

# Promoting Women's Land Rights in SubSaharan Africa: Potential Mitigation Measures to Gender Inequality in Land Access and Land Tenure Security

## A Literature Review

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**Key words:** Access to land; Land management; Gender (in)equality; Land Tenure Security; Land Administration; Sub-Saharan Africa

### SUMMARY

Land is a pillar in household livelihood and in supporting poverty reduction since it is a means of production and an essential source of political power and participation in decision-making. Despite the efforts to promote gender equality in land access and land tenure security, gender inequalities have severely limited women's access and control of land and other productive resources, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Several obstacles prevent women from effectively enjoying equal land rights and equal access to land. These lead to profound gender inequalities in land rights, compromising the eradication of poverty and hunger and increasing social and economic imbalances. The prominence of women's land rights boosted the development of international, regional, and national standards, instruments, agreements, and measures on addressing gender inequalities in land governance.

This paper presents a literature review of different approaches implemented to ensure equitable access to land and ensure women's security of tenure. A qualitative systematic literature review approach was adopted to understand the state-of-the-art on gender inequalities in land access and land tenure and potential mitigation measures, with a special focus on SSA. Peer-reviewed scientific papers have been retrieved through several online databases using different combinations of search terms and standardized techniques. The search has been enlarged to contemplate published literature from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and inter-governmental organizations (IGOs).

Research showed that while it is essential to pursue gender equality in the land legal and regulatory framework, it is necessary to ensure that these instruments are implemented at all levels of land administration, including at the community level. Furthermore, deep-seated cultural ideas need to be understood in their context, and non-discrimination provisions must be included in statutory,

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land, family, and customary laws. The international community and civil society are vital to support and leverage national legal reforms.

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