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# **ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF LAND OWNERSHIP AND LAND GRAB ON DEVELOPMENT**

**– WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON SMALL HOLDINGS AND RURAL AREAS –**

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## Importance of land for development

- ▶ Access to land is a tool for poverty reduction
- ▶ Countries with a more egalitarian distribution of land tend to be characterized by higher levels of economic growth
- ▶ Developing countries have very unequal land distribution, with many small holders
- ▶ Land access in developing countries often not through formal, individual property rights



# Importance of property rights: A controversy I

Advantages of formal property titles (Hernando de Soto and others):

- ▶ increase investment in land and productivity
- ▶ enable the poor to access credit markets
- ▶ land market develops and land is therefore allocated efficiently



## Importance of property rights: A controversy II

Criticism of approach of de Soto and others:

- ▶ Link between individual titling and productivity or access to credit markets could not always be shown empirically
- ▶ Individual property titles may lead to “distress sales” in times of hardship
- ▶ Costs of land titling considerable
- ▶ Impact and advantages of customary and cultural rules must not be underestimated
- ▶ Gender impact
- ▶ Re-distribution not considered



# Importance of property rights: conclusions

- ▶ No one-size-fits-all solution
- ▶ Land reforms (redistributive, registration of titles) need to be accompanied by other measures which enable productive farming by small-holders (capacity-building, allocation of water rights etc.)
- ▶ Secure access to land more important than formal property rights for pro-poor development



# Risks and opportunities of land grabbing



- ▶ NGOs worried over impacts on food security, the environment and human rights
- ▶ Land ownership in developing countries rarely simple and clear → local farmers lose land
- ▶ Weak regulatory frameworks and lack of monitoring and publicity
- ▶ Loss of regulatory capacity of host countries for long periods of time



- ▶ World Bank and some developing countries' governments welcome more foreign investment
- ▶ Benefits in form of jobs, improvement of infrastructure and technology transfer



## Recommendations on land policies

- ▶ Increase **ODA** dedicated to **agriculture**
- ▶ Strengthen the role of the **EU Land Policy Guidelines**
- ▶ Implement the EU Communication “**An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges**”
- ▶ Acknowledge and help implement the findings of the **International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD)**



## Recommendations on land-grabbing

- ▶ Strengthen the **sustainability criteria** for **bio-fuel production** in the EU Renewable Energy Directive
- ▶ Strengthen **human rights** in international investment agreements and treaties
- ▶ Support developing countries in **informed decision-making** on investments
- ▶ Actively support the **FAO Voluntary Guidelines**
- ▶ Improve **reporting** and **monitoring** on large scale land acquisitions involving European investors and support further research





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# Thank you for listening.

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