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| Università degli Studi di TrentoScuola di Studi Internazionale | Master’s Degree in European and International StudiesEnglish Language Use of English  | a.a. 20120– 201317 June 2013 |

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For each of the numbered gaps 1 - 30, provide ONE word to complete the phrase IF a word is necessary. Write the word against the correct number on your answer sheet. If no word is necessary, put a diagonal line in the space next to the number. Blank spaces on the answer sheet will be marked as incorrect.

**Analysis: Land grab or development opportunity?**

*With land central to the livelihoods of millions of people in Africa, Lorenzo Cotula, who leads the Lands Rights Team at the Uk-based research body the International Institute for Environment and Development,* 1) … *the impact of large-scale land acquisitions on the continent's farmers. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17099348*

Large-scale acquisitions of farmland in Africa, Latin America and Asia have recently made headlines 2) … the world. According to a US-based think tank - the International Food Policy Research Institute, nearly $20bn to $30bn a year is being spent by rich countries 3) … land in developing countries. The investors include some of the world's largest food, financial and car companies.

The issue described as "land grabbing" by its critics has been particularly contentious in sub-Saharan Africa because land there is considered central to identity, food security and livelihoods. Ethiopia, South Sudan, Mozambique, Liberia, the DRC and Sierra Leone have all signed sizeable land deals with foreign investors. The host governments and investors say that these investments will 4) … to economic development; promising employment, infrastructure and social services. 5) …, human rights groups argue that the main beneficiaries of "land grabs" are the foreign investors, because most of them produce commodities for export. They argue that the land deals are not done transparently, 6) … create a breeding ground for corruption.

So is it a land grab or a development opportunity? Is land grabbing actually good for Africa?

*"Land grabs" are now one of the biggest issues in Africa.*

7) …the past few years, companies and foreign governments have been leasing large areas of land in some of Africa's poorest countries. Many commentators have 8) … concerns that poor villagers will be forced off their land and agribusiness will marginalise family farming. Others say that foreign investment can help African countries create jobs, increase export earnings and use more advanced technologies. Three years 9) … media reports started raising public awareness on this issue, evidence has been growing on the scale, geography, players, features and impacts of the land rush. The emerging picture provides ground for concern.

Last year the World Bank documented media reports of land deals over the period between 2008 and 2009. The deals were for nearly 60 million hectares worldwide, roughly the 10) … of a country like Ukraine - and two-thirds of the land acquired was in Africa. 11) … new figures continue to emerge, all evidence points to a phenomenon of unprecedented scale. Also, some individual deals are for very large areas. For example, Liberia recently signed a concession for 220,000 hectares.

**Money to be made**

Media attention has 12) … on investments by Middle Eastern and Asian government-backed operators but Western companies have also been heavily involved. Companies acquire land because they 13) … world food and commodity prices to increase - so there is money to be made in agriculture.

Some governments have also promoted land acquisitions abroad 14) … a way to secure affordable food for their people. In many African countries, 15) … agriculture has suffered from years of neglect - and investment is needed to improve productivity and market access.

But not all investment is good - and growing evidence strongly indicates that large land deals are not the way to go.

**Short-lived jobs**

A synthesis of over 30 reports worldwide found that many investments have failed 16) … to insufficient soil fertility, financing difficulties or over-ambitious business plans. For example, in Mozamique and Tanzania, some large biofuels projects have now been abandoned. Even where investments are profitable, it is often difficult to see how they contribute to poverty 17) … . The jobs created are few, short-lived and low-paid - and public revenues are limited by tax exemptions.

A report published last year raised serious questions 18) … the terms of the contracts that governments are signing up to. Some of the world's poorest people are losing the land, water and natural resources that have supported their livelihoods for generations. In Uganda, for example 20,000 people claim to have been evicted from their land and a legal case is pending 19) … courts.

Not every deal is a "land grab" - much depends 20) … local context, the investor's track-record, the terms of the lease, and whether these reflect the free, prior and informed consent of local landholders. But for local people, the context in which the deals are being concluded tends to make negative outcomes more 21) … .

**Best intentions**

There are huge power imbalances among international companies, government and local landholders. Many land deals are being negotiated without transparency and local consultation. In many parts of Africa, local farmers, herders and gatherers only have insecure legal rights to the land they see as theirs. Most have 22) … written documents for their land. Much land is owned by the state, which can allocate it to outside investors

23) … against local opposition. And while international law provides relatively effective protection for foreign investment, international human rights law remains inaccessible and ineffective for people losing land. 24) … even when investors come with the best intentions, this means local groups are exposed to the risk of dispossession - and investors to legal disputes.

**Family farming**

Family farmers have long provided the backbone of African agriculture - and, when 25) … a chance, they have been able to compete on global markets. In Ghana, for example, a cooperative of 60,000 cocoa farmers has

26) … a successful business for nearly 20 years and owns 45% of a UK company that manufactures and distributes chocolate. Public policies and infrastructure to support family farming are 27) … today more than ever.

Evidence also shows that private investments to improve productivity or market access can be structured in ways that support local farmers. Many companies successfully source agricultural produce from family farmers, and have invested in other activities along the production 28) … - in ways that secure their supplies and improve local livelihoods. In Mali and Zambia, some farmer associations own 29) … in the company they collaborate with, which gives them monetary benefits and a greater say. Co-operatives or intermediaries can reduce the costs linked to working with large numbers of farmers. Public policy plays a key role in promoting fairer investment models.

The perception that large plantations are needed to "modernise" agriculture in poorer countries is dominant in many government circles. But evidence shows that this perception is misplaced.

Promoting agricultural development in Africa and 30) … the world's food security challenges requires investing in farmers - not in farmland.

***Alternative viewpoint* Nissi Ekpott,** Entrepreneur and business journalist

International land deals are a form of trade - and for years Africa has been asking 31) … increased trade, rather than aid, as a way out of poverty. Economists say 32) … 2% increase in Africa's share of global trade could halve unemployment. When it comes to agricultural land, Africa has a significant global competitive advantage - a position that it needs to make use of.

Some acquisitions have resulted in a raw deal for local people - but this should not mean that the continent should steer clear of all deals. Statistics show that 84% of businesses fail in their first year. But this does not mean that starting a business is bad; instead measures should be put in 33) … to reduce the rate at which start-ups fail. The same applies to land deals.

Africa's civil society groups have important roles to play – by 34) … greater transparency from their governments and investors. Instead of 35) … treated as helpless victims, local communities could easily be helped to become equal partners.

If land deals are implemented properly, they can 36) … many benefits to Africa - including increased food production; access to improved agro-skills and development in rural communities, which, in turn, will stem the tide of urban migration, one of Africa's most pressing issues.

**Investor case study - Abdul Matlub Ahmad** Nitol-Niloy Group, Bangladesh

Africa is our first investment choice. It is a huge continent with plenty of land and not as densely 37) … as Bangladesh. We are looking at opportunities in Uganda and Kenya, where people do not eat as much rice as we do. This means we can sell 10-30% of the crop to the local market and export the 38) …, thereby ensuring food security for Bangladesh.

We would provide technical assistance to local farmers. Bangladesh has extensive experience of rice research. We have developed some seeds that can be used for farming in Africa - and we can also produce new breeds by mixing our rice seeds with African seeds

To keep production costs down, we plan to help Bangladeshi farmers move 39) … Africa with their families - and give them land and equipment. We know there are concerns about foreign investors acquiring land in Africa. But I think this is mostly about richer countries and the 40) … colonial rulers - not a country like Bangladesh, which is as poor as many African countries. I think we can live side-by-side happily.