

# Learning Workshop on Women, Land and Housing Rights: Assessing the impacts of dispossession

27–29 August 2020  
Harare, Zimbabwe



Zimbabwe Peoples  
Land Rights  
Movement



Housing and Land  
Rights Network •  
Habitat International  
Coalition



# Contextualising the question of land and housing in Zimbabwe

*Presenter: Terence Chitapi, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, and Agricultural Policy Research in Africa at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK*



# Background

- Zimbabwe now has four decades of land and agrarian reform; characterized by four epochs:
  1. 1980 – 1985
  2. 19860 – 1997
  3. 2001 – 2004 (but officially 2001)
  4. Post-2010 (but beginning roughly around 2005-7)
  
- In this presentation, focus on two (2) aspects:
  1. The land question
  2. Housing as a social and public good

# 1. The land question

- Historical and dates back to colonial times; an inseparable component of the agrarian question.
- Features dispossession of the African population of their land – and the development of white settler capitalism.
- Incomplete process, which however leaves the indigenous population largely land-short.
- The land question becomes an issue underpinning the national liberation struggle.
- Thus, at the 1979 Lancaster House talks, the land question is a key issue; settled by adoption of the ‘willing seller, willing buyer’ method of land reform.
- The resettlement permits address both issues of access to agricultural and housing land simultaneously – but this is almost exclusively rural.



## 2. What happens with the question of urban land and housing?

- Urban housing partially addressed through land held by urban councils – however not adequate because of the prevalence of rural to urban migration, largely a consequence of the failed ESAP.
- With the decimation of the white commercial farming sector through the FTLRP, re-configuration of the political economy, from the dominance of the formal to informal economy, prompts rapid urbanization without a matching development of housing and accompanying amenities.
- Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order in 2005 and the displacement of about 700 000 people.
- But where do these people go?

# ...urban land and housing (cont'd.)

- A good number migrate back to the rural areas and assimilated back in the rural land continuum.
- However, majority are moved initially into peri-urban farms which increasingly come under control of ruling party-sponsored housing cooperatives – the rise of land barons.
- E.g. Caledonia, Hopley, Ushewokunze, Tabudirira
- Politically connected elites and business people get access to peri-urban farms as farmland, but legally/illegally change land use.
- E.g. Crowhill, Glaudene, Zimre Park
- Was more rampant in the main urban metropolises of Harare and Bulawayo, but was still widespread in all urban centres across the country.
- Fuels rapid urbanization but without matching social amenities and public goods e.g. roads, water, electricity, sanitation, recreation.



# ...urban land and housing (cont'd.)

- Tenure and titling is not straight-forward –
  - in some instances, it is integrated within legitimate urban council processes and title deeds issued;
  - In some instances, title is non-existent and occupation remains precarious and tied to political patronage.
  - This patronage on access to urban housing occurs across both the ruling party and the opposition.

# So what?

## What is the significance of this history?

- The FTLRP and previous land reforms in Zimbabwe are irreversible – have addressed the land question and the housing question in the rural areas.
  - however, tenure remains precarious without functional title.
- The urban housing expansion through cooperatives and other irregular land deals will not be reversed.
  - however, regularization will have to happen.
- Numerous land audits have been conducted since 2000; also consider the *2018 Uchena Commission of Inquiry into the sale of state land in and around urban areas since 2005*.

# What next?

- What are the implications of all this going forward?
  1. Funding will have to be sought to expand access to urban housing land and accompanying development and expansion of social services and amenities.
  2. Addressing institutional deficiencies and failures – tightening screws around corruption in allocation of housing land; strengthening both rural and urban land governance underpinned on a genuine land audit; titling to secure tenure.

Ends//

*Thank You*