



## Women's rights to land must be strengthened: African parliamentarians

Addis Ababa, 4 March 2016 – The Land Policy Initiative (LPI) participated in a workshop organized by the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) on the theme “*Strengthening women's rights to land access: a parliamentary response to close gender gap for economic development through agriculture.*” The one-day session was held on 1 March 2016, in Johannesburg, South Africa as a side event of the first statutory PAP meeting taking place from 29 February to 6 March 2016.

The workshop discussed the relationship between women's access to land and economic development in Africa, and identified the critical factors that prevent women from using and controlling land. It helped to strengthen Parliamentarians' capacity to advocate for increased governments and communities' awareness of women land rights. The workshop enhanced the capacity of members of PAP, who are also members of their respective national Parliaments, to further take on their legislative mandate and oversight role with the aim to influence women's access to and control over land.

The LPI supported the workshop with two substantial presentations: “*Land access as women's rights: an approach to deepen empowerment,*” and “*Tools to domesticate articles 15, 19 and 21 of the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security into national law: oversight and report back mechanisms for the implementation of women's rights.*”

The discussions that followed the LPI presentations highlighted the PAP's awareness of the *Maputo Protocol* and the status of women's land rights in the member countries. Various countries, including the Gambia and Mozambique, have made notable progress towards implementing the *Maputo Protocol*. Countries that are still to ratify, or are moving towards implementing the *Protocol*, highlighted the various challenges they face.

The workshop highlighted the follow-up actions for strengthening the land rights of African women. The Action Plan issued at the end of the meeting identified strategies for strengthening PAP oversight and monitoring of progress made in ratifying, domesticating and implementing the *Maputo Protocol*. The strategies include capacity building, advocacy, and resource mobilisation. In the area of monitoring and evaluation of PAP and national parliaments, a special attention was given to discussing the 30 per cent target of documented lands allocated to women by 2025. The target was adopted in October 2015 by the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on agriculture, rural development, water and environment. Parliamentarians agreed that the implementation of this target would benefit women's access to land, and stressed the need to prioritise its implementation and monitoring.

The workshop was co-hosted by the PAP Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Committee on Gender, Family, Youth and People with Disabilities. Based on the two-year partnership with PAP, LPI supported the event through facilitating the workshop, providing technical input and helping to develop the action plan. The workshop was attended by African parliamentarians, and representatives of LPI, the *German* Agency for International Cooperation (*GIZ*), and the NGO *Habitat for Humanity*.

The Land Policy Initiative is a joint programme of the tripartite consortium consisting of the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Its mandate is to facilitate the implementation of the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa.

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