

OUR LAND OUR BUSINESS

JOINT STATEMENT

Stop Enabling Land Grabs: Agriculture Doesn't Need World Bank's Business Indicators.

As a promoter and financier of large-scale land investments in agriculture, the World Bank Group has been a key driver of land grabbing in the developing world. It is a central player in the industrial development system that is using its financial and political might, through its investment agencies and institutions, to force developing countries to follow a pre-prescribed model of development, based on the neoliberal principles of privatization, deregulation, low corporate taxation and 'free market' fundamentalism. This model is designed to extract the maximum value from developing countries' natural and human resources and centralize wealth and power in an already tiny but bloated corporate and elite minority.

Since 2002, the World Bank has promoted this model through the Doing Business rankings which score countries according to how well Washington bureaucrats think they are improving the "ease of doing business." According to Bank's own statements, these annual rankings are closely followed by foreign investors; they are used by the World Bank and bilateral donors to guide their funding.

The *Doing Business* ranking is today's version of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) that devastated the livelihoods of millions through the withdrawal of state intervention and the forced liberalization of national economies in the 1980s and 1990s.

The ranking has already greatly impacted agricultural sectors at the expense of well-established smallholders by favoring foreign 'investors' who seek quick profits through the violations of peoples' land rights, the extraction of natural resources and the exploitation of cheap labor.

Though it is widely recognized today that land grabs are dispossessing and impoverishing rural communities across the globe, the World Bank is unwilling to change its approach. On the contrary, it is working to do more to favor investments by foreign corporations in developing countries' agricultural sectors.

At the demand of the G8 in 2012, and with funding from the Gates Foundation, the UK, US, Dutch and Danish governments, the World Bank is now developing a new instrument for *benchmarking the business of agriculture* (BBA). Started in late 2013, pilot studies are now underway in 10 countries, to be scaled up to 40 countries in 2014. The BBA is expected to benchmark and rank eighty to a hundred countries by 2015¹. The BBA builds on the *Doing Business* model and adapts it to agriculture. With this new instrument, the World Bank advocates for instance for the free circulation of commercial seeds, fertilizers, and access to "secure property rights" through land reform.² Despite a language that claims concerns for small-farmers, the goal of this new agriculture-focused ranking system is far too clear: further open up countries' agricultural sectors to foreign corporations.

Doing Business Fosters Land Grabs Around the World

The Doing Business gives points to countries when they act in favor of the "ease of doing business". This consists in smoothing the way for corporations' activity in the country by, for

instance, cutting administrative procedures, lowering corporate taxes, removing environmental and social regulations or suppressing trade barriers. With the ranking, the World Bank also encourages land reforms that tend to make land a marketable commodity, easily accessible to wealthy corporations. Considering that public regulations are obstacles to enterprises' thriving, the *Doing Business* neglects issues such as human rights, right to food, economic and social rights, the protection of workers, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

There is abundant evidence of how the Doing Business ranking has favored land grabbing. For example, Liberia implemented 39 reforms to ease business between 2008 and 2011³ and as a result attracted growing flows of FDIs. Among the investors were palm oil and rubber giants: the British Equatorial Palm Oil, Malaysian Sime Darby, and Indonesian Golden Agri-Resources, who have acquired more than 1.5 million acres (607,000 hectares) in just a few years, taking away farms, resources and livelihoods from thousands of local people.⁴

In Sierra Leone, the World Bank guided a series of reforms with aim of attracting FDI. FDI went from an average of \$18 million per year between 2000 and 2005 to \$740 million in 2012 alone. Reforms around land registration and fast-tracking land leasing processes have attracted sugar cane and oil palm planters including Addax Bioenergy from Switzerland, Quifel Natural Resources from Portugal, CAPARO from UK or SOFCIN from Luxembourg. In 2011 Sierra Leone had already leased 508,292 hectares to foreign investors.⁵ A 2014 deal with the palm oil grower Golden Veroleum could double this figure and bring to 20% the amount of Sierra Leone's arable land taken away from rural populations.⁶

Hailed as one of the 2014 top ten reformers, the Philippines jumped up 40 spots in three years is. The year before, World Bank had advised reforms "for accelerating growth" in the country and creating of jobs in rural sector.⁷ Opening of Philippines' agricultural sector to FDI made it the third most popular destination for foreign investment in land and led to total acquisition of 5.2 million hectares by foreigners in 2013.⁸

World Bank's yearly rankings are used by corporations and investors who want to know where to direct their capital. Additionally, the *Doing Business* results echo in WBG's policies and budget allocation through the "investment climate" activities,⁹ and is used by bilateral donors for their financing.¹⁰ The *Doing Business* has thus huge financial implications and provokes a race to deregulation among governments willing to improve their ranking in order to attract money flows.

Worse, the Bank is now developing the Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture (BBA), which is expected to further accelerate the rush for agricultural land and natural resources such as water in developing countries.

The World Bank must come to reason in its agricultural strategy!

Smallholders farm 80 percent of the farmland and produce 80 percent of the food consumed in the developing world.¹¹ Therefore, they are essential guarantors of food security, countries' food sovereignty, and constitute by far the first investors current and future and employers in developing countries' agricultural sector.¹² It is **their** capacity to invest and develop their land that should be strengthened, and **not the corporations**. Smallholders' investments are hampered by tenure insecurity and lack of government support such as extension, financial and insurance services. Farmers' assets are particularly threatened by the current trend of land grabbing, which is fueled by World Bank's business indicators and its advocacy for the opening of agricultural sectors, FDIs and land reforms.

It is time that the World Bank ceases to ignore that smallholders are the only future of an agriculture that can guarantee food security, ensure a sustainable use of natural resources and bring human development. We know far too well how damaging large-scale industrial

farming is to the environment and the people. This model shall not be expanded to the developing world.

Food security, fair and equal development are achievable objectives if proper support is given to small farming. This starts with providing farmers with real tenure security, through providing secure access to common and agricultural lands rather than land reform, and through impeding that their assets be looted by foreign investors. The Bank doesn't understand this basic requirement and, through its powerful weapons *Doing Business* and *Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture*, continues to indiscriminately advocate for FDIs in the agricultural sector and to impose its one-size-fits all model of development where corporations reign supremely. This jeopardizes developing countries' food security and sovereignty.

We therefore ask that World Bank's Doing Business and Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture indicators be stopped.

If you want to add the name of your organization or require more information, please contact ourlandourbusiness@oaklandinstitute.org

SIGNATORIES

11.11.11- Coalition of the Flemish North-South Movement	Belgium
AAF	Bangladesh
Aboriginal Rights Coalition	Australia
Acció per un Turisme Responsable	Spain
Accion Colectiva Socioambiental	Mexico
ACRF	Belgium
Actionaid Bangladesh	Bangladesh
Actionaid Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
ACTNOW!	Papua New Guinea
ADEA Colombia	Colombia
Adivaani	India
Africa Europe Faith and Justice Network	Belgium
Africa Faith and Justice Network	USA
African Biodiversity Network	Kenya
African Centre for Biodiversity	South Africa
Alternatives	Canada
Amigos de la Tierra Argentina	Argentina
Ardea Ecologistas en Acción Sierra de Ayllon	Spain
ASiA Assoc Salut i Agroecologia	Spain
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development	Asia Pacific
Asociacion Ambiente y Sociedad	Colombia
Asociación Vecinal Puebla de la Sierra	Spain
Associacio Varietats Loclas Illes Balears	Spain
Association pour la Défense des Droits de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement (ADDEA)	Senegal
Bangladesh Krishok Federation	Bangladesh

Biofuelwatch	UK / USA
BIOSALON	Sierra Leone
Biowatch South Africa	South Africa
Blue Planet Project	Canada
Both ENDS	Netherlands
Bread for all	Switzerland
Bretton Woods Project	UK
British Tamils Forum	UK
Caney Fork Headwaters Association	USA
CASPANI	Niger
CATAPA	Belgium
CCHRA	Sierra Leone
CDHR	Sierra Leone
CDR Carrion y Ucieza	Spain
Center for Environmental Education and Development	Nigeria
Central Sepik Rural Development Foundation	Papua New Guinea
Centre National de Coopération au Développement, CNCD-11.11.11	Belgium
Centre Tricontinental	Belgium
Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." (CSMM)	Ecuador
Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigación y Desarrollo Alternativo, U Yich Lu'um, A. C	Mexico
Centro de Promoción y Educación Profesional Vasco de Quiorga	Mexico
CEPA-SL	Sierra Leone
Cercle pour la Défense de l'Environnement	Democratic Republic of Congo
CICODEV Africa	Senegal
Climate and Sustainable Development Network of Nigeria	Nigeria
Club Entre Nous Jeunes	Central African Republic
Coalition pour la Souveraineté Alimentaire / Food Sovereignty Coalition	Canada
College of the Atlantic	USA
Comité Nacional AIAF	Guinea Bissau
Consell Balear Produccio Agraria Ecologica	Spain
Constituyente Ciudadana Popular/Gto	Mexico
Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali (CNOP Mali)	Mali
COPAGEN	West Africa
Cornucopia Network/NJ/TN Chapter	USA
Corporate Europe Observatory	Belgium
Council of Canadians	Canada
Cumberland Countians for Ecojustice	USA

Development Services Exchange	Solomon Islands
Earth in Brackets	USA
Echos du Capricorne	France
Acologistas en Acción	Spain
Ecologistas en Acción Palencia	Spain
Ecoropa	Europe
Ekta Parishad	India
Enda Pronat	Senegal
Entraide et Fraternite	Belgium
Environmental Monitoring Group	South Africa
ETC Group	Canada
Fahamu	Senegal, Kenya
Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.	USA
Federacion SETEM	Spain
FIAN Belgium	Belgium
FIAN Germany	Germany
FIAN International	International
Focus on the Global South	Thailand, India, Philippines
Food Empowerment Project	USA
Food Sovereignty Sussex	UK
Food Tank	USA
Forest Governance Programme of the Sustainable Development Institute	Liberia
Forest Peoples' Programme	UK
Frente Regional Ciudadano en Defensa de la Soberanía	Mexico
Friends of the Earth International (74 member groups)	International
Friends of the Siberian Forests	Russia
GASA	Panama
Global Exchange	USA
Global Forest Coalition	International
Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	USA
Global Justice NOW	International
Global Justice Project/Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California-Berkeley	USA
GRAIN	International
Grassroots International	USA
Green Scenery	Sierra Leone
Habitat International Coalition	Egypt
Heinrich Boll Stiftung Abuja	Nigeria
Housing and Land Rights Network	Egypt
Huerta El Campichuelo	Spain
Human Rights Council	Ethiopia
ICCA Consortium	International

IEDD	Burkina Faso
IFOAM Organics International	International
Illes Solidaries Amb el Sud	Spain
Inades Training Chad	Chad
Inades-Formation	Côte d'Ivoire
Inclusive Development International	USA
Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)	India
Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples	Thailand
Indigenous Peoples Links aka PIPLinks	UK
Indigenous Peoples Rights Activists Network	Nepal
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy	USA
Instituto Latinoamericano para una Sociedad y un Derecho Alternativos	Latin America
International Accountability Project	International
International Development Exchange	International
International Forum on Globalization	USA
International Society for Ecology & Culture	USA
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	International
International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)	International
Jamaa Resource Initiatives	Kenya
Kalpavriksh	India
Karamoja Development Forum	Uganda
Kenya Debt Relief Network (KENDREN)	Kenya
Kenya Land Alliance	Kenya
Kiasmo Space S.L.	Spain
La Red Nacional Género y Economía (REDGE)	Mexico
Labour, Health and Human Rights Development Centre	Nigeria
Malen Land Owners and Users Association	Sierra Leone
Massachusetts Global Action	USA
Maudesco Foe Mauritius	Mauritius
Mercy Home	Belgium
Mescal Canyon Retreat	USA
Moana Nui Alliance	USA
More and Better Network	International
Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra	Brazil
Movimiento M4	Mesoamerica
Narbada Bachao Andolan	India
National Alliance of Peoples Movement	India
National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)	Uganda
National Peasants Coalition of Pakistan (NPCP)	Pakistan
NetInfo TV	France

Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility Of	USA
United Church of Christ	Finland
New Wind	USA
Nicaragua Center for Community Action (NICCA)	Sierra Leone
NU	USA
Oakland Institute	Honduras
OFRANEH	
Organisation Nigérienne pour la Défense des Droits des Couches Vulnérables (ONDDCV)	Niger
Our Water Commons	USA
Pacific Network On Globalization (PANG)	Fiji
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum	Pakistan
Pan African Community Movement	Africa
Partners for the Land & Agricultural Needs of Traditional Peoples (PLANT)	USA
Passionists International	International
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty - Africa	Africa
Peopleriver	UK
PICOT	Sierra Leone
Plataforma Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, Democracia y Desarrollo (PIDHDD Regional)	Latin America
Platform Aarde Boer Consument	Netherlands
Polaris Institute	Canada
Pomio Potongpaga Group	Papua New Guinea
Popular Resistance	USA
Presbyterian Church	USA
PROSALUS	Spain
Public Services International	International
Puvidham rural development trust	India
RACAP	Sierra Leone
Red de Ambientalistas Comunitarios de El Salvador (RACDES)	El Salvador
Red Mexicana de afectados por la Minería (REMA)	Mexico
RedNNA	Peru
Renewable Energy and Rural Development Services	Benin
Réseau de Développement de l'Agriculture Durable (REDAD)	Benin
Responsible Investment at Harvard Coalition	USA
Salvemos al Madidi	Republic of Korea
Sambhav Social Service Organization	India
SEARICE	Philippines
Second Chance Foundation NYC	USA
Servindi	Peru
SiLNoRF	Sierra Leone
Sira del Val Sarabia	Spain

SLADE	Sierra Leone
Slow Food Burgos	Spain
Social Justice Connection / Connexion Justice Sociale	Canada
Sociedad española de Agricultura Ecológica / Sociedad Española de Agroecología (SEAE)	Spain
Society for International Development	International
Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia (SMNE)	Ethiopia
Solomon Islands Land Defence Alliance	Solomon Islands
SOS FAIM	Belgium
Spire Utviklingsfondets Ungdom	Norway
Struggle to Economize Future Environment (SEFE)	Cameroon
Synagri Tunisie	Tunisia
Synergie Paysanne	Republic of Benin
Talking Drums	Sierra Leone
Terra Franca	Spain
Texas Drought Project	USA
The Corner House	UK
The Development Fund	Norway
THE MEAL, Un repas pour notre Avenir	Switzerland
The Rules	International
Third World Network	International
Timberwatch	South Africa
Transnational Institute	Netherlands
Turubu Ecoforestry	Papua New Guinea
Union Paysanne	Canada
UPHR	Sierra Leone
USS, Nilphamari	Bangladesh
Walking on the South (WOTS)	Italy
Our Water Commons	USA
WhyHunger	USA
WoNES	Sierra Leone
Working Group Food Justice	Netherlands
World Family	UK
World Rural Forum	International
Zimbabwe People's Land Rights Movement	Zimbabwe

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⁶ *SLIEPA to facilitate \$1.6b investment for Golden veroleum Palm Oil Production in Sierra Leone*, <http://awoko.org/2013/06/21/sierra-leone-sliepa-to-facilitate-1-6b-investment-for-golden-veroleum-palm-oil-production-in-sierra-leone/>.

⁷ World Bank Press release “New World Bank Vice President: Philippines Poised to Accelerate Reforms for More and Better Jobs”, July 12, 2013, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/07/12/new-world-bank-president-philippines-poised-to-accelerate-reforms-for-more-and-better-jobs>.

⁸ World Trade report 2013, “*Factors shaping the future of world trade*”, World Trade Organization 2013, http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2013_e/its2013_e.pdf.

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¹⁰ Manuel, T. et al. *The Independent Panel Review of the Doing Business Report*, 2013, <http://www.dbrpanel.org/sites/dbrpanel/files/doing-business-review-panel-report.pdf>.

¹¹ IFAD. Proceedings of the Governing Council High-Level Panel and Side Events, 2010, “From summit resolutions to farmers’ fields: Climate change, food security and smallholder agriculture.” http://www.ifad.org/events/gc/33/panels/proceedings_web.pdf.

¹² CFS, *Policy Roundtable: How to Increase Food Security and Smallholder-sensitive investment in agriculture*, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/023/mc066e.pdf>.