



Public Announcement

The Judy Adoko Inaugural Memorial Lecture and Workshop

*Theme: The Land Question in Uganda: Keeping
Conversations on Customary Land Tenure Alive*

On March 5, 2023, Judy Adoko, an intellectual, thinker, mentor, activist, and founding director of the Land and Equity Movement in Uganda (LEMU) rested. March 5, 2025 will mark the second anniversary of her untimely departure, and it is on this day that her inaugural memorial lecture will be held. Judy was much known for her indelible, intelligible and insistent fight for the protection of customary land tenure in Uganda and across the continent through her activist work and her writings. The journey since Judy's passing has been filled with internal conversations and questions on the best way we can celebrate and think of/with her beyond activism. For Judy was, above all else, a critical thinker, and her activism was anchored on it. How can we best celebrate an icon who was not only an activist but also a critical thinker who has been instrumental in shaping contemporary discourse on customary land? This was a key question we have had to address. After thorough considerations and deliberations by *LEMU's Core Team* of the Working Group on Land and Agrarian Questions in July 2024, it was resolved that an annual Memorial Lecture and workshop would be the best option for such an uphill task. This would allow us a chance to account for Judy's activist work in the land sector in Uganda and to take seriously Judy's intellectual contribution to the question of customary tenure and the larger land question in Africa. Judy Adoko's contribution can only be made sense of if we engage the kinds of questions she was asking for 20 years, between 2003 and 2023, when she deliberated on customary land and agrarian questions in Uganda. The memorial lecture will be offered by **Prof. Mahmood Mamdani**.

The objective of the lecture and the subsequent workshop is threefold: (a) to reflect on and make sense of the questions Judy consistently asked about attempts at reforming customary land tenure, (b) to lay the ground for similar annual critical engagements on land questions in Uganda and Africa, and (c) to place Judy's intellectual thought in broader historical and contemporary scholarly debates. In doing so,

the inaugural annual lecture will lay the ground for successive annual lectures as modest contributions to the ongoing debates on the land and agrarian questions. The forum will avail an immense opportunity for scholars, activists, and stakeholders to reflect on, be challenged by Judy Adoko's life and work and its significance to our careers and political commitments to decolonial work. This will be followed with a day-long memorial workshop in which panel presentations, and discussions will be held. The idea is to ensure that enough time is given to critically think about and think with Judy's work, reflect and engage with the questions she asked thoroughly and place it/them within larger debates as a way to shape discourse, knowledge, and epistemology. By doing so, we will have a chance to rethink the old questions from our vantage points. The panel presentations will be thematically categorized based on the core questions Judy engaged with. These will include: **1) The state, the market, and the politics of land reform; 2) Gender and the customary land question; 3) Land grabbing, large-scale land acquisition, and the question of development; 4) Land, food sovereignty, and social reproduction; and 5) International Financial Institutions (IFIs), NGOs, donor agencies, and the land question.** Besides these themes, the memorial workshop will also feature Judy's biography, to reflect the ways in which personalities are (re)shaped or not shaped by one's lived experiences.

Both the lecture and workshop will be open to the public.

For more details visit www.land-in-uganda.org or email us at info@land-in-uganda.org

Timelines

1. Memorial lecture by Prof. Mahmood Mamdani (month and date to be confirmed)
2. Memorial workshop – March 5, 2025 (Venue will be Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), Makerere University).