



The members of the 11th Parliament of Uganda proposed to establish the Uganda Parliamentarians Land Management Forum (UPLMF) (hereinafter “the Forum”): a voluntary and bi-partisan platform for Members of Parliament (MPs) to pursue advocacy and legislative initiatives on land management in the country. It is a space for MPs to brainstorm, strategize, share experiences and lessons as well as undertake activities to promote and ensure good land governance in Uganda. This is in response to the social, economic, and political challenges associated with land in Uganda.

Currently, the Forum has a membership of MPs drawn from various political parties and regions represented in the 11th Parliament representing over 45million Ugandans. It has a five-member Executive Committee and a Secretariat headed by a Coordinator with different support staff. The Forum observes the developments in land management and has developed strategic actions and activities in light with the trending and emerging issues concerning land nationally. The proposed Forum aspires to influence legal and policy reforms in Uganda, East Africa, Africa and internationally on the issues of land management to foster the realisation of Uganda’s development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite the fact that the Forum is established within the ambit of Parliament, it will operate as a Non State entity, fundraise and operate independently to ensure that the public interface with Parliament on issues of land management in Uganda and the outcomes are well sustained. As such, a number of partnerships will be sought to ensure sustainable financing of the strategic options of UPLMF. This is due to the fact that Members’ financial contributions are inadequate. With this arrangement, we expect to reduce the gap of lack of parliamentary extensive discussion on land management at Parliament and in the constituencies.

Parliament, being the primary law-making entity with oversight and resource allocation mandate in Uganda makes it important to lead the resolutions aimed at ensuring harmonized land management in Ugandans. This concept therefore serves to explain the planned rationale for the operationalization of the Forum “and an overview of the contribution it will bring in the Parliamentary business in Uganda.

Introduction:

Land is arguably one of the most legislated issues in Uganda. A plethora of laws on or related to land attest to this. These include: the Constitution, Land Act, Cap 227; Land Acquisition Act, Cap 226; Registration of Titles Act, Cap 230; National Environment Act, Cap 153; Water Act, Cap 152; Mining Act, 2003; Petroleum (Exploration, Development and Production) Act, 2013; Electricity Act, 1999; Investment Code Act, Cap 92; Road Act, 1964; Access to Roads Act, Cap 350; Traditional Rulers (Restitution of Assets and Properties) Act, Cap 247; Succession Act, 2022; Illiterates Protection Act, Cap 78; Survey Act, Cap 232; National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, No. 8 of 2003; and Physical Planning Act, No. 8 of 2010. These laws are informed by several policies including the Uganda National Land Policy, National Land Use Policy, among others.

Land is a major concern in Uganda and is of the utmost importance for economic development. As such, it is a pertinent issue for the Ugandan parliament because it lies at the heart of social, political and economic life in the country and across the world. Despite the huge diversity of regions, peoples, and economies across the country, agriculture, natural resource use and other land-based activities remain key to livelihoods for all Ugandans.

Justification for amplified focus on land management:

Land is acknowledged as a national priority as it is the most essential pillar of human existence, national development, and a major factor of production. National Land Policy, 2013, harmonizes the diverse needs for human settlement, production, and conservation by adopting best practices in land utilization for the purposes of growth in agricultural, industrial and technological sector.

Uganda is a natural resource dependent economy with land as the most critical of the natural resources. Her terrestrial resources consist of four distinct ecosystem types: shrub lands, savannah and grasslands covering 44% of the total land area, cropland/natural vegetation covering 35%, wetlands and water bodies covering 16% and forests covering 4% with 1% of the land being barren with sparse vegetation (UNEP/IISD, 2005). Specifically, terrestrial systems consist of land, soils and agriculture; forestry and woodland resources; wildlife resources; and mineral resources. Land resources include agricultural land and soils that are public resources managed by the Government, and private resources owned and managed by individuals, communities or cultural kingdoms in Uganda. The land resources form the main asset for the derivation of livelihoods by Ugandans. Nearly 80% of the Ugandan population relies on land, agriculture and soils for their primary livelihoods (UBOS, 2006), of which forestry and woodland resources contribute about 6% to Uganda's Gross Domestic Product (UBOS, 2006).

Uganda's wet and dry grasslands are found largely in the "*Cattle Corridor*", which extends from Moroto and Kotido Districts in the north-east through Lake Kyoga's flat

lands to Masaka, Rakai and Mbarara Districts in the south-west, with smaller parts scattered throughout the country. This area is referred to as the "*Cattle Corridor*" because of the pastoral livelihoods that dominate the zone. Tropical grasslands constitute important natural systems and they provide several ecosystem services that support life. It is assumed that the Land Act, 2013, by underwriting tenure security seeks to increase the incentive for the poor to invest in land improvements and expand their production and income. It is further assumed that landowners unable to use all their land will have the confidence to rent it, rather than hold it in its unproductive state because of fear that they will not get it back.

The scourge of land disputes and land grabbing is on the rise in Uganda partly because of the colonial legacies which have resulted in multiple rights and interests over the same piece of land. In addition, a number of border disputes arising out of tribal-ethnic groupings and trans-state border disputes as well as failure to implement the provisions of the Constitution exist. UPLMF will work to address issues land disputes tracing from land grabbing and arbitrary evictions, disputes occasioned by natural disasters and conflict, encroachments, acquisition of land without compensation and use of fraudulent acquisition of land. The Forum will also work to reduce segregation against women and girls when it comes to inheriting land given the predominantly patriarchal society and ensure the provisions of the constitution observes among the four tenure systems; customary, freehold, mailo and leasehold.

Furthermore, Uganda is faced with disparities in ownership, access to and control of land by vulnerable groups, displacements, and landlessness resulting from high population growth and increasing demands on land for investment especially communal lands which are neither demarcated nor titled.

In Uganda, the lands sub-sector is regulated by the ministry of lands, housing and urban development. UPLMF will observe Land definition to comprise of all elements of the physical environment including; soil, land forms, geology, climate and hydrology, the flora and fauna.

Uganda Parliamentarians Land Management Forum (UPLMF) is a membership consortium of serving MPs and a platform through which the rest of the stakeholders (including CSOs, Academia, communities, private sector and line ministries) shall liaise with Parliament on issues of land governance and Land Dispute mechanisms.

Who we are;

Mandate; Land rights fulfillment in Uganda.

Vision; A Prosperous Ugandan society with secure tenure rights to land.

Mission; To increase and sustain Parliamentary participation in advocacy, service delivery and material support related to land rights fulfillment in Uganda.

Goal; To re-position parliamentary roles for fulfillment of equitable land rights in Uganda.

Strategic Objectives

SO 1: To strengthen oversight of land governance and dispute resolution planning, decision making and implementation of relevant interventions in Uganda.

SO 2: To ensure the enactment of inclusive, resilient and gender sensitive land laws and policies in partnership with various stakeholders

SO 3: To provide an interface for dialogue on land rights, laws & policies and a channel through which different stakeholders can have their land tenure views voiced to parliament and in different fora, nationally/internationally.

SO 4: To support gender inclusive and sensitive budgetary allocations and appropriation to land governance and land dispute resolution mechanisms in the country.

Priorities and Strategic Interventions 2022 - 2026

The priorities for the new strategic period will be embedded within the four core mandates of parliamentarians i.e. legislation, oversight, budgetary allocations and representation. Within these contexts, UPLMF will endeavor to ensure effective legislation that supports effective policy framework for land management actions in the country. This will also have to involve regular interface with the respective government agencies to track progress on agreed undertakings as well as regularly reaching to the respective constituents with strategies, actions and information for land management at the local levels.

Oversight on land tenure issues

Under the oversight dimension, the Forum will prioritize the following:

- a) Benchmarking on best land tenure security options and ensure some of the practices are replicated in the Ugandan context.

- b) Interfacing regularly with government institutions for updates on performance of land governance and Dispute resolution mechanisms for accountability purposes.
- c) Monitoring of ongoing land tenure and settlement response projects implemented by government agencies.
- d) Tracking progress on fulfillment of Uganda's land-related global commitments including SDGs, VGGTs, RAI, etc. and reporting by government agencies to the respective bodies such as; Ministry of Lands and others

Legislation on Land Management in Uganda

- a) Engaging with relevant stakeholders including the constituents, government institutions, the private sector, CSOs, academia and development partners for updates on emerging land laws and rights trends to inform Uganda's land use related legislations for consensus.
- b) Participating actively during deliberations to enact laws, policies or guidelines that support general sustainability of tenure rights to land while ensuring that such regulatory frameworks are sensitive to the historical, current and future land questions in Uganda.
- c) Holding public exhibitions/demonstrations/media campaigns at parliament and constituencies to show case land– legislative initiatives to raise awareness among MPs, parliament fraternity and the general public.

Representation and constituency outreaches

- a) Promoting land related discourse and dialogue among constituents as a mechanism to solicit issues to input into ongoing land regulatory framework reviews.
- b) Conducting political and public awareness on the costs and benefits of decisions impacting land use options.
- c) Documenting, publishing and disseminating relevant land governance response strategies among the different stakeholders including the grassroots
- d) Show casing best practices for land rights protection for uptake by relevant stakeholders in constituencies

- e) Developing and coordinating partnerships and cooperative efforts for resource mobilization to address land issues.

Budgetary appropriation for climate change

- a) Analyzing government budgets and ministerial policy statements as a basis for allocating adequate budgetary support for land law, policy and rights response activities.
- b) Supporting budgetary allocation to government agencies implementing land rights fulfillment undertakings.

UPLMF (Uganda Parliamentarians Land Management Forum) Structures

The Forum has the Membership of currently serving MPs of the 11th Parliament of Uganda, with an executive of at least 5 Members of Parliament.

The Speaker of Parliament is the Patron of the Forum. There is a Coordinator and an accountant and administrator to organize the secretariat and run the day today business of the forum.

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