



Workshop Report

Title: *Reclaiming Land, Restoring Justice: Strengthening Community Land Rights through Alternative Justice Systems (AJS)*

Venue: Ceamo Hotel, Lodwar

Date: 26–28 August 2025

Convened by: County Government of Turkana – Directorate of Lands, Urban and Physical Planning

Facilitated by: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Islamic Foundation for Integrated Programs (IFIP)

1. Introduction

In Turkana, land is more than territory—it is the anchor of identity, the basis of livelihoods, and a deeply spiritual connection for many communities. Yet, despite its centrality, land remains a contested resource, with disputes often escalating into divisions that weaken community bonds. Formal legal systems, while important, are often inaccessible, expensive, or misaligned with cultural realities.

To address these challenges, the County Government of Turkana convened a landmark three-day workshop on “**Reclaiming Land, Restoring Justice**” from 26–28 August 2025 at Ceamo Hotel,

Lodwar. Facilitated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Islamic Foundation for Integrated Programs (IFIP), the workshop brought together 46 participants from across the spectrum—government officials, legal practitioners, traditional leaders, civil society, youth, women representatives, and the media.

The event was officially opened by three senior county leaders: **Leah Losuru (Chief Officer for Lands), Stenza Lomorukai (Chief Officer for Urban Development), and Ruth Emanikor (County Attorney)**. Their joint presence underscored the political will and institutional commitment to strengthen land governance through approaches that blend law, culture, and community ownership.

2. Workshop Facilitation

The facilitation team was drawn from FAO and IFIP, organizations that bring together technical expertise in land governance, justice systems, and participatory community approaches. Sessions were designed to combine **theory, practice, and dialogue**.

Two facilitators led in-depth discussions on **Alternative Justice Systems (AJS)**—exploring the principles of restorative justice, the structure of community-based mechanisms, and how they can complement formal judicial frameworks. A third facilitator guided participants through **community land rights**, unpacking the Community Land Act (2016) and emphasizing the importance of customary tenure and participatory governance.

The sessions were highly interactive, drawing on case studies, role plays, and real-life experiences. By the end, participants not only had increased knowledge but also practical tools they could apply in resolving disputes at the community level.

3. Workshop Objectives

The workshop had three central objectives:

- To deepen understanding of land laws, particularly the Community Land Act (2016), and their implications for Turkana.
- To strengthen knowledge and skills on AJS as a culturally grounded yet legally aligned system of dispute resolution.
- To foster collaboration among government, judiciary, civil society, and communities in order to promote **inclusive, transparent, and sustainable land governance**.

These objectives resonated strongly with participants, many of whom noted that such conversations were long overdue in a county where land disputes are both common and complex.

4. Stakeholder Composition

The workshop brought together a remarkable cross-section of actors. County government departments—including Lands, Physical Planning, and Urban Development—sat alongside representatives from national agencies such as the Ministry of Lands and the National Land Commission (NLC). The judiciary was also represented, with officers from the Lodwar Law Courts, the County Attorney's Office, and the Law Society of Kenya (LSK).

At the community level, members of **Community Land Management Committees (CLMCs)**, youth and women leaders, and traditional elders provided grassroots perspectives. Civil society and faith-based organizations enriched the dialogue with their advocacy and social mobilization experience, while media representatives ensured that the discussions would extend beyond the workshop walls.

This diversity created a unique space where **policy met practice**, and where technical knowledge was balanced with lived community realities.

5. Key Challenges Identified

Despite strong aspirations, participants candidly discussed the deep-rooted challenges facing land governance and justice in Turkana.

One recurring concern was **political interference**. Land allocation and dispute resolution are often swayed by political actors, undermining transparency and fueling mistrust. Coupled with this is the lack of clarity on how **AJS and formal judicial systems interact**—leaving communities unsure about where to seek justice. Another persistent gap is the **poor documentation of customary land agreements**, which leaves communities vulnerable to manipulation and loss of ancestral rights.

At the community level, **low awareness of AJS** mechanisms was flagged as a major obstacle. Many still view justice solely through the lens of formal courts, which are costly and inaccessible to most. The **exclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups** was also highlighted, with participants emphasizing that justice cannot be legitimate if large segments of the population remain voiceless.

Institutionally, the **absence of a formal AJS Secretariat** has made coordination and oversight difficult. AJS committees often lack even the most basic resources—offices, transport, and documentation tools. Without sustainable budgets or clear accountability mechanisms, the system struggles to move from intention to implementation.

6. Strategic Resolutions

The workshop was not only about identifying problems but also about designing solutions. Participants collectively agreed on a roadmap that included institutional, legal, and community-level actions.

On the **institutional front**, stakeholders resolved to establish autonomous AJS committees at county and sub-county levels, supported by a County AJS Secretariat staffed with seconded officers from the judiciary, the County Attorney's Office, and the Lands Department. This structure would provide a clear home for AJS within Turkana's governance system.

Legally, there was consensus on the need for **county-level legislation** that recognizes and protects customary land agreements, while ensuring that AJS processes remain politically neutral and aligned with national policy.

Inclusivity emerged as a non-negotiable principle. Participants proposed **mandatory representation of women, youth, and marginalized groups** in AJS committees, alongside robust civic education campaigns to raise public awareness.

Capacity-building was also emphasized. The plan includes **training CLMCs and AJS committees** in both land law and mediation, peer-learning exchanges with other counties already implementing AJS, and certification for community mediators.

Finally, participants agreed that infrastructure and resources must be strengthened. Offices, ICT tools, transport, and documentation systems are essential. FAO and IFIP made an initial contribution of office supplies during the workshop, symbolizing a starting point for greater investment.

7. Workshop Evaluation

A total of **46 participants** attended, including 34 men and 12 women, ranging in age from 18 to 56+. Roles varied from land administrators and surveyors to community leaders and legal officers, ensuring a holistic perspective.

The evaluation showed high levels of satisfaction:

- Clarity of objectives: **4.7/5**
- Relevance to roles: **4.8/5**
- Understanding of AJS: **4.7/5**
- Facilitators' delivery: **4.8/5**
- Training methods: **4.6/5**
- Overall satisfaction: **4.6/5**
- Likelihood to recommend: **9.2/10**

While logistics and time management were areas needing improvement, the overwhelming feedback reflected that the workshop was both timely and transformative.

8. Participant Reflections

Throughout the sessions, participants shared moving reflections:

"Community land registration and AJS are key to securing rights. I will use this knowledge to guide others." — LSK Representative

"This training was timely and practical. Structured support is now urgent." — County Attorney, Turkana County

"We call on partners to continue walking with us as we put these lessons into practice." — CLMC Chairperson, Kerio Village Unit

These testimonies showed both appreciation for the learning and urgency for action.

9. Call to Action

The workshop ended with a strong call to action:

- For the **County Government**, to institutionalize AJS in laws, budgets, and development plans.
- For **national agencies**, to legally recognize AJS and harmonize policies.
- For **development partners**, to invest in infrastructure, training, and resource mobilization.
- For **communities**, to embrace AJS as a legitimate, accessible, and inclusive system of justice.

10. Conclusion

This workshop marked a turning point for Turkana. What began as dialogue evolved into a collective roadmap for action. The County Government demonstrated leadership, facilitators provided technical depth, and communities showed readiness to embrace justice rooted in both tradition and law.

As participants departed Lodwar, the message was clear: **AJS offers Turkana a chance to resolve disputes fairly, secure land rights, and strengthen peace.** The foundation has been laid—now is the moment to build.

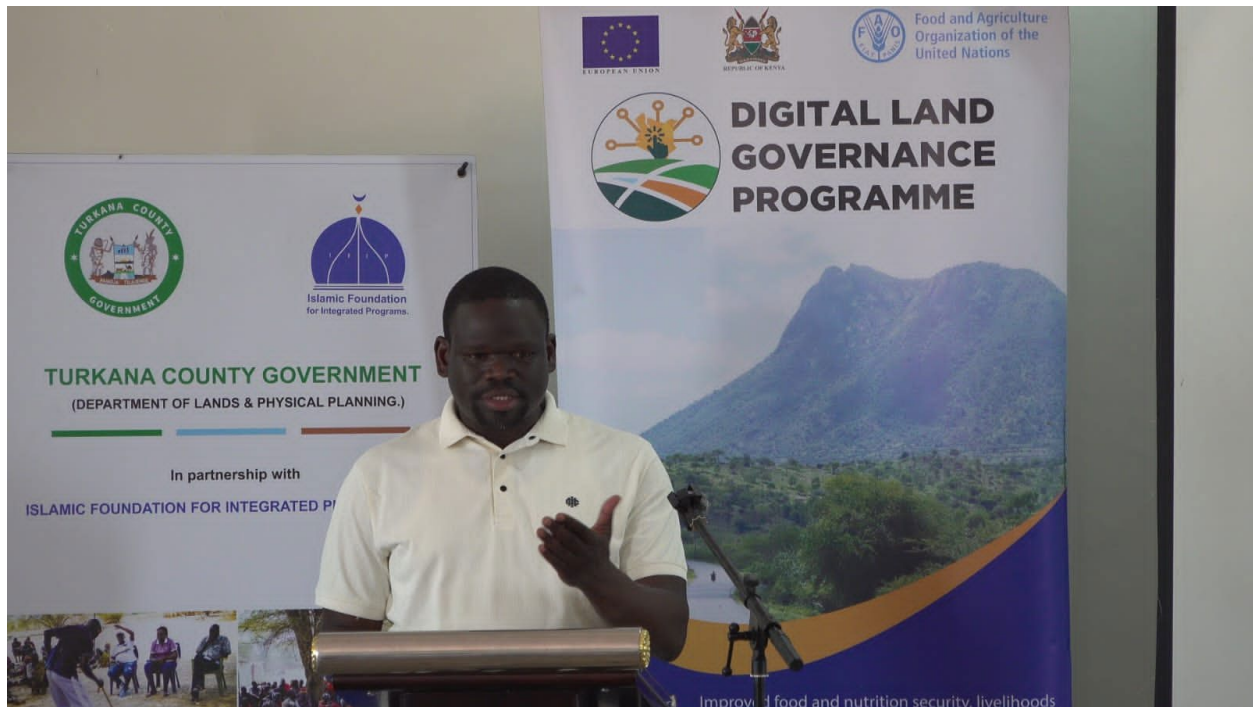
Annexes



Turkana county Land adjudicator Vincent Agevi giving his insights



Participants during the training



Facilitator Okoth unpacking community land act



The 3 day workshop attendees

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