

Enhancing Women's access to Land through Land Restoration Policies and Programs

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Key words: Access to land; Land distribution; Land management

SUMMARY

Land degradation from man-made and natural courses is on the rise globally, and is further aggravated and accelerated by climate change and extreme weather events. While there are implications about the growing crises of land degradation on property investment and the property development sector, there are also land ownership and tenure issues associated with the phenomenon. Issues such as capital value diminution from incessant flooding and inundation of residential and commercial neighborhoods or complete erosion of investment capital through climate induced land disasters, either way, land tenure is impacted and people, particularly women's access to land and tenure security can be compromised through the loss of land and land rights as a result of land degradation. Land restoration is currently being deployed across the globe to address and reverse land degradation. The Land Degradation Neutrality Fund (LDN) offers finance for the rehabilitation of degraded land and sustainable business models used on land affected or at risk of degradation. This funding presents an indirect opportunity for women's increased access to land because of the potential for economic empowerment that they can leverage upon by actively participating in financed land restoration projects. It also presents a direct opportunity for women to be at the forefront of environmental restoration projects if their capacity is enhanced to enable them do so. Another possible outcome of land restoration is the fact that restored land can be redistributed so that more people gain access to the same land after its restoration. Such redistribution benefits of land restoration can be factored into land degradation neutrality funding and can further narrow the current gaps that exist in terms of ownership. Generally, in many parts of the world and Africa in particular, there is on-going and strong advocacy for gender equality within the context of land access and land ownership. Through a policy driven redistribution options tied to land degradation financing, more women can gain access to land. The mechanism by which land redistribution can be explored further is the thrust of this paper.

Enhancing Women's access to Land through Land Restoration Policies and Programs (13376)
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FIG Working Week 2025

Collaboration, Innovation and Resilience: Championing a Digital Generation
Brisbane, Australia, 6–10 April 2025