



LAND POLICY INITIATIVE

Multi-stakeholder Conference on

Agricultural Investment, Gender and Land in Africa

Towards inclusive, equitable and socially responsible investment

Protea Hotel, Stellenbosch (Cape Town), South Africa, 5-7 March 2014

Announcement and call for participation

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), the Future Agricultures Consortium, and the Land Policy Initiative (LPI) of the African Union, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, are jointly organizing a multi-stakeholder conference to be held in Cape Town, South Africa in March 2014.

Call for participation

Individuals and institutions from different sectors, including academia, government, private sector, civil society, rural organizations, and donor and development agencies, are invited to submit proposals to participate in the conference. We especially call for positive experiences and examples of investment in agriculture and African farmers, including public-private partnerships. Abstracts for presentations of papers and convening of discussion panels should be no more than 300 words and should explicitly mention how gender is addressed. *Proposals for contributions in a variety of formats – including short papers, movies, poster presentations, toolkits and checklists, book launches, and others – will be welcomed.* Please send your proposals to Tersia Warries at PLAAS on tmwarries@plaas.org.za by close of business South African time on **Wednesday 8 January 2014**.

Objectives of the conference

The conference aims to promote an open exchange of experiences and evidence-based knowledge on the implications of public and private agricultural investments for rural livelihoods, gender relations, social differentiation. The conference will feature research findings by a range of institutions and networks, that document and analyse diverse land-based investments and the related business models, investment partnerships, community impacts and community responses. The purpose is to critically review existing investment practices as well as relevant policy and institutional set-ups in order to identify good and bad practices, promising strategies, approaches and policy measures that can be promoted and adapted to national contexts to foster inclusive, equitable and socially responsible investment that respect the rights of local communities and promote economic growth within a framework of social and gender equality.

Context

The last few years have witnessed a renewed interest in of Africa's farmland, and the role of agricultural development in national and international agendas. As a result, many developing countries are making vigorous efforts to attract and facilitate foreign and domestic investment in agriculture, with the expectation that such investment will contribute to production growth, poverty reduction and food security, while at the same time provide developmental benefits through technology transfer, employment creation, access to markets and infrastructure development. However, recent research has highlighted that investment does not necessarily produce positive outcomes; rather, the outcomes depend on many factors, including the prevailing agriculture and rural development model; the institutional, policy and regulatory framework in place; the type and degree of inclusiveness of the business models adopted, and the extent to which social and gender equity issues are considered, among others. Certain types of investment, such as large-scale land acquisitions, have had negative effects on host countries such as displacing small farmers, undermining or negating existing rights, increasing corruption, reducing food security, aggravating gender and social inequalities and environment degradation. Conversely, investments in farmers themselves, and investments adopting inclusive business models and respecting rural populations' rights, including land and labour rights, seem to be more beneficial for small farmers and workers. In response to these varied experiences, efforts have been made to foster international/regional frameworks that promote more responsible public and private investment in agriculture, including the African Union's Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa adopted in 2009, and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in 2012.

Why the focus on gender?

Despite the progress made to date, there has been limited focus on how agricultural investments affect differently women and men from various social groups. Yet recent studies carried out in several countries by FAO, PLAAS and Future Agricultures and the LPI (among others) have clearly shown that agricultural investments operated under diverse business models (including plantations, contract farming, outgrower schemes or joint ventures) create gender-differentiated labour and income-generating opportunities for local farmers, agricultural workers and the rest of the rural population. Case studies have also brought to light that there are differences in access, use and control of land among different social categories of rural people, depending on sex, civil status, ethnicity, education, relative position in the community etc. This and other evidence could help to identify promising approaches, policies, strategies and measures that are more inclusive and socially and environmentally sensitive. Moreover, the involvement of inclusive producers' organizations and cooperatives, both in the investment process and in shaping an enabling environment, is crucial for the realization of equitable and socially responsible public and private agricultural investments.

Themes of the conference

In order to move forward and enrich the existing evidence taking into account the gender dimensions of agricultural investments, the conference will foster exchange of ideas on thematic areas and specific issues drawing on presentations of cases and recent research and experiences from the field. The conference will analyze the following thematic areas always with a strong focus on gender and social equity dimensions:

1. Primary agriculture investments implemented under different business models and the implications for the livelihoods of rural women and men;

- Value chain participation and small-scale farmer development
- Technology transfer and skills development
- Opportunities and challenges for decent employment creation and income generation
- Changes in land access, use and control
- Free, prior and informed consent
- Changes in intra-household decision-making and resource control
- Infrastructure development and provision of social goods

2. Enabling environment, strategies and approaches for responsible, inclusive and gender equitable agriculture investments;

- Policy, institutional and regulatory frameworks, including national land tenure, agricultural development, trade regulation and investment policy, legislation and related institutions
- Civil society and producers' organizations best practice, roles and responses
- Private sector best practice, corporate social responsibility and self-regulation

Focus countries

Ghana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda are the priority countries but interesting and innovative case studies from other countries will also be considered.

Who should attend?

Approximately 80-100 participants are envisaged to contribute views and experiences from different sectoral perspectives. The conference will be of interest to:

- National government representatives (central and local level)
- Regional organisations like the African Union, AfDB, SADC, EAC, CEMAC, ECOWAS
- Bilateral and multilateral agencies and donors
- UN agencies and other development bodies
- Civil society groups, farmers' associations, producer cooperatives
- Private investors and private sector interest groups
- Researchers and academics

Languages

The conference will be held in English. Interpretation might be provided if needed. Those needing interpretation should indicate this in their proposals.

Cost of participation

No conference fee will be charged. Those organisations that are able to self-fund their participation and/or sponsor other participants are invited to contact the conference organisers. A limited number of participants can be provided with travel and accommodation by the conference organisers. Those wishing to apply for this financial support should write a one paragraph motivation clarifying why they feel they should attend the conference and the reason why they need assistance.

Organising committee

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This conference is co-sponsored and supported by the following organisations.

