

Land Tenure: A Tool for Controlling Pollution and Improving Environmental Quality in Informal Settlements

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ABSTRACT

Urban settlements are places where large amounts of labor and capital are mixed with small amounts of land to produce specific commodities and services. The appropriate mixture of capital, labor and land is the secret for locating an activity at a specific parcel of land. The model of urban land use, better known as the monocentric model, provides valuable insights presenting how and why land is used, and could explain the development of informal settlements in particular location within the city proper or at the hinterlands.

Informal settlements in developing countries provide their settlers with means of subsistence. They provide them with shelter and jobs to support their families. Meanwhile, informal settlements are areas that lack amenities, particularly social and physical infrastructures, and often the built environment is degraded.

Environment is the source for materials to be used as inputs in the production process, and the medium where wastes are dumped. Pollution results from the return of unmanaged, untreated wastes to the environment. Firms and households discharge their wastes to the environment in gaseous, liquid and solid state.

Informal areas within and around a metropolis are among the sources of polluting the urban environment, and significantly contribute to global environmental problems. This paper attempts to show how securing land tenure for settlers of informal areas is bound to abate pollution and improve the quality of the environment. The paper uses the model and related body of the economic theory to argue that registry of real estate, particularly land, through securing its tenure will mobilize resources needed for improving the degraded built environment of informal settlements.