

STRENGTHENING GENDER EQUALITY AND SECURE LAND RIGHTS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN GLTN PHASE 3



Community members from Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) viewing a map from one of the settlements within Okahandja municipality. ©GLTN

Gender justice in land governance is a fundamental pillar in the promotion and protection of human rights, the realization of human development goals, and the protection of natural resources in a time of a changing climate. Women's land rights are a key determinant of women's empowerment and have profound implications on women's ability to enjoy and practice civil, political, social and economic rights, as well as to escape poverty and social exclusion.

Despite the growing global movement for gender equality in land rights and governance, women and girls continue to face widespread inequality in their ability to access, own, and control land and other natural resources. Pervasive constraints include discriminatory laws, customs, practices and social norms, as well as complex, costly, and lengthy bureaucratic procedures required to complete land transactions.

The Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) commitment to gender equality is rooted in its mission, strategy, tools and approaches for over 18 years. The GLTN's Gender Agenda features in all aspects of the GLTN strategy: the vision, mission, goal, strategic objectives, and ways that the GLTN monitors and evaluates its work. The GLTN advanced its work on gender equality in Phase 3 (2018-2023) through the following activities, approaches and processes.

- ▶ Launching the foundational [GLTN Gender Strategy 2019-2030](#);
- ▶ Making systemic progress on the support for national-level gender responsive land policies and laws, and by working with partners to develop and apply gender responsive tools and approaches for implementation of reforms; and



Landless women display their land application registration documents in Dangisharan municipality in Nepal. ©GLTN

- ▶ Pursuing in-depth innovative work on gender as related to the five GLTN thematic areas of operation, i.e., urban-rural nexus, informal settlements, customary and indigenous land and communal group rights, climate change and conflict-affected areas.

The GLTN's work on gender in Phase 3 overlapped with a growing global movement in support of women's land rights, including the Stand for Her Land Campaign, where GLTN is a global steering committee member, and the Collective Women's Land Rights Commitment Makers, encompassing all stakeholders while highlighting the critical role of grassroots women's voices.

WORKING FOR GENDER EQUALITY ACROSS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN PHASE 3

The GLTN integrated its commitment to gender into its strategic objectives through:

- ▶ **Supporting governments in the development of innovative, gender-responsive land policies and laws:** the GLTN worked with national governments and stakeholders in developing gender-responsive, pro-poor national land policies and legal frameworks, national strategies and proclamations in Nepal, Zambia, Uganda, Iraq, the DRC, and South Sudan. Through these efforts, the GLTN's Phase 3 Programme impacted approximately 329,067,806 million people (of which approximately 166,309,418 were women and girls) globally by enhancing their prospects for tenure security.
- ▶ **Supporting the implementation of gender specific laws and policies and progressive gender practices:** the GLTN supported laws, policies, strategies, and guidelines in specific priority countries promoting and explicitly protecting women's and girls' land rights such as joint spousal land registration, inclusion of daughters in tenorial instruments, land registration for women who are single heads of households, and tax rebates on land registration for women to ensure increased women's access to and control over land (Uganda, Zambia, Iraq, Kenya, Namibia, South Sudan, DRC and Nepal).
- ▶ **Implementing and institutionalizing the GLTN tools at scale:** the GLTN supported collection of the social economic and geospatial information necessary for the recognition of land rights and claims for women and other vulnerable groups resulted in improved tenure security for approximately 388,259 households (including upward of 182,482 women) in Phase 3.
- ▶ **Raising awareness, building capacity and advocating for gender equality at all levels:** the GLTN joined forces with partners to raise awareness, advocate and build capacity around women's and girls' land rights through convenings, workshops, Expert Group Meetings, publications, knowledge sharing and instructional documents, e-training courses, videos and social media posts in Phase 3, as well as in-depth work at the regional level (e.g., the Women and Land Campaign in the Arab Region) and the national level (e.g., South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda).



Project monitoring in one of the wetlands in Butaleja district, Uganda. ©GLTN

FORGING NEW GROUND TOWARD GENDER EQUALITY IN CRITICAL AND EMERGING THEMATIC AREAS

The GLTN collaborated with partners to break ground toward gender equality in several critical thematic areas in Phase 3, including:

- ▶ **Addressing land tenure security within the Urban-rural nexus.** The GLTN collaborated with partners on gender-inclusive tenure reforms in urban settlements and urban periphery areas, including:
 - Supporting issuance of the first Certificates of Customary Ownership within urban limits in Mbale and Lira, Uganda, in collaboration with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development.
 - Securing women's and girls' land rights through issuing Certificates of Customary Land Occupancy in Chamuka Chiefdom, located on the urban periphery, Central Zambia, in collaboration with His Royal Highness Chief Chamuka, as well as the development of guidelines to allocate 50% of all available land to women and mandatory joint registration for spouses.
- ▶ **Improving tenure security in informal settlement and slum contexts.** The GLTN implemented gender responsive tools to map and document land rights in informal settlements in Kenya (Nairobi, Mombasa), the Philippines (Muntinlupa, Malabon City), Nepal (14 municipalities), and Zambia (Lusaka and four local governments), making data available to authorities and decision makers towards recognition of land rights.
- ▶ **Recognizing Customary and indigenous land rights and communal and group tenure systems.** The GLTN supported intersectional gains toward women's equality in the context of customary and indigenous land rights through:
 - Supporting gender equality in mapping and documenting Certificates of Customary Land Occupancy in Chamuka Chiefdom in Zambia.
 - Supporting gender inclusive processes and outcomes in the issuance of Certificates of Customary Land Occupancy in three indigenous communities in the Kalatungan Mountain Range, Bukidnon, the Philippines.
 - Supporting issuance of Certificates of Customary Land Ownership in Uganda in collaboration with the government of Uganda and various national and local stakeholders.
 - Supporting the documentation of land rights for indigenous communities, ethnic minorities and landless urban people in fourteen (14) municipalities in Nepal, in collaboration with the government of Nepal and other stakeholders.
- ▶ **Reducing land rights vulnerabilities to climate change impacts:** GLTN worked to forge new ground toward gender inclusion in the nexus of land and climate change through:
 - Working with national level partners on land rights mapping and documentation in climate-critical areas in Nepal, the Philippines, Uganda, Kenya and other countries.
 - Fostering transformation of land rights and climate justice through the development of a "women-led renegotiated new social contract to enhance land rights and climate justice."

► **Securing land rights of affected communities in conflict-affected areas.** In 2019, the GLTN and UN-Habitat, in collaboration with a Core Group of UN agencies collaborated in the development of the Guidance Note of the Secretary General on “The United Nations and Land and Conflict”. The Guidance Note aims to help the UN system to be more fit for purpose on land and conflict issues and identifies the ‘support to Human Rights-Based and Gender-Sensitive Approaches’ as one of the guiding principles for UN engagement related to land and conflict and the need to protect women’s access to land during restitution processes; and ensuring due attention is given to enforcement measures. Additionally, within phase 3 GLTN continued to focus intensively on women’s and girls’ land rights in the context of conflict and fragile states through supporting:

- The government of South Sudan in developing a national land policy. The GLTN also implemented the project “Enhancing Women’s Access to Land to Consolidate Peace in South Sudan” in Wau State, which focused on developing a Gender-Responsive Land Dispute Resolution curriculum.
- The government of the DRC in developing a gender responsive National Land Policy (2022).
- The Women and Land Campaign in the Arab Region, both regionally and at the country level in Lebanon, Tunisia and Libya.
- The GLTN’s global awareness campaign on Women, Land and Peace, including training and advocacy videos and key message documents.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The GLTN’s ongoing work towards gender equal land tenure and governance reinforces the fact that a concerted focus on these issues, strategically designed and implemented, can serve as a catalyst for much broader change in a region or country. Through advancements and lessons learned in Phase 3, the GLTN will continue contributing to the global movement toward women’s and girls’ land rights in Phase 4 (2024-2027), leveraging its ability to work with multi-stakeholder groups in-country to develop and implement gender responsive policies, laws, tools and approaches. The GLTN’s participation in advocacy campaigns, including the Stand for her Land Campaign and the Collective Women’s Land Rights Commitment



A youth from Miarayon Lapok Lirongan Talaandig Tribal Association, Inc. (MILALITTRA) looking at one of the maps from the Miarayon Region in Bukidnon province, Philippines. ©GLTN

Makers, provides opportunities to further leverage the Network’s experience on women’s and girls’ land rights at a global scale.

Building from the gains in Phase 3, GLTN will take several specific actions toward gender equal land tenure and governance in Phase 4, including:

1. Responding to keen interest by partners for peer learning across geographies on gender equal land rights and governance by organizing global and regional convenings on successes, challenges and lessons learned.
2. Fully integrating the GLTN’s 2019 Gender Strategy’s four objectives and ten commitments into all stages of GLTN’s project and program life cycle, including design, implementation and monitoring, drawing on recommendations included in the 2024 Gender Action Plan for GLTN Phase 4 Implementation.
3. Pursuing opportunities to better understand, pilot and scale up GLTN’s work on gender and land rights in each of its strategic thematic areas: customary and indigenous land rights and communal and group tenure systems; informal settlements; urban-rural nexus; climate change; and conflict-affected contexts.
4. Developing new innovative and creative ways to document, report and share transformational effects of women’s and girls’ equal rights to and control over land at the individual, household and community levels.

For more information please contact us:

United Nations Human Settlements Programme
(UN-Habitat)
Urban Practices Branch
Land, Housing and Shelter Section
www.unhabitat.org

Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Secretariat
Facilitated by UN-Habitat
unhabitat-gltn@un.org
www.gltn.net