

**HUAIROU COMMISSION LAND AND HOUSING CAMPAIGN  
UNDP Democratic Governance Group Bureau for Development Policy  
UN HABITAT**

**TITLE:** *Grassroots Women's Solutions to Empowerment, Sustainable Livelihood and Land Justice*

**Date:** Tuesday, 28 February 2012

**Time:** 6:30pm to 7:45pm

**Cocktail:** 6:00-6:30 (by invitation only)

**Where:** Chapel, 1st Floor room at the Church Center of the UN

**Summary Description:**

This parallel event, co-sponsored by Huairou Commission, UN HABITAT, and UNDP Democratic Governance Group will feature grassroots rural women leaders and highlight their strategies to protect and secure women's land and property rights. Empowering women to claim and protect their land and property rights provides the basis for sustainable communities and development. The event will focus on specific grassroots women designed and implemented tools around: strengthening the implementation of laws and policies, such as land acts and land regularization in a way that benefits women; developing financing mechanisms and participatory budgeting processes to scale-up grassroots women's access to land and property; and creating partnerships with community leaders to ensure justice for women on land issues. We will highlight in particular successful partnerships between grassroots women and governments that are considered "champions of women's land rights for development." This will be an opportunity to forge a South-South Platform to empower women to gain equality with men on matters of land and development.

**Background**

Ensuring equal access to and use of land and related resources and assets is critical for poverty reduction and sustainable human development today. In rural and urban communities across the world, it is mainly poor women who are struggling to own, access, and control land and other core productive assets (such as credit and market spaces). Challenges of climate change, food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, and large scale land grabs compound to the difficulties women face in securing land and sustaining their livelihood opportunities.

These struggles are central not only to reducing the incidence of poverty among women and children and subsequently, lifting entire communities out of poverty. Women's land struggles enable their economic empowerment, realize their independent human rights to housing, land and property and in turn empower women socially and politically

Grassroots women are organizing and responding to these challenges in innovative ways to change their lives. They are thus building collective and individual empowerment through legal, social and economic strategies to attain, manage and ultimately benefit from land. They are implementing creative solutions to ensure justice in issues of land, combating disinheritance

and asset stripping at the intersection of statutory and customary legal justice and legal systems to exercise their rights. Women are finding ways to collectively and individually obtain security over land and sustainable livelihoods.

Through these processes women are empowered in that their role, capability and active participation in decision-making processes, and so increasing secure authority over the asset of land in order to as well build an economic base. In these ways, overall land distribution inequalities are being rectified.

This panel event *Grassroots Women's Solutions to Empowerment, Sustainable Livelihood and Land Justice* will feature grassroots women leaders from Latin America and Africa to share community driven processes and strategies used to build partnerships with diverse stakeholders to improve land governance, justice and economic empowerment. The panel will examine the processes and the impacts from grassroots women's as well as government perspectives.

These strategies to be presented focus on building a South-South cross learning and strengthening the implementation of laws and policies, taking advantage of financing mechanisms and participatory budgeting processes to improve grassroots women's access to land and property and implementing community justice processes through successful relationships with community leaders.

The event highlight an ongoing collaboration between UNDP Democratic Governance Group and the Huairou Commission that is researching the tools, strategies and approaches used by grassroots women to address land injustice in Africa and bring these to the fore to influence policy making and effective development programming for women's empowerment and land justice. As well, the discussion will illustrate the impact of the joint partnership between the UN HABITAT, Huairou Commission and its local member organization working to ensure policies and programs are gender sensitive and work for women in Brazil and Tanzania.

The lessons learned from the solutions developed by grassroots women will be shared through a lively moderated discussion. In the context of enriching the 56th Session of the CSW, this side event will offer UN officials, governments and other participants an updated view of how grassroots women and their communities strengthen their ability to influence decision making around ownership and control over land and assets at the community level, to apply their own practical situations and to work with policy makers and development practitioners to integrate these approaches into a policy or programmatic frameworks on land and women's empowerment.

**OBJECTIVES:**

The objectives of the panel discussion are to:

- Demonstrate effective mechanisms and interventions that increase women's leadership and influence in decision making processes to address land injustice within formal, informal and customary systems;
- Strengthen the dialogue among grassroots organizations and policy makers and financial stakeholders on the need for action in promoting gender sensitive policies and programmes with full engagement of grassroots women in the design, implementation and monitoring of land programmes;

- Champion impactful partnerships between grassroots organizations and policy makers and other stakeholders in addressing women's empowerment and ownership and control over land and assets;
- Contribute to the creation of a set of actions that support of grassroots women's empowerment to achieve justice for themselves in their communities.

### **ORGANIZERS and co-sponsors**

The panel is sponsored by Huairou Commission, UNDP Democratic Governance Group, and UNHABITAT

### **PROGRAM DETAILS:**

The panel will be chaired by *Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary General and Director for the Bureau of Development Policy, UNDP* and *Ms. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director UN-HABITAT* and will feature a panel discussion of five speakers including grassroots leaders and government officials from Brazil, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Zambia.

### **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

- What are successful partnerships between policy makers, grassroots women that have resulted in land justice for women?
- What next steps need to be taken to ensure and accelerate commitment and actions in support of grassroots women's empowerment and women's ability to exercise full citizenship?
- How are women advocating for beneficial change in policies and programmes, and ensuring that change is properly implemented?
- What kind of support is needed for grassroots women's organizations to have impact to make the formal and informal system more equitable?
- How can we foster investment towards strengthening women's ownership and access to key productive resources (land inputs, tools, credits, information, etc.) and enjoy equal rights (property, inheritance)?

### **PROGRAMME**

*Opening: Welcome and Introductions by Chairs (5 minutes each)*

**Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary General and Director for the Bureau of Development Policy, UNDP (confirmed)**

**Ms. Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director UN-HABITAT (confirmed)**

**Opening Statement: What we aim to achieve from this session?**

**Jan Peterson, Chair of the Huairou Commission (confirmed)**

### **PANEL PRESENTATIONS**

*Patricia Chaves, Director of Espaço Feminista, Recife, Brazil (7min)*

*Mrs. Maria de Oliveira Director of the Land Institute (ITERPE), Government of Pernambuco, Brazil (confirmed)*

Presentation: The create of a partnership between grassroots rural women, communities and other stakeholders, including all levels of government and land professionals, to advance

women's rights to land and assets. The experience emphasizes the partnership strategy with multi-stakeholders including the Land Institute and the Rural Policies Program run by the State of Pernambuco, Brazil.

***Haydee Rodriguez, President of Union of Women's Producers Cooperatives Las Brumas, Nicaragua***

***Maria Rubiales, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Nicaragua (to be confirmed)***

Presentation: How rural women worked towards passing of National Law 717, which guarantees the allocation of funds from the national budget to poor women for the purpose of purchasing land for agricultural production and their advocacy strategies to ensure the implementation of the Law.

***Nidnini Kimesera, Director and Esupat Ngulupa, Grassroots Leader, Maasai Women Development Organization (7min)***

Presentation: The process of implementing key strategies that focus focused on strengthening the implementation of the Village Land Act of 1999 at the local and customary justice levels and scaling-up grassroots women's access to land and property in Tanzania.

***Florence Shakafuswa, Director of Katuba Women's Association (7min)***

***Mr. Joe Kapembwa, Director, Finance and Economic Section, Division of Gender in Development, Cabinet Office ( confirmed)***

Presentation: Informal community negotiations, mediation and customary justice used by grassroots women in their struggle to stop asset stripping and land grabbing in Zambia and what grassroots women are doing to influence informal negotiations around land issues.

***Inter-active Discussion and Dialogue (30 min)***

After the panellist presentations, guests will be invited to participate in an interactive dialogue. Grassroots Women Organizations representatives, Government officials, NGOs and other in attendance will be given to floor. Speaking time for interventions is 2-3 minutes. At the end of this programme segment, each panellist will be invited to make 1-2 minute concluding remarks.

***Summary of Discussion (4min)***

***Concluding Remarks (2min)***