IDLO
International Development Law Organization

Mobilizing the rule of law for land governance

COUNTRIES OF ENGAGEMENT

Burundi	Liberia	Tanzania
Indonesia	Mozambique	Tunisia
Jordan	Rwanda	Uganda
Kenya	Somalia	Zambia

A critical resource for peace and development

More than half of global economic output – around €39 trillion – depends on natural capital. Yet, weak land governance, insecure tenure and unresolved land disputes continue to undermine investment, fuel conflict and displacement, and reduce resilience to climate change. As of 2026, only 35 per cent of the world's land is formally documented, while nearly one in four adults fears they could lose their land within the next five years[1].

Rule-of-law solutions

Just and responsible land governance relies on the rule of law to ensure legal certainty, protect tenure rights, manage competing land claims and prevent disputes. By bringing together legal reform, effective institutions, and people-centred justice, it positions countries to access new opportunities in climate finance and carbon markets, ensuring that sustainable development benefits communities and the environment.

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) supports partners' efforts to strengthen land governance through an integrated approach that combines programming, research and policy advocacy.

- **Strengthening legal frameworks and institutions**

  As land, investment and environmental challenges grow more complex, the rule of law provides the legal and institutional foundation for transparent and predictable decisions. IDLO works closely with governments to improve land laws and policies, enhance land registration systems, advance land consolidation and land-use planning, and modernize land administration through legal reform, digital innovation and institutional capacity development.

- **Expanding access to justice and dispute resolution**

  A significant percentage of violent conflicts worldwide are linked to land disputes, making accessible and effective justice systems essential to peace and stability. IDLO supports courts, alternative dispute resolution and customary justice mechanisms to help resolve land disputes quickly and peacefully. By expanding access to legal services, we help people protect their land rights, reduce pressure on justice systems and build trust.

- **Promoting inclusive governance for responsible investment**

  While growing demand for land creates new opportunities for investment, climate action and economic growth, without appropriate legal safeguards, these opportunities can deepen inequality and displacement. IDLO promotes participatory decision-making, advances women's land rights and legal empowerment, and helps governments create an enabling environment for responsible land-based investment while protecting local community interests.

- **Advancing evidence-based reform**

  IDLO produces legal and policy research that informs national reforms, strengthens institutions and guides evidence-based programming. We also advance policy dialogue on land governance at global, regional and national levels through engagement with major international forums, including the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conferences and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification Conference, linking local realities to global advocacy.

- **Securing women's land rights**

  Women play a critical role in land and natural resource governance as right holders and agents of change. IDLO works towards securing women's land rights by addressing discriminatory legal, societal and institutional barriers through strengthening legal literacy and awareness, advancing gender-responsive laws and policies that enable fair access to resources, and supporting policy processes that ensure women's rights are recognized and enforced in both customary and statutory systems.

> "On behalf of the Government of Uganda, I want to thank IDLO for supporting the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa towards resolving land conflicts in the region."
>
> **Kania Obiga**
> Then Minister of State for Lands at the 2022 Land and Conflict Conference, convened by IDLO and IGAD.

Results at a glance (2021-2025)

16
legal and policy reforms on land, environment and natural resource governance advanced

25,000+
people accessed justice services to resolve land disputes

200+
formal and customary justice institutions strengthened

1 FAO, ILC and CIRAD, Status of Land Tenure and Governance (2026).

Resolving land disputes, rebuilding futures

When her partner of more than 20 years left her for another woman, Angelique was forced out of the home and fields she had worked for two decades. She lost both her shelter and livelihood while continuing to care for their children. Unable to afford court proceedings, she turned to Rwanda's community mediation committees, Abunzi. Through IDLO's Land Conflict Resolution Project, mediators applied improved guidance to recognise her contribution to the household, award her a fair share of the property and secure child maintenance. Angelique used the compensation to start a bicycle rental business, purchase a home and keep her children in school.

"The Abunzi recognized my rights, and their decision rebuilt my life. Now I have my own house, and my children can learn toward [securing] the future they deserve."

Angelique

Impact on the ground

- **13,700+ people** in **Rwanda** supported through community-based land dispute resolution services (2021–2025), with a 94 per cent satisfaction rate.
- **20% reduction** in **Kenya**'s Environment and Land Court backlogs (2020–2026) achieved through alternative justice systems, successfully resolving disputes that had been pending for over 30 years.
- **€1.84 million in climate finance** accessed in **Kenya** through strengthened land and climate governance frameworks, supporting locally led climate action.
- A **digital land dispute management system** launched in **Rwanda**, linking land administration and justice institutions to improve case management, transparency and coordination.
- **Six national land governance assessments** completed across the **East and Horn of Africa** (2022–2025), contributing to a regional roadmap on land governance, conflict prevention and tenure security.
- A **digital transformation roadmap** developed for **Tunisia**'s Agricultural Land Agency, laying the foundations for land administration reform.

About IDLO

The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) is the only global intergovernmental organization exclusively focused on advancing the rule of law to promote peace and sustainable development. Founded in 1983, IDLO holds United Nations Observer Status and has experience in some 100 countries. Headquartered in Rome, with offices in The Hague, Geneva, and New York, and operations across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa, IDLO is a trusted partner to governments, civil society, and multilateral actors. Its vision is a world in which every person lives with dignity and equality under the rule of law.

Why IDLO

Proven track record:
€17.5+ million in land and natural resources governance programming implemented since 2020.

Rule-of-law expertise:
Complementing technical expertise on land and natural resources with a rule of law lens focused on rights, justice and accountable institutions.

Legal pluralism:
Working across diverse legal traditions, including formal, customary and informal justice systems to resolve land disputes and uphold rights.

Trusted convener:
Brings together governments, communities and civil society.

Contacts

Ilaria Bottigliero
Director, Research and Learning
ibottigliero@idlo.int

Find out more

@idlonews
@idlo
@international-development-law-organization

www.idlo.int
idlo@idlo.int
Viale Vaticano, 106,
00165 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 4040 3200