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IMPROVING LAND ACCESS AND ASSET OWNERSHIP BY THE POOR
THROUGH LAND REFORM: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE AND POLICY
IMPLICATIONS

ORGANIZER AND RAPPORTEUR KLAUS DEININGER (USA)

The symposium dealt with five papers on land markets and land reform. It opened with analysis of the impact of a recent land-titling programme on land-attached investment, profits and land values in Nicaragua (Juan Sebastian Chamorro). This reported a surprisingly significant impact of possession of registered title on the dependent variables. To study the functioning of land markets in the Dominican Republic, Karen Macours and Alain de Janvry used community-level surveys to identify determinants of farmers' factor market participation. A third paper on the impact of land reform in the Philippines (Miet Maertens and Klaus Deininger) found a significant impact of the programme on investment and accumulation of human capital, but at the same time a deleterious effect on land access of the legislation accompanying the land reform.

An analysis of the Zimbabwean land reform (Bill Kinsey) used panel data specifically collected for the purpose. It indicated that land reform improved asset accumulation by beneficiaries. However, the impact on per capita income was less pronounced because, as a result of the economic crisis, relatively well-to-do land reform households faced considerable in-migration from family members coming from urban areas.

Finally, a recent analysis of the land reform programme in South Africa (K. Deininger and J. May) indicated that shortcomings in design reduced the speed with which the programme could be implemented. Nevertheless, poor people, especially those who made a contribution to managing the subproject in which they participated, were able to use the land reform programme to increase production. Participants discussed implications for government intervention aiming to improve the efficiency with which land markets function and with which property rights are defined. The conditions under which programmes of redistributive land reform might be desirable, as well as their design features, were also considered.