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LANDLINKS

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## #LandMatters Newsletter February 2023

Dear Readers,

In this month of February, I am happy to share with you the USAID Land and Resource Governance (LRG) Division's newsletter. In December 2022, we celebrated International Human Rights Day and last month we hosted an online panel webinar event to draw attention to the work of environmental defenders and the enormous threats that they face. According to Global Witness, an environmental defender has been killed every two days on average over the past decade, while many more are harassed, intimidated, criminalized and forced from their lands. In this newsletter, you can access an online recording of our event and read a special op-ed published by USAID Chief Climate Officer Gillian Caldwell. We have also included updates from our work supporting women's land rights and other highlights. I hope that you enjoy reading about recent achievements in the LRG sector.

Sincerely,

**Stephen Brooks**  
Division Lead, USAID Land and Resource Governance Division

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## Supporting Environmental Defenders



*Members of the Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH) celebrate after David Castillo, president of Desarrollos Energeticos S.A (DESA), was found guilty in the murder of Honduran environmentalist and indigenous leader Berta Caceres, in Tegucigalpa on July 5, 2021. Orlando SIERRA / AFP*

## **Online panel webinar: Standing with Environmental Defenders Under Threat**

On January 19th, 2023, USAID hosted an online panel to discuss the threats facing environmental defenders as they fight against negative climate impacts and biodiversity loss and identified potential solutions to help mitigate these multiple challenges. This event was the kick-off of the year-long “Frontiers” event series, which explores the interface of conflict, climate change, and governance of land and natural resources. The series is hosted by USAID’s Center for Conflict and Violence Prevention and USAID’s Land and Resource Governance Division in partnership with New America.

## **Standing with Environmental Defenders Under Threat**

This op-ed was published by USAID Chief Climate Officer Gillian Caldwell. Environmental defenders are on the frontlines of ecological and social justice. They can be members of local communities, conservation and forest monitors, environmental activists, human rights advocates, religious leaders, journalists, lawyers, or youth leaders. Given the critical and gravely dangerous work that

environmental defenders undertake, USAID and other multilateral and donor organizations must do more to support them.

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## Strengthening Women's Land Rights



*Photo credit: Vaishnavi Suresh, Gap Inc. for USAID*

### **Gender Equality and Climate Finance Technical Brief**

Climate finance offers a pathway to achieve equitable climate action and support a transition to a low-carbon future. Yet, most climate finance to date has been gender-neutral, failing to capture the specific roles and needs of women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in achieving climate goals. This brief explores how to overcome barriers to promoting gender-responsive climate finance, and provides recommendations for interventions.

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### **Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Through Land and Property Rights**

This document describes why USAID's land and property rights programs should

integrate programming to address gender-based violence (GBV) and details specific strategies for doing so. Program examples are provided to illustrate how the strategies can be incorporated into programs in crisis and conflict settings, and links to tools and resources are provided for additional information.

**More blogs and related resources can be found on the [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment page](#) on [Land-Links.org](#)**

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## New Research & Resources Available

### [Land Tenure and Resource Governance Capacity Assessment Framework](#)

ILRG has developed a capacity assessment framework (CAF) focused on land tenure and resource governance. The CAF documents and measures the progress of capacity-building activities toward enabling improved land and resource governance capacity development outcomes. The framework and tool were designed primarily for use by USAID-funded projects, though it may be of interest to additional users such as other funders or implementers of land and resource governance-related activities.

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### [Land Documentation for Financial Inclusion Brief](#)

This brief documents and shares experiences expanding access to weather index insurance and microfinance in Zambia as part of a pilot program developed by ILRG. The program collaborated with financial service providers, insurance agencies, and agricultural input companies to deliver services to stakeholders with customary land certificates. The brief highlights the opportunities and challenges of expanding financial inclusion in underserved rural areas in Zambia.

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### [New Green Energy Minerals Page](#)

This new issue page on LandLinks provides a hub for background information and resources related to USAID's work on the green energy transition. Our energy future depends on securing reliable global mineral supply chains, and key minerals used in green energy are mined around the world, including across 70 countries where USAID works. This page will continue to be developed as USAID's work in this area expands.

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## USAID Land Project Highlights

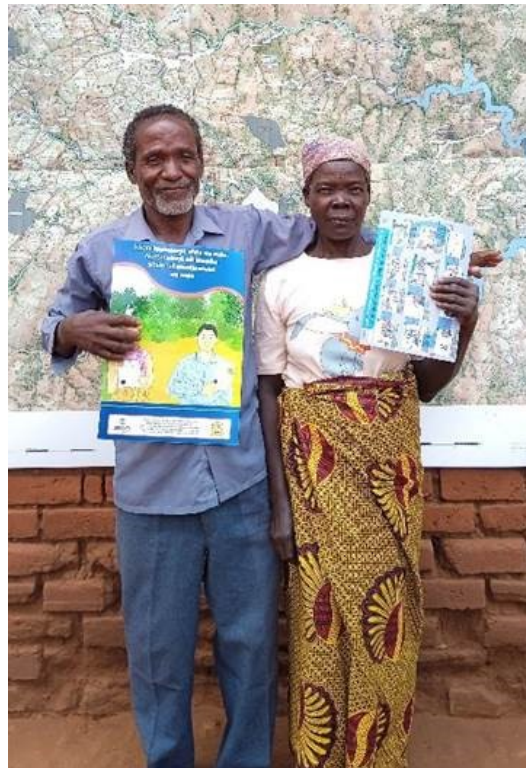


USAID's [Integrated Land and Resource Governance program](#) is a flexible field support mechanism that works with USAID Missions to provide both short- and long-term assistance. Read their most recent publications:

- New Private Sector Profiles
  - [Green Resources](#)
  - [Grupo Madal](#)
  - [Illovo Sugar Africa Ltd.](#)
  - [PepsiCo](#)
- [Migration and Forest Condition Literature Review](#)
- [Land Documentation for Financial Inclusion Brief](#)

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**Quote from the field:** *"Marriage and family are a sacred thing, we both had to come together to see for ourselves the outcome of what we had registered. My wife and I love each other and I always want her to be part of and knowledgeable about everything happening around the family including all the land we own."* – Shadreck Kasamba, 65, and his wife Lozaria Zakeyo, 62, jointly registered their two parcels under a customary land documentation pilot in Malawi supported by the Government of Malawi and USAID. Shadreck and Lozaria came to check their parcel information together during the public display period, when community members can review parcel maps and make any corrections before land certificates are issued.





USAID’s [Integrated Natural Resource Management](#) activity provides on-demand support services and technical assistance for USAID Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices across a wide array of environmental and natural resource management issues, with a focus on gender equality and social inclusion.

Recent publications include:

- [Frontiers: Standing with Environmental Defenders Under Threat](#)
- [Gender Equality and Climate Finance Technical Brief](#)

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**Quote from the field:** *“I never knew anything about land documentation, but my family has had an issue with our land. After I attended the land literacy training, we discussed it, and I showed my family how we could solve the issue. I then sent my son to the land office in the nearby town with the proper documents. Our issue is now resolved, which is a big relief.”* – Salema Begam attended land literacy training under a USAID-PepsiCo partnership to empower women in PepsiCo’s potato supply chain in West Bengal, India. The training helps educate women on land laws and walks them through the process to update their land records.



USAID/Colombia’s [Land for Prosperity Activity](#) supports the Government of Colombia in improving the conditions of rural households to achieve licit economic development through land tenure strengthening.

Read more in some of their recent blog posts:

- ["Having a land title is being rooted to your land without being afraid"](#)
- [Coordination among USAID programs: a win-win for Colombians](#)

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**Quote from the field:** *"I've never had an opportunity to participate in an activity like this before because I'm a visually impaired person. When I heard that they were sensitizing leaders and community members about the involvement of people with disabilities I felt alive, because in our society we are not valued. Today I say yes, I am useful in the community."* – Hortêncio Jorge, a 21 year old young man from Alto Molocué, Mozambique, who recently participated in a training on how to manage an eucalyptus forest plantation. The plantation was transferred to the community as part of a land divestment initiative by company Green Resources with USAID support.



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