



## Summary Report on CSW62 Side-Event

# Transformative approaches to achieve women's tenure security at scale: the relation between equal land rights and women's empowerment in rural Africa

## Joint EU-Germany-Finland Side Event at the Commission on the Status of Women 2018

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## Women's Land Rights and (Rural) Women's Empowerment at CSW62



Women's land rights and tenure security featured prominently at CSW62. Under the overall priority theme "Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls", women's land rights were at the core of the agreed conclusions and the [Report of the Secretary General](#). The CSW62 Conclusions emphasize both the need to create equal legal rights to land and resources as well as the measures to enforce them:

d. Enact legislation and undertake reforms to realize the equal rights of women and men, and where applicable girls and boys, to access natural resources and economic and productive resources, including access to, use of, ownership of and control over land, property and inheritance rights, including in diverse

types of land tenure, appropriate new technology and financial services, including credit, banking and finance, including but not limited to microfinance, as well as equal access to justice and legal assistance in this regard, and ensure women's legal capacity and equal rights with men to conclude contracts;

e. Enact legislation to promote women's, including rural women's, land registration and land title certification, regardless of their marital status, and address practices and stereotypes that undermine their land rights, including in the context of customary and traditional systems, which often govern land management, administration and transfer in rural areas; ([CSW62 Agreed Conclusions](#), 46 d, e)

One point of negotiation that should be highlighted was the successful push for strong language that goes beyond access and ownership but highlights the importance of *control* over resources.

Next to the official negotiations and background documents, a number of other side events dedicated to the issues of women's land rights took place, including an interactive expert panel on "the role of women's land rights and tenure security in achieving the SDGs" ([recording available here](#)), a roundtable of the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment more broadly, complemented by [several parallel events](#) (not part of the official CSW62 side events) of organisations such as ILC, Landesa, GLTN, WOCAN, that were more oriented towards academia and community activism. Overall, there was strong pushback from civil society against the

term “rural women” and the suggestion to rather refer to “women living in rural areas” to reflect that many challenges women face in rural areas are place-based .

## Agenda

<u>Opening remarks:</u>	<b>Jean-Louis Ville</b> , EU Commision, DG DEVCO, Director “People and Peace”
<u>Moderator:</u>	<b>Justine Uvuza</b> , Landesa
<u>Panelists:</u>	<b>Mabel-Ann Akoto-Kwudzo</b> , Manager of Okata Farms, Ghana (video message) <b>Prisca Mandimika</b> , Advisor to the Minister of Land Reform, Namibia <b>Stefanie Braun</b> , Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Programme Manager "Strengthening Women's Land Use and Land Ownership Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa" <b>Venge Nyirongo</b> , Policy Specialist, UN Women <b>Joan Marende</b> , OXFAM, Programme Manager “Women’s Land Rights for Inclusive Development and Growth in Africa”
<u>Closing remarks:</u>	<b>Johanna Klotz</b> , BMZ Germany, Senior Policy Officer Gender

## Discussion Highlights

“It has becoming increasingly clear that in order to achieve equality in land rights for women, in addition to economic empowerment, there needs to be a transformational change in the attitudes and behaviour that societies display towards women’s land rights. In other words, there needs to be also a change in social norms.” **Jean-Louis Ville, European Commission**

A central point of discussion was the need to work with all stakeholders, especially **traditional authorities**, to achieve actual change in **social norms** and practices. This usually means working with men to convince them of the value of equal land rights.

„Working with traditional authorities requires time and building up trust. But it has proven key to achieving real change for women to claim the rights that the legal framework provides them with.” **Stefanie Braun, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung**



At the same time, **targeted support to women’s organisations** and networks was recommended as a way to facilitate the distribution of information to women about their own rights to create the necessary prerequisite knowledge to demand their rights.

“For women to be truly empowered and enjoy real economic and social benefits from their land rights, they need more support. This entails better informing women of their rights, improving access to registration offices, but also accompanying measures such as credit programmes, agricultural trainings and market access facilitation. And these measures will only be successful if they not only understand the social norms and behaviour that govern the lives of rural women, but also work at promoting positive change.” **Johanna Klotz, BMZ**



chiefs are not ready to give lands to females  
 them to inherit. But as a group, when Okata  
 approached the chiefs, we were able to  
 e cast lands to the tune of 7000 acres. What  
 is helping the women to increase their  
 for them to be able to provide for their  
 s.” **Mabel Ann Akoto Kudjo, partner of the  
 Innovation Centre Ghana, via video**



**Mabel Ann Akoto Kudjo**  
**CEO of Okata Farms, Ghana**

Furthermore, the relation between women’s land rights and **economic empowerment** were discussed. Progressive legislation is the necessary precondition for economic empowerment, but it is just the first step. To ensure that secure land rights translates into economic benefits and graduation out of poverty significant additional support is needed. Land registration needs to be linked to agricultural extension and provision of rural services to achieve concrete economic benefits.

„Since 2013, women can apply for land rights in their own name and no longer depend on families or husbands for signature. Access to land is a vital precondition for the economic empowerment of women. However, it is important to note that land and property rights are not an end in themselves, but a means for better livelihood for women and their families. “ **Prisca Mandimika, Government of Namibia**



Other questions and comments from the audience included an appeal to give special focus not only to land rights as such but the specific **inheritance laws** of countries. Moreover, the questions was raised how the **land rights of girls** rather than women could be safeguarded, especially in case of child marriage. This was an issue that panelists felt should be further discussed as few countries seem to have addressed this specific matter. The issue of the land and land use rights of **pastoralists** also triggered debate and reference to the VGGTs, that cover pastoralism as well.



## What's next?

“Women are disadvantaged all over Africa regarding their rights to land and tenure. There is a need for all different actors, including NGOs and the African Union, to work together to implement international and continental policies at the national level, also in regard to land investments.” **Joan Marende, Oxfam**

- Keep CSW62 Agreed Conclusions on the agenda and push for national level accountability.
- Continue discussion on the land rights of women in rural areas and their economic empowerment between EU Members States, other donors in the framework of the GDPRD, and all other partners.
- Create synergies between manifold initiatives for women's land rights and harmonize efforts to improve information and data sharing

## **Speaker Biographies**

In alphabetical order:



**Mabel-Ann Akoto-Kwudzo**, CEO Okata Farms and Food Processing Ltd, Ghana  
Mabel-Ann Akoto-Kwudzo is the executive director of Okata Farms and Food Processing Ltd. In Ghana. It works in eleven districts of the Volta regions and with more than 3000 smallholder farmers that cultivate a total of 5600 acres of farmland. The company integrates the entire value chain from production to processing, packaging and finally distribution under the product brand name “Oka farms”. Okata Farms and Food is a partner of the German cooperation’s flagship programme the “Green Innovation Centres” and the Competitive African Rice Initiative. Mabel-Ann Akoto-Kwudzo holds a degree in child psychology and MSc in Agronomy.



**Stefanie Braun**, Project Manager, Konrad Adenauer Foundation Namibia  
Stefanie Braun is the project manager for „One World – No Hunger: Strengthening Women’s Land Ownership and Land Use Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa“ project. She is a certified lawyer by training and has been with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Namibia since 2015. During her studies in Germany she specialized on international laws with a special focus on law in Sub-Saharan Africa and Namibian Law. She spent several months abroad to work with different NGO’s and law firms in India and Namibia.



**Prisca Mandimika**, Advisor, Ministry of Land Reform, Namibia  
Prisca Mandimika works in an advisory capacity to the Minister of Land Reform in Namibia. She has professional working experience in various capacities in Government, Private Sector and Civil Society on land related issues. She has written on agrarian reform specifically on large scale commercial farming and rural development. She has made contributions to debates on land and agrarian issues. Her research interests include agrarian reform, rural livelihoods and natural resources management. Ms. Mandimika is trained in policy. She graduated with a Msc. Policy (University of Zimbabwe). Bsc. Honours (University of Zimbabwe). She is currently registered for post graduate studies at the University of Western Cape in South Africa.



**Joan Marende**, Project Manager, Oxfam Pan Africa  
Joan Marende, the Oxfam Pan African Programme Women Land Rights Project Manager is specialized in Gender and Climate Change in Education. She leads the Pan African Women Land Rights project engagement with continental and regional policy actors, research and partner organisations. According to her, Women Land Rights Programme supports countries to realize transformative programming approaches that will ensure women’s access to and control over their land resources across Africa - supporting and enabling rural women’s voices.



**Venge Nyirongo**, Policy Specialist, UN Women

Venge Nyirongo is an economist working on the nexus between sustainable development and women's economic empowerment. As focal point on Land, he represents UN Women on expert groups and conferences on land to strengthen the integration of gender considerations in land governance and administration through: promotion of women's land rights in the SDGs, via his involvement in the development and roll out of the Finnish-funded project on "Women's Rights to Land and Tenure Security in the Context of the SDGs"; supporting gender integration

into the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII); providing technical support to the development of SDG indicator methodologies for SDG Indicators 1.4.2, 5.a.1 and 5.a.2 and their implementation; contributing to the multilateral and substantive work of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), including strengthening gender perspectives of GLTN strategies, UN-Habitat-led studies and intergovernmental reports related to land and conflict, and implementing the work of the Women's Land Rights Working Group of GLII.



**Johanna Klotz**, Senior Policy Advisor, BMZ Germany

Johanna Klotz studied Social Sciences and International Relations in Bielefeld, Berlin, Potsdam and Warsaw. From the beginning, she focused on international cooperation. In her final thesis, she analyzed the opportunities women entrepreneurs (SMEs) in Senegal have to participate in political dialogues. Johanna completed the Postgraduate Training Programme at the German Development Institute (DIE) in Bonn. Afterwards she began working for BMZ. She is responsible for women's rights and gender equality



**Dr. Justine Uvuza**, Sr. Land Policy Advisor, Landesa

Dr. Uvuza is a Land Policy Advisor, Gender at Landesa. A social-justice lawyer, she holds a Doctorate of Philosophy in Gender and Women Studies from Newcastle University (UK), a Master's Degree in Law and Development from Warwick University (UK) and a Bachelor's Degree in Law from the National University of Rwanda. She is an experienced researcher and trainer from both academic and long term involvement with government and NGO work. Uvuza has 22 years of experience working with the government, donors, NGOs, CBOs and academic institutions in the fields of land rights, gender, social justice, policy development, advocacy, community

mobilization, and management in the Sub-Saharan African context.



**Jean-Louis Ville**, acting Director, European Commission DEVCO

Jean-Louis Ville is presently acting Director for People and Peace at the European Commission in the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation (DEVCO). Previously, he occupied the position of Head of Unit, in charge of Human Rights, Gender, and Democratic Governance. He is in charge of the policy and thematic issues related to these areas and implementing a variety of instruments directed to CSOs and International partners. Working with the European Commission since 1987, he has occupied several positions in various Directorate General (Agriculture, Budget and Development and Cooperation) as Head of Unit for Budget, Finance and Contracts, Regional Programs for the

Neighbourhood East and South. He also served for a period as Deputy Head of the private Office of the Rt Hon C. PATTEN during his mandate as European Commissioner for External Relations. He has studied political sciences in Strasbourg, European Affairs in Bruges and European law in Paris.