



PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS IN LAND IN AFRICA

NOVEMBER 30 to DECEMBER 1, 2017 IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

This conference on the gender dimensions of agricultural investments in land aims to strengthen the policy dialogue on securing women land rights in Africa and improve land governance and food security in West Africa.

It is being organized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament, together with the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Oxfam and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). It will convene November 30 to December 1, 2017 in Abuja, Nigeria during the 2nd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament.

Background and Context

Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is increasingly recognized as a key driver for food security, poverty reduction and rural development. However, equal participation of women and men in economic, social and political life is far from being realized. The case is not any different in West Africa where women's rights to land ownership and control continue to be neglected, despite stakeholders highlighting the fact that agriculture is key to women's livelihoods. These inequalities are multifaceted, multi-causal and pose major challenges to Africa's aspirations in Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 for the Africa we want.

In recent years, the rising interest in acquiring African farmland for agricultural investments has seen companies acquire large parcels of land for agri-investments. While such investments can create jobs, improve access to markets and support infrastructure, the emerging research on this recent phenomenon has revealed concurrent risks, including widespread alienation of land from local communities without adequate compensation and the marginalization of smallholder farmers—a majority of whom are women, therefore entrenching gender inequality further. This is also because women's tenure rights tend to be more insecure. Hence, land acquisition by private companies has, in several cases, contributed to further undermining women's access to land, with negative spill-over effects for household food security.

Differently from investments based on large-scale acquisition, investments that adopt more inclusive business models can enable farmers and communities to retain control over their land, and thus provide greater livelihood benefits. Nevertheless, those schemes tend to be dominated by male farmers. There is also evidence that collaborative models, such as outgrower schemes,



can alter gendered land use patterns at the household level and entail consequences on household food security.

Thus, there are many factors that determine whether land investments will contribute to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security, and women's rights and gender equality in Africa. These factors include the type of contract, national regulations and local systems governing land tenure, the behaviour and goals of the investor, and local cultures that shape gender norms and relations at the household and community levels.

International frameworks that promote more responsible investment in agriculture emphasize gender equality. This includes the Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, and the Guiding Principles on Large Scale Land Based Investment in Africa.

These frameworks echo the commitments made by the heads of state and governments in Africa in the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa to fight poverty, improve social and economic standards, and promote gender equality in all aspects of socio-political and economic spheres, including access to and control of land and other natural resources. This conference will provide valuable opportunities for learning and forming partnerships to further support these commitments.

Objectives of the Conference

Women account for 60–80 per cent of smallholder farmers and comprise the largest percentage of the workforce in the agricultural sector. Inequalities between women and men in access to land, productive resources, income-generating activities and public consultation spaces seriously undermine women's capacity to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The ECOWAS Parliament is empowered to consider issues concerning human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens, community policy on environment, among others, and make recommendations to the appropriate institutions and/or organs of the community. Responsible investment in land is an issue of human rights, thus the proposed conference will seek to:

- Understand the importance of promoting a gender equality and women's empowerment approach to agricultural investment in land
- Share recent research, learning, programming and experience on gender and agricultural investments in Africa, including:
 - Present the IISD report, *Promoting Gender Equality in Foreign Agricultural Investments: Lessons from voluntary sustainability standards*
 - Disseminate the Oxfam-IISD Gendered Tool on Meaningful Community Engagement with Large Scale Land Based Investments (LSLBI) in Agriculture in Africa



- Present the FAO program, Promoting gender-equitable and inclusive land-related investment policies and regulatory frameworks that contribute to enhance food security, reduce poverty and strengthen the livelihood of poor rural women and men
- Raise awareness on international frameworks that promote responsible investment in agriculture
- Foster policy dialogue on women's land rights.

Participants

This session is organized during the 2nd Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament. Participants will include:

- National government representatives
- Members of Parliament from the following committees: the Committee on Agriculture, Environment, Water Resources and Sustainable Development; the Committee on Gender, Women Empowerment and Social Protection; the Committee on Legal and Judicial Affairs; and the Association of ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians
- Representatives of international institutions
- Civil society groups and farmers' organizations
- Researchers and academics

Expected Outcomes

We expect that the conference will:

1. Deepen our understanding of the importance of engendering agricultural land investment for improved land governance and food security in West Africa
2. Generate knowledge and share research and programming on the gender-differentiated implications of land-related investments
3. Strengthen the policy dialogue on securing women land rights in Africa

PROGRAM

09:00 – 09:30 <i>Registration</i>	
08:30-09:00	<p><i>Opening session</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hon. S.E Moustapha Cissé Lo, President of ECOWAS Parliament ○ Hon. Roger Dang Nkodo, President of the Pan African Parliament ○ Miss Francine Picard, IISD ○ Hon. Aisha Jumai Alhassan, Minister of Women's Affairs (TBD)
09:00-09:15	<i>Group Photo</i>
09:15-12:00	<p><i>Promoting gender equality in foreign agricultural investments: Lessons from voluntary sustainability standards</i></p> <p>Moderator: President of the Committee on Agriculture, ECOWAS Parliament</p> <p>This session analyzes the gender-related content of the sustainability standards and the responsible investment frameworks and assesses whether sustainability standards improve gender equality. The session shares lessons learned from these initiatives.</p> <p>Kathleen Sexsmith, IISD and Cornell University Rosemary Addico, Solidaridad West Africa</p> <p>Discussion</p>
12:00-13:00	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00-14:15	<p><i>The gender impact of foreign agricultural investments</i></p> <p>Moderator: Elisabeth Atangana, President of CNOP-Cameroon, member of PAFO</p> <p>This session examines the gender impact of foreign investment in agriculture and provides specific attention to land investment dynamics in the West African region.</p> <p>Ambra Gallina, FAO</p> <p>Discussion</p>
14:15-14:30	<i>Break</i>
14:30-16:45	<p><i>Gender and inclusive business models</i></p> <p>Moderator: President of the Association of ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians</p> <p>This session will present alternative business models to land investments and will highlight how these inclusive business models and contractual arrangement are addressing gender equality and women's empowerment.</p> <p>Martha Osorio, FAO</p> <p>Discussion</p>
16:45	<i>End of day 1</i>

09:00-09:30	Summary of day 1
09:30-10:45	<p><i>Women and the decision-making process</i></p> <p>Moderator: President of the Committee on Agriculture, ECOWAS Parliament</p> <p>This session will present the Gendered Tool for Meaningful Community Engagement with LSLBI in Africa that is designed to help ensure that women in particular and their communities in general are directly participating in decision making regarding large-scale land-based investments in agriculture in their communities.</p> <p>Eileen Wakesho, Oxfam Francine Picard, IISD</p> <p>Discussion</p>
10:45-11:00	<i>Break</i>
10:45-12:00	<p><i>Role play</i></p> <p>The purpose of this role-play session is to increase participants' understanding of the gender tool by providing the perspectives of different stakeholder groups involved in agricultural investment.</p> <p>Joseph Desire Zebaze, ILC Charles Opyo, Oxfam</p> <p>Discussion</p>
12:00-13:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30-15:00	<p><i>Gender Responsive National and Regional Agriculture Investment Plans for Meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge</i></p> <p>Moderator Hon. Haidara Aichata, President of the Women Caucus, PAP</p> <p>Participants will consider the Gender Responsive National and Regional Agriculture Investments Plans for Meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge</p> <p>ECOWAS Commission (TBD)</p> <p>Discussion</p>
15:00-15:30	<i>Break</i>
15:30-17:00	<p><i>Panel discussion: Scaling up women's land rights</i></p> <p>Moderator : Eileen Wakesho, Oxfam and ROPPA (TBD)</p> <p>Several countries in Africa have been developing new laws to promote gender equality and women's access to land. This is in addition to the at least 30% documentation of land for women campaign launched by the AU. Participants will discuss the interaction between customary land law, initiatives to facilitate land access to women and how these changes are implemented.</p>
17:00	<p><i>Closing remarks from FAO, IISD, OXFAM, ECOWAS</i></p> <p><i>End of meeting</i></p>