



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



MILLENNIUM
CHALLENGE CORPORATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO GOOD LAND GOVERNANCE

Secure access to and control of land and land-based resources are critical to supporting U.S. Government development priorities, including economic growth that reaches the poor, women’s economic empowerment, food and energy security, adaptation and mitigation of climate change, and natural resource management.

Lack of secure and negotiable property rights is one of the most limiting factors in achieving economic growth and democratic governance throughout the world. Within this broad perspective, there is a particular need presently to focus attention on better governance of rights for small- and large-scale agribusiness interests and extractive industry investments. Improving the governance of land rights and access in order to improve development prospects requires sustained attention from the U.S. Government and its development partners. The United States Agency for International Development and the Millennium Challenge Corporation provide significant support to governments around the world toward this end.

USAID supports development of good land governance programs in many developing countries. As of 2010, there were approximately 30 USAID-funded land tenure/property rights programs ongoing worldwide, with a total investment of nearly \$184 million. Through the “Feed the Future” initiative, the U.S. Government has pledged \$3.5 billion to promote food security over the next three years, including programs specifically addressing land tenure issues.

MCC has invested approximately \$249 million in property rights and land policy reforms across 11 of its 20 Compact grants. MCC’s Property Rights and Land Policy (PRLP) investments are designed to result in increased transactions, increased investments in land and property, and higher land productivity and value.

Both MCC and USAID programs support of legal and regulatory reforms, clarification and formalization of land and property rights, conflict resolution, capacity building of national and local institutions, and land-related outreach and education. These initiatives will reduce transaction costs, increase tenure security, decrease land degradation, and improve access to and use of land.

The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for nearly 50 years. For more information about USAID’s programs, please visit: usa.gov.

Many of the U.S. Government’s land tenure programs are operating in Africa, and each program implements best practices to support the property rights of all land holders, including those who hold rights through customary and statutory legal systems. Examples follow [for more information: <http://www.mcc.gov/documents/press/factsheet-2010002014803-land.pdf> and for USAID’s land tenure programs see: <http://ltp.rmpportal.net/>].

In Mozambique, MCC is supporting improvement in land administration services through a three-part program. First, MCC supports the review and monitoring of existing land policy with an eye to more effective implementation of a pioneering land law that USAID helped institute in the wake of Mozambique’s civil war. Second, MCC supports capacity building for the public services that provide for more effective land-related governance, including registration of land rights and facilitation of transfers, MCC has funded training and equipment for provincial, district and municipal cadastral services, including development of methodologies and technologies for land use inventory and planning procedures.

Finally, MCC is promoting site-specific on-the-job training of cadastral services to formalize land use rights for individuals and communities in targeted urban and rural areas that have high economic potential or are experiencing conflicts among competing land uses/users.

MCC also supports the Community Land Initiative in Mozambique, which provides grants to rural communities to streamline access to land and to link investors with communities.

In Ghana, MCC is improving land tenure security for small farmers by implementing a systematic title registration process for the first time in rural areas. Other aspects of the Land Tenure Facilitation Project are designed to clear the backlog of hundreds of land dispute cases that have been pending for years in the Ghanaian court system, train judges in alternative dispute resolution, construct and equip three model land registry offices to serve rural areas in the north, central and southern zones of the country, and prepare a Strategic Plan for modernization of the national geodetic infrastructure.

In Mongolia's peri-urban areas, MCC is securing tenure rights of herder groups through introducing long-term leasing of overgrazed pasture lands, including strengthening land legislation, building public understanding of lease rights, and introducing more feed-intensive herding practices. In exchange for a commitment to limit animal numbers to the land's carrying capacity and for maintenance of proper herd composition and storing fodder for emergency conditions, herder groups will receive land leases, shelter materials, water wells, and training on management of land, water resources and livestock. This will help herders in Mongolia increase the economic output and long-term health of each animal, which will improve household food security during harsh winters and supply cities with dairy and other animal products.

In Sudan, USAID has worked with the Government of Southern Sudan and civil society representatives from all ten states over the last two years to develop a new land policy. The new land policy and land law, developed in response to multiple stakeholder consultations involving more than 1000 participants from all ten states, specifically recognizes land rights held under customary tenure rules and articulates the need to protect women's property rights. This program also supports the work of the Southern Sudan Land Commission, which develops Sudanese expertise to manage land tenure challenges, and the Nile Institute, a Sudanese research institution undertaking research on land-related challenges to improve public policy.

In Liberia, USAID has several programs supporting government and civil society work to address post-conflict land tenure challenges. The newly established Property Rights and Artisanal Development (PRADD) project utilizes a land rights formalization process to help artisanal diamond miners achieve clear, secure and publicly acknowledged rights to land and resources. The project will work initially in two sites (Cape Mount, Gbarpolu or Nimba counties) with an estimated 200 artisanal miners in each. The land rights clarification process is complemented by training and technical support in alternative livelihoods strategies for economic development. In addition to PRADD, USAID will implement MCC's Threshold program in Liberia to strengthen land administration, develop land policy and law, and conduct field-based evaluations of customary tenure institutions and practices to best determine how they might be legalized.

In Kenya, the USAID-funded Securing Rights to Land and Natural Resources for Biodiversity and Livelihoods in the North Coast (SECURE) is a pilot project supporting the Ministry of Lands and the Kenya Wildlife Service to develop a new, transparent and participatory land rights formalization process for land held under customary tenure. The project aims to secure land tenure for approximately 7,500 people in 9 pilot villages; if successful, this model can be integrated into Kenya's new land laws and be replicated in other parts of the country, potentially affecting millions. In addition to securing local livelihoods, the project is working to improve biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in and around three biologically significant national reserves through co-management agreements between government resource agencies and the communities who will have a statutory land claim in which to invest.

In 2010 USAID launched PROMARA, a second land tenure program in Kenya, in the upper Mara River catchment area of about 1000 km². This program will help communities and the Government of Kenya develop co-management mechanisms for land and forests. By securing property rights and clarifying roles and responsibilities for communities, PROMARA is expected to mitigate land conflicts while improving forest management and equitable economic benefits to Mau residents. While the project is currently starting up, it is estimated that 50,000 households could be affected by the project if the full program is implemented by the government throughout the watershed.

In Ethiopia, USAID supports the Ethiopia Land Administration program. This five-year activity provides assistance to reform national and regional land laws to support smallholder property rights, strengthen capacity of regional governments to register land rights, train lawyers and judges on land law and dispute resolution, and registered property rights. So far, more than 700,000 parcels of land benefiting more than 147,000 households have been registered. On-going research in the communities where land certification has taken place shows increased land tenure security; increased investment by smallholders in soil and water conservation and in production of crops; increased household income, and specifically improved income for women farmers; improved land markets and greater frequency in land leases among smallholders; and greatly reduced land conflicts among smallholders.

In Jamaica, USAID is supporting the PRIDE program which aims to strengthen land policy and administration through legal review, increased automation of land registration processes, and support to public outreach and education on land administration and property rights. These activities will help the National Land Agency meet the increased demands for land services while at the same time broadening eligibility criteria that will enable greater numbers of Jamaicans to register their property and leverage economic benefits of this middle income country.

USAID and MCC-supported programs to promote strengthened property rights, development of land markets, and access to credit for small and large land holders will have significant impact on the sustainability of development investments. The connection between food security and property rights is particularly strong, and will continue to be a focus of USAID and MCC.

Millennium Challenge Corporation, a U.S. Government agency designed to work with developing countries, is based on the principle that aid is most effective when it reinforces sound political, economic, and social policies that promote poverty reduction through economic growth. For more information, please visit www.mcc.gov.