

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Tuesday 22 July 2014

International recognition for land reform Research

University of Tasmania post-graduate student David Anafo has received international recognition for his work on land reforms in Ghana.

Mr Anafo received a silver medal for his work in the annual Global Development Network Awards and Medals Competition, at the 15th Annual Global Development Conference held last month in Accra, Ghana.

His paper was one of six selected for prizes from 400 entries, and was presented to the full conference audience of more than 500 participants drawn from 72 countries and comprised of academics, policy-makers and stakeholders.

The winning paper was chosen under the category of Environmental Sustainability, Management of Natural Resources and Structural Transformations, receiving a US \$5,000 prize. The paper was titled *Land Reforms and Land Rights Change: An Ethnographic Case Study of Land Stressed Groups in the Nkoranza South Municipality of Ghana*.

Mr Anafo's paper looked at the impacts of land reforms in Ghana on the capacity of small communities to gain access to agricultural land. The paper outlined the introduction in 1999 of the Ghana Land Administration Project, a land reform system that aimed to provide investors with transparent and secure access to land they could buy as a means of stimulating national development. This land tenure reform replaced an existing kin-based system where community chiefs apportioned land each year for community members to grow crops.

Mr Anafo's research suggested that the Land Administration Project has impacted negatively on women farmers, pastoralists and migrant farmers in small rural communities whose land rights are now uncertain, undefined and subject to changes beyond their control. Mr Anafo's paper recommended that land reforms must embody the traditional conception of land as a commodity, a gift, and as a sacred object.

"With this year's Global Development Conference being held in Ghana, it was a great opportunity to present my paper to the people who are currently making decisions about land reforms in my country including the Vice President of Ghana, representatives of the World Bank and academics from African universities," Mr Anafo said.

“The award also gave me the opportunity to provide some evidence of the impacts of land reforms on small regional communities to key decision makers from around the world. The information I have gathered is specific to Ghana but relates to all developing countries where community systems are being replaced by private ownership of land.”

The paper included research results from Mr Anafo's PhD project that he is completing with the support of one of the University of Tasmania's Elite Research Scholarships through the Institute of Regional Development at the Cradle Coast Campus in Burnie.

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