

Call for Papers - Edited Book: *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Land Use Regimes under the AfCFTA*

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Rationale

The co-editors, Chidebe Nwankwo, Sikelela Ndlazi, and Angelo Dube, invite contributions to an edited volume entitled ‘Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Land Use Regimes under the AfCFTA.’ The volume seeks to catalogue the prospects and challenges of extant land use regimes in African states towards actualizing the objectives of the anticipated single market. The goal of the volume is to offer fresh insight from multidisciplinary perspectives on the historical, institutional, political, and legal and policy dimensions of land and the sustainable development of the member states under the AfCFTA.

The volume builds on previous literature on the subject-matter which has undertaken legal, socio-economic, historical, and other approaches towards understanding the issue of land reform on the African continent and the attendant challenges that have surrounded land use in African countries. Onoja and Achike (2015), decry the problem of land-grabbing through buying of large portions of land by investors in middle- and low-income African countries. They argue that this phenomenon is one of the manifestations of weak land use regimes on the continent. They further posit that this could be detrimental to food security, food safety, environmental safety, and peace and economic well-being of citizens. Manji (2006) explores the politics of land reform in Africa, particularly with a view to understanding the role of law in bringing about development. The author identifies the elements of a network of African land reform which includes International Financial Institutions (IFIs), international donors, African governments, legislators, non-governmental organizations, legal consultants, commercial lenders, and the judiciary as important actors in the land reform process. Furthermore, the author offers insights on how these networks are sustained. Lipton centers land reform as a critical mechanism for achieving socioeconomic equilibrium. The author makes a compelling case on the need to repurpose land reform primarily on its use as a means to achieve agricultural growth to reduce rural poverty. Improving access to land will ensure that the benefits of agricultural technical change reach many millions of rural poor. Cotula et al. (2009) observed that despite the spate of media reports and some published research, international land deals and their

impacts remain little understood. Also, Cotula (2013) establishes the link between the ‘great African land grab’ under the guise of agricultural investments and the global food system. These dimensions underscore the need to continue to engage with scholarship on the effects of land reform in Africa.

Other authors such as Masitera (2021), Ntsebeza & Hall (2007), and Cavanagh (2013) analyse the political issues underlying land rights and redistribution from a Southern African lenses. Mwangi (2007) offers an ecological and historical perspective on the evolution of property rights in Kenya with the Masailand as a case study. Boone (2013) analyses the relationship between how property institutions shape dynamics of great interest to scholars of politics, including the dynamics of land-related competition and conflict, territorial conflict, patron-client relations, electoral cleavage and mobilization, ethnic politics, rural rebellion, and the localization and “nationalization” of political competition. The implications of studies on land reforms and its wholesale impact on society warrants a multidisciplinary approach.

Scope

More often than not, it is expected that the predominantly legal process of land reform in most states places legal perspectives on land reform at the front burner. However, to arrive at real answers, it is important to adopt a more policy-oriented and innovative approach which offers new models and creative ideas as solutions to practical problems of land management. The volume follows the aforementioned literature by focusing on a central thematic question implied by the following perspectives: “How do land use regimes in African states impact the lofty objectives of the AfCFTA regime?”.

The volume calls for contributions that offer insights into the above thematic question. It invites theoretical, institutional, and policy contributions from scholars and practitioners with an interest in the subject matter. At its core, the volume aims to unpack the relationship between the land use regimes in African states and the prospective single market under the AfCFTA regime. Individual chapters can focus on any one of the following topics:

1. Historical perspectives on land reforms in Africa - from colonialism to independence.
2. The role of IFIs and neoliberal influences on the formulation of land reform policies around the African continent.
3. The relationship between globalization of law and land law reforms in Africa
4. The role of national elites in the removal of complex and varied forms of communal landholding in post-colonial African societies

5. The relationship between legal centralist ideals in the relegation of informal property rights as extralegal social contracts on property.
6. Indigenous rights and land reforms in Africa.
7. Land registration systems and sustainability in the land reform process.
8. Sustainable land use, national economic systems and the actualization of the AfCFTA.
9. Regional approaches to combating land-grabbing in Africa.
10. The role of land reform networks in socio-economic development in Africa.
11. The political economy of land use acts in poverty eradication in Africa
12. The impact of land redistribution policies on community organs of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
13. Agricultural land use and food security under the AfCFTA regime
14. Communal landholding versus statutory land use laws in the AfCFTA era
15. Trade implications of land tenure for value chains and investment zones under the AfCFTA
16. Regional infrastructure and urban planning for regional integration
17. Environmental sustainability and land degradation linked to trade expansion under the AfCFTA regime
18. Land rights, gender, and social inclusion in regional integration
19. Institutional frameworks for land governance across RECs and the AfCFTA
20. Technology, land data governance, and spatial planning innovations
21. Comparative case studies from the RECs.

The editors invite interested authors to submit abstracts of 500 words summarizing the plans for their proposed chapter, including the chapter topic, methodology, and central argument. Authors can also submit copies of their chapters alongside their abstracts. Submission should be made to Chidebe Nwankwo (matthew.nwankwo@unn.edu.ng); cnplegal@outlook.com) by 30th December, 2025. Book chapters should not be longer than 6000 words in total (excluding references and bibliography).

The Editorial Team

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Angelo Dube is a Professor in the College of Law, University of South Africa Muckleneuk Campus. He is also the Acting Director of the School of Law. He is a proven scholar in the field of Aviation law, Public International law, International Criminal law, Law and business and Comparative constitutionalism. He is also a licensed pilot.

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