



Call for Abstracts
LANDac ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL LAND CONFERENCE
30 June – 1 July 2016

DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS: 15 FEBRUARY 2016

Hosted by: Utrecht University, International Development Studies (IDS) – The Netherlands
Venue: Muntgebouw, Utrecht, The Netherlands

**Large-scale land acquisition in the context of urban sprawl and climate change:
LINKING THE RURAL AND THE URBAN**

The ‘global land rush’ has been analysed extensively in recent years, focusing in particular on the *rural* sphere: emphasis has been given to large scale investments in land for expansions of food and biofuel production, *monocultivation* of landscapes, nature conservation and mining, focusing in particular on the consequences for rural livelihoods and landscapes (e.g. the disappearance of the commons) and the environmental impact in terms of deforestation and resource depletion. Similarly, resource depletion and deforestation linked to such investment flows have claimed significant attention. In assessing the development outcomes, *rural* has been the focus of attention, for example whether rural communities have been consulted through Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); whether local people are able to defend their rights (e.g., through collective action and land titling); and whether communities share sufficiently in the benefits through responsible business practices.

Similar processes, however, take place in the *urban* and *peri-urban* spheres where ongoing and rapid population growth, land scarcity as well as financial and speculative imperatives have caused an unprecedented surge of investments related to land. This urban land rush, and the resulting transformation of urban and peri-urban landscapes and livelihoods, has so far received scant attention in the debates surrounding the global land rush. Considerable investments, both domestic and international, are committed to real estate development, infrastructure, and urban extension projects within urban locales. Moreover, these investments are often actively courted by city

governments in their attempts to create and compete as ‘world class cities’. As a result, *within cities*, extensive areas are converted to new uses, oftentimes for new users, through urban ‘development’ and large-scale infrastructure upgrading; this leads to new elite enclaves as well as office and business parks, infrastructure, and urban services areas. As real estate development often accounts for a considerable share of national investment stock, the ‘value creation’ thus undertaken is accompanied by similar processes of land conversion, displacement, and resettlement related to investment in rural areas.

Alongside intra-city development, the peri-urban sphere is the locus of extensive dynamics; rapid urbanisation and urban sprawl confront rural people with new types of ‘urban land grabs’ that generate particular problems that are comparable, but not the same, as those in the rural sphere. In addition, the renewed popularity of developing entirely new cities from scratch adds to the complexity of land issues in the rural-urban interface. As existing procedures often are not adequate or are seen as unjust, new types of policy frameworks that address issues of compensation and alternative livelihoods are required. FPIC or standard financial compensation packages often are not sufficient.

As with the rural land rush, land-related investment in urban contexts is a driver of resettlement and displacement. On the other hand, in many cases investment in land triggers in-migration as it attracts people who hope to benefit from new employment opportunities. As a result, along with processes of spontaneous urbanisation, increasing numbers of people become concentrated in vulnerable areas such as where land is prone to flooding. This nexus between urban land governance and migration remains under explored in the context of the ‘global land grab’.

As emerging concepts of good land governance and instruments such as FPIC, voluntary guidelines, land titling and others will not necessarily contribute to the sustainable use of space, this conference aims to merge debates about the ‘Global Land Rush’ with ongoing debates about ‘Sustainable Cities’ and ‘Climate Smart Cities’. This requires another type of debate that takes into account intra-urban dynamics, rural-urban linkages, urbanisation processes and financial flows, as well as the emerging environmental and social vulnerabilities related to climate change. Discussions will be linked to the upcoming global UN summit, also known as Habitat III, which will take place in Quito, Ecuador from 17-20 October 2016.

In various panels, we aim to analyse the global land rush in the context of rapid urbanisation and climate change, aspects that until now have remained under researched. Particularly, we will focus on the following types of ‘urban land grabbing’:

A. Intra-city dynamics: urban renewal and the emptying of space

Cities, and in particular city centres, are experiencing processes of ‘land grabbing’ that until now have not been systematically analysed, at least not in relation to (1) the rural land rush, and (2) the internationalisation of financial flows into urban real estate and infrastructure. Cities often have to deal with a rapid inflow of investments (including Foreign Direct Investment) for the realisation of urban renewal, housing projects and real estate and infrastructure development among others. What do we know about ‘local community’ involvement in this urban setting? Who are the investors, and is there a link with rural investments? What kinds of partnerships are involved, and how responsible are the investments?

B. Dynamics in the peri-urban sphere: displacement and compensation

Many countries have to deal with rapid urbanisation and urban sprawl; especially in the peri-urban sphere, a huge competition for land and water resources often occurs at the cost of rural populations. Can large scale urban investments be matched with local communities and their

priorities? To the extent that rural people lose their land, how are they compensated? How many people are displaced, and what do we know about the displacement destinations?

C. Urbanisation effects in the rural sphere – emerging cities

The global land rush has in many cases triggered processes of urbanisation in predominately rural areas through the emergence of urban hubs in places where investments are made as well as through the resettlement of people. The global land rush in the rural sphere is often going hand in hand with rapid urbanisation as people are attracted by new opportunities provided by the rural projects. What do we know about these emerging rural nodes, what kind of new vulnerabilities do they bring, and how can they be made more inclusive and sustainable?

D. Large scale investments in (urban) infrastructure

We are currently experiencing booming amounts of infrastructural investments in hydropower-dams, road networks, and coastal protection infrastructure among others. These projects are often presented as a necessary element of economic growth and climate resilient development, even though this development might come at the cost of local populations and common pool resources. Who are the stakeholders involved and what are the consequences? What kinds of problems are highlighted, and to what extent are these occurring at the cost of local stakeholders?

E. Mega-infrastructure, rising sea levels and land subsidence

Processes of land loss are being triggered by rising sea-levels and land subsidence (which results in the absolute loss of natural resources), creating a new stress upon land and water resources. One common response is large scale investment in mega-infrastructure. In the context of climate change discussions (and new discussions about the Sustainable Development Goals), large scale investments are made in new types of mega-infrastructure, focusing on a particular place while bypassing others and displacing the problem to other areas. Large cities are competing with their surroundings for water access; satisfying the needs of urban populations is often a higher priority than defending the rights of people located in the periphery.

F. Food security and related issues

Many countries currently hosting large scale investments in food and biofuels have an interest in strengthening their national and local food security. This is not only the food security of the rural population, but also the food security of urban groups. How can it be ensured that investments are made in the right crops – and in the right places – so that food security is guaranteed in the long run? Within cities, often in the peri-urban sphere, new types of urban agriculture are appearing. At the same time, however, rural people in the peri-urban sphere are being pushed aside for the sake of city expansion. What kinds of impacts does this have on local food security? And how can rural surplus production serve the growing demand for food in cities?

This conference is a follow-up of the 2015 LANDac International Conference *Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development* (<http://www.landgovernance.org/landac-2015-international-land-conference-report-available/>). The 2016 Conference aims to connect rural land debates and the urban agenda. Topics highlighted during this conference include the following:

- Urban land grabs and real estate development/ Urban renewal
- Emerging cities and new city development/ Climate Smart Cities and Eco-cities
- Urban expansion and compensation
- Resettlement and sedentarisation
- Informal settlements and slums
- Displacement destinations

- Fair urbanisation/ Right to the city/ Right to rural land
- Dealing with land degradation, land subsidence and floods (in collaboration with Utrecht University's Future Deltas programme)
- Rural-urban linkages – the role of elites
- Urban food markets, urban agriculture, value chains and food security
- Urbanisation effects of large-scale land investments
- Investments in large-scale infrastructure, industrial parks, and special economic zones
- The urban commons (in collaboration with International Association for the Study of the Commons)
- Climate change and land grabbing
- Land governance and climate related policies

Abstracts on related topics are welcome.

We are now inviting abstract submissions for papers, posters and other forms of contribution on the topics outlined in this call. You are kindly invited to submit your abstract of no more than 300 words to landaconference2016@gmail.com by 15 February 2016 mentioning 'LANDac conference 2016' in the subject line. Abstracts should be written in English. The organising committee will decide on the selection of abstracts.

The conference offers space for paper presentations, poster presentations, policy discussions, round tables and other interactive forms. Special round tables will be organised on specific topics, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests, the Global Call to Action on Indigenous and Community Land Rights, Habitat III (UrbAct), and the Human City Coalition.

LANDac

This conference is organised by LANDac and a selection of Dutch and international knowledge institutes. LANDac, founded in 2010 and based at Utrecht University, is a network of Dutch organisations interested in how land governance can contribute to equitable and sustainable development. LANDac is involved in both short- and long-term research on the multiple dimensions of land governance. Its partners share a specific interest in linking up the fields of research, policy and practice, in making a difference on the ground (www.landgovernance.org).

Participants are required to organise their own funding, travel and accommodation.

For further information: www.landgovernance.org | landaconference2016@gmail.com

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Royal Tropical Institute

