



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Women struggle to secure land rights



Hard fight for access and decision-making power

 By Mary Kimani

Felitus Kures is a widow living in Kapchorwa, northeastern Uganda. Her husband's death left her solely responsible for their children. To meet their needs, she

depended on the small piece of land she and her husband had farmed together. But just months after his funeral, her in-laws sold her husband's land without her knowledge. "We only realized this when the buyer came to evict us," Ms. Kures explains. She was able to regain use of the land after she got legal assistance with the help of the Uganda Land Alliance, a civil society group that campaigns for land rights.

Ms. Kures's plight is a common one in Africa, although she was more fortunate than most other women.

Maize field in Malawi: Women account for 70 per cent of Africa's food production, but often do not have secure access to land.

 Redux / Hollandse Hoogte / Arie Kievit

Many never regain access or rights to matrimonial land lost after divorce or the death of a spouse.

Experts report that women in Africa contribute 70 per cent of food production. They also account for nearly half of all farm labour, and 80–90 per cent of food processing, storage and transport, as well as hoeing and weeding.