



# LAND

## A FOUNDATION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE IN AFRICA

**118 million people in Africa are projected to face drought, floods & extreme heat by 2030 unless we change trajectory.**

The merciless effects of climate change are hitting Africa harder than any other region—and the continent’s temperature is warming faster than the global average. With national economies largely dependent on agriculture and a high proportion of their populations experiencing economic instability, the combination of extreme weather and resource degradation can exacerbate food and water scarcity, public health crises, and severe poverty. Marginalized populations — women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities — bear the greatest burden of these threats.

**Over 70% of sub-Saharan Africa’s population depends upon land that is threatened by climate change.** In fact, two-thirds of the continent’s agricultural land is already degraded. Yet this very land can be part of the solution to the climate crisis.

**Landesa harnesses the power of land rights to mitigate climate change, build resilience through climate adaptation, and promote climate justice, ensuring a better future for people and the planet.**

Inclusive and secure land rights create the incentive and the opportunity for smallholder farmers to make long-term climate-smart land investments such as...

- tree planting, cultivation, and integration
- soil conservation techniques like fallowing and terracing
- irrigation infrastructure

...enhancing carbon sequestration and the ability of marginalized and vulnerable groups to adapt to a changing climate. Land rights foster a world where both people and the planet can thrive.

## LANDESA WORKS TO:

### Elevate land rights in global, regional, and national climate agendas

*Responsible land governance is central to reaching ambitious climate targets.*

- Landesa partnered with the Liberia Land Authority to conduct research on **women's use of wetlands** in peri-urban and urban areas, revealing the importance of the ecosystem for both conservation and livelihoods. This research now informs national land use policy to strengthen wetland area protections and support local communities and carbon sequestration efforts.
- Landesa developed a paper describing options for [raising awareness on how to integrate gender-equal land rights into strategies to achieve land degradation neutrality](#). The Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the sole legally binding international agreement to address land degradation and desertification, commissioned this paper.
- Landesa **advocated for inclusion of climate considerations in the African Union Commission's Land Governance Strategy**, which guides efforts surrounding land governance, land rights, and sustainable development.



### Support climate-smart business practices

*Companies can be climate leaders by shifting sectoral standards to prioritize community rights and environmental health.*

- Landesa is working to strengthen inclusive and effective natural resource governance through the [Community-Smart Consultation and Consent Project](#). This initiative will develop and test different tools and approaches to scale good consultation and consent practices for the benefit of all stakeholders. In Tanzania, Landesa will be working with local partner organizations, private companies, and the government to better incorporate **natural resource safeguarding and climate mitigation and adaptation practices in land-based investments**.

#### Butaleja, Uganda

After legally registering their wetlands, a community in Butaleja, Uganda, formulated a sustainable land management plan that helped them adopt more sustainable farming practices, improve food security, and significantly reduce conflicts with neighbors.

“Before, there was much confusion and struggle,” said one woman from the community. **“Now, we are cultivating without any fear.”**



## Secure land rights for climate leaders

*Women, youth, and local communities are powerful climate actors. With strong land rights in place, their influence in [building climate resilience](#) grows.*

- In Africa, youth hold an untapped potential to transform agricultural economies — so much so that they are often referred to as [Africa's demographic dividend](#). But they often lack access to land. To examine the issue, Landesa has conducted an assessment and produced policy briefs on youth land rights and climate change in Tanzania. Our work describes the potential of securing land tenure for youth to advance **economic empowerment, food security, and climate adaptation**.
- Ghana's agricultural sector encompasses a variety of profitable value chains, from cocoa and shea to cashew and cotton. Yet, with insufficient access to land, youth are frequently excluded from agricultural employment. Furthermore, their ability to profit from farm work is threatened by climate change and environmental degradation. Landesa is assessing land tenure issues around high-value agriculture in Ghana, particularly for youth, to facilitate **access to land, land documentation, and agronomy and business training for up to 35,000 young women and 15,000 young men**.
 

Strengthening land rights for 50,000 young women & men
- **Efforts to address climate change are more successful when women hold secure rights to land.** Landesa is the Secretariat of Stand for Her Land (S4HL). In Africa, S4HL has launched national coalitions in Ethiopia, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. Each coalition has unique objectives, with interventions incorporating climate and sustainability solutions. For example, S4HL Uganda raises awareness on the sustainability benefits of women's land rights for families and communities.



## Secure land rights in environments rich in carbon and biodiversity

*Local communities can guard vital hotspots to protect ecosystems and livelihoods.*

- Mufindi District, Tanzania, is a carbon hotspot, storing **70.8 megatons of carbon**. But the area's impressive natural forest cover is decreasing, releasing this carbon into the atmosphere. To help change this reality, Landesa has partnered with the Mufindi District Council and PELUM Tanzania to survey land parcels and issue over 4,000 customary rights certificates. Through this partnership, we have **strengthened land rights and supported gender-responsive land use planning** in two villages.
- Along the Great Rift Valley, Kenya and Rwanda host a vast diversity of ecological habitats, from savannahs and mountain forests to wetlands and mangroves. Landesa is laying the foundation for long-term land investments for millions of smallholder farmers through the [Agricultural Systems Change Initiative](#) with One Acre Fund and Co-Impact. Collectively, these efforts will strengthen land rights for 6 million households while helping to improve crop cultivation in Kenya and advance tree seedling planting in Rwanda. Stronger land rights, increased productivity, and higher land values are expected to generate an economic and livelihood impact of over \$200 million across the two countries. This comprehensive approach will help uproot extreme poverty, foster a gender equitable future, and create plentiful **opportunities to sequester carbon and grow climate resilience**.
 

Strengthening land rights for 6 million households with an expected economic & livelihoods impact of over \$200 million

# GROWING AFRICA'S CLIMATE RESILIENCE

**The climate crisis in Africa is complex and urgent.** Growing resilience requires layered solutions. Further potential to advance climate mitigation, adaptation, and justice through land rights includes:

- **Building climate adaptation strategies into community land use and management plans, and ensuring women are in decision-making roles for natural resource management**
- Amplifying the **linkages between women's land rights and climate action** across S4HL Coalition countries
- Piloting options developed for the UNCCD around **gender-equal land rights towards land degradation neutrality**
- Engaging companies across the continent to promote best practices for **upholding community tenure rights in land-based investments**

## LIBERIA

*Threats include:*

- sea-level rise
- unpredictable rainfall
- increased pest infestations
- desertification
- plant & tree stunting

*Climate-sensitive environments include:*

- rainforests support biodiversity, maintain the water cycle, sequester carbon, provide medicine & food, and protect against flood, drought, and erosion

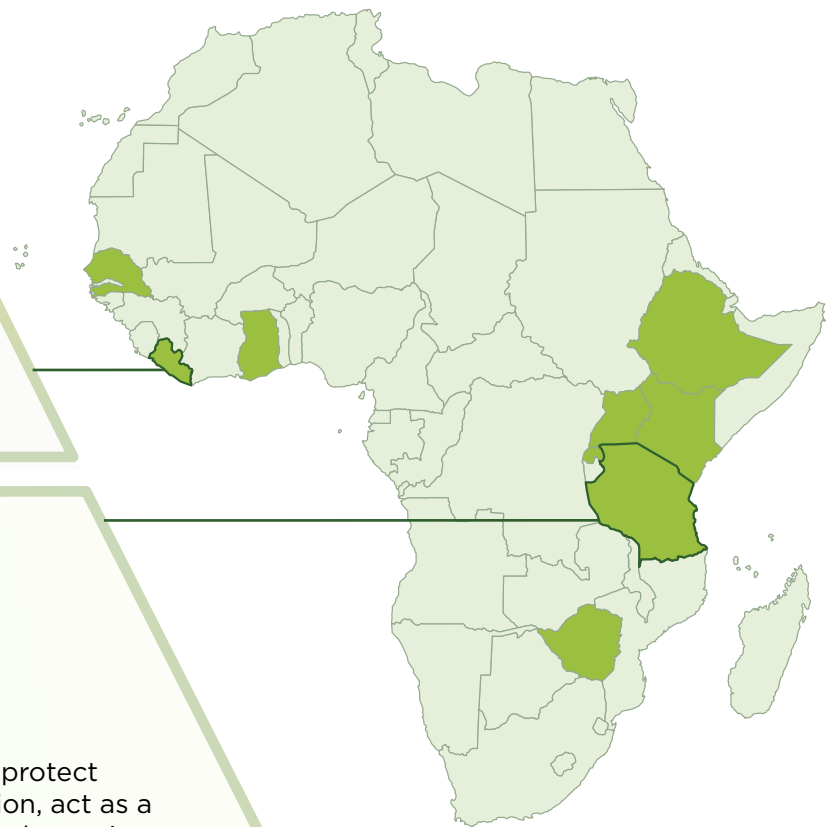
## TANZANIA

*Threats include:*

- storm surges
- forest & bush fires
- river basin rise & flooding
- drought
- soil degradation

*Climate-sensitive environments include:*

- coastal mangroves & mangrove swamp deltas protect farmland from storm surges & saltwater intrusion, act as a habitat for fish critical to local livelihoods & food security, and offer fuel, timber, and medicine to local communities



■ African countries Landesa currently works in

To join us in leveraging land as a foundation for climate justice, contact [getinvolved@landesa.org](mailto:getinvolved@landesa.org)

Learn more about our climate work: [landesa.org/land-rights-for-climate-justice/](https://landesa.org/land-rights-for-climate-justice/)