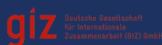




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Proceedings of NELGA Session at the World Bank Conference 2025

“Securing Land for Climate Action in Africa: Ideas, Concepts and Experiences”

Report Prepared by NELGA Southern Africa Secretariat





1. Executive Summary

Africa is one of the region's most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including increased frequency of droughts, floods, and land degradation. These environmental stresses directly impact livelihoods, food security, infrastructure, and equitable access to natural resources. In this context, land governance plays a pivotal role in shaping Africa's response to climate change. The African Union (AU), through the African Land Policy Centre (ALPC), has recognised the urgent need to strengthen land policy frameworks and implementation across the continent. ALPC has been mandated to spearhead the AU Agenda on Land, which aims to improve land policy development and implementation in a regionally coordinated and contextually relevant manner. Aligned with this mandate, the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032) provides a continental framework for climate action. It seeks to promote sustainable economic growth, enhance adaptation capacities, and build resilience among African communities, particularly those whose livelihoods are intrinsically linked to land and natural resource systems.

The Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) hosted a session at the 2025 World Bank Land Conference, under the theme "Securing Land for Climate Action in Africa: Ideas, Concepts and Experiences." This session was conceptualised as a platform to advance discussions on land tenure security and climate resilience. The session aligned with the AU climate strategy by bringing together African researchers, policymakers, youth leaders, and development practitioners to explore how land tenure systems, land use planning, and inclusive governance frameworks can serve as enablers of effective climate action.

Through rich discussions and case studies, the session showcased how NELGA efforts contribute to climate-resilient development, while also elevating youth and gender-informed approaches to land governance. It further demonstrated the impact of NELGA's collaborative research and training efforts in advancing Africa's role in global land and climate dialogues. By positioning land as a foundational pillar of effective climate action, the session reinforced the importance of locally driven, inclusive solutions for sustainable development across the continent.



2. Goal of the NELGA Session

- Provide a continental framework for collective climate action.
- Enhance cooperation among African countries in addressing climate change challenges.
- Improve livelihoods and overall well-being through climate-responsive strategies.
- Promote adaptation capacity to climate variability and shocks.
- Achieve low-emission, sustainable economic growth across the continent

2.1. The Key Message for the Session

The key message drawn from this session is that land and land tenure issues in Africa are at the centre of climate change mitigation and adaptation. The specific messages hinged on the following:

- Land tenure is an enabler or disabler of climate action (including issues of adaptation, mitigation and land restoration).
- A land tenure and climate change nexus are crucial in designing and implementing climate action that seeks to mitigate GHG emissions sustainably.
- More land tenure responsive strategies are necessary for refocusing the awareness of the climate perils caused by lack of access to land and tenure insecurity. Therefore, to ensure resilience and more equitable access to land and land resources.
- Land tenure security is paramount to climate change mitigation. Negating the role of land tenure insecurity in climatic, environmental and resource degradation should be a concern in the global climate action.
- There are experiences of land tenure and climate change in African communities that support the above statements, and they will be presented and discussed.



SPEAKERS INCLUDE:



PROF. UCHENDU CHIGBU
Coordinator: NELGA Southern Africa
Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)



DR. AGNES MWASUMBI
Coordinator: NELGA Eastern Africa
Arush University



PROF. SYLVANA RUDITH KING
Professor: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)
NELGA Anglophone West Africa



ANTOINE INNOCENT HOUEDJI
Executive Director: Youth Initiative for Land in Africa (YILAA)



DR. JENNILEE KOHIMA
Co-Chair: Urban-Rural Land Linkages
International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)



MR. MOHAMMED ADIL SAIT
Researcher: London School of Economics and Political Science, Research and Training, Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)

REMARKS BY:



NANNY WIECHERT
Head of Project: Strengthening Advisory Capacities for Land Governance in Africa (SLGA), GIZ African Union



DR. DIANE DUMASHIE
President: International Federation of Surveyors (FIG)

Image of the official flyer for session outreach, identifying all speakers.

3. Session Format

The 90-minute session was organised as a roundtable discussion with researchers and panelists reflecting diverse academic and stakeholder backgrounds from eight (8) institutions, including, Youth Initiative for Land in Africa (YILAA), Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA), International Federation Surveyors (FIG), Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), London School of Economics and Political Science, the GIZ, University of East London, and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). Together, these organisations represent the Academia, Civil society, Government institutions, Professional organisations, and Private sector (including youth and gender focused organisations). The organisations span across Africa, North America and Europe. During the closing, concrete opportunities for follow-up and next steps were outlined to ensure continued dialogue and collaboration on the intersection of land governance and climate action.



4. Proceedings of Session Agenda (6 May 2025)

Pre-roundtable Speeches

4.1. Introduction

The Chair, **Prof Uchendu Eugene Chigbu** (Coordinator of NELGA-Southern Africa Node), kick-started the special session with an introductory orientation on the relevance of climate change research in Africa and why NELGA is poised to lead in ensuring that Africa is made a place of research rather than just a subject of research in the climate change arena. He highlighted the work already done by NELGA in contribution to the research capacity in Africa. This was followed by Ms Nanny (GIZ/SLGA), who highlighted the support of GIZ for NELGA over the past 10 years and the tangible results.

4.2. Opening Remarks

Ms Nanny Wiechert (Head of GIZ-Strengthening Advisory Capacities for Land Governance in Africa - SLGA project) opened the special session with a welcome address. She called upon all stakeholders, within and beyond Africa, to embrace the efforts of NELGA in enhancing capacity development in land governance in Africa. She spoke briefly about the commitments that GIZ and BMZ have taken in their support for NELGA through the SLGA project in Africa. She encouraged the NELGA representatives to continue the work towards building capacities in the African land sector.

4.3. NELGA Support to The Integration of Land Governance into NDC

3.0 Tanzania

Dr Agnes Mwasumbi (Coordinator NELGA East Africa) gave a brief presentation on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC 3) using Tanzania as a Case. She affirmed that 1% of GDP was lost annually in Tanzania due to climate change. She also highlighted some of the interventions by the government. She recommended the integration of land governance and land tenure into NDC 3.0 to promote sustainable land management, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen climate resilience and support equitable and sustainable development.



4.4. Climate Change Adaptation Practices of Women in Urban Flood Lands: The Case of Kumasi, Ghana

Prof. Syvana Rudith King (Coordinator NELGA-Anglophone West Africa) discussed gendered vulnerabilities to climate change, presenting a case from Kumasi, Ghana. Her focus was on how women living on the fringes of urban floodplains are adapting to climate pressures and developing localised resilience strategies. She called for policies that integrate gender considerations in climate response planning.

4.5. Youth Climate Actions in NELGA Regions

Mr. Innocent Houedji (CEO of YILAA) presented youth-led initiatives in climate action across African regions. He demonstrated how youth are mobilising around issues of land and environmental justice, highlighting their roles in advocacy, awareness, and innovation. His presentation emphasised youth as current actors, not just future leaders in the climate movement.

4.6. Informality and Climate Change in The Pursuit of Tenure Security in Okahandja, Namibia

Dr Jennilee Kohima (Co-Chair FIG Commission 8.1) shared lessons from a project in Okahandja, Namibia, focusing on tenure security in informal settlements and their exposure to climate-induced risks. She argued that addressing informality in land administration is a prerequisite for building climate resilience among urban poor communities. She further highlighted the importance of being open-minded when working with communities.

4.7. NELGA's Influence on The Global Land Agenda

Mr. Adil Sait (LSE/University of East London discussed/GLTN) NELGA's contribution to the global land agenda. He emphasised the strategic alignment of NELGA's research and training programs with continental and international development goals. He reinforced the importance of land rights and inclusive governance as foundations for sustainable climate adaptation.

4.8. Roundtable Discussion

The session included an interactive roundtable where participants posed questions to the panellists and shared insights from their own experiences. Topics raised included youth involvement in climate policy, integrating traditional land tenure systems into national planning, and leveraging academic networks for evidence-based policymaking. The discussion further highlighted the importance of land policies in Africa and their position in terms of climate change and adaptation

strategies. Participants also applaud the network for capacity development and research on land governance and land administration in various sectors and domains and its relationship with educational institutions in Africa and partnership with international organisations.

5. Post-roundtable Commentaries and Closing Remarks

After the presentations in the session, the audience had ample time to engage and discuss matters arising from the presentations – specifically on the climate change scenarios in Africa and the capacity development efforts from NELGA in the continent. The question and answer period lasted more than 40 minutes. In addition, representatives from the key stakeholders of NELGA at the continental and regional levels used the opportunity to give commentaries on the outcome of the session.

5.1. Special remarks made at the session

Dr Joan Kagwanja (Coordinator, African Land Policy Centre or ALPC) provided commentaries on the importance of NELGA's work in the development of land sector capacities in Africa. She applauded the well-attended and robustly participatory session. She also used the opportunity to invite all stakeholder to the Sixth Conference on Land Policy in Africa (CLPA) which will take place from November 10 to 14, 2025, at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She noted that the conference is organized by a tripartite consortium consisting of the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). She informed the audience that the 2025 edition of the conference aims to address critical issues related to land governance, justice, and reparations for Africans and descendants of people of the African diaspora.



Dr Joan Kagwanja, Coordinator, ALPC.

Dr Janet Edeme (Head, Rural Economy Division in the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the AUC) emphasised the importance of NELGA to the African Union. She spoke highly of the achievement of the network of the past decade and called on the stakeholders present at the session to support the work of NELGA through collaborations with the network. She congratulated the network on their success in hosting a session at the World Bank Conference.



Dr Janet Edeme, Head, Rural Economy, AUC.

Dr Gaynor Paradza (Senior Researcher, Public Affairs Research Institute or PARI, South Africa) lauded the work of NELGA and spoke about the importance of NELGA as coordinated research in the field of land governance in Africa. She spoke about the work of NELGA in the Southern African region, noting the tremendous impact NELGA has had in the region in the areas of policy engagement, career development, mentorship, research and land sector awareness. She called on the stakeholders to support the work of NELGA. She noted the importance of sustainability of the network's successes. She applauded the success of the NELGA session at the World Bank.



Dr Gaynor Paradza, Snr. Researcher, PARI



5.2. Closing Remarks

Dr Diane Dumashie (President of FIG) provided a closing remark. In her closing remark to the special session, she spoke about the “Power of Network Partnerships: connection, collaboration, capacity-building and co ordinating.” In her reflections, she noted that the complex global challenges demand our Africa land community to continue to be more courageous and committed to creating impactful, knowledge driven solutions that empower every human to flourish. She noted that the several case studies presented by the speakers reflect that “power is about connectivity collaboration and capacity.” Lastly, she introduced FIG as a global network spanning up to 120 countries that cover the land, built and natural environment arena. She stated FIG’s commitment to work with NELGA, GIZ, AU and other partners in the land sector in Africa. She praised the collaborative model exemplified by NELGA and emphasised the critical role of networks in building climate-resilient land governance systems in Africa.

5.3. Final words from the Rapporteur

Prof Oluibukun Ajayi (Associate Professor in Geoinformation Technology from the Namibia University of Science and Technology) served as the rapporteur for the special session. He used a very brief opportunity to state his satisfaction with the proceedings of the session, especially on the points of discussion.

6. Way Forward

This Special Session, conducted during the World Bank Conference in Washington, DC, proved that NELGA has international recognition and has developed the capacity to engage internationally with other key actors of the global land sector. Together, all the stakeholders in the session recognised the Imperative for land professionals to act in a climate-responsive way in Africa and in all geographies of the world. From the standpoint of capacity building, the session demonstrated that NELGA is a network that is making an impact in the Land sector in Africa. The session affirmed the GIZ’s continued commitment to support land governance in Africa and their continued recognition of the importance and impact of an African knowledge base on several levels, particularly in scaling up secure access to land. This demonstrates that in the face of climate risks, stakeholders are growing stronger together in building knowledge for action.



The session is an indication that NELGA has evolved into a global actor in land affairs and has the capacity to work with other actors within and outside Africa. The session is an indication of what the President of FIG, DR Diane Dumashie, described in the following statement – the “Power of Partnership is Connectivity, Collaboration, Capacity and Coordination.” In this context, she described “Power of Networks” to mean the capacity to “imagine and enable conversations internally and externally, improve the adaptation and resilience, inspire and innovate implementation measures and co-create knowledge.” With those words, the NELGA representatives in Washington, DC made a collective commitment to continue to work together in promoting the objectives of NELGA and utilise the capacity already gained through the support of SLGA in pushing forward future actions for responsible land governance in Africa.

Annexure: Scenes from the Conference



NELGA, GIZ-SLGA, AUC, ALPC, GLTN, NUST & FIG Delegations at the World Bank Conference 2025, Washington, DC.



Prof Chigbu of NELGA Southern Africa chairing the session.



Mr Houedji, CEO YILAA, speaking on youth experience on climate change in Africa.



A view of participants at the NELGA session at the World Bank Conference 2025, Washington, DC.



Dr Jennilee Kohima, Co-Chair of FIG Commission 8.1, presenting climate change in efforts in Namibia.



Ms Nanny Wiechert, Head of Project GIZ-SLGA, delivering the opening remarks at the World Bank Conference 2025, Washington, DC.



Dr Agnes Mwasumbi, Coordinator NELGA East Africa presenting the climate change efforts of her region.



Prof Rudith King, Coordinator NELGA West Africa (Anglophone) presenting the climate change efforts of her region.



Mr Adil Sait, Representative of the GLTN, presenting the climate change efforts made by the Research and Training Cluster of the GLTN in Africa.



Dr Diane Dumashie, President of FIG, delivering the closing remarks.



GIZ-SLGA & FIG Delegations at the World Bank Conference 2025, Washington, DC.



World Bank, YILAA, FIG and NELGA Southern African Delegations at the World Bank Conference 2025, Washington, DC.



A cross-section of the audience at the NELGA session at the World Bank Conference 2025, Washington, DC.