

LAND MATTERS: INTEGRATING INTERNATIONAL NORMS IN GHANA'S NATIONAL LAND POLICY THROUGH A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH

Project Background

The BMZ financed program '**Strengthening Advisory Capacities for Land Governance in Africa (SLGA)**', implemented by GIZ, seeks to improve expertise in land on the African continent. The program supports the implementation of the **African Union Agenda on Land**. The overall objective of SLGA is to strengthen the human and institutional capacities required to realize sustainable land policies that pay attention to the rights of marginalized groups such as small-scale farmers, pastoralists and women across Africa. One of the main areas of action for SLGA is the establishment and support of the **Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA)** under the leadership of the **African Land Policy Centre (ALPC)**.

NELGA is a partnership of more than **70 African universities and research institutions** with proven leadership and track record in education, training and research on land governance. Its primary purpose is to enhance the role of African universities and research institutions in supporting land policy development, implementation and monitoring. NELGA works across Africa with footprints **in over 40 countries**. The network supports African states in the area of capacity building, research and policy advice on land governance. Its work is aligned with the *AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges* and other frameworks, such as the *AU Guidelines for the Development of Land Governance Curricula in Africa*, *Guidelines on Land Ethnicity and Conflict* and the *Guiding Principles on Large Scale Land Based Investments*.

The Ghanaian Context

Ghana is a relatively small country of 238,533 square kilometers spanning diverse biomes that range from coastal savannas to tropical rainforests and Guinea savannas. With a population of 30.79 million people (2021 population census), Ghana is the second-most populous country in West Africa. It is a largely agricultural country. **The National Land Policy (NLP) of Ghana was launched in June 1999**. Land tenure is a complex combination of customary (comprising stools, skins, clans, families and individual tenures) and state land tenures within a land administration system that has been undergoing reforms since 2003. The legal reform resulted in the enactment of three pieces of legislation: The Lands Commission Act, 2008 (Act 767), The Land Use and Spatial Planning Act, 2016 (Act 925), and the Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036).

Subsequently, global and continental instruments were developed to provide more guidance, guidelines, and standards for the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of land policies on the continent. These included the ***African Union Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa (F&G)*** and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) ***Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)***. Additionally, there have been numerous emerging social and economic issues that impact land governance, land management, land administration, land-use planning, and land development. These include the global rush for agricultural lands in 2007 and 2008 after the world food crisis, climate change and adaptability, migration, and land degradation. These issues have affected good and responsible land governance, necessitating new policy responses. Evidence from countries on the continent indicates that many of these countries revised their national land policies after five years to enable the policies to respond to emerging issues and challenges. After 25 years of the existence of the National Land Policy, it is time to review and revise its provisions.

Current Review of the Ghana Land Policy

A National Land Conference held in 2022 passed a resolution to establish the ***Ghana Land Sector Multi-Stakeholder Platform (LSMSP)***. The purpose of this platform is to oversee the implementation of the recommendations made during the conference. The LSMSP is composed of 75 institutions representing 32 stakeholder categories. Recognizing the urgent need for a new land policy, a technical working group was created with the sole purpose of initiating and supporting efforts to **review the National Land Policy of 1999 and to make proposals for a new national land policy.**

As member of the LSMSP, **NELGA members play a key role in the comprehensive review of the 1999 National Land Policy.** By promoting an evidence-based approach, NELGA helps identify any existing gaps or shortcomings in relation to present socio-economic realities and emerging issues. Furthermore, NELGA members advocate for adherence to international standards and the incorporation of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles.