Introduction to the Book Review Symposium on ANRC's "Rethinking Land Reform in Africa: New Ideas, Opportunities and Challenges"

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In 2020, the African Natural Resources Centre (ANRC) of the African Development Bank (AfDB) launched its book entitled: “Rethinking Land Reform in Africa: New Ideas, Opportunities and Challenges”. The goal is expressed “to achieve a thought-leading policy platform and publication of inquiry, analysis and research for breakthrough progress in land reform policy”. ANRC was not sparing in its choice of contributors both numerically and in quality, with fourteen contributors comprising of Professors, Researchers, Policy Advisors, Historians, and Economists from different walks of life ranging from law to land management, political science, economics and taxation. The respective contributors are from diverse institutions within and outside Africa. The plausible implications of this are that not only does the book afford a broad

analysis on the issue of land reform at different professional spheres, but it also offers both endogenous and exogenous perspectives.

Cosmas Milton Obote Ochieng provides an overarching context for the discourse in his comprehensive introduction. Sara Berry explores the political and economic undertone to the land reform disclosure by exploring the dynamics of power interplay and the uncertainty it manifests in the Sub-Saharan African political and economic landscape. Lorenzo Cotula reminds us of the commercial implications of land rights and highlights the relevance of commercial factors in painting a futuristic land rights regime in Africa, especially in the rural areas. Liz Alden Wily introduces a property ownership dimension to the discourse and brings to fore, the inherent contentions between public and commercial property ownership regimes. Pauline E. Peters in a similar strain, explores the customary land tenure system, its "descent-based" peculiarities and its implications in conceiving the prospects for land reform in Africa.

Howard Stein and Shiela Khama bring a spark of policy discussions to the table. While Khama explores the evolution of land tenure policy, with particular focus on Botswana, and reveals its connection to urban land markets, Stein looks generally at how policy-change influences institutional transformation, and further examines the purport of this within the context of the land reform in Africa. Robert Home and Horman Chitonge approach the subject with focus on Africa as a region. Home looks generally at the contentions surrounding land reform in Africa. Chintonge looks specifically at how land governance is strategic to building a productive equitable and sustainable land use profile for Africa. Riël Franzsen distinguishes himself as a tax man by reviewing the property transfer tax regime in Africa. Matthew Mitchell also brings some form of uniqueness to the table by coming from a peacebuilding and conflict resolution angle. He explores whether land reform in Africa can further aid contentions with indigenous rights. He does this by bringing into focus the benefits and pitfalls of the Free, Prior and Informed Consents principle.

Michael Lipton and Thomas Bassett explore some specific practical issues that are invariably attendant to the issue of land reform in Africa. Lipton sorts through issues such as demography, employment, farms and resources. Bassett's interest is more tailored towards maps and mapping practices with

focus on the rural areas of Cote d'Ivoire. Finally, Uchendu Chigbu reminds readers of the relevance of the feminist voice in the discourse surrounding land reforms in Africa by pointing out the potential for such reforms to balance the pendulum that has overtime been tilted in contrast to the interest of women in Africa. With such a comprehensive and ground-breaking work on such a strategic subject, we at Afronomicslaw could not be more delighted to present this book Symposium on ANRC's "Rethinking Land Reform in Africa: New Ideas, Opportunities and Challenges". We have an outstanding line up of reviewers, whose commentaries not only provide perspective to the literature but also reveal corollary issues requiring further research.

In his review entitled "Beyond Land Reforms: Strengthening Links with Food Sovereignty and Land Rights Activists", Tomaso Ferrando brings a dynamic perspective to the relationship between land and socio-economic conditions of people in Sub-Saharan Africa. He highlights how the book critiques the dominant narrative of international organization and international institutions, as well as their modes of operation. This is particularly by drawing from how modern states reproduce colonial models, how the international legal order is obsessed with formalization, the merit of defining and mapping out communities and lands vis-a-vis their respective rights rather than merely describing their jurisdictions, and the need to place land rights within the broader landscape of interconnected economies. He also goes on to draw on the need to connect land reforms to the struggle for food sovereignty and the political implications of the fight.

In their article entitled "The Land Question and Legal Pluralism in Africa: Recent Contributions and Future Work", Nathan Andrews and Logan Cochrane demonstrate how the book reveals the political, ideological, historical and economic demographical and socio-cultural implications of land reforms in Africa. They identify how the book generally reflects a critical and evidence-based approach to the issue of land reform which can be impactful in defining the future of the continent in that it demystifies the real issues surrounding land reform in Africa rather than merely condemning them to be non-viable, political and ideological as the established narrative seems to infer. While they appreciate the emphasis of the book on the internal factors that influence land reforms, Andrews and Cochrane demonstrate that there is the need to consider external factors as well, such as World Bank as well as external state creditors,

whose actions and inactions also have an influence in determining paradigms with glaring examples to be drawn from Gabon and Ethiopia. They also recommend the need for the discourse to include environmental issues, particularly as it relates to climate change, especially considering its implication on food security and the conservation of biodiversity.

In their piece which directly reviews Paulin Peters' chapter of the book entitled "The Significance of Descent-Based Customary Land Management for Land Reform and Agricultural futures in Africa", Luregn Lenggenhager and Ronnie Nghitevelekwa reiterate Peters' criticism of the conventional land policy and reform interventions in Africa. They highlight Peters' point on the inherent merits of the original African landholding system and its strong communal feature as well as its propensity to guarantee a social support system which only seems to have been disrupted by an alternate system that incites competition and conflict while compromising on responsibility, obligation and interdependence. They also stress Peters' allusion to the fact that land deals are invariably influenced by contextual factors such as territory, sovereignty, authority and subjects and they further posit that global capitalism hampers the thriving of land deals in such a manner that protect these factors.

In his piece entitled, "The Place of Communal Land Rights in Africa's Land Reform Discourse", Collins Odote lends his voice in highlighting the inequity manifested in the eroding of the original indigenous and customary property rights regime by the contemporary system which he terms as "colonial legacy". In agreeing with Cotula and Clarke, he reiterates that the relegation of the communal indigenous customary land rights is an occasion for a less sustainable land reform system in Africa. In alluding generally to Alden Wily and Pauline Peters' contributions, Odote highlights the expropriation in the contemporary structure and advocates for communal land tenure system in imagining a system that optimally harnesses Africa's land resources, secures its global competitive edge and assures inclusivity.

In her contribution entitled, "Will land reform change black rural women's realities in South Africa?", Femke Brandt critiques Lipton's checklist for predicting the success of land reforms in Africa on the ground that there are imagined from the lens of South African policies which lack the voices of key players such as black farmers who seek agro-ecology and food sovereignty. She

makes an example of the National Development Plan which seems to push the narrative that informal markets pose problems to productivity, thus inferring the need to expand to commercial agriculture. Brandt also critiques Chitonge's argument on land governance dynamics in the context of customary tenure relations on the basis that Brandt assumes that power relations among the actors is the bedrock of land governance, whereas Chitonge argues that land governance ought to be premised on rules, laws and principles, institutional structure and lastly, the context within which actors interact. Brandt concludes on the note that an effective land reform ought to be centred around the socio cultural interest of the people depending on them including rural women, farm workers, urban land occupiers, shack dwellers, and small holder farmers.

In closing, we felicitate with the ANRC as well as the entire African Development Bank on the completion of such remarkable project. We appreciate the reviewers for their insights and critiques. To our readers, we hope that you have a pleasant experience reading the reviews, and we enjoin you to send in your brilliant comments.

Contributors

Cosmas Milton Obote Ochieng & Oluwaseyi Sanni: Rethinking Land Reform in Africa: New Ideas, Opportunities and Challenges: Introduction

Tomaso Ferrando: Beyond Land Reforms: Strengthening Links with Food Sovereignty and Land Rights Activists

Femke Brandt: Will Land Reform Change Rural Women's Realities in South Africa?

Nathan Andrews & Logan Cochrane: The Land Question and Legal Pluralism in Africa: Recent Contributions and Future Work

Luregn Leggenhager & Romie Nghitevelekwa: The Significance of decent-based 'customary' land management for land reform and agricultural futures in Africa

Collins Odote: The Place of Communal Land Rights in Africa's Land Reform Discourse

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