

Bridging gender disparities to enhance women's land rights in Malawi

[uneca.org/stories/bridging-gender-disparities-enhance-women-s-land-rights-malawi](https://www.uneca.org/stories/bridging-gender-disparities-enhance-women-s-land-rights-malawi)

23 December, 2020



Lilongwe, Malawi, December 23, 2020 (ECA) - *The African Land Policy Center (ALPC), 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), this week undertook a training to strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders in Malawi to effectively identify, assess and address gender-based disparities and exclusion to improve women's rights to land and other productive resources.*

The training, done in collaboration with Malawi's Lands Ministry, is grounded on the ALPC's comprehensive review of the country's legislative framework, which provides the basis for women land rights and how these legal frameworks can be enhanced to better women's rights.

Both the comprehensive reviews and training are in response to a request from the Government of Malawi to build the capacity of key stakeholders tasked with implementing women's land rights. The ALPC trained policymakers, traditional authorities, and other key stakeholders to bridge gender disparities and promote gender-responsive land governance and administration in line with the African Union agenda on land.

The training, held in Lilongwe from December 22-23, 2020 under the theme; 'Strengthening Women's Land Tenure Security and Entrepreneurship in Line with the African Union Agenda on Land' familiarized trainees with existing regional commitments, frameworks, and tools and enhanced their understanding of the key challenges associated with strengthening women's land tenure security and entrepreneurship.

ALPC Coordinator, Joan Kagwanja, commended Malawi for being a pioneer in land rights in Africa by supporting the constituting of the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa in 2009; and putting policies in place to ensure its implementation at the country level.

"The AU Declaration on Land highlights the plight of African women, and Member States are asked to review land policies to ensure gender equality as this builds towards meeting the continent's economic goals," said Ms. Kagwanja.

She said ALPC's training programme builds on a comprehensive review of the legislative framework, with key recommendations to bridge gender-disparities and enhance women's land rights in Malawi.

In his welcome remarks, Duncan Chione, a representative of the Ministry of Lands, lauded the training theme saying it was well aligned with the related needs identified by the Government following recent pilots of select land laws.

He explained: "Land policies and their governance are critical for every government, which is why we are piloting the new land laws and customary land acts with respective provisions for women land rights in selected districts in Malawi."

An emphasis has been placed on the traditional leaders' role, who are customary custodians of the land, to ensure an enabling environment for implementing the new land laws.

Commending the positive reception of the training, senior chiefs from central and northern Malawi called on ALPC and the Ministry of Lands to enhance the Forum for African Traditional Authorities (FATA) and support regional forums so that traditional chiefs and leaders can effectively influence mindsets on women tenure security and support the AU agenda on land and other international instruments.

The training targeted a diverse group of stakeholders, including officials from the ministries of Lands; Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development; Gender, Children and Community Development; and traditional authorities, customary land committees, district land tribunals, land clerks, small farmer associations, academics, and civil society organizations. As influencers in society and because of their positions, the stakeholders are expected to influence policymaking and reforms to ensure institutions and legislation in Malawi recognize women's land rights.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The African Land Policy Centre (ALPC), formerly called the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), 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 purpose is to enable the use of land to lend impetus to the process of African development.

Issued by:

*Communications Section
Economic Commission for Africa
PO Box 3001
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Tel: +251 11 551 5826
E-mail: eca-info@un.org*