

Transforming Land Administration Practices Through the Application of Fit-For-Purpose Technologies: Country Case Studies in Africa

Danilo Antonio, John Gitau, Hellen Nyamweru-Ndungu and Solomon Njogu (Kenya)

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SUMMARY

Land tenure security for majority of people in Africa is insecure and this continues to pose a risk to poverty, hunger, forced evictions and social conflicts. The delivery of land tenure in many cases is not adequately addressed (Deininget et.al, 2010; African Union, 2009). Notably, in sub-Saharan Africa, tradition or informal land tenure systems dominate statutory forms of tenure and are generally not recorded in the official register. Responding to these challenges, UN-Habitat and FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food security advocates for tailored and incremental approaches in land tenure recordation (UN FAO, 2012). It follows the recognition of the continuum of land rights approach that promotes an inclusive solution for documenting all land rights and encourages recognition and legitimization of various tenure types. Moreover, the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) says that the spatial framework in developing country need to be adapted to the context on the basis of simple, affordable and incremental solutions as the point of entry in developing effective land tenure delivery system (UN-Habitat/GLTN 2016; Enemark, 2013). Indeed, the emergence of ‘spatial framework’, one of three primary frameworks of Fit-for-Purpose (FFP) land administration, provides a basis for reflecting on what is currently needed to serve the population in different contexts, rather than a focus on ‘accuracy’.

In this context, the increasing use of open source tools, technology and standard in land administration such as the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) are enabling flexible applications of FFP spatial framework. The innovative use of technology is supporting reform in technical standards, policies, institutional practices and ultimately improvement in land governance (Antonio, 2015). The focus of this paper highlights the degree to which implementation of STDM based on fit-for-purpose technologies can improve tenure security in informal settlements and customary land areas in Kenya, Uganda and Zambia. It will also attempt to understand how the spatial framework

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and related practices through the use and application of STDm can land policies and institutional arrangements. The paper will also make some reflections on how the research findings could influence any identified research gaps but more importantly, how the results could inform the implementation of fit-for-purpose land administration approaches.

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