

Aruba, July 24, 2013 - Africa's economic growth is being held back by confusion over who owns vast swathes of agricultural land, according to a World Bank report.

The continent is home to half of the world's usable uncultivated land, yet has the highest poverty rate.

But the Bank said farmers' inability to prove ownership, legal disputes and land grabs had held back cultivation. Land governance needs to be improved if Africa is to fully exploit its resources and create jobs, it said.

Writing in the report, *Securing Africa's Land for Shared Prosperity*, the Bank's vice-president for the continent, Makhtar Diop, said: "Despite abundant land and mineral wealth, Africa remains poor. "Improving land governance is vital for achieving rapid economic growth and translating it into significantly less poverty and more opportunity for Africans, including women who make up 70% of Africa's farmers, yet are locked out of land ownership due to customary laws.

"The status quo is unacceptable and must change so that all Africans can benefit from their land," Mr Diop said.

Read more/ Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23421548>