

From Global Land Grabbing for Bio-fuels Expansion to Access Acquisitions of African Water for Commercial Agriculture

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The expansion of bio-fuel investments has been supported by indebted African governments because of the perceived potential development benefits to poor countries including **sustainable energy development, support to poor farmers, developing rural economies and reducing greenhouse gases. However, the** intensity of bio-fuel political economy in poor countries would worsen inequality of the vulnerable poor. This is evidenced in acquisitions of large scale of land in Africa for bio-fuels and crops production primarily for home consumption – food, animal feeds and energy crops. The search for distance land in African countries had been triggered by the growing concerns for food and energy security in the developed countries since the global food crisis of 2008. Moreover, these recent developments in large scale acquisitions of land in Africa is not a new phenomenon but it is the renewal on the old practice in commercial agriculture in Africa, which are either conducted through purchases or long term leases for commercial agricultural production.

In addition to bio-fuel expansion, this study also notes that the current land acquisitions in Sub Saharan Africa have further been driven by the demands to access water resources for commercial agriculture and industrialization. Land purchases or leases automatically guarantee access to African water. This demand for water for agriculture is a respond to climatic change where most industrialists believe that acquiring land near main water reservoir could guarantee the future of their industrial potentials. There have been few analyses done in this area of water acquisition. This study therefore looks at these recent developments in land acquisitions in Africa to mean acquisition of water as a security for commercial agriculture as climatic changes could bit the big producers who depend on tropical rains for crop production. It focuses on analyzing the national policy available for these acquisitions, rights accorded to these foreign investors and how these acquisitions undermine the indigenous rights access to common resources which have been the source of their livelihoods. This is done by employing the political economy approach to analyze these recent developments in Sub Saharan Africa.

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