



## SNAPSHOT

### Customary Tenure Studies Influence Land Policy in Liberia

#### LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCE TENURE RESEARCH PROMOTES CUSTOMARY TENURE RECOGNITION



Photo: Anna Knox

Man works his land in Little Kola Clan, Liberia.

*Analysis from 11 clans results in recommendations for addressing sources of tenure insecurity faced by rural communities in Liberia.*

#### Telling Our Story

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The Land Policy and Institutional Support (LPIS) Project, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), conducted field research on land and natural resource tenure in 11 administrative clan units in Liberia, including Ding, Dobli, Gbanshay, Little Kola, Mana, Motor Road, Saykleken, Tengia, Upper Workor, Ylan, and the community of Nitrian. The final report presented an analysis of critical implications of the findings of the study and provided recommendations for addressing sources of tenure insecurity faced by rural communities in Liberia. The research was carried out under the auspices of the Liberian Land Commission and was undertaken with the primary purpose of improving the understanding of customary tenure in rural Liberia. The information and analyses were intended to enable the Land Commission to develop sound law and policy that will strengthen the land tenure security of rural communities in Liberia.

LPIS drew from the research carried out in 11 clans to provide suggestions for actions the Government of Liberia can take to strengthen the tenure security of rural communities who rely primarily on custom to secure their rights to land and natural resources. These were structured around three principal objectives:

- 1) To provide legal recognition of customary land tenure and immediately protect rural communities from further challenges to their customary claims;
- 2) To develop an inclusive process for adjudicating and recording community-based tenure claims in a manner that reflects local norms and values and provides equitable access to land for rural populations; and,
- 3) To reform local land and natural governance structures so that they command social legitimacy and can be held accountable by their constituencies.

The Land Commission has already incorporated these recommendations in drafting a land rights policy that recognizes customary tenure and stipulates that the tenure category has the same rights as private tenure and should be protected accordingly.