



PLAAS

Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies



Future
Agricultures

LAND GRABBING IN AFRICA

Available evidence on its **scale and character**
and **insights of relevance** to **policy makers**

Ruth Hall

Senior researcher, PLAAS

Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies

University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Structure

1. Africa: the centre of the global rush for farmland

- Why?
- For what? How? Where?
- Impacts?

2. Key messages

- Africa's land is not empty, idle or available
- Not only land being grabbed
- Investors are not necessarily the 'grabbers'
- Remedy: tenure reform & re-direction of agricultural policy



Source: Bertolazzi, in FAO 2007

Overseas Land Investments to Secure Food Supplies

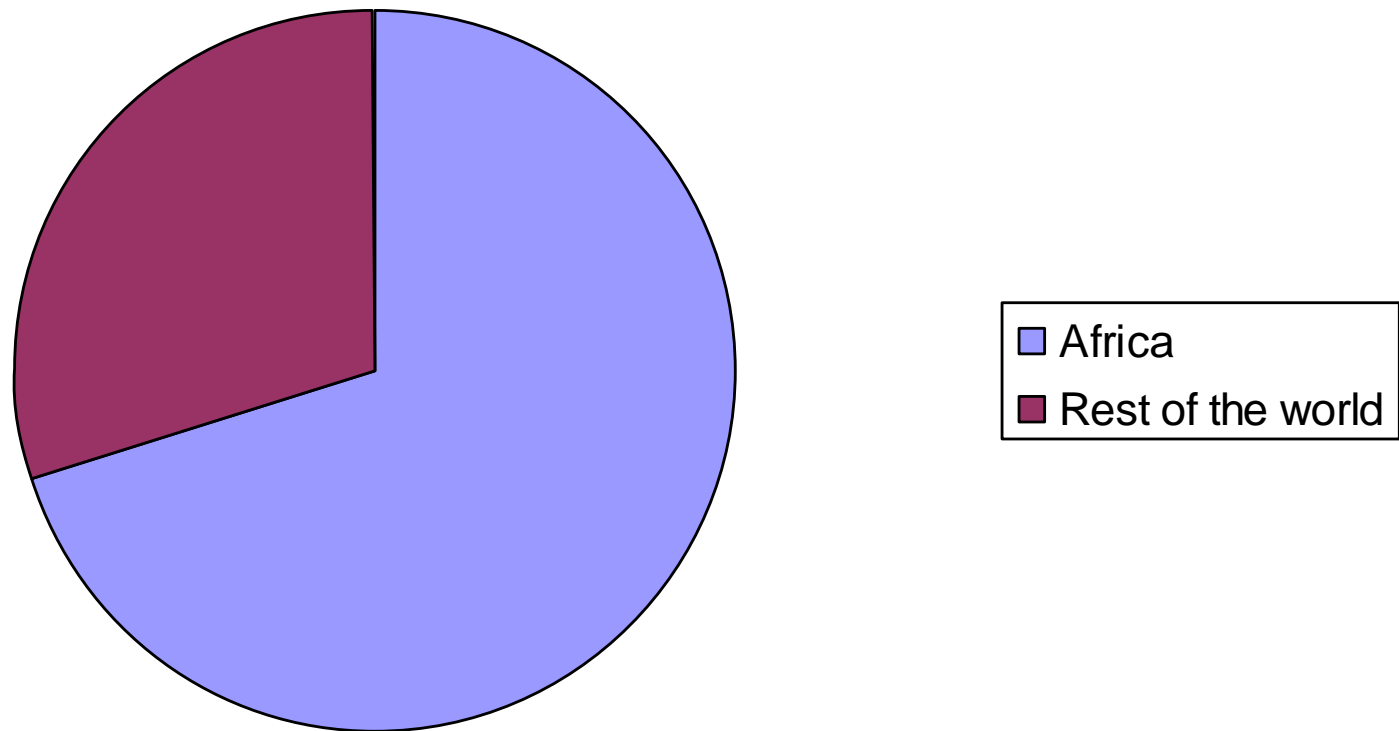


Source: von Braun and Meinzen-Dick 2009, with data compiled from media reports.

Where are major land deals taking place?

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Large-scale land acquisitions (2009)
Total approx 45 million hectares



Source: World Bank 2010

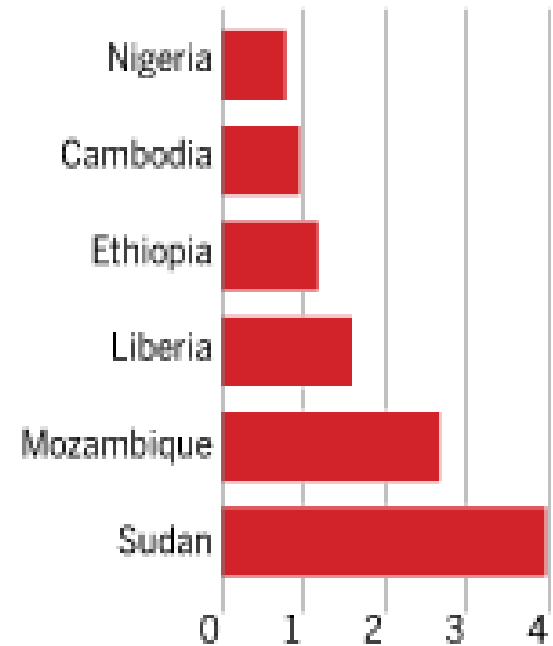
Large land deals in Africa

Drivers & actors:

- Asian powers seeking to secure food supply
- Oil-rich (but land and water poor) Gulf States
- European and North American banks, financiers and sovereign funds, responding to financial crisis
- All the above in partnerships with African governments and/or domestic partners.

Large land transfers

2004 - 2009 (million hectares)



Source: World Bank

Source: Blas (*Financial Times*) 2010

Why is Africa the centre of land grabbing?

1. Customary tenure unrecognised by state / investors
 - Dominance of customary tenure systems that are inadequately recognised in law enable
 - Customary use rights are inadequately recognised either in law or in practice as holders of real property rights.
2. The land is presented as unused and available
 - The central “Guinea-Savannah” zone of Africa constitutes a “vast under-utilised land reserve” – World Bank 2009
 - But evidence that all of it is claimed, used or occupied.



'Whose land are you giving away, Mr President?'



Source: Hall 2008

- *Remedy lies in... legal acknowledgement that customary and other longstanding unregistered land tenancy amounts to a real property interest, registered or not... Without this change, majority rural landholders remain little better than squatters on their own land, a condition already wrongfully endured for a century or more... While hardly new, the current wave of state... backed leasing hardens an already dangerous dichotomy between the interests of governments and their people*
– Alden Wily 2010: 1

African Union framework & guidelines on land policy (2009)



- Concern about “the new scramble for Africa’s land resources”
 - The first started in the 1880s after the conference of Berlin which defined colonial boundaries)
 - Widespread adoption of land policies and laws over past two decades – but with very limited civil society involvement, and poorly implemented.
 - *‘Sustainable growth and development in Africa as well the continent’s contribution to the world economy in the 21st century will continue to depend largely on the manner in which land and land-related resources are secured, used and managed’ - African Union 2009.*

Land grabs for what, how, where?

Dimension	Range of experiences documented
Size	Available data on deals over 1,000 hectares; huge variation ranging up to deals of 500,000 hectares and plans of deals up to 10 million hectares
Duration	Short to medium term, but mostly long-term 15-25 year (often renewable) leases, and up to 50 or 99 year leases
Source	Domestic private investors, foreign private investors (both being individuals or large companies), parastatals, foreign sovereign wealth funds,
Commodity	Jatropha, sugar, rice, other foods, forestry, various minerals, also tourism experiences.
Business model	Enclave model, colonist model, large commercial estates, nucleus estates with outgrowers, outgrowers and processor, smallholder model
Tenure arrangements	Lease, concession, illegal enclosure, or purchase (rare)
Resource access	Land, water, minerals, marine resource, wildlife, forestry (<i>and labour</i>)
Lease / compensation payments	Value, method of calculation, timing (once-off or repeat, eg. annual payments) and distribution to local communities, traditional leaders and local, district, provincial and national government
Displacement	'Vacant' and 'unused' land, claimed land, grazing land, cultivated lands, lands used for natural resource harvesting
Labour	Locally hired labour, imported labour, self-employment as outgrower
Settlement	Changes in settlement (eg. villagisation), de-agrarianisation
Infrastructure	Investment in infrastructure for production, processing transport (roads, ports), and social infrastructure (schools, clinics)

An (incomplete) depiction of major land deals in some countries of Southern Africa

	Jatropha	Sugar	Mining	Cotton	Rice	Tourism	Hydro-electric	Forestry
Angola			X				X	
Madagascar	X				X			X
Malawi		X	X	X				
Mozambique	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Namibia			X			X	X	
South Africa	X	X	X			X		
Tanzania	X		X			X		X
Zambia	X	X	X					
Zimbabwe	X	X	X					

Impacts?

- Displacement: settlement, cultivation, pasture, natural resource harvesting.
- Outcomes:
 - Projected employment effects unrealised.
 - Deals without investment.
 - Biofuels: deforestation for plantations.
- Changes in social relations
 - conversion of small-scale farmers into wage labourers
 - accentuated social differentiation.
- Changes in land uses:
 - towards monocropping
 - out of food crops or
 - out of agriculture.



Source: Hall 2008

Land use changes not readily reversed



Forest livelihood at Kilwa, Tanzania
(Sulle, undated)



Cleared forest at Bioshape jatropha
plantation 'trial plot' Kilwa district (IFM report,
2009)

Key messages

1. 'Vacant land' discourse fundamentally flawed and untrue
 - no cases of deals on land that is neither claimed, used or occupied by local people already
2. Not just land being 'grabbed'
 - water, minerals, forests, other natural resources... and labour
3. Investors are not necessarily the 'grabbers'
 - Political economy of land and resources: state control and feasibility of appropriation of land for investment
4. Remedy lies in (i) securing customary rights to land, water and other natural resources and (ii) substantive re-direction of agricultural policy.