



Embassy
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Kampala



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PRESS RELEASE

Announcement of the National Dialogue on Compulsory Land Acquisition

Land constitutes a highly valuable and appreciated good. It has long been an extremely sensitive issue in Uganda. For rural agriculture-based households in particular, land is the most important asset for production. Not surprisingly, efforts of the Government of Uganda to speed up infrastructural developments, such as national roads, railways or hospitals, as laid out in Vision 2040, are being met with a sizeable amount of resistance and fear by many citizens.

When in 2017 the Government of Uganda initiated the process to revise Article 26 of the 1995 Constitution to simplify the procedures of compulsory land acquisition, the reaction of the Ugandan public was not slow in coming. As a result of the emerging controversy, the Constitutional (Amendment) Bill 2017 was withdrawn. The challenges faced by the Government in realizing time-bound infrastructural projects therefore remain unresolved as there is no statutory legislation operationalizing Article 26 of the Constitution. This issue needs to be addressed if infrastructure projects are to move forward without disproportional court action delaying them for too long.

The heated nationwide debate about the proposed amendments requires a reply based on wisdom, common sense and good faith, following a transparent and honest discussion. Trust must be rebuilt, and mutual suspicion reduced between citizens and the state. While the Government must ensure that infrastructure can be developed in reasonable time for the greater good, Ugandans must regain the conviction that the state remains the protector of their interests in land.

The Government of Uganda has therefore, with German support, initiated a National Dialogue on compulsory land acquisition by bringing together different key stakeholder and experts for a technical exchange. The aim for the National Dialogue is to provide a safe space for a well-organized, issues based and inclusive national debate of the draft amendments to

the law, and for creating the conditions for the emergence of a national consensus on the way forward. It is the organizers' sincere hope that the National Dialogue will provide Ugandans with the opportunity to make side by side comparisons and as such provide them with reasonable parameters on compensation following compulsory land acquisition.

The event is organized by LANDnet with the support of a multi-stakeholder steering committee. The committee is comprised of representatives of the Government, development partners, the civil society, and the private sector in order to ensure a balanced preparational process.

The National Dialogue on Compulsory Land Acquisition will be held in Kampala on Thursday, 21st of March 2019. Some two hundred participants are expected to attend. Invited guests include government officials from the Ministry for Lands, Housing and Urban development and the Ministry of Justice and State House, representatives from national and international Civil Society Organizations, representatives of the diplomatic corps as well as the private sector and academia. The National Dialogue is seen as a necessary first step towards reaching a national consensus with regard to proposals on compulsory land acquisition.

Since the topic is of high public interest, the event will be covered by different representatives of the media and press corps. More information can be found on the LANDnet website (<https://www.landnet.ug/national-land-dialogue>) and the event can be followed on twitter #LandDialogueUG.



NATIONAL DIALOGUE
ON
COMPULSORY LAND ACQUISITION
IN UGANDA

March 21 2019 ♦ Skyz Hotel – Naguru

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