

Can SADC member states feed the future while fueling the present? A Perspective on Intergenerational Justice in Land Management

Lupwana Jean Jacques, Kandala, PhD
University of Venda, Department of Public Law
Email: lupwana.kandala@univen.ac.za

Abstract *

The progressive disappearance of land available for farming or for livestock to produce biofuel in SADC member states creates inequalities that will persist across current and future generations. Meeting the rising demand for land for biofuel production without unacceptable socioeconomic and environmental consequences is a major challenge for most SADC member states. Biofuel production may exacerbate these challenges, particularly by diverting land, water, and other natural resources away from food production. As many countries struggle to achieve national land reform, issues such as land availability for biofuel use must be addressed through legislation and regulation, as well as sustainability standards and certification schemes, to guide the deployment of bioenergy production systems. Even if this may seem remote given the current realities, promoting sustainable land use realistically requires balancing environmental and socioeconomic objectives. Using a doctrinal approach, this paper assesses the extent to which the rules and practices of international law applicable to the global Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to natural resources, constitute an essential component of governance in a sustainable biofuel system. The paper argues that these rules help mitigate negative impacts and promote best management practices. Their use also contributes to community participation, national environmental impact assessment and land tenure processes, and therefore may shape the way land is used to produce food and biofuels.

Keywords: biofuel, food, intergenerational justice, land management, SADC states