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LEMU's Response to Land Registration Process in Uganda



On 8th August 2024, Daily Monitor published a “New 4-step land titling” process adopted by the Government of Uganda to improve the process of land registration in the country, with the aim of attaining economic development. To be part of this conversation, LEMU was contacted to by Daily Monitor to respond to the question below;

Will government achieve its plan to have more people register their land if the process of land registration is shortened?

The answer to this question is not straight. If we go back to history, the Uganda State since 1900 has been promoting land registration in Uganda, but after more than 100 years we still have more than 70% of the land unregistered. The slow speed of land registration has actually not only been about the high cost or even the lengthy steps involved, as it is always explained.



While the Uganda state and development partners always paint a picture of land registration as a magic bullet for achieving economic development, there are other contestations that hinder the move towards land registration. For example, the state itself has been viewed by many sections of society for using land registration as a trick to grab people's land. This perception informed community hostilities towards government surveyors as was seen in some locations like Kamuda in Soroti district in the mid-2000s.

The second area of contestation which is still not resolved is that land registration facilitates individualization of land, yet most communities that hold customary land do not hold it as individuals but rather as families, clans and communities. Under such circumstances, the question of whose name will be on the land title

breeds questions, conflicts and has the potential to halt the process. Thirdly, there are still contestations around registration of women's land rights in communities where men believe women should not own land.

With these lingering contestations, the new moves to promote many avenues of increasing land registration may not go far if these contestations are not effectively addressed. Where these issues are ignored or challenged by the actors involved, land registration may instead promote tenure insecurity instead of the much-desired tenure security and economic development. Even though open resistance to land registration seems to have lessened in most areas where people own land under customary tenure compared to 20 years ago, it does not mean that people no longer have questions and issues with it.

Details via <https://monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/govt-reviews-steps-for-land-registration-4718356...>

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