



The Power of Human Rights to Protect Tenure Rights - A call for a human rights-based approach to land governance

Nairobi, Kenya 25 January 2023



There is an intimate link between access to land and enjoyment of human rights. As we speak, people who are poor and marginalised are losing land at a rapid pace due to urbanisation, infrastructure development, natural resource exploitation and intensive agriculture. This often leads to loss of livelihoods with serious human rights implications including violation of the right to food, housing and even the right to life and security.

As civil society organisations and national human rights institutions we bear witness to these violations in our daily work. The lack of respect for people's right

to land and resources also exacerbate the world food crises – where more than 800 million people are currently affected by hunger worldwide.



Osman reading the statement on behalf of signatory NHRIs and CSOs

Our governments have unanimously adopted the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests (VGGT) at the United Nations (UN) Committee on World Food Security. Binding **human rights obligations form the basis of these Tenure Guidelines.**

We call on governments to apply the VGGT and align policies and actions with their human rights obligations and protect legitimate tenure rights with a particular focus on marginalised groups. To ensure the realisation of these human rights, all stakeholders need to step up efforts to empower and support those most at risk of losing their land and livelihoods.

For accountability, it is important regularly monitor the implementation of rights realization in a way that is inclusive and participatory. We have developed the [Human Rights 4 Land](#) Monitoring Tools to enable monitoring in systematic way

that is explicitly based on human rights obligations. The tools provide a human right based framework for analysing and investigating land conflicts. The tools enable generation of evidence for use in advocacy at the local and national level and inform human rights reporting to international UN human rights bodies.

We invite other land and human rights actors to join our partnership to **use the power of human rights to protect land rights!**

Read by Ms. Habiba Osman, Executive Secretary for Malawi Human Rights Commission, on behalf National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organizations working in Africa during a Regional Land Governance Exchange Public Event under the Theme “Power of Human Rights to protect tenure rights: A call for a human-rights based approach to land governance” held in Nairobi.

Signatories

Action Aid, Kenya

Citizen Participation Forum, Kenya

Danish Institute for Human Rights

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone

Kenya Land Alliance

Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association

Kituo Cha Sheria, Kenya

Land for Life Initiative, Sierra Leone

Land Governance Alliance, Malawi

Malawi Human Rights Commission

Namati, Kenya

Network of African National Human Rights Institutions

Resource Conflict Institute (Reconcile), Kenya

Shibuye Community Health Workers, Kenya

Taita Taveta Human Rights Watch, Kenya

TMG Research, Germany

Uganda Human Rights Commission