

# Tenure-Restoration Nexus for Local Action in Africa: Identifying Customary Enablers and Disablers of Tenure in Land Restoration

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## SUMMARY

Land degradation has tremendous negative impacts on the health and well-being of more than 3.2 billion people around the world, directly or indirectly. This is why land restoration, as a means of achieving land degradation neutrality, lies at the core of all countries' commitments to achieving better living conditions for their people. To avoid, reduce and reverse the trends in land degradation in Africa, successful restoration depends on a range of enabling factors, including secure land and natural resource tenure. However, much of the literature on land tenure and restoration focuses on quantifying losses and assessing the costs of inaction on land degradation. The only research on land degradation neutrality's tenure and restoration aspects is a yet-to-be-released Working Paper of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, entitled Strengthening Tenure and Resource Rights for Land Restoration. In this current paper, the authors shift towards creating a specific understanding of the customary dimension of the tenure-restoration nexus in Africa. Methodologically, the paper adopts a narrative literature review approach. The authors focus on pooling evidence from identified studies rather than narratives. The paper answers the following questions: What do we know about tenure's enabling and disabling influence on land restoration? What are the customary enablers, and disablers of tenure in land restoration in Africa? The paper explores the role of land tenure security at the local level in Africa to answer these questions. Notably, its influence on land restoration by describing and identifying the links between customary land tenure and land restoration, and how secure tenure is needed to avoid, reduce or reverse land degradation. By way of output, the study identified enabling and disabling tenure-restoration nexus scenarios in Africa in general, and specifically from Cameroon, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Kenya, Guinea, Tanzania, Ethiopia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Somalia, Malawi and Ghana. It also presents a generic approach to creating local actions supporting land restoration based on the restorative experiences from across Africa.

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