundary disputes;
- ❑ There are cases of wetland degradation, especially in the districts of Butalejja, Tororo and Kibuku among others;
- ❑ The formal land administration institutions are generally weak, especially district land offices, area land committees and district land boards.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The “Securing Land Tenure for Improved Food Security in Select Areas in Uganda” project is funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda and implemented by the Global Land Tool Network, as facilitated by UN-Habitat. It aims to address the key challenges by improving land tenure security for about 3,000 rural smallholder farmers in select areas of Uganda, particularly for women, youth and vulnerable groups. Securing land rights will enhance agricultural productivity and therefore increase food security, incomes

and the resilience of rural smallholder farmers involved in the Netherlands Embassy Food Security Programme.

The project goal will be achieved through three main outcomes:

- ❑ Outcome (1): Increased uptake of land tools, approaches and frameworks that are pro-poor, fit-for-purpose and gender responsive to secure land tenure rights and the wise use of wetlands.
- ❑ Outcome (2): Strengthened capacity of change agents, including poor rural women, youth and vulnerable groups, to implement pro-poor, fit-for-purpose and gender-responsive land tools and approaches; and
- ❑ Outcome (3): Improved knowledge and awareness among stakeholders on issues and measures for improving land tenure security for poor women, men and vulnerable groups.

The project contributes to systemic change at all levels: local, national, regional and global. In particular, it advances:

- ❑ The Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 11 and 15, which refer to and advance the role of land in sustainable development, specifically Indicator 1.4.2, which directly tracks progress in strengthening tenure security;
- ❑ The African Union Commission / African Development Bank / United Nations Economic Commission for



Issuance of certificates in Pader District Uganda  
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Africa Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa;

- ❑ The Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure on Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security; and
- ❑ The priority areas of Uganda's National Land Policy aimed at finding practical and acceptable solutions to address land issues at the local level.

The project is expected to inform the on-going land debates and contribute to the government objective of securing community land rights, including customary land rights, with attention to women, youth and vulnerable groups.

## TARGET ZONES

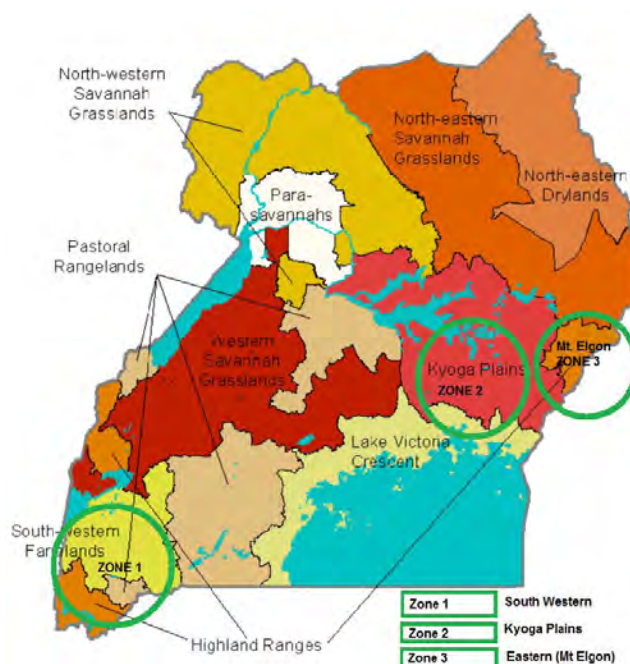
The project goal is to improve the land tenure security of smallholder farmers, the majority of whom are women, youth and vulnerable groups, in three agricultural production zones of Uganda: south-western Uganda (Zone 1), the Kyoga Plains (Zone 2) and the Mount Elgon region (Zone 3).

The primary beneficiaries will be smallholder farmers who are directly involved in agricultural production and marketing of selected crops (rice and potatoes) as supported by the Embassy's Food Security Programme partners, like IFDC, among others.

## KEY INTERVENTIONS

- i Through inclusive and participatory approaches and the application of select GLTN land tools, mapping, enumeration and inventory of the existing land use and land rights of smallholder farmers will be done. Where possible, farmers and/or landowners will be systematically supported to apply for land tenure documents.
- ii Facilitate the identification of capacity development needs and the delivery of appropriate capacity

Map showing the three agricultural production zones of Uganda



development initiatives and interventions. This intervention will include training of local people (particularly women and youth) on the use and application of land tools. In addition, partners from civil society organizations and traditional authorities will be trained in alternative dispute mediation and land tools implementation.

- iii Strengthen and support existing multi-stakeholder platforms, partnerships and constituency building processes to get improved land tenure interventions in the target areas. This will entail supporting multi-stakeholder dialogues and conducting advocacy campaigns, and supporting joint partners' programmes, initiatives and learning. Regular engagement with the traditional authorities and/or clan leaders, especially in customary land areas, will be conducted to create awareness on land rights recognition, particularly women's land rights.

### Implementing Partners:

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) and Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC)

**In close collaboration with:** ACTogether Uganda, International Fertilizer Development Centre (IFDC), Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS), Makerere University, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, and local governments in the three agricultural zones.

**Funded by:** Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Uganda

## STATUS AND NEXT STEPS

The Project will be implemented for a period of two years. The key interventions shall build on existing experiences and lessons learned by GLTN in Uganda, particularly on partnership building, capacity development, tools implementation and improving customary land rights.

Key interventions have started in the two agricultural production zones and activities for the third site will commence soon. Capacity development interventions have been undertaken and will continue in the coming months. Advocacy and awareness building activities are also at an advanced stage.

To ensure the smooth implementation of the project, the various interventions and expected outputs will be closely monitored and documented in coordination with the implementing partners.



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