



Commercialisation of Land and 'Land Grabbing': Implications for Land Rights and Livelihoods in Southern Africa

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Background

This project investigates the multiple pressures towards the commercialisation of land in Southern Africa – specifically the leasing, concessions or sale of public and communal lands to foreign companies and governments for food production, for tourism developments, for biofuel production, and for other commercial agricultural uses. These pressures are part of a global phenomenon that has accelerated since the 'food price crisis' of 2007-2008. The project critically investigates how these factors impact on land rights, how land users are responding, their views of the deals and their impacts, how governments and other authorities in the region are responding (and promoting or opposing) major transnational land deals, and we work with local land users, through local research institutions, NGOs and other structures, to document the land deals and their effects, to develop recommendations for policy, and to inform advocacy in national, regional, continental and global contexts. The project duration is three years, with the final year

exclusively dedicated to dissemination and engagement with a wide spectrum of actors on the basis of research findings.

This project

This project is conceived as a response to widespread concerns about the 'land grab' phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa, and the dearth of grounded studies to understand how these deals are structured, who facilitates them, how local people respond, and the degree to which protection of land rights in existing policy and legislation is adequate to safeguard the interests of poor land users in the face of pressures towards commercialisation, in which governments and urban elites are often actively involved.

Objectives

The project purpose is to support policy makers and civil society organisations with the information and capacity needed to make evidence-based policy to promote good land governance in, as well as alternatives to, large-scale land acquisitions, so as to protect

people living on public and customary lands in Southern Africa from dispossession, and enable them to shape decisions concerning the use and transaction of their land.

The overall objective is to realise the aim that good land governance is promoted through effective and sustainable decentralised land reforms, which contribute to resolving conflicts around diverse and contested land needs, specifically those arising in the context of the commercialisation of land and large-scale land acquisitions of land in Southern Africa.

Countries

Zambia

Evidence-based policy advocacy around large-scale land acquisitions in the field crop and mining sectors
Zambia Land Alliance
www.zla.org.zm



Zambia Land Alliance is carrying out field work in two sites namely: the proposed Amatheon Agri in Mumbwa District, Central Province where the firm has already obtained between 1,200ha to 20,000ha and aims to make a bigger concession of up to 60,000ha; the second site concerns First Quantum

Minerals in Solwezi District, North-Western Province. First Quantum Minerals (FQM) is a Canadian mining company which has already invested in a copper mining project, the Kansanshi Copper Mine, in Solwezi; they have received an additional large-scale mining license to begin their expansion with the Trident Project, of which the first development will take place in the Sentinel deposit for copper. Since these are projects under negotiation, the study is focusing on processes involved in the allocation of large-scale land investments and the scope for consultation and participation by the different stakeholders.

Zimbabwe



Beneath and Beyond the Land Revolution:
Lessons from Land Investments in Zimbabwe
Ruzivo Trust
www.ruzivo.co.zw

Ruzivo Trust is investigating the investment of the Zimbabwe Bioenergy Company which has invested in multiple land uses in Mwenezi District, Masvingo Province. The land under the Zimbabwe Development Trust (360,000 ha) is now used for sugarcane production, cattle ranching, crocodile farming and tourism. The study is exploring the broader context of the impact of this investment to communities in Mwenezi, as well as those ring-fenced in the estate, and are beneficiaries of the Zimbabwe's fast-track land reform programme. The country team is doing a comparative analysis in Chisumbanje in Manicaland Province through examining the same issues, but also capturing differences emerging on the displacement of local farmers and contests over who owns and has rights on the 40,000 hectares between the communities and the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency (ARDA), which has partnered with the Zimbabwe Bioenergy Company.

Malawi

Policy reforms and large scale land investments: Implications for food security and livelihoods of the rural poor in Malawi
LandNet Malawi
www.landcoalition.org/organizations/land-net-malawi



LandNet is researching three different types of land-based investments. The first study site includes the combination of an operating large-scale sugarcane estate and small-scale farmers in Nkhotakota District in the central region. The second site is the new mining concessions in the Mzimba district, Northern Region. The last site is the individual investments in sugarcane plantations in the southern region, where individual land accumulation for sugarcane production is underway. In all the three sites, the team is exploring the impacts of the identified deals on the land rights, food security and livelihoods of the people, and particularly women and children. It is further examining the decision-making processes in terms of who makes which decisions and how those decisions affect the wellbeing of the immediate communities.

Namibia



Investigating commercial irrigation land deals in Namibia's communal areas focusing on the Kavango and Caprivi Regions
Legal Assistance Centre
www.lac.org.na

The research team in Namibia looks at two planned irrigation projects located in the Kavango region and at one project located in the Caprivi region. The first irrigation project in the Kavango, the Fumo Mbambo Project, is situated in the Mukwe Constituency in eastern Kavango and covers 892ha. It is reportedly aimed at producing various crops and vegetables for the local market; it was initiated by a local businessman. The second project in Kavango is located in the Ndiyona constituency, covering 2000ha. Its main investor is a South African Company called HJM Agri Investments. However, local farmers resisted the project as according to them they had not been consulted. They fear relocation and clearance of their crop fields (45 local farmers). Allegedly the project has come to a halt with an investigation currently being carried out by the Kavango Communal Land Board. The third project is located in the centre of Eastern Caprivi within the Sibinda constituency, initiated by the Namibia Agriculture & Renewables Company. A right of leasehold over 5000ha has been issued by the Caprivi Communal Land Board, however the total size of the project is foreseen to be in total 29,873 ha to be developed in stages after the attainment of certain milestones. Lucern is supposed to be the anchor crop of this project. In these three projects, the research team is focusing on conflicts that exist within Kavango and Caprivi regarding agriculture, land rights and conservation programmes and the impacts of large-scale investments on the local communities in the area.

Mozambique



Large-scale land acquisitions, land tenure security and local communities' livelihoods: Examples from ProSavana in Mozambique
Juventude Desenvolvimento e Advocacia Ambiental

[http://africaprosperity.com/index.php/region/east-africa/mozambique/region/](http://africaprosperity.com/index.php/region/east-africa/mozambique/region/items/view/Juventude-Desenvolvimento-e-Advocacia-Ambiental)

[items/view/Juventude-Desenvolvimento-e-Advocacia-Ambiental](http://africaprosperity.com/index.php/region/east-africa/mozambique/region/items/view/Juventude-Desenvolvimento-e-Advocacia-Ambiental)

The country team is exploring the on-going negotiations and plans to implement the ProSavana program – a triangular project in Nampula, Zambézia and Niassa provinces in Northern Mozambique. The program covers 14 districts, within an area of 65,907 km², representing 8.7 % of the total country's size, jointly implemented by the governments of Mozambique, Brazil and Japan. Currently, the master plan of the programme is still in the final elaboration phase. The case is ideal to provide an analysis of these on-going processes, interrogate how the project engages the local communities and its implications for rural livelihoods and secure land tenure. In this way, the research is aiming to influence the issues of land grabs in specific affected communities, but also at the national level.

Outputs

The project outputs will include, from 2013:

- **Testimonials and photos** from landholders and small-scale farmers at two research sites
- **Podcasts** featuring affected landholders and small-scale farmers at our research sites
- **A database and clickable map** showing details of large-scale land deals in Southern Africa
- **Research updates** on emerging findings and outcomes of action research

- **Policy briefs** summarising implications of findings for policy audiences
- **A final research report**
- Additional outputs will include **newspaper articles, radio and television interviews**, and **academic articles** in refereed international journals.

Timelines

This is a three year project from 2012-2014. Qualitative fieldwork is underway during 2013. In 2014, follow-up fieldwork will continue alongside dissemination of research findings and policy engagement with state and non-state actors in Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as in regional and continental bodies.

Policy engagement

Policy actors at national, regional, continental and global levels are keen to learn from insights from research on land and agricultural commercialisation, and to integrate these lessons into emerging policy frameworks. Among our priority policy audiences are the African Union and its Land Policy Initiative (LPI), the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), together with agricultural development and finance bodies; and regional organisations like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU). At national level, we aim to engage as our research proceeds with government departments of trade and investment, agriculture, land and environment, parliaments, agribusiness actors, the media, traditional leaders, and civil society organisations.

Research partners

This research is undertaken by the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) (www.plaas.org.za) and partners listed above in the five countries, under the aegis of the Future Agricultures Consortium (www.future-agricultures.org).



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Governments must ensure livelihoods and food security are protected under land deals

PLAAS/Future Agricultures

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The Future Agricultures Consortium aims to encourage critical debate and policy dialogue on the future of agriculture in Africa. The Consortium is a partnership between research-based organisations across Africa and in the UK. Future Agricultures Consortium Secretariat at the University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE UK T +44 (0) 1273 915670 E info@future-agricultures.org

PLAAS does research, policy engagement, teaching and training about the dynamics of chronic poverty and structural inequality in Southern Africa, with a particular emphasis on the key role of restructuring and contesting land holding and agro-food systems in the subcontinent and beyond.

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