



Quarterly Newsletter | October - December 2015

# Uganda Land Alliance



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## Editor's Note



Dear reader,

I hope you enjoyed our various Newsletter editions for the year 2015.

Uganda Land Alliance is happy to report that it has successfully completed the year [2015] and hopes to enter the New Year with a lot of energy to continue with its core land business of lobbying and advocating for fair legal and policy framework that responds to the needs of vulnerable groups.

This special edition gives wider coverage of several high profile activities implemented during the last quarter (October-December) of the year. It covers an account of some of the activities implemented under a six months project funded by Oxfam-Uganda entitled: *"Women Land Rights in Light of Changing Context in Karamoja, consolidating the gains and documenting new realities" in Kotido and Kaabong districts.*

The publication also gives detailed account of; a) this year's Land Awareness Week. b) The International Land Coalition Regional Assembly hosted by ULA and c), the Civil Society Organization National Land Policy Implementation Conference.

Do not miss to read about Charles Acudu who regained ownership of his land after 11 years among other interesting things.

I would like to thank you for being part of our wider audience and for your usual constructive feedback on the various editions of our Newsletters. On behalf of ULA, I would like to pledge that in the New Year [2016], we will continue to feed you with a lot of fascinating information regarding land and our work in this same quarterly publication.

The sky is the limit.

I wish you a happy festive season, rewarding 2016!

**Julius Businge**  
**Communications Officer**

## Women Land Rights: Oxfam Partners with ULA

By ULA Team

**W**ith support from Oxfam, Uganda Land Alliance implemented several activities under a six months project entitled; *"Women Land Rights in Light of Changing Context in Karamoja, consolidating the gains and documenting new realities" in Kotido and Kaabong districts.* As popularly known, Karamoja sub region is faced with multiple issues of land rights violation ranging from disputes over boundary, land rights abuses by investors and denial of ownership of land on the side of women based on the customary norms and practices.

*The discovery of minerals has also led to a number of land rights violations emanating from the gaps in mineral laws. A keen and careful understanding of these issues bring out one major thing: Women are still undermined in the sub region yet they play a crucial role in national development.*

*Below is an account of some activities that were implemented during the project timeline.*

### International Rural Women's Day

Bearing in mind what diligent rural women contribute to national development, on October 15, Uganda Land Alliance joined the rest of the world to celebrate the eighth 2015 International Rural Women's Day.

The Day was celebrated in Kotido and Kaabong districts in Karamoja Sub-region with support from development partners – Oxfam and Mercy Corps.

The two areas continue to register many negative cases surrounding women land rights. Women in the Sub-region are surrounded by statutory and customary laws that discriminate them when it comes to access, control and ownership of land. It is common in the region for women to only use the land and not have control over it.

The major activities held during the day included peaceful demonstrations that showcased messages related to women land rights and gender, performances by different women groups, schools and mobile legal aid clinics and resourceful speeches from leaders.

The event was held under the theme; *"Rural women rise up and claim your rights to land and inheritance"*. Over the years, ULA has stamped the importance of celebrating this day as a way of supporting the rural community to mainstream gender, land rights and how best they can relate to climate change in their agricultural related activities.

The major objectives of the day were; to increase knowledge and awareness regarding land rights and the contribution of women in the development of the country's economy; raise the profile of the rural women in the public domain

and empower them to demand for equality and service from the different stakeholders; promote a society that is informed and appreciate the roles that rural women play in development and come up with critical actions that address the needs and problems of the rural women.

Speaking during the event, Ms. Rebecca Apio, ULA's Gender Officer said celebrating the day was critical given that women needed more sensitization on what their rights on land are, their role in national development and how to manage natural resources for sustainable development.

"As a woman I know there are millions of women out there suffering because there are limited efforts by actors to support them in different ways" Ms Apio said.

On his part, ULA's Executive Director, Mr. Edmond Owor said, ULA together with its development partners are committed to supporting women understand what the legal framework provides for them among other things.

"We cannot sit back and watch our mothers lose their land to selfish people," Mr. Owor said, who will feed our children, he asked?"

The event was organized in line with the commemoration of the 4<sup>th</sup> UN Conference on Women held in 1995 in Beijing which gave birth to this important day.

Our activities for the day directly reflected what the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon said: "The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have gender equality and women's empowerment at their core, and include a target to "double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women. Indeed, rural women are critical to the success of almost all of the 17 SDGs."

According to Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 90% of all rural women [in Uganda] work in agriculture and very few men are involved. Agriculture serves as a source of income to women, who many times struggle to look after their families.

Analysts say, supporting women in all spheres of life especially in the area of land rights and agriculture would contribute to decreasing world hunger and poverty and make rural women critical for the success of the UN's new Sustainable Development agenda for 2030.

The day's events were attended by community leaders, Member of Parliament, representatives from civil society organizations and development partners, representatives from Uganda Police Force, students, women, children, and men among other groups.

### Key issues that emerged

Speakers of the day encouraged women to rise up and claim their rights to land and inheritance since they are protected by the law; Women were encouraged to be productive and to avoid taking part in deadly behaviours like alcoholism. Participants were also encouraged to actively take part in ULA activities.

Other important speakers encouraged ULA to support women to acquire

Certificates of Customary ownership of land and be able to access services such as bank loans. Men were encouraged to respect women due to their critical role of providing and feeding their families. Participants were also encouraged to educate their children as a password to fighting poverty among other things.

As splendid issues emerged, positive results of the day's celebrations could easily be noted.

Teresa Atudi, 62, and widow hailing from Kaabong said; I am glad to be part of this event and I hope to visit ULA offices to help me manage my problem regarding land.

Speaking with poignant gesture, Teresa said it was hard for her to feed her nine children because she had lost most of her land to a neighbour who claimed that land belonged to him. "I have reported this matter to local leaders but they are not helping," she said, adding I have just talked to an officer from Uganda Land Alliance and she has taken my contacts and promised to help me; I believe this issue will be well managed, a hopeful Atudi said.

Generally speaking, going by what was shared and issues that emerged during the celebrations especially on tenure insecurity in the sub region, there is need for more support from civil



*One of the participants stressing a point at the meeting.*



**Female and male champions attending the training on Dec.14**

society organisations, government, leaders and development partners so as to reverse the situation and cause positive change to people's welfare.

### **Land administrators to popularize women land rights messages**

In a bid to strengthen its collaboration with land administrators in Kotido district, Uganda Land Alliance housed 30 land administrators to discuss issues relating to land administration and management. Of the 30 participants, 25 were males, the rest females.

During the meeting, it was agreed that the department of Natural Resources at the district should speed up the swearing in of the Area Land Committees so they can enthusiastically support in the process of managing women land rights. It was also agreed that ULA should help train District Land Board officers, Area Land Committees, Traditional Leaders and the Recorders. In the end, this training would popularize hopeful women land rights messages.

### **Kotido residents sensitized**

Uganda Land Alliance with support from Oxfam sensitized 944 residents of Kotido district hailing from the Sub counties of Kacheri (48 females; 37 males), Kotido Sub county (284 females; 125 males), Rengen Sub county (144 females; 99 males) and Panyangara Sub county (73 females; 134 males). The project was

implemented as a remedy to respond to multiple issues on land rights violation ranging from disputes over boundary, land rights abuses by companies or investors, denial of ownership of land by women from widows and orphans by close relatives based on the customary norms and practices among other issues. The Alliance targeted men, women, children and the elderly as beneficiaries of these sensitization sessions. Specific emphasis was put on women and children land rights. During the sensitization, it was generally noted that the attitudes of elderly men who are custodians and executors of the customary laws (norms and practices) are positive towards equality that spill over to land inheritance and ownership by women in the district. Customary laws that govern marriage, issues of rape and defilement are positively understood as bad. There is more effort that needs to be done by government and non-state actors to support women in this community to attain their land rights so they are not excluded in the development agenda of Uganda.

### **Competent groups formed to tackle land matters**

During the six months project timeline, ULA held two meetings in the two districts of Kotido and Kaabong with the aim of forming land groups to spearhead the land rights campaign. In Kaabong, the advocates were identified based on the existing lists of the women that actively participated in

the International Rural Women's Day of 2014 and 2015 among other activities. Male Champions were identified from the district level council of members and the Sub county level council of elders. The two groups formed in each district of Kotido and Kaabong are; Women Land Rights Advocates and Male Champions. Women Land Rights Advocates carryout advocacy for the rights of women to land ownership. The group also identifies cultural norms and practices that violate the rights of women to land ownership.

On the other hand, the Male Champions were identified as "agents of change" so they facilitate the understanding of women land rights to their fellow men. The group jointly operates with the women land rights advocates in trying to identify customary norms and practices which violate the rights of women to land and the general community in which they live. ULA is also helping the groups to come up with the legal framework to support their day to day work.

### **Women, men champions acquire training**

Women are property and property cannot own property, women are foreigners, women are strangers, women don't carry land on their head while going for marriage, women are visitors who can leave anytime!!! These were perceptions that most people had about women when it comes to access, ownership and management of land. In the month of December, ULA organized special sessions to train female and

**CONTINUED ON Page 10**

# 2015 Land Awareness Week

By ULA Team

“I am grateful to Uganda Land Alliance and the Ministry of Lands for enabling me verify the authenticity of my land title.”

That is what Hanifah Namubiru said at the 2015 Land Awareness Week (LAW) shortly after verifying the authenticity of her land title using the Land Information system manned by the Ministry of Lands technical staff.

The ministry officials took part at the 2015 Land Awareness Week that was held at Uganda Manufacturers Association Conference Hall, Kampala from December 7-11.

Namubiru’s applause represented hundreds of people who actively took part in the five day event. This was the second time the Alliance was organizing a similar Week. The inaugural one took place at the end of 2013 at The Sheraton Kampala Hotel.

The 2015 event brought together representatives from Government, Civil Society, Academia, development partners, private sector, media and the general public to discuss a number of pertinent land issues in Uganda.

The idea behind Land Awareness Week is to bridge the historical questions relating to land in Uganda and the needed future reforms in a bid to build synergies and a common understanding of our destiny as a people.

It seeks to open up the Lands, Housing and Urban Development Sector to the general public making it more relevant and accessible to those various segments of society it is intended to support. In addition, the event provides space for government and other relevant actors to give more light on the various legal and policy framework which guide the land sector in the country.

This year’s event was held using funds from Democratic Governance Facility, Trocaire and Mercy Corps. It was held under the theme: *Support Land*

*Reforms for a Prosperous Uganda.*

Below is a summary of what happened on each day of the week:

## Day One Highlights

Speaking at the opening of the event (on Dec.7), ULA’s Board Chairperson, Mr. Richard Ssewakiryanga said that the event was planned to answer the ever increasing number of questions which Ugandans have regarding land. Mr. Ssewakiryanga said that Uganda has got very good policies and laws regarding land and land rights; what is needed are monitoring mechanisms to ensure that these translate into what the people need. “...all that can happen when the citizens of Uganda understand what is going on,” he said, adding that events like the Land Awareness Week are crucial for that cause.

“Every day we listen to radios...news about land conflicts, land grabbing,” he said, it is from such forum that answers to those problems can be found.

I urge you to continue participating in the Land Awareness Week physically and through the media, he added.

Mr. Edmond Owor, the Executive Director of ULA said the Land Awareness Week was organized, planned as one of the key events towards achieving the Alliance’s five year strategic plan [2014-2019].

Mr. Owor said issues that have to do with national level advocacy, women land rights and more importantly protection and enforcement of land rights of the poor and vulnerable can be achieved once the various actors are brought together.

“....and that is partly why we have the Land Awareness Week,” Mr. Owor said. He used the same space to present the International Land Coalition Award that ULA won in Senegal in May 2015 after supporting communities in Karamoja Sub-region to form Communal Land Associations (CLAs). CLAs in the land of warrior nomads are helping communities to effectively administer their land and more importantly, to fight land grabbers.

Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Lands Housing and Urban



**MLHUD’s Dennis Obbo speaks to participants.**

Development, Mr. Emmanuel Alaunah said, government was happy with the efforts Civil Society Organizations and other actors were putting in to ensure that land governance is managed in the country.

He said that government was ready to provide solutions to land challenges through the various legal and policy framework put in place. He added that Uganda’s land question has three concerns: unlawful land evictions, underutilization of land and cases of land conflicts. These have to be managed well in order for us to achieve our development goals.

Indeed statistics from Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) Abstract for 2014 indicate that Uganda’s land area is 200 523.2 Sq.km of this, only 91151.8sq.km is covered by Uganda’s dominant sector agriculture, leaving about 109371.4sq. km of land underutilized.

Mr. Alaunah said such scenarios are a hindering block to Uganda’s economic growth prospects and that the situation can only be reversed when massive sensitization programmes similar to the LAW are conducted.

Development partners–DGF, Mercy Corps, Trocaire and others were equally optimistic that the notion of People Centred Land Governance can easily yield fruits through events like the Land Awareness Week.

Ms. Catherine Gunby, the Program Manager Trocaire Uganda applauded ULA for training paralegals and dealing with district officials and magistrates in managing land problems. Ms.

Gunby added that land sensitization campaigns are crucial when it comes to ensuring that the rights of the people on customary and communal land are respected.

Mr. Sean Glanville, the Country Director for Mercy Corps Uganda said they are funding ULA through a program called Building Resilience against Climate Extremes and Disasters-BRACED in order to promote sustainable livelihoods and boosting people's welfare. Mr. Glanville said that events like the Land Awareness Week would help land owners and actors to access information regarding land which would in the process guide them while advocating for their rights.

"I am confident that this week is going to be useful to all of us as we continue to seek solutions to Uganda's land challenges," he said.

Technical staff from the ministry of lands gave presentations like the National Land Policy, National Housing Policy, National Urban Policy, the Condominium Law among others. These presentations sparked debate during and after the five day event.

### Day Two

Day two was specifically planned and designed for some land actors to exhibit their work, materials and explain deeply what is in for the public. The exhibitors included, The Ministry of Lands, ULA, Pelum, Caritas Jinja, International Justice Mission, Kikandwa Environmental Association, Legal Aid Service Providers Network (LASPNET), Send A Cow, Agency for Integrated Rural Development (AFIRD). Others like Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment exhibited their work after second day.

### Day Three

This day was held under the topic;

Responsible Governance of Land Tenure. Mr. Robert Opio, the Acting Commissioner for Land Use Regulation and Compliance at the Ministry of Lands gave a detailed presentation on; The Update on the Competitiveness and Enterprise Development Project (CEDP) implementation. Mr. Opio informed the audience that through the project, funded by the World Bank, over 600 Communal Land Associations were to be formed and registered by government. He said, CEDP was to support efficient land use and management on top of helping Uganda achieve Vision 2040. He also noted that government was rolling out systematic demarcation of peoples' land, a process that would see land owners get land titles and other relevant documents from government among other initiatives.

"We are confident these initiatives will ensure that the people attain tenure security," he said, before thanking ULA for organizing the event through which several issues regarding land would be discussed and reported to policy makers for action.

The other presentations of the day included; Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forestry in the context of National Food Security (VGGT); Challenges in Land Market and Reforms to Accessing Land for Investment and; Existing Opportunities and Challenges in Documenting the Land Rights of Customary Owners in Uganda. All these presentations attracted good questions from some of the over 80 active participants of the day.

### Day Four

This was another interesting second last day of the week. It was held under the topic; integrating and gendering land tools. Several presentations were given and discussed. They included;



**Ministry of Lands officials attending to visitors during the week's exhibition at UMA.**

Assessment of how the Gender Evaluation Criteria have yielded valuable impacts, presentation on the land registry to showcase the land information system and lastly but very interesting, The People's Parliament that largely focused on how Land leads to economic development. The major issues that came up included; the need to document and give titles to lawful land owners, stopping land grabbing by the well-connected individuals, equipping the Ministry of Lands Zonal Offices so they can ably respond to peoples' land queries, massive sensitization of the public on their land rights, integrating gender related land tools to bring onboard everyone in the area of land justice among other issues. The Parliament that was well attended, was presided over by NTV-Uganda and was afterwards aired on the same station as well as shared on the various channels of communication.

### Day Five

This was the last day of the event. It largely focused on the topics; Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience. Ministry of Lands officials shared experiences from implementing projects on sustainable land management in Nakasongola and Kamuli districts. The presentation formed the basis for the panel discussion on how effective is the existing framework for use and management of land based resources in Uganda. Experts from the lands ministry, climate change activists constituted the panel that was moderated by Dr. Ronald Naluwairo from ACODE. The audience was active and deeply engaged panellists during and after the session.

On the closing day, ULA's Executive Director Mr. Owor said: "Our plan is that we organize next year's-2016 Land Awareness Week in such a way that activities are held in the various regions of the country. This will bring onboard more people with land queries to participate and get solutions ■"



**Participants during The People's Parliament.**

# ULA Hosts National Land Policy Actors

By ULA Team

Ugandan government through the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development opened doors for Civil Society Organisations working in the land sector to partner with it [government] in the process of implementing the 2013 National Land Policy (NLP).

Speaking at a two day CSOs dialogue on the implementation of the NLP at Hotel Africana on November 25, Ms Naome Kabanda the head of the NLP Implementation at the Ministry of Lands, said government alone cannot effectively spearhead the process of implementation of the policy.

"We are therefore asking Uganda Land Alliance to circulate a form to CSOs dealing in land issues so they can show interest in key areas of implementation," Ms Kabanda said, adding that all players in the land sector need to be well conversant with all documentation regarding land.

The NLP was passed in 2013 after many years of stakeholder consultations. What now remains is its effective implementation.

The major objective of the policy is; to provide a framework for articulating the role of land in national development, land ownership, distribution, utilization management and control. This is specifically intended to boost national development.

Mr. Robert Opiyo, the Acting Commissioner for Land Use Regulation and Compliance at the

ministry of lands said, the smooth implementation will among other things boost government's efforts to map, document, demarcate and give out land titles to land owners.

This process will ultimately lead us into achieving tenure security for everyone, said Mr. Opiyo.

Reports indicate that about 90% of Uganda's population does not have any form of land documents to protect their land rights. This could partly explain the current high number of land wrangles in the country.

In addition, demographic pressures, changes in consumption patterns and financial speculation have generated an unprecedented increase in the price of food accompanied by the globalization of land markets and increased competition for land, with national elites increasing investments.

Once effectively implemented, according to Mr. Edmond Owor, ULA's Executive Director, the NLP will provide lasting solutions to land problems. "But it is a process," he said at the opening of the meeting on November, 24.

The NLP meeting was organized with guidance from the ministry of lands.

The idea of organizing this meeting was born in July this year, when the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development held a national stakeholders workshop to deliberate on the proposed implementation framework for Uganda's National Land Policy.

At the July meeting, the Ministry tasked ULA to mobilize resources to see to it that several CSOs involved in land matters could convene and build their capacity to implement the NLP.

The meeting that was funded by ULA's courteous development partner-Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), brought together over 100 representatives of CSOs, government, experts, academia and the media.

Mr. David Mabonga, from Elgon Community Civil Rights Activists Association, Mbale said he was happy to be part of the meeting and promised to be active in the process of the NLP implementation.

Mr. Mabonga, together with other participants agreed that there should be continuous working relationship between CSOs and the Ministry of Lands in the implementation process of the NLP. It was also agreed that Uganda Land Alliance continues to mobilize resources for other similar meetings to cement CSOs understanding of the policy; participants agreed that they would actively take part in the implementation of the NLP by filling a template (document) showing critical areas of their interest in the implementation process of the NLP among other things.

Mr. Owor (ULA's Executive Director) said ULA is committed to spearheading the process given the fact that the Alliance has 78 members, majority being CSOs, CBOs and individuals with keen interest in pushing for excellent land reforms to benefit all Ugandans ■



Panelists discuss issues during the conference.



Participants taking part in a group discussion.

# ULA Hosts High Profile ILC regional Assembly

By ULA Team

From October 20-25, Uganda Land Alliance hosted the International Land Coalition Africa Regional Assembly in Kampala, Uganda in an effort to respond to land governance issues.

Held at Entebbe Botanical Beach Hotel, the Assembly constituted a total of 43 delegates (32 males and 11 females) from both Uganda and abroad.

The high profile regional assembly attracted participants from Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan & Sudan, Malawi, Senegal, Ghana, Togo, Burundi, Benin, Madagascar, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Argentina and ILC representatives.

The theme for the assembly was; *"Towards a sustainable gender justice and land governance system."*

Uganda Land Alliance got the opportunity to host the assembly in Kampala after winning the first International Land Coalition Award for the Best Success Story. The Alliance won the award in May 2015 in Dakar, Senegal. About 77 articles were submitted for this cause but ULA's won.

The story was about the formation of Communal Land Associations in Karamoja Sub region.

The 52 Communal Land Associations were formed by ULA in Karamoja Sub-region years back and have of recent been able to negotiate and get fair compensation for their land before giving it out to investors.

## Government speaks out

Speaking at the opening of the Assembly, Mr. Robert Opio the Acting Commissioner for Land Use Regulation and Compliance at the Ministry of Lands said Uganda was glad to host the ILC regional assembly because of its relevance.

"It is from such gatherings that different actors exchange ideas regarding their work," he said, I am sure at the end, a lot will be learnt, shared for the good of our land reforms and the general policy and legal framework. We all know that once a country improves tenure security, hunger and other related problems become history, Mr. Opio added.

On ULA's intervention in Karamoja, Mr. Opio said that government would advance the recognition of Communal Land Associations formed by ULA.

"The success registered by ULA on CLAs is enough for me to believe that once

empowered, people can fight for their rights," he said, it is a good example to guide us in the implementation of people-centred land governance in Africa and beyond.

The 1998 Land Act has provisions for the creation of Communal Land Associations. Once formalized, a Communal Land Association is recognized as the sole owner of the communal lands it controls.

In fact, a community land title gives rights to the community that are similar to the rights a freehold title gives to an individual land owner.

Unfortunately, the provisions of the Uganda Land Policy for communal lands are yet to be applied.

ULA is active in many regions of Uganda, including Karamoja, the poorest of all. An estimated 80% of 27,000 km<sup>2</sup> of land in Karamoja is communally held in a customary manner, by pastoralist Karamojong communities. Recovering from a civil war, these pastoralists are now facing a massive influx of speculators and investors in search of precious minerals—marble or oil etc.

While they often hold licenses for exploration or exploitation, they conduct their activities in disregard of the communities that use the land as



Some of the participants at a Gender Evaluation Criteria field tour in Mukono.

pastures. The Uganda Land Alliance continues to assist the communities in running the Communal Land Associations which allows them to negotiate with the state and the investors.

### Dialogue on CLAs

Day one of the meeting recognized the importance of CLAs. A dialogue consisting of members from the civil society, government and other actors was held and panel members called on government to speed up the process of formalizing the CLAs so they can battle greedy land grabbers.

Battling land grabbers by communities would ideally improve tenure security which would in the end support production and other income generating activities. In the end, this would positively help in fighting poverty and disease which are a hindering block to Uganda's 'soft' socio-economic growth.

Mr. Opio admitted that there is need to advance the recognition of the Communal Land Associations in order to provide security to these communities whose livelihood is based on the use of communal lands.

He added that mapping and registration of CLAs by government would start soon with funding from World Bank.

Mr. Edmond Owor, the Executive Director at ULA said the conference was a very good platform to share experiences, success stories with all the members from different countries.

On issues of gender and land, a specific land tool–Gender Evaluation Criteria–was discussed. Mr. Owor was happy to note that members had interest in understanding the tool.

He said [he was] confident that member countries were returning home with a lot of experiences about the GEC tool and would apply it in their daily activities.

"We need to network as ILC member organizations in order to implement this tool," Mr. Owor added.

Mr. Samuel Mabike from development partner, UN-Habitat, said women in Uganda do not have land deeds and are discriminated in terms of access to productive resources coupled with traditions on inheritance. Mr. Mabike said, most times, women are left out deliberately and are rather trained on being submissive wives with no access to land in their homes or families.

In Africa, most land is held under customary tenure systems. In Uganda specifically, over 70% of land is under customary tenure which sometimes

does not give equitable access to the various land resources.

Mr. Mabike highlighted on some of the causes of gender inequality as being; limited ability to negotiate on land matters, land administration majorly done by men other than women, discrimination in capacity building among others.

He however said that this inequality can be trounced by empowering women to participate directly in policy design and implementation and by creating innovative solutions for such global challenges.

Mr. Shadrack Omondi, the Chairman of ILC Africa said the Assembly was then serving as an opportunity for securing land and rights to land with a lot of interest and zeal.

He said the coalition needs to concentrate on issues surrounding land rights for women and men, protection for land rights defenders, mobilization for land rights and influencing decision makers.

The five day meeting involved upcountry visits to Mukono and Karamoja Sub-region. Visitors went on the ground to critically observe the work of ULA.



**Participants during the Regional Assembly in Entebbe.**

## Regaining Own Land After 11 Years

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male champions on the broader issues regarding women and their rights on land.

It was found out that the basis for these perceptions arose from the fact that majority of the people are ignorant of the law and are still stuck with traditional cultural norms, practices and beliefs that largely discriminate women from owning property.

Fortunately, by the end of the training, most participants understood and appreciated the fact that women too have equal land rights like their counterparts—men. They promised to play a pivotal role of sensitizing the community on the same.

“I now know I have rights on land and I will defend them; I will also sensitize the community to protect women land rights” said Lokot Marry a woman advocate. Going forward, sensitized groups are expected to tangibly support women land rights campaigns ■

October was one of those memorable months in 2015 that finally saw a smile on Charles Acudu’s family after 11 long years of what had seemed to be a chronic land dispute. Charles Acudu, 69, married with 10 children and resident of Amoo Village, Kelim Parish, Ngariam Sub County Katakwi District finally regained control over their land following a series of mediation sessions conducted by Uganda Land Alliance.

Acudu’s land problem started in 2004, when his neighbor, Samuel Oseenyuk started meddling with part of his land measuring approximately 10 acres through extensive cultivation, claiming that the land was given to him by the late father of the complainant (Charles Acudu).

Realizing that his neighbor was not about to stop using his land, Acudu reported the matter to Clan leaders who instead referred him to the Area Local Council leaders in fear of Oseenyuk’s power and aggressiveness. The area local council one tried to intervene in the matter but failed to handle it after trying to arrange several meetings in vain

since the respondent Oseenyuk could not honor the invitations.

Before the LC1 was able to give Acudu a referral letter for the matter, to the surprise of Acudu, Oseenyuk decided to approach the complainant and requested that they put their past behind and that he was willing to give back the land since it did not belong to him. However, he requested that he should be allowed to cultivate for a short while and that he would return the land back in 2013 after two years.

On a gentle man’s agreement, Acudu accepted Oseenyuk’s proposal and allowed him to continue using the disputed land. After the agreed period of two years was over, Acudu’s attempt to get back his land were futile after Oseenyuk refusing to honor the earlier agreement but instead claiming that land belongs to him.

After this fracas, Acudu again reported back to the LC1 leaders. The LC1 leaders referred the matter to Uganda land alliance (ULA) for better management.

Uganda Land Alliance registered the



**Disputing parties witness demarcation after successful mediation exercise.**

case and later on scheduled mediation meetings to have the matter resolved peacefully although Acudu’s tormentor was unwilling to have the matter peacefully resolved through mediation. However, after consistent follow up and involvement of the stakeholders, Acudu’s tormentor agreed to vacate the land. It was at this opportune time that the boundaries of the land were clearly demarcated. The demarcation put to an end of the 11 year land wrangle. Thanks to support from Uganda Land Alliance ■

## Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum - Uganda (HRAPF)

HRAPF is a non-governmental organisation whose mission is to promote respect and observance of human rights of marginalised groups through legal and legislative advocacy, research and documentation, legal and human rights awareness, capacity building and partnerships. HRAPF's work is directed towards achieving equality, non-discrimination, and access to justice for the most marginalised groups in Uganda.

The organisation has a website which is [www.hrapf.org](http://www.hrapf.org). The site is designed to provide information about HRAPF, key developments in the field of human rights in Uganda, and access to the various publications that HRAPF has developed. It is updated periodically with the latest information.

We hope you will enjoy the experience of visiting our website.

Human Rights Awareness and promotion Forum (HRAPF) is an independent, non-partisan, Non-Governmental human rights advocacy organization. It was founded in 2008 by a group of freshly graduated lawyers and other professionals. HRAPF seeks to create awareness of human rights and provide legal support to the most marginalised groups as a means of stemming abuse of their human rights.

HRAPF is incorporated under the laws of Uganda.

### Vision

A society where the human rights of all persons including marginalised groups are valued and respected.

### Mission

To promote respect and observance of human rights of marginalised groups through legal and legislative advocacy, research and documentation, legal and human rights awareness, capacity building and partnerships.

### Slogan

Taking Human Rights To All.

### Objectives

1. To sensitize Ugandans on the international and national human rights regime in order to promote a culture of respect for human rights of marginalised groups.
2. To undertake research and document human rights abuses suffered by marginalised groups for appropriate remedial action.
3. To influence legal and policy developments in Uganda to ensure compliance with human rights principles
4. To offer legal assistance to marginalised groups in order to enhance access to justice.
5. To share information and best practices on the rights of marginalised groups in order to strengthen the human rights movement in Uganda.
6. To network and collaborate with key strategic partners, government, communities and individuals at a national, regional and international level.
7. To build a strong and vibrant human rights organization.

### Values

1. Non-discrimination
2. Equal opportunity
3. Justice
4. Practical approach
5. Team work

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**“The problems emerge in large part because most development theorists and policy - makers are unable to recognize the fact that the process of linking gender equity with land reform involves bringing together two distinctive kinds of geographical agendas to make a single and complex geographic project.”**

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**By Haripriya Rangan, Mary Gilmartin**

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