



EDITORIAL

DEAR READERS

OVER RECENT YEARS the subject of food security, land rights and agricultural reforms have continued to be highlighted through media reports. This has come to light especially as a result of increased food prices globally, and the social unrest that has faced governments because of this. This year alone reports of agreements and discussions have been noted between African, Indian and Chinese actors amongst others. These have included negotiations for access to agricultural technologies and skills development in an effort to boost agricultural output in the face of global challenges. These efforts have also looked to increase market share and trade while increasing profitability of these agricultural products.

But beyond the media reports we read, there is little information publicised on the details of agricultural investments in Africa, how local communities are affected and what degree of input they have in the drafting of these agreements. The issue of land rights, the effect of investment practices on small-scale farmers as well as food sovereignty can be highlighted as areas of particular concern.

This edition of the newsletter includes two articles looking at the topics of land reform and agricultural investment in Africa. The first article by Rahul Goswami explains the process of measuring potential land profitability and the attention Africa has received as a result of this measurement process due to the 'untapped' potential of land identified on the Continent. He then goes on to explain the

reaction and push for new agricultural investments as a result of these measurements.

The second article by Dr Yongjun Zhao asks what lessons can be learnt from China's historical land reform process and whether these lessons are applicable to Africa. The article explains that local contexts should be taken into consideration when forming and implementing land reform processes in order to ensure that local communities benefit according to their own identified needs. In an effort to better understand this process, Dr Zhao announces an initiative to bring these issues to the fore through consultation with Chinese and African researchers. To this end, an Africa-China Comparative Research Group on Land and Development (ACRELAD) is proposed.

We encourage articles that will further unpack these important issues relevant to Africa's agricultural sector and the engagement of emerging actors in this area, as well as the impact of this engagement on local communities. This will also create a better understanding of the effects of these investments and the opinions of those who are directly affected by them.

Sincerely

Hayley Herman
Programme Officer
Emerging Powers in Africa Initiative

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More analysis and commentary from Fahamu's Emerging Powers in Africa Programme can be found online in Pambazuka News: www.pambazuka.org/en/category/africa_china/

COMMENTARY

In field and for food, the return of structural adjustment

By Rahul Goswami

THE NEW LAND calculus that is being employed for analyses of Africa is created by the coming together of technology and finance. It assesses the continent using a fine grid that is electronically laid out over the land. This grid is the electronic operating topography, created by a model that makes extensive use of satellite imagery, remote sensing analysis and existing databases on terrain and climate, soil and population, water and infrastructure. In this view of Africa, a grid represents a potential investment sink to be harvested after a high-technology crop cycle. The characteristics of a grid square indicate its per hectare revenue and profitability in dollar terms.

Africa is not unique in being dissected through the combination of earth sciences grid and database. All of the developing South has been covered by such grids - South America, Asia (East, South and South-East), the Maghreb and West Africa. Graded according to per hectare output that range from the equivalent of US\$167/ha to over US\$2,500/ha, countries and regions in sub-Saharan Africa are weighed for investment by a variety of criteria: type of soil, agro-ecological types, availability of transport infrastructure and logistics, type of terrain, vegetation indices, watersheds, distance from port, productivity of land already under cultivation, and of course population and demographics.

The first employers of this formula are the investment cartels that control much of the world's grain movement, the flows of edible oils and which are responsible for the dominance of agricultural commodities trade. They also exercise control over the actual flow of food from aggregating markets to ports to retail chains. It is they who have the business models to protect and who leverage corporate power to revoke or alter national legislation to suit their needs. Yet the creator of this formula is the global development apparatus, including several United Nations agencies, specialised organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research. These have provided the evocative basis for the formula - the human development needs, the gap in reaching the Millennium Development Goals, the sustainable development arguments, the health-education-gender dimension.

Left at that, the formula may well have been just what the world's tens of millions of smallholder farming households could find a use for - an assessment that is as holistic globally as it

is specific locally. But the formula was not left to be used through the lens of human development and sustainable natural resource use. The multilateral funding agencies took control, and immediately the assessment grid was bent towards 'market' needs. Thus we have today, operating for all of Africa barring the Saharan belt, "an integrated agro-ecological and socio-economic methodology" whose nominal owners are the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Its methodology rests atop what is called a global database for assessment of policy options for food security and sustainable agricultural development. It has been applied by the World Bank "to provide global, regional and national insight and decision-making support for investors and host-country governments" and it is presented as being able to "facilitate sustainable and responsible international agricultural land investments".

We have heard such terminology before, in the 1970s and 1980s, when it was used to describe the crippling structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. They are indeed back, now as structural agri-food adjustment programmes, and 25 years later they are formidably armed with new machinery provided by the urgency of the triple crisis: climate change, economic volatility and food shortages.

The formula has been used to shortlist countries suitable for receiving agri-land investment and, in this iteration of the grid assessment, the threshold is set at countries which have at least three million hectares of "suitable" land - defined as non-cultivated, non-forested and non-protected land. Long and bitter experiences in developing Asia tell us that the definitions of 'cultivated', 'forested' and 'protected' are all too often unscientific, and can be strikingly different between an act of legislation and its subsequent amendment. These definitions can and do quickly become politically loaded. Now, with the employment of this formula, they become market definitions, since the formula includes population only as a deflator of final crop output.

Under the analysis, the countries of the sub-Saharan Africa region are ranked by the availability of such "suitable" land in their territories (in million hectares): Sudan 46.02; Democratic Republic of Congo 22.49; Mozambique 16.25; Madagascar 16.24; Chad 14.81; Zambia 13.02; Angola 9.68; Tanzania 8.65; Central African Republic 7.94; Ethiopia 4.72; Cameroon 4.65; Kenya

4.61; Mali 3.90; Burkina Faso 3.71; South Africa 3.55; and Congo 3.47. What does this ranking mean? "In most of Africa, area expansion has been based on smallholder agriculture in the context of population growth," explained a World Bank report, issued in 2010 September. "Also, structural issues arising from this long-standing neglect of technology, infrastructure, and institutions continue to limit competitiveness. In many cases, they contributed to disappointing performance of commercial cultivation of bulk commodities, where Africa can have a comparative advantage." This report is the now infamous 'Rising Global Interest in Farmland: Can It Yield Sustainable and Equitable Benefits?' and the question posed concerning benefits is entirely rhetorical.

"Instead, success with export agriculture was limited to higher-value crops such as cotton, cocoa, coffee, and more recently horticulture," stated the World Bank report. "At the same time such gaps also affect smallholder performance. In fact, none of the Sub-Saharan African countries (e.g. Mozambique, Zambia, Sudan, or Madagascar) that recently attracted investor interest achieved more than 25% of potential yields, and area cultivated per rural inhabitant remains well below 1 ha. If technology, infrastructure, and institutions can be improved, higher global demand for agricultural commodities can bring large benefits to existing producers and countries." The Bank calls it agricultural commodities, those living under poverty lines (or just above) in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa call it food.

The difference in terminology has, since the food price spikes of 2007-08, been politically and socially sensitive. The trading of agricultural commodities - and the ubiquity of agricultural future products on the world's busiest commodity trading exchanges - has been blamed for both the price spikes of recent years, in 2007-08 and the 2010-11 condition which continues. This is true, but is not the only factor responsible for the uptrend in food-grain prices in developing countries. At work also is the economic project to encourage urbanisation in the developing South, advance the case for economic growth rates as the definer of a country's 'progress', and leach the rural commons of both population and small farms. UN Habitat tells us that ten years ago in 2001, 37% of China's population lived in urban areas, 471,927,000 people; and 28% of India's population lived in urban areas, 285,608,000 people. In 2010 these numbers had grown to 44.9% and 607,230,500 people in China; 30.1% and 366,858,300 people in India.

These two populous countries alone exert a staggering pressure on food-grain demand. In India, the average per capita cereal consumption ranges between 9 and 13 kilo per month for urban areas (for rural areas the average may be slightly higher, but as ever there is considerable variation between regions). In China the average per capita cereal consumption is estimated to have increased steadily during the 'reform period' (1979-1985),

after the liberalisation of food production when the annual economic growth rate was over 10%, when China began to import cereals. The estimate for the time was 192 kg per capita annually. Since then, nutritional studies have shown that further economic growth in China has led to a shift in energy requirements, and therefore the structure of the Chinese diet shifted, with cereal consumption declining. For urban India, the transition has followed a similar pattern and the weights of cereals and pulses in the diet have declined. In both countries, this is what has been called a "nutrition transition", and has been exploited as such by the global food retail chains, their regional collaborators and the global agri-food-seed-biotech industry.

Those urban dwellers in China, India and elsewhere who are experiencing the nutrition transition are, in many cases, first or second generation migrants from rural provinces. Their presence in metropolises or urbanising agglomerations represents a profound shift in labour away from the land - the patterns that today dominate smallholder agriculture have much to do with labour and migration, and explain in part why the feminisation of smallholder agriculture is such a widespread phenomenon in the South. Thus we have cultivator-consumer dependency ratios, in developing Asia, which are utterly unsustainable. Rough calculations done for India have shown that in districts where agriculture remains the primary occupation, the average ratio that a cultivator (or agricultural labourer) helps feed is 2 to 2.5 people (family included). When fast-growing urban areas are factored in, the ratio climbs to 4.5 and above. The bald truth is that for smallholder farms, these are unfeasible numbers and cause unbearable pressures. No matter what the conditions are, the families and households look for a monthly basket of food staples to survive. The consequence is labour migration, the conversion of agricultural land to commercial use, or the annexation of agricultural land for industrial farming, which will in almost every case be high-input, high-technology.

It is this link - which brings together the consequences of an economic model, population growth, and the corporatisation of the cultivation and food distribution system - that must also be examined when studying the investor-centric land use analyses of Africa. "Sub-Saharan Africa, with its fertile land, ample water resources and the world's lowest agricultural productivity, is the biggest hot spot for agricultural land acquisition by public and private investors from the GCC, China, India and Europe," stated a recent assessment made by the Qatar National Food Security Programme for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). "The agricultural sector in SSA countries is in urgent need of investment capital. However, decades of poor government commitments to agriculture and low investments have resulted in stagnating productivity and food-production levels. The SSA countries' capacity to fill the investment gap



is limited and the pledges of ODA are often not delivered.”

The “urgent need” is a recurring justification, helped by ample evidence of development gaps, the miseries of populations displaced internally because of conflict, the weakness of partnerships between government and social institutions. The “urgent need” has also become the growing nutrition gap in countries of the South, experienced by both urban and rural poor. It is for both the provision of the monthly basket of food staples and in closing the nutrition gap that the new agri-tech industry is deploying resources and the global grid assessment.

That such evidence is misused to further agriland investment campaigns is also in plain sight, but is not corrected by the intergovernmental agencies working in Africa. The result, to those outside the framework of the ‘market’, is grotesque: “Parametric assumptions about yield and input levels, and application of a vector of output and input prices adjusted for transport cost spread over an appropriate time period, would allow the computation of expected investment returns and land rents from any given use,” is one representative piece of advice that was provided on the sidelines of a international meet on food security held in October 2010. “This would allow host governments to assess their comparative advantages better in negotiations with outside investors. Globally, such information can help investors who are interested in certain types of crop to identify the most appropriate countries and macro-regions to consider.”

Who are the investors whom such information would help? They are the clients of investment firms such as BlackRock, which in early 2010 launched a world agriculture fund, earmarking US\$30 million for farmland acquisitions, they are the clients of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, who already offer investors access to similar funds, they are the clients of firms like the new Agcapita, that focus exclusively on farmland investment. These are the firms which assess countries based on their contribution to the health of a basket of exchange traded funds, or ETFs, in the agriculture sector. Such complex and sophisticated market instruments are linked by finance to the world’s dominant agri-tech companies and trading firms: Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge, Louis Dreyfus, Cargill, Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer being amongst them. But it is not the transnational’s alone that command the flows of food and the control of land. The economic growth in China and India has spawned regional competitors with similar interests, and who possess the advantages of market knowledge and reach that the multinationals do not. There are parallels between the competition for fuel and mineral resources amongst China and India, and their effort to secure agricultural land overseas. The tools employed are similar and often

the finance stems from the same preferred sources.

Ignored entirely by the new agri-investing powers is the evidence of many highly credible and comprehensive scientific studies that confirm the value of small-scale agro-ecological approaches in Africa, documented in detail by civil society organisations, farmworkers and farmer associations, grassroots groups, health and consumer organisations, environmental groups, scientists and academics. These groups share “a recognition that hunger, poverty, and climate change are inter-related through the medium of agricultural policies”, and have distributed widely the evidence against commercial, high-input farming that employs bio-technology and genetic engineering (‘biofortification’ is a new variant) to fulfil commercial market objectives. Their recent critique of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s approach to these issues - directly and through its Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) subsidiary - is one such effort.

The industry and its supporters (in national governments, in the opaque inter-governmental agri-research networks with their industry connections) are well aware of the power of such opposition. That is why all statements describing international agricultural investments include by default clauses reiterating the need to develop principles for responsible agriculture investment that respect the rights, livelihoods and resources of local communities. These are stock templates, designed to deflect the fallout from a growing number of media reports of land deals between investors and governments in host countries that have failed to ensure that fair benefits will accrue to the local populations.

They are used to mask the key elements of the new structural agri-food adjustment programmes that are already in place in the developing South: agri-investor friendly new industrial policies, the disinvestment by and withdrawal of government equity in profitable public sector enterprises, financial sector ‘reform’ that ushers in private banking and asset management, the championing of public-private partnership in tandem with cuts in social sector spending, legislative ‘reform’ to support the new measures, the encouragement of urbanisation and the steady creation of new classes of consumers whose purchasing patterns can be fed into the global grid model. These are the elements of the new structural adjustment programme for crop and field, which represents all that threatens our principles of food sovereignty and social justice.

Rahul Goswami is a Research Associate at the Centre for Communication and Development Studies, India, and worked as a social sector consultant in India’s National Agricultural Innovation Project in 2009-10 (makanaka@pobox.com).

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COMMENTARY

Land and development in Africa-China: lessons and multilateral collaboration

By Yongjun Zhao

Introduction

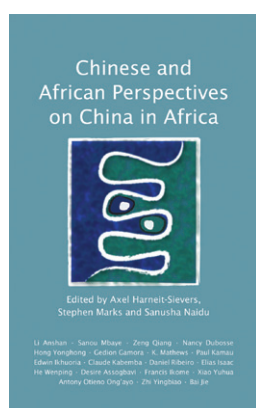
WHILE CHINA'S FOOTPRINT in Africa has triggered tremendous 'disturbances' to the policy towards Africa of the West in recent years, it remains a puzzle as to what this will lead to in the global development landscape in general and the implications for sustainable development in Africa in particular. Ongoing debates on China's role in Africa, due to lack of supportive empirical data, have not rendered well-informed and more critical and balanced perspectives on the policy and institutional processes of Chinese ventures, whose interactions with the local community and polity and the impacts on the livelihoods of the poor and their surrounding environment have yet to be systematically and analytically documented. As Chinese investments in Africa are part of the global process of rising commercial pressures on agricultural land and natural resource use for the production of bio-fuels and minerals, as well as

the development of forest plantations and tourism, policy-makers and researchers have yet to grapple with the underlying challenges. Solutions to sustainable development in affected areas require re-examination of the multifaceted development processes, more realistic assessment of the current scenarios and more practical guidelines on multi-stakeholder engagement concerning not only China's role, but also the others'.

The Chinese involvement in agricultural programmes — quite often criticized for incurring forced evictions of smallholders — underscores poor governance in terms of lack of transparency, adequate prior consultation and prior impact assessments. Yet, one often ignores the intrinsic factors of governance in Africa that facilitates relevant players' rent-seeking behaviours. In other words, the fast growing Chinese investments are partly the outcome of the ongoing African

Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa

Edited by Axel Harneit-Sievers, Stephen Marks and Sanusha Naidu



- Focuses on the dialogue between Chinese and African civil society organisations rather than states
- Provides new data and real insights into the burgeoning relationship between China and Africa
- Notable contributions from African and Chinese scholars and activists

The deepening engagement of China in Africa since the end of the cold war has led to debates about the evolving nature of this relationship. Yet the focus

of analysis has largely been confined to the interactions between states. Little attention has been paid to the growing dialogue between Chinese and African civil society organisations. This collection of essays, written by scholars and activists, explores the interaction between African and Chinese non-state actors and argues that the future of Africa-China relations rests on including such voices if a robust and vibrant engagement and a meaningful relationship are to be sustained. Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa assesses China's activities in Africa through patterns of investment, legal cooperation, effects on the environment, trade, aid and labour links, questions of peace, security and stability, the African Union response, possible regulatory interventions and the future strengthening of an Africa-China CSO dialogue.

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governance processes. On the other side of the coin, poor governance may have cost the Chinese investors more capital than would otherwise be the case. Given relatively huge economic, political and socio-cultural differences between Africa and China, the risks of China's inroads into Africa cannot be underestimated. It may be the Chinese who have taken the bolder action in Africa than the other actors from the West in Africa's development.

The ineffectiveness of the Western approach to development aid to Africa provides the Chinese with the opportunity to deliver its own resources 'without strings attached'. The latter, obviously, cannot be taken for granted, as Chinese aid carries its own political and economic agenda. But for the African recipients, both win as the Chinese bring the desired capital, technology, skills and resources, which enable much faster delivery of development results than the West. As the then Zimbabwean ambassador to Beijing remarked, Western development aid was a conspiracy, although he did not explicate it. His statement might be overtly politicized, but might reveal the complexity and controversy of development. In this respect, the China model of development — if there is one — may provide an alternative to conventional approaches introduced by the West and adopted by Africa. Nevertheless, what the Chinese development model constitutes remains elusive, and some may also be doubtful of its sustainable existence and relevance for Africa. 'China going Latin' also denotes a main criticism of the controversial nature of China's development. Despite this, the presumed China model has been entrenched in Africa's own development, which facilitates China's pursuit of its own political and economic agenda. Failing to understand China's development experiences and the way it does business in Africa will render the engagement with China futile. The Chinese may also find Africa's experiences especially concerning social and political reform relevant. Thus, there is a need to bring these dimensions to the fore, which will also benefit both parties, if they are serious enough about achieving the outcomes of development cooperation in the long run. This can be better achieved if one development sector is located from multidisciplinary angles and from the perspectives of different stakeholders for the purpose of enhanced understanding of the nature of China-Africa development cooperation and multilateral engagement for the benefits of the poor African people.

Land reform and sustainable development: the missing link

With regard to the China model, land reform is assumed to be an exemplar for many African countries who are struggling with rising issues of inequality embedded with land tenure. Lack of access to land and land tenure insecurity are often claimed to hamper rapid rural economic development. The success of China's land reform

as a result of the Communist-led revolution has far-reaching implications for land reform in Africa, especially for countries like Zimbabwe who pursued a radical approach. Paradoxically, China's land reform has been met with rising challenges as far as economies of scale of agricultural production, chronic poverty and rising social conflicts, among others. Although land equality is instituted, the current land tenure structure characterized by individual household land use rights (house responsibility system, or HRS) under village collective landownership has fragmented local social organizations as opposite to that of the collective era of a planned economy. It has contributed to poor governance and also rising conflicts among various actors in village affairs, land use and management in particular. In fact, since its inception, the HRS as more economic-driven has marked the watershed from the commune in 1960s, while serving the political agenda of the state. To a certain extent, this land tenure arrangement as evident in the loosening of inter-household relations and collective action in agricultural production has facilitated unprecedented land grabs across the country in the name of public interest. It has also contributed to natural resource degradation and depletion—an indicator of the vulnerability of the poor in coping with resource constraints and the effects of climate change and natural disasters. Current reform measures with an emphasis on strengthening land rights of the smallholders to resemble the pro-market approach have not achieved their objectives. The issues surrounding adequate compensation, resettlement, and access to productive land and job creation for the displaced groups are also hindering China's overall economic and social transformation.

In Africa, ongoing land reforms to legalize landownership and rights through titling and registering land under individual, group, communal and customary ownership have reached limited positive outcomes. These measures have attributed to enlarging social inequality, poor political governance, and unsustainable use of land resources and exacerbation of poverty. The use of the simplistic rather than inclusive approaches to land governance, land use and development may be subject to blame. Although local social and political contexts are taken as important factors in the design of these programmes, they are far from being well understood and linked to feasible points of action. Academic debates on these issues need to go further, beyond the narrow domain of tenure security and enforcement of land rights. While being innovative to pursue the 'third way', that is, to prioritize local concepts and practice into the flexible design of a specific land tenure system, it is a far cry from being practical in the real local setting. Decentralization of varying forms is also seen as a necessity to couple land reform and governance, which has not brought about genuine democracy and power transfers to the localities. In a nutshell, the current reform measures have failed to explain land tenure arrangements and under what conditions they can be compatible with

sustainable land resource use, governance and development. And the current land tenure reform programmes and research efforts have not put forward a clear conceptual framework for further research and policy designs. Questions on what constitutes and conditions land tenure from multi-stakeholder perspectives and from an angle of land use, governance and development linkages have not been answered.

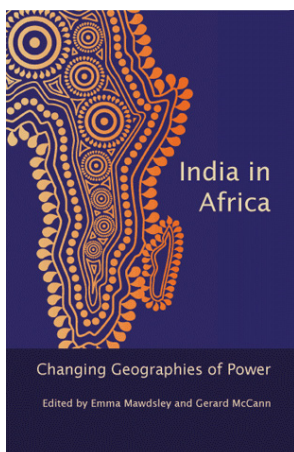
In contrast, China's current land tenure structure interwoven with strong state dominance to safeguard state interest and social stability seems a prerequisite to achieving the economic growth up to date. But it has triggered bad governance-related problems, which land policy developments strive to redress through strengthening the land rights of individual households and to lay the basis of land rights transfers, and thus to enhance economies of scale in agricultural production. The trend towards the marketization of farmland is under the assumption that the market itself can create favourable terms for the farmers. By no means can this approach be equated with land privatization, since collective ownership is upheld in farmland transactions solely determined by the local government—not the farmers themselves. This implies that the alliance of village elites, township, county and provincial government plays a dominant role in approving plans and applications for land use changes. At the lowest

level of government, the village collective is essential in meeting the demands of its masters rather than the constituency. It is this institutional arrangement that marks a difference from the cases of other countries where local governance is too weak to exert effective control over land management and its underlying social and political relations. But in a similar vein, the village collective in China is also often criticized for conniving with the local state and business actors to strike lucrative land deals at the peril of individual farmers. In this context, neither land privatization nor nationalization will be the appropriate approach to land reform. Again, the question remains as to how to develop appropriate land tenure and governance systems to protect farmers' rights and to serve their needs for sustainable land use and development in the context of rising commercial interests and agricultural land shrinkages in both China and Africa.

It is hard to generalize what farmers really want from the land they till either as an owner, renter or labourer. But it may be largely correct that not many farmers would like to maintain their rural status forever, which may even hold true for many in developed countries. Their pragmatic values towards land use and governance as interwoven with cultural, social and political relations may compound the understanding of their preference for a specific land tenure system. This fundamentally contradicts the conventional view that land tenure

India in Africa: Changing Geographies of Power

Edited by Emma Mawdsley & Gerard McCann



- A highly original book— one of the first to set out an extended analysis of contemporary India-African relations
- Enables readers to compare India to China and other 'Rising Powers' in Africa
- Written by expert authors from Africa, India and Europe
- Of interest to academic, civil society, policy and student readerships.

Major changes are taking place in the global economy and polity. While China's relationship to Africa is much examined, knowledge and analysis of India's role in Africa

has until now been limited but, as a significant global player, India's growing interactions with various African countries call for detailed analysis of the Asian giant's influence and its relations with the African continent.

In this original book, which enables readers to compare India to China and other 'rising powers' in Africa, expert African, Indian and western commentators draw on a collection of accessibly written case studies to explore inter-related areas including trade, investment, development aid, civil society relations, security and geopolitics.

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Africa-China Comparative Research Group on Land and Development (ACRELAD)

1. Goal:

ACRELAD strives to provide socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable strategies for the creation of appropriate pro-poor social institutions at both local, regional and international levels to facilitate models of social and political change in Africa where China's development experiences and influences are relevant through multi-stakeholder lesson-learning, engagement and cooperation in research, networking, advocacy and policy advisory support. This will also contribute to an enhanced understanding of the roles of other emerging powers in Africa.

2. Objectives:

To coordinate and facilitate research programmes that reveal the current dilemma, assess the risks and address the opportunities and constraints for community-led land and natural resource management, governance and development in Africa in the context of rising Chinese investments in Africa's agricultural land;

To coordinate and facilitate comparative research programmes on Africa-China in terms of development theory, practice and trajectories related to land and development;

To contribute to the enhanced understanding of Africa-China relations and the political economy of development cooperation;

To contribute to capacity building of local communities and institutions in their engagements with Chinese investors, developers and other stakeholders;

To foster sharing of Africa-China related information, experiences and lesson-learning on land reform, development and natural resource governance issues among the members and the wider public.

3. Outputs:

articles and relevant debates to be published through Fahamu's Emerging Powers in Africa Newsletter "Perspectives on Emerging Powers in Africa"

scientific publications: working papers, reports, journal articles and books

networking activities: meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, websites, etc.

professional training of researchers, practitioners, decision-makers and graduates in land and development related issues of Africa-China from comparative perspectives

policy advisory support to relevant institutions

4. Call for members:

Open to professionals with interest in the subject areas; timeline to be made

Seeking strong support of key actors

A preparatory workshop envisaged in June 2011 in an African country

5. Coordination:

Dr. Yongjun Zhao, Assistant Professor, Groningen Centre for Law and Governance, University of Groningen, The Netherlands, with the support of Fahamu.

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security is essential to capitalizing on farmers' incentives to farming and its related investments. Notwithstanding the importance of understanding complex social and political context, it is more important to investigate the basic conditions that make land tenure really work – not only for the sake of the farmers – but also in the interests of the wider public and the nation as a whole. This requires a more practical approach to understanding what land reform can really provide for the farmers and other stakeholders.

Land tenure and the role of land cannot be understood in isolation from the overall challenges of governance and development. One needs to rethink the conditions and dynamics of land tenure in a specific local setting, which requires the design of tailor-made solutions. If sustainable land resource use and livelihood development for

the farmers, especially those poorer groups, are considered more seriously by decision-makers, one may come up with a practical roadmap for change. A match between a land tenure system and sustainable land resource use is fundamental to governance and sustainable development. This means that a specific land use plan concerning farmland, forests, water, woodlands and so forth, should be institutionalized with a central role to determine the design of an appropriate land tenure regime. As a result, a number of land tenure systems can even be present in one village. A reorganization of existing land tenure relations and ways of governance is needed, which may sound daunting, but is necessary for better-managed land systems as far as sustainable development is concerned. Land tenure, sustainable livelihoods, land resource use and governance are thus intermingled and one cannot be appropriate without the others. A land

tenure design from a sustainable development and governance angle can be a more useful paradigm shift from the conventional approaches mentioned earlier. This would provide the opportunity for both Chinese investors and developers and African decision-makers and farmers to work together towards a feasible framework of action to reach the goal of sustainable investments beneficial to all parties.

Lesson learning and cooperation: the Africa and China comparative research group (ACRELAD)

As land reform is critical to sustainable livelihoods, agriculture and natural resource use in both Africa and China, researchers, practitioners and decision-makers from both and other regions with common interests may need to find effective communication channels to share experiences and learn lessons from each other in order to improve their understanding of and capacity in making possible solutions to the development challenges facing Africa and China. First-hand knowledge is imperative to uncovering the 'truth' and thus contributing to more constructive interactions among the major players, which is key to addressing the fundamental question of Africa's land reform compounded by global development processes. The formation of a research group on these issues from comparative perspectives would be a timely contribution to the process of knowledge attainment and capacity building for Africa's smallholders as well, thus contributing to the fostering of participatory land

governance and sustainable development. The ultimate outcome of this group would be to provide feasible strategies for the creation of appropriate pro-poor social institutions at local, regional and international levels to facilitate models of social and political change especially in Africa. As such, multi-stakeholder engagement and cooperation is the key for the attainment of socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable solutions (see Box). The research group represents a bold action to address development challenges in a more critical and comparative manner, which creates synergies for existing initiatives and opportunities for more innovative and collaborative efforts among the members and others. Its success is contingent upon the support of all corners of society in Africa and China with a strong will to be the change agents in helping the poor find more feasible solutions to poverty and under-representation.

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LINKS, RESOURCES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Media Brief

African Development Bank

China in Africa: A New Development Partner?

China's growing interest in Africa has spurred intense debate. China's has been Africa's most prominent emerging partner in recent years. Chinese Foreign Direct investment (FDI) in Africa has increased by an average of 46% yearly in the past decade. The African Development Bank (AfDB) will soon release a report on this topical subject. This report challenges the idea that only China gains from its relationship with Africa and assess the real opportunities for both sides.

1) African Assets for China

China needs natural resources that it can find on the African continent to fuel its surging economy. According to the AfDB Chief Economist, Mthuli Ncube, "The growing trade and investment relations are often supported by grants or concessionary loans from China's government, as part of the country's "Going Global" strategy". Most of Africa's exports to China are either crude oil (70% of the total) or raw materials (15%) while the larger share of China's trade and investments are linked to extractive industries and related infrastructure.

2) Opportunities for Africa

China plays the role of an important provider of much-needed finance and know-how for the development of the continent. Below are the major trends of Chinese investments in Africa.

- Chinese FDI structure often suggests the intention of establishing long-term relationships with local governments. It is very different from that of Western countries which involves private investors, and not committed to long-term presence.
- China spurs infrastructure development: more than 35 African countries have benefitted from China's infrastructure financing. This rose from USD 1 billion per annum in 2001 to USD 7.5 in 2006.
- Providing African products access to international and regional markets is easier thanks to improved infrastructure. African exports to China expand while the continent's trade with other major global markets are either stagnating or declining.
- Africa's imports from China are more diversified than its exports. Three major types of products are imported: machinery and transport equipment; manufactured goods and handicraft, thus enhancing local consumption. Since Chinese imports include cheap electronic toys and textiles, it helps create a consumer society.
- The establishment of Chinese-Operated Special Economic Zones in African countries since 2006 is expected to focus on value-added

by boosting the manufacturing capacity of many African countries.

3) Challenges for Africa: Unbalanced Relationship?

There are still challenges that Africa has to face in its relationship with China.

- In overall value terms, over 70% of African exports emanate from four countries: Angola (34%), South Africa (20%), Sudan (11%), and the Republic of Congo (8%).
- It is quite the same for Chinese imports. They benefit relatively few countries. Six countries account for 60% of the total: South Africa, 21%; Egypt, 12%; Nigeria, 10%; Algeria, 7%; Morocco, 6%; and Benin, 5%.
- There is a large trade deficit between Africa and China. In 2008, the amount of the deficit was USD 10 billion.
- China's trade does not seem to be geared toward a purely African strategy but is consistent with Chinese policy which is: lessening the country's energy constraints and opening markets for its manufactured products.

4) Emerging Chinese Trends in Africa.

- China emphasizes investments in private sector and SMEs.
- Chinese are less risk-averse than their Western counterparts. For instance, they are not constrained by the same social and environmental safeguards.
- Chinese firms use some countries for re-exports, especially in the textile industries.

China's growing engagement on the continent challenges the way traditional development partners operate and the AfDB would like to leverage the much-needed resources and know-how from China for the benefit of African countries. China has helped to re-establish Africa as a source of valuable commodities on the global market and also helped to focus on the challenges Africa still has to face in terms of creating sustainable growth for all and poverty reduction. However, through this new partnership, China should indirectly help to promote African interests throughout the world and therefore contribute to the continent's sustainable growth.

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China in Africa Podcast: "Aid, Trade & Some Indignation"

<http://chinainafrica.blogs.france24.com/article/2011/01/20/audio-china-africa-podcast-aid-trade-some-indignation-0>

China in Africa Podcast: The Debrief with Sanusha Naidu

Sanusha Naidu, Research Director, Emerging Powers in Africa Initiative, explains why the prevailing view about the Chinese in Africa can be best described as “cautiously optimistic.”

<http://china.buzzsprout.com/937/15806-china-in-africa-podcast-the-debrief-with-sanusha-naidu>

China in Africa Podcast: Getting to know each other

Sanusha Naidu, discusses the Fahamu African Journalist Study Tour to Beijing conducted in 2010.

<http://chinainafrica.blogs.france24.com/article/2011/01/17/audio-china-africa-podcast-getting-know-each-other-0>

Recent Publications and New Reports

India’s Africa Engagement: Prospects for the 2011 India-Africa Forum

Written by Alex Vines, Chatham House, December 2010

Programme Paper can be accessed at: http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/download/-/id/983/file/18076_1210vines.pdf

The Changing Nature of Nigeria-India Relations

Written by Parvathi Vasudevan, Chatham House, December 2010

Programme Paper can be accessed at: http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/download/-/id/984/file/18077_1210vasudevan.pdf

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China's growing role in African peace and security

Report by Saferworld, January 2011

Report can be accessed at: <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Chinas%20Growing%20Role%20in%20African%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf>

Chinese Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones in Africa: The Case of Mauritius

Written by Ana Cristina Alves, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), Occasional Paper No 74, January 2011

Occasional Paper can be accessed at: http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/occasional_papers/saia_sop_74_alves_20110131.pdf

China's Overseas Foreign Direct Investment Risk: 2008-2009

Written by Wang Duanyong, SAIIA, Occasional Paper No 73, January 2011

Occasional Paper can be accessed at: http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/occasional_papers/saia_sop_73_duanyong_20110125.pdf

Chinese Debt, Aid and Trade: Opportunity or Threat for Zambia?

Written by Chilufya Chileshe, SAIIA, Occasional Paper No 72, December 2010

Occasional Paper can be accessed at: http://www.saiia.org.za/images/stories/pubs/occasional_papers/saia_sop_72_chileshe_20101214.pdf

Africa 10/21: The ten markets in Sub-Saharan Africa that will lead the transformation of the Continent in the 21st century; Part A

Report by MasterCard Worldwide Insights, 2010

Report can be accessed at: <http://www.masterintelligence.com/upload/234/161/MC81-SubSaharAfrica-S.pdf>

Africa 10/21: The ten markets in Sub-Saharan Africa and their engagement with China and India in the 21st century; Part B

MasterCard Worldwide Insights, 2010

Report can be accessed at: http://www.masterintelligence.com/upload/253/185/Africa21_China_India_s.pdf

Beijing and troubled nations: Signals of a shift (featured through International Rivers Network)

Financial Times, January 20 2011

Article can be accessed at: <http://damsandalternatives.blogspot.com/2011/01/beijing-and-troubled-nations-signals-of.html>

Carrie Liu Currier and Manochehr Dorraj, eds., China's Energy Relations with the Developing World (New York: Continuum, 2011)

Overview and Table of Contents: <http://www.andrewerickson.com/2011/01/pipelines-versus-sealanes-challenges-and-opportunities-for-securing-energy-resources/>

SADC: A Study of India's Trade and Investment Potential

Released by Export-Import Bank of India, Occasional Paper No. 139

Report can be accessed at: <http://www.eximbankindia.com/op/op139.pdf>

Useful Websites

- AidData: <http://www.aiddata.org>

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

World Social Forum Roundtable Dialogue

The Emerging Powers in Africa Initiative organised a roundtable dialogue on South-South Cooperation: **Charting the way for people to people collaboration** at the 2011 World Social Forum, 8 February 2011, Dakar (Senegal). A commentary from the roundtable will be published in the forthcoming edition of the newsletter.

African Journalist Study Tour to New Delhi

Ms Hayley Herman, Programme Officer, led a group of African journalists and practitioners under the Fahamu African Journalist Study Tour to New

Delhi (India) from 22-29 January 2011. A report on the visit will be included in the forthcoming edition of the newsletter.

Conference/Workshop Attendance

Sanusha Naidu, Research Director, presented a paper entitled **The Role of Civil Society in the Food Security Debate** at the Conference on South-South Cooperation: India, Africa and Food Security: Between the Summits, 10-11 January 2011, Mumbai (India). The conference was hosted by the Centre for African studies (University of Mumbai), Nordic Africa Institute (Uppsala) and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation (UNDP - New York).



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