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Canada

SECURING DEMOCRATIC SPACE TO ADVANCE LAND RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN SIAYA AND KWALE COUNTIES

Siaya Community Training Seminar on Human Rights, Access to Resources and Sustainable Development & Launch of ILEG's Siaya Community Resource Centre (ISCRC)

ILEG Office, Siala Plaza, Siaya. February 20th 2015

Background

The land question has been and remains the most thorny socio-economic and political issue in Kenya. It manifests in relative intensity and breadth in virtually all counties. ILEG's work in Siaya and Kwale reveals intractable concerns and challenges around access to natural resources and land rights in these two counties. Land-related problems, including insecurity of tenure, discrimination of women and youth in access to land and natural resources, land grabbing, and insecurity of access to land and natural resources by local community resource users and managers such as artisanal miners and fishermen are commonplace. These problems cause periodic episodes of violence and conflicts between government agencies and local communities, on the one hand, and communities and investors, on the other hand. Failure to address the problems has caused a long-standing sentiment of historical land and natural resource injustices that have been pervasive in these counties. The affected local communities feel disenfranchised due to many cases where they have been denied access to specific sections of the land or natural resources which they perceive as their own, but has since been appropriated for investments, by elites, or for other public purposes without their say.

It is against this backdrop that ILEG, with support from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI)¹, is implementing the project '*Securing democratic space to advance land rights of vulnerable local communities in Siaya and Kwale counties*'. The overall purpose of the project is to support local communities in Siaya and Kwale counties to engage the National Land Commission (NLC), especially its recently appointed Task Force on the formulation of the Bill on historical injustices, to effectively participate in the on-going policy process to resolve current and historical land injustices. The project also aims at enhancing the local communities'

understanding of constitutional and other legal provisions on land rights, as well as other socio-economic rights, including the right to public participation in governance processes.

The Dialogue-cum-Seminar

One of the main activities of the project is to hold local community dialogues-cum-seminars on land rights and outstanding current and historical land injustices in Siaya and Kwale. The first in the series of the dialogues was held in Kwale in January 2015. ILEG plans to hold the second such dialogue and seminar in Siaya on the 20 February 2015. Dubbed **Siaya Community Training Seminar on Human Rights, Access to Resources and Sustainable Development**, the event comes at a time when the Task Force set up by the National Land Commission (NLC) has generated a Bill to address historical injustices. It is instructive to note that ILEG worked with the local community and the Siaya County Government's Ministry of Lands to synthesize and present land issues in the form of a Memorandum to the Task Force. The Bill on Investigation and Adjudication of Historical Land Injustices Bill, 2015 is due for circulation and public reviews and comments.

Organized primarily as a training seminar on human rights, access to resources and sustainable development seminar, the event will provide a good platform for the community to the Bill and prepare comments for submission to NLC's task-force on historical injustices.

Launch of ILEG's Siaya Community Resource Centre (ISCRC)

The seminar-cum-dialogue event on **Human Rights, Access to Resources and Sustainable Development** will also be used to launch ILEG's Siaya Community Resource Centre. The ISCRC provide an information, training and engagement hub for effective socio-economic and political governance in Siaya County. It is intended to be a resource access to information relevant to development planning and implementation in Siaya County. Through the Centre, ILEG will collect, collate, simplify and disseminate information relevant to ensuring effective participation and engagement of citizens in Siaya County development matters. provide a platform for engagement between the county government and local communities. Such information will include – but will not be limited to – budget and budget processes, bills, policies, action plans, tenders, business opportunities, resource mobilization opportunities, training opportunities and county development events. It will also provide training services for local communities, youth and women on important sustainable development issues, including human rights, leadership, policy processes, tendering processes, and basic information and communication skills and technologies.

The expected results of the meeting are:

- i. Local communities in Siaya trained on constitutional and other legal provisions on land, environmental and socio-economic rights
- ii. Local communities in Siaya sensitized on on-going land reform processes (including The Investigation and Adjudication of Historical Land Injustices Bill, 2015), and how they can effectively participate in them.
- iii. Local communities in Siaya trained on how they can engage and collaborate with the County Government as well as the National Land Commission (NLC) in order to actualize land reforms and solve outstanding land issues
- iv. Siaya Community Resource Centre officially launched

The meeting will be held on **20th February 2015**, at **ILEG's office in Siala Plaza, Siaya**. About 20 participants drawn from local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and the private sector are expected to participate. The meeting will be graced by the Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya, H.E. David Angell.

Programme

February 20th 2015

TIME	SESSION	FACILITATOR
8.45 - 9.15 AM	Arrival and registration	<i>ILEG</i>
9.15 – 9.45 AM	Introductions and Opening Remarks	
Session 1: Community dialogue-cum-seminar		
9.45 – 10.45 AM	Constitutional and other legal provisions on land, environmental and socio-economic rights	
10.45 – 11.00 AM	<i>Health Break</i>	
11.00 – 12.00 PM	Solving current and historical land injustices: Engaging with the County Government and the National Land Commission (NLC)	
12.00 – 1.00 PM	Solving current and historical land injustices: The Investigation and Adjudication of Historical Land Injustices Bill, 2015	
1.00 – 2.00 PM	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
Session 2: Launch of ILEG's Siaya Community Resource Centre		
2.00 – 3.00 PM	Speeches: Rep , Siaya Community Rep , County Government Benson Ochieng , <i>Executive Director, ILEG</i> H.E. David Angell , Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya	

3.00 PM	Official launch of Siaya Community Resource Centre	
Closing		