

Will papers help me protect my land?

Most people do not have any papers to show they own their land. The law says that even without papers, you have the same rights of ownership as people who have titles to their land. It is not necessary to get a title in order to own land.

You can own land without titles according to 'customary rules', for example because you inherited the land or because you bought it from the person who was locally recognised as being the real owner.

Nevertheless, some people feel that they would be more secure if they had titles, and there are some programmes which are encouraging people to get titles.

Is this a good idea? Are there advantages in getting papers for land? There are both advantages and disadvantages in getting papers of ownership for your land. No-one can decide for you what is the best for you, because that will depend upon your circumstances and your needs. If you understand what is involved in the different choices that you can make, then you and your family will be able to make the decisions that best suit you.

What should I do?

You have three choices.

- 1) You can choose **not to get any papers** at all. You are still the legal owner of the land.
- 2) You can get a **certificate of customary ownership**. The certificate is given by the Recorder (the sub-county chief).
- 3) You can get a **title** to your land. This means that you will be what is called 'the freehold owner' of the land. You can apply for a title at the District Land Board.

Some people want to get a leasehold title from the District Land Board on their customary land. This is not correct. A lease is a long term rental agreement, which is why you have to pay ground rent every year. You get a lease on land which is owned by someone else, e.g. the State ("the Government"), but not on your own land.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of the three choices. There is no 'best way forward' that will suit everyone. Read through the leaflets which explain what is involved in each choice. Discuss it with your family and decide which one suits your interests best.