



Analytical Report III | 2021

Taking stock of the global land rush

*Few development benefits,
many human and environmental risks*

LAUNCH WEBINAR

Tuesday 28 September 2021
13:00-14:00 CEST



LAND MATRIX

ABRIDGED WEBINAR CHAT TRANSCRIPT

Key:



Question/comment



Response



In essence, what has changed since LM I and II?



We now see the actual Impacts on the ground.



Thank you for an interesting presentation and report! How do you see the next step of the problems you defined? Have the donors of the report been interested to discuss recommendations/next steps with you? Do you see problems to be discussed in AU, EU or ASEAN? Or as a bilateral discussion among countries?



What did you find are the mechanisms of deforestation within LSLA project sites that are operational or abandoned respectively?



How do you explain that deals in Latin/South America tend to be more operational than deals in SSA for instance?



We don't have a quick explanation for that, but the fact that most deals are intended for large-scale for export crops may have something to do with it.



Infrastructure of land deals in LA is better compared to SSA, which is one of the reasons that implementation is faster.



It's true that large scale deals are operational in parts of South America, but there is also significant violence, conflict and environmental destruction associated with them.



It would be interesting to find out more about the factors behind the failure of LSLAs, especially organised local resistance.



Trois points dans les recommandations en partant du cas sénégalais :

- (i) Développement de synergies entre acteurs, systèmes et modes de production (ATGE, Agriculture familiale, exploitations moyennes ou émergentes, etc.) dans les politiques publiques (politique foncière, politique agricole, politique environnementale, etc.);
- (ii) Valoriser les complémentarités fonctionnelles des différentes activités de production en prenant en compte leurs spécificité et leur adaptabilité aux territoires ainsi que leur niveau d'acceptation par les communautés locales;
- (iii) La sécurisation de la mobilité pastorale, des espaces et ressources pastoraux est une condition nécessaire à la bonne cohabitation entre ATGE et acteurs locaux et la prise en compte de la multifonctionnalité des territoires dans les législations.

[Three points in the recommendations based on the Senegalese case:

- (i) Development of synergies between actors, systems and modes of production (ATGE, family farming, medium-sized or emerging farms, etc.) in public policies (land policy, agricultural policy, environmental policy, etc.);*
- (ii) Valuing the functional complementarities of the different production activities by taking into account their specificity and adaptability to the territories as well as their level of acceptance by the local communities;*
- (iii) Securing pastoral mobility, pastoral spaces and resources is a necessary condition for good cohabitation between ATGE and local actors and for taking into account the multifunctionality of the territories in the legislation.]*



Is it possible to enforce this through investment arbitration? Would states be incentivised to regulate the land rights better against the foreign investors?



Do chiefs / customary leaders sometimes play a role in the implementation (or failure of implementation) of these deals?



What did you find are the mechanisms of deforestation within LSLA project sites that are operational or abandoned respectively?



Can community mapping initiatives be effective at all in pushing back against some of these LSLAs?



In some LAC countries, people in government are themselves investors, or have direct or indirect links to investors... so that would be hard to accomplish.



Has the COVID-19 pandemic had any impact on LSLAs?



Sometimes investors are afraid to engage with the local communities and their leaders because of the time it takes to engage with them properly and the pressure on project schedules. There is scope for independent capacity building of communities to challenge investors on their practices and intentions.



Next week is the UN data forum. What role do you think data has to play with LSLAs? How can it help? Could it aggravate the situation if used badly?



It's still probably too early to tell, but I guess emission reduction-related investments will be important in the near future.



We did not analyse this problem in detail, but this will be surely one of the foci in the coming years.



What about the issue of Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) which have held host countries captive to LSLAs? Promises are good but the actual results are mainly negative, especially for smallholders and indigenous communities' rights.



I 100% agree with regard to implementation of VGGTs. The role of land valuation, and therefore compensation, needs to be reinforced within land governance.



Are we going to tackle REDD+ driven land acquisitions in Africa?



How can we deal with power imbalances in multi-stakeholder platforms? What can we learn from past experiences?



You are calling for "inclusion of smallholder farmers" into what? You are seriously, despite all the findings, arguing for inclusion of smallholders into this destructive model of agriculture and its land grabbing? It is not about whether a few local farmer may benefit from a few of these land grabs, it is about the paradigm and what we promote and support.



We believe that cooperation between Investors and smallholders could be possible in some circumstances – but most importantly, smallholders need to be included in negotiation processes. Not all companies are exploiting smallholders. There might be exceptions that are worth looking at.



I agree with most of what you say, the thing is that we need to have more information on the dimension of this phenomenon in order to fight back!



Inclusion of smallholders may easily end up in smallholders becoming dependent (enslaved) in global value chains due to unfavourable contract farming and out grower contracts (commodity control; commodity grabs)



One important lesson from the work both of the Tenure Facility and of the Forest and Farm Facility where I work is that strengthening local rural organisation, of small farmers, pastoralists, forest communities, Indigenous Peoples, is essential to address this issue. Governments, private companies, and other stakeholders clearly have important roles, but if

the inhabitants on that ground do not have strong organisations and a capacity to consolidate their own economic activities and advocate effectively for their rights, it will be practically impossible to limit inappropriate large-scale land acquisitions.



Thanks for this important work! Oxfam has calculated that the total amount of land required for planned carbon removal (government and company net zero commitments to address climate change) could potentially be the equivalent of all the farmland on the planet (up to 1.62 billion hectares). Given this, it would seem the problem of LSLAs could worsen significantly. Have you seen evidence of this in the research?



My experience working with some of the SSA governments is that they have little interest in allocating replacement values to affected assets in valuation efforts and implementing livelihood restoration programmes (and raise the bar in line with the VGGTs) because it would mean that precedents are set, making any of their expropriations for construction of infrastructure and large-scale investments very costly.



LSLAs usually focus on investments in monocultures of export commodities serving global "value" chains (drains?); supply chains of multinational companies. Does this not call for recommendations to stop promoting and serving Global Value Chains but promote local development and high biodiversity inclusive short chains agroecology instead?



Should women's land rights be looked at specifically, given their greater involvement with land use and agricultural? Will customary rights and ancestral rights not focus on feminist rights?



Any data on the gender impacts and women's land rights?



How do you see the potential of UNDROP to play a role in defending smallholder farmer's right to land? Any role at all or another toothless tiger?



Great work. The findings are clear; these LSLBIs don't work, in fact they are more often destructive. Sad that the recommendations continue to basically focus on how we try to make this failing model work, even include more farmers into it. The logical response should be a rejection of this model and the investment of our time, energy, imagination, resources into other models. There are plenty out there that are already showing better outcomes - agroecology, food sovereignty, family farmers linked to territorial markets, etc.



If we see that smallholder agriculture creates more jobs, enables greater biodiversity, and with adequate conditions more production per hectare, how can we justify looking for ways that LSLAs can work. We need to shift policy priorities in an entirely different direction and channel investment very differently. The private sector will not be inclined to do this without strong state role and regulation.



There's a lot of talk about ESG lately – what could be done to make investors (and E&S consultants advising investors) aware that addressing environmental and social risks and impacts adequately (including restoring the livelihoods of people affected by large-scale





investments) takes a lot of time, effort, and money? A larger percent of deals needs to be set aside to mitigate and manage E&S impacts.

J'ai remarqué qu'il n'y a pas assez de données sur les terres pastorales (surtout au Sahel). Qu'est-ce qui explique cela? Pour certains pays comme le Niger, les terres pastorales relèvent du domaine public de l'état. Quel avantage ou inconvénients? Les communautés autochtones et locales ne sont pas prises en compte. Quelles dispositions recommandiez-vous pour cela.

[I have noticed that there is not enough data on pastoral lands (especially in the Sahel). What explains this? For some countries, such as Niger, pastoral lands are part of the public domain of the state. What are the advantages or disadvantages? The indigenous and local communities are not taken into account. What provisions would you recommend for this?]

For more substantial responses from the Land Matrix team on some of the questions and comments raised during the webinar, please refer to the [launch webinar team responses](#) document.