

KENYA: New Constitution Ushers in Women's Land Rights

Kenya's new constitution was signed into law in 2010 and launched a bold new set of land rights for women within its broader remit to address both land rights security and gender equality. As a result of over a decade's work, Kenya is now at the forefront of the movement in sub-Saharan Africa to mainstream gender concerns: under the new constitution, its women are now able to own and inherit land and are guaranteed equal treatment to men under the law. This reform ends widespread discrimination against unmarried, widowed, and divorced women, which was often upheld by customary law.

Numerous groups played a pivotal role in delivering this historically critical outcome, including established groups such as the Kenya Land Alliance, the Center for Land, Economy, and Rights of Women, and the Green Belt Movement, and newer groups such as the young women's advocacy group Waremboni Yes (an outgrowth of Bunge la Mwananchi—Women's Social Movement). Waremboni Yes used new technologies (such as mobile phones and the internet) and more traditional methods such as community forums to amplify the voices of their constituency. In the process, innovative female leaders emerged to advance women's rights.

Not only are gender land rights now affirmed in Kenya, the new constitution guarantees that women will fill at least one-third of elected and appointed government posts. The challenge now is to realize in practice the land rights of women that are newly enshrined in the constitution.

Click [here](#) for the full report "PUSHBACK: Local Power, Global Realignment," which takes stock of the current status of forest rights and tenure globally, assesses the key issues and events of 2010 that shape possibilities to improve local rights and livelihoods, and identifies key questions and challenges that the world will face in 2011.