



# SECURING LAND TENURE FOR IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY IN BUTALEJA DISTRICT

## Project Brief

### Introduction

Land is central in promoting rural livelihoods and food security in Uganda. Land tenure insecurity is however a major impediment to poverty eradication and eradication of hunger. Over 78 percent of Ugandans reside in rural areas, and depend on agriculture for survival.

The agricultural sector is the backbone of Uganda's economy, providing about 70 per cent of the employment. Food security and poverty reduction cannot be achieved unless issues of access to land, security of tenure and the capacity to use land are addressed. Eradication of hunger and poverty and sustainable use of the environment depend in large measure on how people, communities and others gain access to land and other natural resources. Inadequate and insecure tenure rights increase vulnerability, hunger and poverty and can lead to conflict and environmental degradation when competing users fight for control of resources.

### Issues of Concern

Approximately 80 percent of land in Uganda is held customarily and it is largely undocumented. Only 18 percent is registered with women's ownership at 5% (MLHUD, 2015). The customary system of land administration is vaguely structured with no clearly legally defined functional structures and is governed by customs which differ from area to area.

### FACTS

*Land tenure insecurity is a major impediment to eradication of poverty and hunger.*

*The agriculture sector provides employment to about 70% of Ugandans.*

*Food security and poverty reduction cannot be achieved unless land tenure security and land use planning are addressed.*

*Implementation of land governance systems in Uganda is not robust to protect security of tenure for all (GLTN, 2010).*

Women as the principal users of land are continually denied the right to own/inherit land due to rigid customary practices which discriminatively provide for women's access and user rights only. This has not only escalated their tenure insecurity and failure to productively contribute to family and community development but has also locked women in the vicious cycle of poverty as they are unable to effectively engage in their main source of livelihood; agriculture!

Tenure insecurity is perpetuated by weak existing land administration institutions that are inadequately facilitated to efficiently fulfill their obligations and dispense land justice. It has become common knowledge that a land process such as surveying and valuation of land and acquisition of a title can take an overly long period of time to be achieved. This is further widening the gap between Uganda's land law and the lived realities.

Several households in the Kyoga plains where land is largely held customarily derive their main livelihoods from subsistence farming which is practiced on both the uplands and wetlands. The unguided human economic activities especially in the low lands have fast led to the degradation of the natural resource; posing a high threat of poor and unreliable climate patterns, loss of fertile soils and reduction of agricultural yields among others. The unwise and unsustainable use of wetlands



is destroying the eco-system.

## ISSUES OF CONCERN

*80% of land in Uganda is customarily held and is unregistered.*

*Women who are the principal users of land are still denied land inheritance and ownership rights by customs.*

*Tenure insecurity is perpetuated by weak land administration systems.*

*Unguided human economic activities are fast degrading natural resources.*



### *Project Overview*

The Securing Land Tenure for Improved Food Security project is funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Uganda and implemented by Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) in partnership with the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN) as facilitated by United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT).

The overall project objective is to improve land tenure security for 800 or more rural smallholder farmers particularly women, youth and vulnerable groups in order to increase food security in select areas in Uganda.

The project has been implemented in Buteleja district in three sub-counties namely; Kachonga, Naweyo and Mazimasa for over a year since the end of 2018.

### *Achieving the Project goal*

This is being achieved through three main outcomes;

#### Outcome 1:

Increased uptake of land tools, approaches and frameworks that are pro-poor, fit-for-purpose and gender responsive to secure land tenure rights and wise use of wetlands.

#### Outcome 2:

Strengthened capacity of change agents and rural poor women, youth and vulnerable groups to implement pro-poor, fit-for-purpose and gender responsive land tools and approaches for securing land rights.

#### Outcome 3:

Improved knowledge and awareness among stakeholders on issues and measures for improving land tenure security for poor women and men.





### Key project outputs to-date.

#### *Securing tenure using Certificates of Customary Ownership (CCOs):*

- Over 800 applications for CCOs were received from the community members interested in registering their land rights.
- Thus far 733 applications were submitted by the Area Land Committees (ALC) of the project areas to the Butaleja District Land Board and out of these; 692 were approved for issuance of CCOs and 41 were deferred.
- Approximately 284 (19 females and 165 males) leaders and community members benefited from trainings on mediation. The leaders included; cultural leaders, opinion leaders, Area Land Committee members, religious leaders.

s, elders, local council I and III chairpersons, youth and female community leaders.

#### *Securing tenure using wetland resource use permits:*

- Six (6) Wetland Management Committees were established each comprising 24 members in the 6 wetlands located in Kaiti, Nasinyi, Nahamya, Namawa, Doho-Muhula and Mawanga in the sub-counties of Naweyo and Kachonga respectively.
- 914 plots were mapped using STDM three wetlands including Nasinyi (367), Nahamya (193) and Kaiti (354) wetlands. The process is benefiting 908 people including; 733 males and 175 females.
- A project brief has been developed for Nasinyi Wetland Users Association-

n and submitted to the National Environment Management Authority along with an application and the Community Wetland Management Plans for the issuance of Wetland Use Permit.

### Key project outcomes/impact to-date.

*Capacity building of the relevant institutions to effectively execute their duties:*

- ALCs are able to guide communities on registration of customary land using the appropriate land laws and regulations.
- ALC members and recorders (sub-county chiefs) can correctly record parcel information in the relevant record books.
- Refresher training exercises for the district land officials particularly on registration of land rights using CCOs have enabled officials to effectively play their roles.

*Participatory and inclusive agreements on promoting sustainable and wise use of wetlands:*

A total of 144 members of the established wetland management committees engaged in stakeholder analysis exercises with an objective of taking an inventory of activities happening in the existing wetlands and their status.

### Issues agreed upon included;

1. Namawa Wetland marsh be turned into a permanent conservation area for easy water storage down-stream.
2. 50 meter buffer zone was agreed upon from river Namatala and 20 meters from the wetlands bordering major streams.
3. Tree planting areas, watering points, fishing sites, pathways and access points agreed upon.
4. Six Community Wetland Management Plans (CWMP) were compiled stressing the need for sustainable wetland use and management.

*Improved uptake of gender just approaches to land administration and record keeping following an experience with GLTN's Gender Evaluation Criteria:*

Leaders at sub-county and district level are at the forefront of promoting equal participation of both men and women in existing natural resources (land and wetland) processes. They have taken to keeping gender disaggregated records to effectively track the proportion of men and women benefiting from their services and how they can further improve on service delivery.



*The Gender Evaluation Criteria taskforce in a findings validation exercise*

*Informal community structures have been strengthened with capacitation to handle land conflicts:*

This was achieved with the mediation training sessions using the Land Mediation Tool tailored to the community contexts. Community leaders especially elders, opinion leaders, ALC members and religious leaders are ably resolving land disputes especially those over boundaries hence promoting harmonious existence and boosting confidence of rural farmers to further invest in their land for agriculture without fear.

*Youth empowerment and employment;*

Young men and women from the project area acquired practical knowledge and skills for recording land rights using all-round and affordable open source tools

such as Social Tenure and the Gender Evaluation Criteria. They actively participated as the project Land Rights Recordation Teams.

*Assured tenure security:*

4,788 families comprising of 2,817 males and 1,971 females will be receiving the 692 CCOs. 364 beneficiaries (51 female and 313 male wetland users) from Nasinyi Wetland Users Association shall be receiving their Wetland User Permit.

## Challenges faced during implementation of the project

- Overwhelming numbers of interested applicants whose land was not registered due to the limited number of applicants that the pilot project could accommodate.
- High monetary expectations by some of the local leaders approached to support project implementation.
- Low knowledge levels among the leaders and the community members about securing of land tenure using wetland resource use permits and CCOs.
- Customary beliefs and practices are still a major hindrance to women's land rights. Women still hold back from actively participating in land-related processes due to fear of backlash from the community.

### Challenges

*Limited resources to meet the overwhelming demand for registration.*

*High monetary expectations from some leaders.*

*Low knowledge levels on land processes to secure tenure among leaders and community.*

*Discriminative customary beliefs and practices.*



*Members of Butaleja District Land Board in a sitting to review CCO files cleared by members of the Area Land Committees of the 3 target project sub-county areas.*





*Some of the project beneficiaries who received their Certificates of Customary Ownership from Preseident Yoweri Museveni at an issuance ceremony in Tororo district - July, 2019*

UCOBAC is a non-partisan, non-government organization whose mission is to improve the welfare of women and children using community based initiatives.

GLTN is an alliance of global regional and national partners contributing to poverty alleviation through land reform, improved land management and security of tenure particularly through the development and dissemination of pro-poor and gender-sensitive land tools. GLTN is a unit of UN-HABITAT.

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Email: [info@ucobac.org](mailto:info@ucobac.org)

Facebook: [ucobac1990](https://www.facebook.com/ucobac1990)

Twitter: [@ucobac\\_](https://twitter.com/ucobac_)

[www.ucobac.org](http://www.ucobac.org)

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