Land Tenure and International Investment in Agriculture

A perspective on Large-scale foreign investments on land and their alternatives

Madiodio Niasse, ILC Secretariat
What is ILC?

- Established in mid-1990s as: **Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty**, which became ILC in 2003
- A global alliance to *promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for the poor*;
- About **80 member organisations**, including IGOs and CSOs (farmers’ organisations, research institutes, NGOs and CBOs);
- The phenomenon of **large-scale land transactions** at the heart of the Coalition’s mandate
Understanding the broader context of current LSLA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of historical eras (Raskin et al. 2002)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stone Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10^5 \rightarrow$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Pleistocene (Ice Age) | Holocene | Anthropocene* |

* Human activity altering the planet on a scale comparable to major geological events (P. Crutzen)

- **Acceleration** (each stage shortened by a factor of 10 compared to the previous)
- **Globalisation** of the economy \( \rightarrow \) *increased throughputs of natural resources*
- **Weakening of nation-state**
- **Emergence of global governance actors and mechanisms**
Understanding the broader context of current LSLA

The global market

The Earth’s natural resources

Land
Lesson 1. Improve governance in countries where the resources are located
Lesson 2. **CSR and global citizen engagement** make sense to compensate weak governance at national level.
Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Land & NR

**Pros:**
- Does address need to improve governance at national level
- Process used is highly participatory
- Has potential for locally-centred sustainable response

**Cons:**
- Scope (land and NR) might be too broad
- Neglect of key global actors
- Too optimistic on the “demand” for better land governance
- Takes time

ILC contribution:
- Participation in VG consultation processes
- Planned: VG as part of Dialogue on LSLA
- Planned: Promoting the VGs once approved
### Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments

#### Positive Aspects:
- Addresses need to **improve the global governance**
- Recognises the **need for investment in agriculture** in many countries in the South
- Effort to **link the principles with evidence** gathered
- Effort to **reconcile competing interests** (investors, host gov. priorities; protection of community rights)

#### Negative Aspects:
- **Participation sub-optimal**
- Some of **key assumptions contested**: “availability of farmlands”
- **Key Global actors not fully on board**: CSOs in particular
- Lack of clarity on **implementation/enforcement modalities**

#### ILC Contribution:
- **Participation Consult. on WB study**
- **Evidence gathering**
- **Call for an open dialogue**
ILC contribution: Evidence gathering

- **FAO/IFAD/IIED**: 5 countries in Africa (2009)
- **World Bank**: 20+ countries globally (2010)
- **GTZ**: four countries in Asia and Africa (2010)
- **FIAN**: 2 countries /Africa (2010)
- **SNV**: 5 countries West Africa (2009) + 6 countries (2010)
- **Club du Sahel with ILC**: West Africa region (2010)
- **ROPPA/IDRC**: 5 countries in West Africa
- **IFAD/FAO/IIED**: Business models

- **ILC 35 studies**
- **Global synthesis**
Rationale:

- **Major interest groups** (including those who use and/or own the land, govs in the receiving countries, public and private investors) *left out from the search for responses*

⇒ Need for meaningful open debates among the proponents of the various responses, and among all relevant parties

Expected outcome

⇒ Positions & responses by the various parties are more informed by available evidence & by the alternatives perspectives
ILC response: Widening the Dialogue

Format of the Dialogue: a two-stage process

Phases of the Dialogue:

1. CSO-FO Phase (aim of levelling the playing field)
2. Open Dialogue Phase
   - On the evidence
   - On the responses being proposed (principles and alternatives to principles)

Dialogue modalities:

- Regional consultations
- Global consultations (meetings and electronic consultations)
- Linkages with other global and regional processes
Possible issues for Dialogue

1. Needs assessment: Food security for whom?
   - Alt. to FDI
   - FDI
   - Non land-based FDI
   - Extent engagement w/ local communities

2. Economic/social impacts: jobs, food sec.
   - Potential for benefit-sharing mechanisms
   - Environmental impacts

3. Enforcement of agreed regulatory responses
Conclusion: Way forward?

- **Land, territory** has always been subject to a **logic of confrontation** rather than **cooperation**
- The **antagonistic positions** and the **polarised nature of the debates** on land/land reform been **amplified** (not eased) by LSLAs
  - On the evidence, each party collected its own to make its case;
  - On the responses: multiple responses on the table, ranging from radical opposition to any form of LSLA (**land grabbing**) to unconditional support to it (**investments**);
  - Each camp deepening its positions in a potentially endless “battle of trenches” where **the only real loser is the poor, the interest of whom each camp pretends to stand for**.
Conclusion: two possible directions

1. Intensified “Trench warfare”

2. Toward concerted responses
   - You need courage/commitment to be in the trenches
   - You need the same to meet/talk to the other camp
   - ILC bets on the latter, which is its raison d’etre
Thank you!

For more information on ILC: [www.landcoalition.org](http://www.landcoalition.org)