FORCE MULTIPLIERS

THE INSTRUMENTALITIES OF IMPERIALISM

The New Imperialism, Volume 5

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Chapter 2

THE NEW ALLIANCE: GAINING GROUND IN AFRICA

Mandela Coupal Dalgleish

Launched in 2012, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition is a framework designed to facilitate networking, or what Shah (2012) calls "cooperation frameworks" between the private sector, African governments and civil society. The New Alliance comprises 10 African countries and over 100 corporations as well as G8 governments (McKeon, 2014, p. 2) and promises to "help lift 50 million people out of poverty" by 2022 (Shah, 2012) through investments in African agriculture. This is to be accomplished with commitments from African leaders to effect policy reforms to encourage investment opportunities and drive country-led plans on food security; private sector investors; and, donor partners who will broaden the potential for what is being heralded as rapid and sustainable agricultural growth in Africa (McKeon, 2014). According to USAID administrator Shah (2012), everybody benefits from the New Alliance: "With a focus on smallholders, particularly women, the New Alliance brings African nations, international donors and private firms together to unlock real agricultural growth". While it may be true that these actors are coming together in the form of public-private partnerships (PPPs), it is disputable whether the smallholders are truly the beneficiaries.

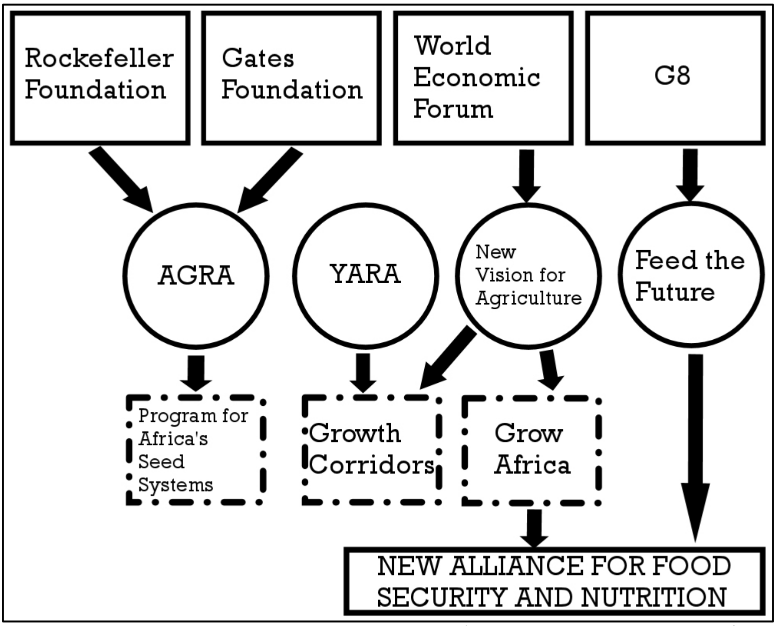
The New Alliance has been the target of much criticism for being a mechanism whose intent is to promote the interests of multinational corporations, rather than the small-scale farmers it claims to help. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that the New Alliance is part of a greater neoliberal project in which agricultural land and resources in Africa have become the object of a new wave of capitalist expansion, led by the US. We will examine how the New Alliance is creating the conditions for the further impoverishment and disenfranchisement of African farmers, while opening African markets to multinational corporations.

Origins of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

A number of actors have paved the way toward the foundation of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, including the private sector, civil society and G8 members. Until the mid-1990s, the US deferred to the major European powers in terms of policy in sub-Saharan Africa, as they still had considerable influence over their former colonies (McCormick, 2006, pp. 344–345). But as opportunities for investment increased in the 1990s in Africa, so did US interest in the continent in what some are now calling the new scramble for Africa (Kerr-Ritchie, 2007). In 2000, the US Congress approved the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) which aims at reforming African policies to facilitate access to US markets. It supports US corporations by pressuring African countries to open their economies and build free markets, while claiming to reduce poverty by creating opportunities and jobs for Africans. However, after September 11, 2001, AGOA also became a valuable mechanism for strengthening "counter-terrorism" activities (Bush, 2001). As president Bush stated in his speech at the African Growth and Opportunity Forum on October 29, 2001: "People who trade in freedom want to live in freedom" (Government Printing Office, 2004, p. 1316). Still today, AGOA is the cornerstone of US economic policy toward sub-Saharan Africa and remains a significant policy that promotes the trade-not-aid approach to developing countries (McCormick, 2006). This trade legislation was to give preferential access to sub-Saharan countries to the American market while enhancing opportunities for investment on the African continent (McCormick, 2006, pp. 341–342).

Philanthropists also play a large role in international development programs. In 2006, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation founded the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). AGRA has been chaired by Kofi Annan the former head of the UN since 2007 (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation [BMGF], 2007, p. 5). Through PPPs, it seeks to modernize African agriculture, improve access farmers have to seeds and develop breeding programs with a focus on small-scale farmers (BMGF, 2007, pp. 7, 8). At the 2009 World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos, Switzerland, 17 multinational companies laid down the foundations for a corporate-led approach to food security in the New Vision for Agriculture, which would serve as the launching pad for the "Grow Africa" partnership platform, which in turn would become an important actor in the development of the New Alliance (McKeon, 2014, p. 7).[1] Grow Africa came into existence at the 2011 WEF under the sponsorship of the African Union Commission and the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The three main objectives of Grow Africa are to increase private sector investments in African agriculture, implement PPPs, and promote already existing initiatives working towards these objectives (Obenland, 2014, p. 9). Together, AGRA and Grow Africa have made significant steps toward naturalizing corporate agricultural development, a style of development that the New Alliance has adopted on the African continent under the guise of African owned and led initiatives (McKeon, 2014). Relationships between these various agencies and programs are charted in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Genealogy of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition



In 2009, at the G8 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy, US president Obama pushed for a common approach towards massive investments into African agriculture and was able to leverage US 22$ billion in donor funding to support national agricultural plans in developing countries (US Department of State [DoS], 2012, p. 1). During the same summit, the five principles that are key to the approach to investment in African agriculture, the "Rome Principles," were articulated: investment in country-led plans and processes; a comprehensive approach to food security that includes support for humanitarian assistance, sustainable agriculture development and nutrition; strategic coordination of assistance; a strong role for multilateral institutions; and, finally, a sustained commitment of financial resources (DoS, 2012, p. 1). The next year, the Feed the Future Initiative was created as the US government's global hunger and food security initiative, which is led by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Building on Feed the Future, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition was created in 2012 to usher in a new phase of global investment in Africa (White House, 2012). The New Alliance will align itself with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), which is an initiative endorsed by the African Union in 2003, whose purpose is to expand national economies through agricultural development (Feed the Future, 2012).

The New Alliance comes from a multitude of similar corporate-led initiatives to industrialize African agriculture. Thus, its principles and objectives are closely related to those of AGRA and Grow Africa. The New Alliance seems to be an effort that concentrates more on sub-Saharan Africa, while strengthening the surrounding initiatives driving towards a corporate-led African green revolution.

Narrative behind the New Alliance

The New Alliance narrative lies within corporate-style agricultural development. Important concepts which are part of the New Alliance approach are modernization and productivism, both being fundamental aspects of the New Alliance narrative (McKeon, 2014, p. 8). Modernization, in the case of the New Alliance, involves the notion that traditional agricultural systems are absolute and must be modernized to fit the standard proposed by the industrial, modernized agricultural system (McKeon, 2014). In fact, the New Alliance has been pushing what it calls Enabling Actions designed to give incentives for the private sector to invest. One such Enabling Action is the Technology Platform, which aims to "assess the availability of improved agricultural technologies, identify constraints to their adoption, and create a roadmap to accelerate the adoption of these technologies among farmers" (McKenna & Shrier, 2013). So-called traditional agricultural systems must progress into modern ones, which generally leaves no room for peasant farmers. Within this modernization discourse, productivism has the single focus of increasing agricultural yield (McKeon, 2014), as expressed by Bill Gates (2013):

> "The metrics here are pretty simple. About three-quarters of the poor who live on these farms need greater productivity, and if they get that productivity we'll see the benefits in income, we'll see it in health, we'll see it in the percentage of their kids who are going off to school. These are incredibly measurable things".

To increase productivity in developing countries, the productivist discourse argues that smallholders using traditional agricultural knowledge should be pushed (or "transitioned") to modern commodity-based production geared toward international markets (McKeon, 2014). This approach ignores local cultural realities, while also putting the power in the hands of global financiers for whom local sustainability and political autonomy are of little concern (McMichael, 2010). Productivism not only fails to consider cultural and social wealth in its discourse, it also excludes other forms of yield from its measurements. By promoting monocultures and genetically modified (GM) crops that require chemical pest and weed control, the productivist scheme in fact increases external inputs that the farmer must purchase, while eroding local agricultural knowledge and crop diversity (Moahloli, 2009).

Due to the undeniable impact industrial agriculture has on the environment and local ecosystems, New Alliance protagonists have introduced the concept of "sustainable intensification" (Shah, 2014), which when looked at more closely seems to be the exact same approach as productivist industrial agriculture. USAID administrator Shah (2014) in a speech given at the Chicago Council for Global Affairs said that "game-changing technologies only actually change the game when they reach farmers," that he was "inspired by the green revolution" and that it is easy to think of new seeds as the "silver bullet". It would seem that the New Alliance is using the word "sustainable" as a way to hide their efforts at industrializing the agricultural systems of participating African countries.

Value Chains

Equally fundamental to the New Alliance vision is the concept of value chains, which focuses on marketing rather than production. Value chains are conceived as direct routes that link producers to the eventual consumer (McKeon, 2014), where investment, lending and the necessary infrastructures are created (Yara, 2014). The argument, according to the New Alliance, is that when there is a surplus of a crop in season, local market prices crash, which dissuades farmers from investing in technologies that would improve their yield (Obenland, 2014, p. 10). The preferred way to link farmers to new markets, or in this case the global market, is with value chains (McKeon, 2014, p. 9). Another assumption is that most farmers in sub-Saharan Africa are subsistence farmers, which is no longer the case as most farmers today are linked to diverse local markets: "As argued before, smallholder agriculture is not located outside the markets. There is no point in 'linking' smallholder agriculture to the markets. The central issue is, instead, how to invest and with which stakeholders to increase and keep more value-added at holding and territorial level" (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2013, p. 73) McMichael (2013) argues that value chain farming, or contract farming, establishes "*chains* of dependency, with smallholders entering markets over which they have no ultimate control, thereby threatening their autonomy on the land" (p. 672). Furthermore, hybrid and GM seeds supported by the value chain "individualise cropping" (McMichael, 2013, p. 679) as opposed to diversified farming. Debt also plays a large role in value chains, as smallholders are expected to buy into expensive inputs such as seeds, fertilizer and pesticides that they cannot afford while bearing the bulk of the risk, thus relying on debt to keep their farms active (McMichael, 2013). The AGRA Program for Africa's Seed Systems (PASS) finances and structures the value chain of hybrid and GM seeds through research and marketing (McKeon, 2014). GRAIN (2007) writes:

> "The logic here is staggering. The idea is to fund public breeders to develop new varieties (as the private sector does not want to do this), to fund private companies to sell these to farmers, and to provide credit to farmers for the purchase of these seeds (because otherwise they cannot pay for them). AGRA is all about creating an effective demand for its own product, prescribing a model of development that is not able to survive on its own".

One of the purposes of value chains is to create demand and dependence on the products sold by multinational corporations (Curtis & Hillary, 2012, p. 1). Once farmers stop saving their own seeds and providing their own inputs, it becomes difficult to regain that control because they are "hooked into use of external inputs through a time-bound, externally-funded programme over whose destiny they have no control" (McKeon, 2014, p. 9).

African countries participating in the New Alliance are making policy changes facilitating fertilizer and seed companies' access to national markets, as well as incentives for investment such as tax reductions. For example, Burkina Faso has committed to "facilitate private sector participation in fertilizer supply contracts" (New Alliance for Food Security & Nutrition [NAFSN], 2013b, p. 5) and to "review the seed legislation to clearly define the role of the private sector in certified seed selection, production and marketing" (NAFSN, 2013b, p. 5), while Ethiopia seeks to "increase private sector participation in seed development, multiplication, and distribution" (NAFSN, 2012a, p. 5). However, farmers in Africa are not asking for the GM and hybrid seeds corporations have to offer because "farmers have developed a very effective seed-saving system that has been in place since times immemorial. This traditional agricultural system allows farmers to access good quality seeds year after year through inter-farmer exchanges and in-crop selections of vigorous seeds" (Coulibaly, 2009, p. 11). As 90% of seeds in Africa are local varieties, the privatization of that component of the value chain is fundamental for maximum profit (McMichael, 2013). Plans to fast-track seed varieties have also been implemented in Tanzania where the "time required to release new varieties of imported seeds from outside the region [is] to be reviewed and benchmarked with international best practices" (NAFSN, 2012d, p. 5). But as McMichael (2013) stated that "fast-tracked seeds dispense with adequate local testing, shifting risk to farmers at the same time as the latter take on debt to buy such commercial varieties" (p. 685). Whether African farmers need the inputs offered by corporations or not, the biotech industry intends nonetheless to penetrate the market, as they have invested immensely in Africa (Bassey, 2009).

Growth Corridors

Led by private corporations, "agricultural growth corridors" combine industrial agricultural production models and value chains to gain maximum "effectiveness". The purpose of growth corridors is to attract investors by converting land into industrial agriculture, and building infrastructure such as roads, railways, ports and processing plants (Paul & Steinbrecher, 2013). Growth corridors were launched by Yara, a fertilizer company, at the 2008 WEF New Vision for Agriculture, "to develop underutilized land areas in Africa that have great potential to enhance food production and economic growth" (Yara, 2014), and have become an official component of the New Alliance framework. What tends to happen instead is smallholders become outgrowers working mainly for multinational corporations, thus reinforcing the dependence of farmers on foreign markets and inputs (Curtis & Hillary, 2012), as stated by EuropAfrica (2013, p. 23):

> "when family farmers enter the commodified market they become part of a commodified chain, losing autonomy and control of the resource base, local markets and jobs. Control is handed to agribusiness, who hold market power through their ability to determine prices for both commercial inputs and produce".

Once again, smallholders and their communities are supposed to be beneficiaries alongside corporations through access to credit, inputs and land rights, yet the "corridor proposals suggest that production is more likely to focus on commodities for international markets, rather than helping local communities practice agriculture for food security/sovereignty, placing them in a role of contract farmers and outgrowers rather than independent food providers" (Paul & Steinbrecher, 2013, pp. 5).

Growth corridors bring together PPPs and the value chain into an effective instrument to foster and promote private investment. The two best known growth corridors are Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC) in Mozambique and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT). Corporations intend to open new markets for their proprietary seeds, fertilizer, and machinery along the entire supply chain, thus likely creating the conditions for land appropriation (Paul & Steinbrecher, 2013).

Cooperation Frameworks

The 10 African countries who have joined the New Alliance have signed Cooperation Framework Agreements (CFAs), which include commitments by host countries, G8 nations, public donors and by corporations, national and transnational (Obenland, 2014). The

CFAs are particular to each hosting African country, yet there are important similarities between all of them. African countries are expected to make policy changes to encourage and facilitate private investment, as can be read in the New Alliance (NAFSN, 2012d, p. 3):

> "The Government of Tanzania intends to focus its efforts, in particular, on increasing stability and transparency in trade policy; improving incentives for the private sector; developing and implementing a transparent land tenure policy; developing and implementing domestic seed policies that encourage increased private sector involvement in this area; and aligning the National Food and Nutrition Policy with the National Nutrition Strategy".

This commitment makes it clear that the intention of the Tanzanian government is to help the private sector, "in particular", to penetrate the Tanzanian agricultural market. The discourse surrounding such policy reforms is that smallholders will increase their yields and productivity once they have access to modern irrigation and farming technology, hybrid and GM seeds and synthetic fertilizer (Moahloli, 2009).

However, there is little mention of the commitments governments and investors have made to support smallholders. In nearly all 10 Cooperation Frameworks, the only commitment which invokes smallholders is for the "delivery of tangible benefits to smallholders, including women", which remains a vague statement at best (NAFSN, 2012d, p. 3). Terms such as "inclusive economic growth" and "responsible agricultural investment" are systematically used in every Cooperation Framework, while providing little to no precision as to what these mean (Obenland, 2014, p. 13). However, given the neoliberal orientations of the program, one may surmise that "inclusive" means inclusive of the private sector and large foreign concerns, and responsible means that the investments respond to the interests of the latter parties.

The only country that has an ostensibly different Cooperation Framework is Benin. Benin's commitments seem more focused on the small-scale farmer by working to "improve Benin's agricultural performance so that it is able, in a sustainable way, to ensure food sovereignty for the population and to contribute to the economic and social development of Benin" (NAFSN, 2013a, p. 2). Benin is also the only country to mention gender equality and environmental issues. That being said, Benin will revise tax and regulatory legislation to "encourage and favour investment in the agricultural sector" (NAFSN, 2013a, p. 6). In addition, given that Benin aims at realizing the Millennium Development Goals more rapidly through agricultural development, this too furthers the goals of neoliberal restructuring, as explained in detail by Cammack (2006).

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

The New Alliance is a "multi-stakeholder partnership initiative" which is implemented through public-private partnerships (PPPs), and represents what the Introduction to this volume explains in terms of the "force multipliers" and "connected capitalism" concepts. The World Bank defines PPPs as, "a long-term contract between a private party and a government agency, for providing a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility" (World Bank, 2012, p. 11). PPPs are touted as a win-win for all parties involved since it becomes possible for the state to benefit from the resources of the private sector and transfer some of the risk to them, while most of the accountability rests in the public sector (McKeon, 2014). However, what generally happens is accountability tends to disappear, while corporations avoid most of the risk by imposing changes in policy and regulations that may put them in a position of risk (McKeon, 2014). AGRA and Grow Africa are both precursors of the New Alliance, and both solidified corporate-led development with PPPs as central components to their approach (McKeon, 2014), and they have been criticized for excluding policy frameworks that were formulated jointly with African peasant farmers and producers (Cissokho, 2012).

Similarly observable in the Cooperation Framework Agreements of the New Alliance, the commitments that host countries must make are much more exhaustive, describing how they intend to create an investment-friendly environment for the private sector, while corporations simply need to write Letters of Intent stating that "they will prepare and execute, and intend to advise, shape, and participate in broad, inclusive and sustained private sector consultative mechanisms with the host government" (NAFSN, 2012d, p. 3). What becomes clear is that the brunt of the risk is shouldered by smallholders who are not included in the PPPs, yet they are the ones most affected by changes in regulations and laws regarding agriculture (McKeon, 2014). Smallholders are to rest easy while corporations and governments have their best interests at heart, so it seems.

Amid the diverse actors that are engaged in the New Alliance, the use of the word "partnership" can be misleading, as it creates an image where all actors are equal and conceals any conflict there may be between them (Obenland, 2014, p. 14). It seems clear that the interests of smallholders and those of corporations are at odds, as they both compete for markets, natural resources, agricultural commodities and profit, with corporations having more influence and financial power, thus making the playing field uneven (Obenland, 2014, p. 14). According to the CFA for Nigeria, "G8 members, the Government of Nigeria, and the private sector intend to review their collective performance under this document through an annual review process to be conducted jointly" (NAFSN, 2012c, pp. 3). Smallholders, those who are the intended beneficiaries of the New Alliance, are not included when the time comes for accountability. Furthermore, the notion of accountability within the New Alliance does not mean liability for one's actions when excesses may occur, such as land grabbing, but rather "to review progress toward jointly determined objectives on the basis of jointly determined benchmarks" (NAFSN, 2012c, pp. 3). Each CFA states that part of the joint objectives or "benchmarks" is to help fulfill each host country's CAADP investment plan (NAFSN, 2012c, pp. 3). The agricultural component of NEPAD, the CAADP, is an African-owned development plan to invest in agriculture and orient priorities and programmes nationally. According to Cissokho (2012), the initiatives born from NEPAD and the CAADP, "generated significant hopes and expectations on the part of the social movements and the networks of peasants and producers, who saw agriculture regaining its position at the heart of the political agenda". That statement suggests that the CAADP was initially a much more inclusive initiative for smallholders and that it aligned itself more closely with farmers and their vision for African agriculture. Nonetheless, the CAADP rapidly degenerated (Cissokho, 2012) and due to a top-down approach and inadequate communication between governments and farmers, the National Agricultural Development Programmes, "appeared to be above all occasions for negotiating new aid" (Cissokho, 2012). CAADP became an instrument directed at acquiring external aid rather than relying on domestic resources in an efficient way (McKeon, 2014).

Land Grabs and the New Alliance

On a global scale, there has been a renewed effort to grab productive lands, but this is especially true in Africa. A World Bank report recently estimated that, "approximately 56 million hectares worth of large-scale farmland deals were announced even before the end of 2009," when up to 2008 only 4 million hectares of agricultural land were acquired (Deininger & Byerlee, 2010, p. xiv). The same report also notes that 70% of that new demand has been in Africa, the target area of the New Alliance, where "countries such as Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Sudan have transferred millions of hectares to investors in recent years" (Deininger & Byerlee, 2010, p. xiv).[2] The appropriation of this land is happening jointly with transnational and national corporate investors, governments and local elites for the purpose of producing commodities for international and domestic markets (Margulis, McKeon & Borras, 2013). The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Committee on World Food Security (CWFS), the World Bank and the African Union have been working on solutions. In 2012, the CWFS adopted the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, which according to GRAIN (2013, p. 6) are a "bottom-up consultation and are acclaimed for putting emphasis on the rights and needs of women, indigenous peoples and the poor". However, the Voluntary Guidelines are just that, voluntary. The CFAs of the New Alliance "take account" (NAFSN, 2012c, p. 3) of the Voluntary Guidelines, while also taking into account the Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI), which were formulated by the World Bank and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The PRAI have been criticized for creating so-called responsible levels of land grabbing instead of working to end them completely (Transnational Institute, 2011). The Transnational Institute (2011) argues that the PRAI is an attempt to create the illusion that power imbalances are lessened between those grabbing the land and those who live and work on it by making land acquisition deals more transparent, while failing to address the problem these land grabs truly pose, that is the loss of the land itself.

As discussed earlier, African countries in the New Alliance, as part of their Cooperation Frameworks, have made commitments with the purpose of reinforcing land right laws and intellectual property rights. In Malawi, the government will release 200,000 hectares of land for large scale commercial agriculture by June 2015 (NAFSN, 2012b); Ghana will produce a database of suitable land for investors with the objective of compiling 10,000 hectares by December 2015 (NAFSN, 2012e); Burkina Faso will "adopt and disseminate a policy framework for resettlement in the developed areas taking into consideration all types of farmers, small and large-scale" (NAFSN, 2013b, p. 6); and, Tanzania will secure land right certificates for smallholders and investors, demarcate village land in the Kilombero district as well as in the SAGCOT region (NAFSN, 2012d). These are some of the policy requirements for investment in the CFAs. While strengthening land rights could have positive consequences in the right context, such as the recognition of women's ownership rights and collectively managed land, it will most likely create the conditions for land grabs (Paul & Steinbrecher, 2013). As Paul & Steinbrecher (2013) put it: "In this context, land titling is only part of the answer, because without the right policy context it can simply lead to land being sold, either voluntarily or under pressure, resulting in concentration of land in the hands of the most powerful players" (p. 11).

Practically speaking, land and its subsequent wealth is being transferred from those who live on it to corporations. Africa is seen as a new frontier for agribusiness corporations, who are committing investments in exchange for risk-free conditions that are undermining the resources and further impoverishing the inhabitants of the land.

Analysis

The New Alliance claims that it will bring 50 million people out of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, yet it is built upon past initiatives and partnerships that have proven to be detrimental to African farmers. The New Alliance is yet another corporate-led, top-down development initiative that benefits the interests of corporations rather than the people it claims to help. The New Alliance is setting the stage for large agricultural companies to swoop into risk free investment environments that African countries must create, while the smallholders who produce the majority of the national food supply receive little to no benefits. Land tenure laws adopted under the New Alliance are leading to land grabs, laws on inputs such as seeds and fertilizer are causing loss of diversity in crops and farming techniques, while value chains and growth corridors are ushering in a new wave of industrial agriculture. Farmers in Africa have the agricultural knowledge and the genetic diversity (seeds) that they need to produce their own food in a sustainable way while generating enough profit to sustain themselves. As Zitto Kabwe stated in an article by Provost, Ford & Tran (2014): "It will be like colonialism. Farmers will not be able to farm until they import, linking farmers to [the] vulnerability of international prices. Big companies will benefit. We should not allow that".

Notes

1 According the World Economic Forum, the "New Vision" project is led by 28 of its "global partner companies," including: Agco Corporation, Archer Daniels Midland, BASF, Bayer AG, Bunge Limited, Cargill, CF Industries, The Coca-Cola Company, Diageo, DuPont, General Mills, Heineken NV, Kraft Foods, Louis Dreyfus Commodities, Maersk, Metro AG, Monsanto Company, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Rabobank, Royal DSM, SABMiller, Swiss Reinsurance Company Ltd., Syngenta, The Mosaic Company, Unilever, Wal-Mart Stores Inc., and Yara International (Paul & Steinbrecher, 2013, p. 2).

2 While Margulis, McKeon, and Borras (2013) posit that the land grab phenomena is most clearly discernible in the history of imperialism—they do not see the current land grabs as fitting within the classic North-South axis of prior imperialism. However, as these numbers demonstrate, there is a definite North-South axis that persists; moreover, the New Alliance itself stems from the actions and decisions of agencies and states of the global North, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and the G8, which diminishes the "polycentric" emphasis which Margulis, McKeon, and Borras, unsuccessfully labour to construct.

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