

Linking land governance and food security in Africa

Outcomes from Uganda, Ghana & Ethiopia

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Executive summary

Equitable access to land is vital for inclusive economic growth, sustainable development and food security. Although much is known about the topics of land governance and food security, it is not always clear how the two relate to each other, especially in specific country contexts. This reflection paper, based on literature, LANDac country factsheets and three learning trajectories initiated by LANDac in Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia, brings together findings and outcomes to provide policy recommendations for improved land governance and food security in Africa. We specifically highlight: National policies, institutions, and international frameworks; land administration and land use planning; responsible agribusiness investments; and gender equity. By including the views of diverse stakeholders, this reflection paper aims to contribute to the international debate linking land governance and food security.

1 Introduction

Equitable access to land is vital for inclusive economic growth, sustainable development and food security in Africa where numerous processes, including those related to globalization, population growth, increased demand for food and biofuels, tourism, urbanization, nature conservation, mining, and climate change increase pressure on land. Diverging interests and competing claims from the global to the household level need to be managed – to prevent conflict, to protect local rights and livelihoods, to stimulate inclusive economic development and to ensure food security. Effective land governance is central to managing land-based claims and the often accompanying processes of inclusion and exclusion.

Much information exists on the links between land governance and food security in Africa, including academic research, policy reports and case studies. It is however not always clear where to find this information, how it can be used or adapted to a specific country context, or how it can inform the decision making of politicians, business actors and development practitioners. For these reasons, and with the support of the Food & Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) and partner organizations in Africa, LANDac initiated three separate learning trajectories in Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia (Box 1).

2 Land governance and food security: key concepts

Three key concepts were introduced at the start of the learning trajectories: land governance, land acquisitions and food security. Each set the stage and kicked off the discussions and country-specific presentations.

Land governance

Land governance is the process by which decisions are made regarding access to and use of land and natural resources, the manner in which those decisions are implemented, and the way that conflicting interests are reconciled (FAO, 2009). A big

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Box 1. The learning trajectories

In 2015, three country-specific learning trajectories were rolled out respectively in Uganda (October 26-30), Ghana (November 23-27) and Ethiopia (December 7-11). The meetings were organized by LANDac, the Food & Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) as well as partner organizations located within the three countries. Roughly 20 professionals working on issues of land governance and food security in their home countries participated. Contributors derived from academia, NGOs, multi-lateral organizations, national and local governments, farmers' organizations, the Netherlands Embassy and the private sector. Through four days of study, exchange and discussion on the complex linkages between land governance and food security, each learning and exchange event provided participants and their organizations with knowledge and tools to better handle issues of land governance and food security in their countries. This was done through presentations given by local experts, by field visits to land-based investments and local government offices, and by developing action plans for their respective organizations.

Based on a literature review, LANDac country factsheets¹ and the discussions and exchanges that emerged at the learning trajectories, this reflection paper provides information and policy recommendations on how land governance can improve food security in Africa. Toward this end, the paper first introduces a number of key concepts related to land governance and food security. We then present four focus areas that link improved land governance and food security, including:

1. National policies, institutions, and international frameworks;
2. Land administration and land use planning;
3. Agribusiness investments;
4. Gender equity.

Each focus area, illustrated through examples obtained from the learning trajectories, ends with a number of policy and practice recommendations specifically aimed at the range of stakeholders engaging in business or development activities in Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia.

1 The country factsheets on Land Governance and Food Security were prepared in 2012 by LANDac and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) at the request of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the factsheets were updated in 2015 and 2016.

challenge for sustainable land governance is how to deal with multiple pressures on land and competing claims, especially those involving powerful foreign and domestic actors whose objectives may clash with local communities reliant on land

for their livelihoods. The ability of women, men, communities and companies to secure access to land depends on the formal and informal tenure security systems in place as well as the level of protection offered in the larger governance framework.

Land acquisitions

While much attention in the 'early years' of the land grab debate was focused on large-scale farmland investments for food and biofuels and the role of global powerhouses like China and the Gulf States, the picture has become more nuanced in recent years (Kaag & Zoomers 2014: 4). Other important drivers have since emerged and include tourism, urbanization, nature conservation, and the rush for minerals and oil. Moreover, it is now recognized that a wider variety of actors are involved, including domestic investors and numerous companies from the US, the EU and the BRIC countries. At the same time, conglomerates of smaller land acquisitions are also now known to play important roles. This diversity and fluidity of actors, processes and outcomes was very well reflected in the land governance and food security topics addressed in each of the learning trajectories.

Food security

The 1996 World Food Summit in Rome defined food security as the situation in which "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 2006). The term food security is used to describe food availability, access, and use at many levels, including global, national, local, household, and intra-household. **Food availability** means that an adequate amount of quality food is available on a consistent basis from food produced, purchased, or received from others (including food aid). **Food access** refers to the ability of individuals, communities, or countries to use economic, legal, political, or social resources and entitlements to obtain the food necessary for a nutritious diet. Finally, **food use** requires access to basic nutrition knowledge and complementary resources such as clean water, sanitation, and health care to ensure that the food consumed meets dietary needs. Finally, as an overarching concept, **food stability** is often used to describe the fluctuations over time in relation to food access, availability and sudden shocks (such as economic or climatic crises or cyclical events such as seasonal food insecurity) (FAO, 2006).

It is claimed that the concept of food security – with its four dimensions – has moved from a relatively simple and one-dimensional approach primarily concerned with starvation and crop failure towards one more sensitive to social and political factors and analysis. For example, Via Campesina coined the concept of 'food sovereignty' in 1996; campaigners for food sovereignty felt that the food security approach was overly focused on large-scale and industrialized corporate farming that in turn was based on specialized production, land concentration and trade liberalization. The sovereignty approach advocates more sensitivity towards ecological



degradation, small-scale farmers and subsistence agriculture, and local markets. This perspective also brings in the added element of power relations.

Linking the concepts: Land governance and food security

There are numerous assumptions about the link between land governance and food security; most of these focus on the importance of securing land rights for increased food production. For example, Landesa (2012) has argued that secure land rights can lead to increased agricultural productivity at the household level through a number of ways. First, secure land tenure provides landowners with incentives to invest in land improvements. In other words, if a farmer consistently operates under the assumption that the state or another entity may take his or her land, they will likely not invest in increasing or sustaining quality production. Second, secure land tenure has the potential to increase access to financial services and government programmes, particularly for women, thereby in turn widening the financial base to purchase the necessary inputs for food production. Third, by reducing the constant risk of land loss, secure land rights can allow for the creation of space needed for more optimal land use (e.g., the recognition of fallow land in formal tenure systems to prevent overuse), again having a potential positive impact on food production. The International Land Coalition (2012a) argues that equitably-accessed and sustainably-managed natural resources, especially land, are key to enabling poor women and men to exercise the fundamental right to be free from hunger and poverty, and to live in dignity. This links to the debates surrounding access to food as a human right. Finally, research has shown that securing land rights for women has several important positive benefits for household food security (See for example FAO, 1995; Landesa, 2012). The topics of land tenure security, land use, land acquisitions and gender is given more attention below.

However, while the literature suggests that securing land rights is a first step towards better food security, it is not the ultimate solution. According to Tanner (2013: 9):

(...) food security for rural farming households is not just a question of access to and control over land. Access to food not produced on the farm, especially between

harvests or at times of drought or other hardships, depends upon a range of other activities – employment, remittances, kinship and other safety nets and so on.

In fact, an additional consideration is that the focus, in terms of food security and investments in land, is very often on food security at the global level which does not always coincide with food security at the regional, community and household levels. For example, large-scale and land-based investments can result in direct livelihood and food security effects at the local level if farmers lose access to important agricultural land or pastoralist communities lose access to crucial grazing lands – even when the acquisition itself is made to increase food production. However, in areas where food production may rise due to an agri-food investment, the impacts at the local level will vary broadly depending on someone’s position (e.g., waged labourer, landless farmer, landowning farmer nearby, or pastoralist) (Kirigia et al., 2016) as well as the destination of the food produced, such as whether it is being exported or sold at local markets. Indeed, food security should always be looked at holistically, taking into account land governance as a crucial component, with proper attention for different outcomes at diverse levels and between different groups.

3 Four focus areas for improved land governance and food security in Africa

The link between land security and food security was a lively topic for debate in all three learning trajectories. The following sections outline four key areas that emerged from the country events. These included the roles of: National policies, institutions, and international frameworks; land administration and land use planning; responsible agribusiness investments; and gender. Each is discussed in the following sections.

3.1 Improving land governance and food security in Africa: National policies, institutions, and international frameworks

One focus area of the learning trajectories was land policies at the state level. At the same time, attention was also given to the linkages national policies have with government institutions at the local level as well as wider global processes. In all countries except Ethiopia, government officials, from both national government as well as local government institutions, presented their respective national land policies and main land-related programmes to learning trajectory participants.

Uganda

In Uganda, land governance is marked by the contradiction between relatively progressive legislation and only partial implementation. Institutions that deal with land administration and land disputes, such as customary authority systems, local government, and special courts for land justice, are relatively weak. The position of women with respect to land and inheritance also remains weak, both legally and in

practice, which undermines their livelihoods and status in society. Furthermore, tenure insecurity in Uganda is a source of conflict within families, between groups and between communities. Overall, land issues are increasingly sensitive and political, as was shown for example when female residents of Uganda's northern Amuru district stripped naked before government ministers to protest a land deal. Specific land governance issues in the country are the landlord-tenant relations on *mailo* land; land tenure insecurity in post-conflict Northern Uganda; disputes over government expropriation of land; the implications of oil exploration and mining for local land tenure systems and rights, especially for pastoral livestock systems; and accusations of land grabbing in rural and urban areas. Finally, Uganda concluded the development of its National Land Policy (NLP) in August 2013, a process that saw the participation of the entire citizenry in its development. While land in the new policy is no longer viewed in terms of rights recognition only, but also in terms of its productive capacity and as an enabler for economic empowerment and political participation (LANDac, 2016h), implementation of the NLP is still to be seen.

Ghana

A complex mix of constitutional, legislative and customary procedures and frameworks are the basis for land governance and administration in Ghana. The current land administration system is one of legal pluralism, resulting in overlapping claims and potentially risky investments. The Ghana National Land Policy was adopted in 1999 to address a series of issues such as weak land administration; land market conflicts; and the expropriation of large tracts of land by the state combined with a lack of landowner consultation. As part of the urgency to ensure local tenure security the government initiated the Land Administration Project (LAP) to demarcate, survey

and document long-term (25 year) rural parcel rights; this is taking place in selected food basket areas that are located in Customary Land Secretariats in the Brong Ahafo, Western, and Ashanti regions of Ghana. LAP aims to increase tenure security to boost agricultural investments as well as to develop a database to compile ownership characteristics such as actual farm sizes and locations, types of crops grown, and rental fees (see Box 3). Conflicts in the country over access occur between different land-owning groups for example as a result of young people and youth who lack secure access to land or between smallholder farmers, women and cattle herdsman who are searching for new land (LANDac, 2015b).

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, food security and integrated water resources management are closely related to access to land, tenure security and collective user rights. Major land governance challenges include a growing population and increased demand for land; land fragmentation and small land holdings; natural resource pressures; weak land governance institutions; and policies that aim to attract land-based investments, including Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). As landlessness in rural areas is widespread, rental markets have become an important means to access land. Ethiopia has made significant progress over the past few years with the registration of user rights over farmland. Moreover, women's rights over land are formally recognized during registration, however this is not guaranteed in practice. An additional source of contention is the government's policy to increase the number of leases on medium- and large-scale parcels; the policy has resulted in land loss, displacement and local livelihood impacts which are made worse by the lack of transparency that characterizes these transactions. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for coordinating land issues and each Regional State has

Table 1 Links to land governance and food security in the Sustainable Development Goals.

SDG Goal	Objective	Target	Linkages
1	No poverty	1.4 Equal rights & access for all to resources & basic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure access & control over land, property & natural resources Secure access & control over economic resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Microfinance - Technology
2	Zero hunger	2.1 Hunger eradication & food access for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable agricultural production Safe, nutritious & stable food supplies & consumption Female health & food consumption patterns
		2.3 Increased agricultural productivity & incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure access & control over land, property & natural resources Secure access & control over economic resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, value addition & non-farm employment
		2.4 Hunger eradication, food security & improved nutrition, & sustainable agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable food production systems Resilient agricultural practices
		5a Gender equality & empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National laws Gender-sensitive reforms for women & girls Access & control over land, property & natural resources Access & control over economic resources

Source: Compiled from Sustainable Development Solutions Network, n.d. (<http://indicators.report/indicators/>).

its own institutional arrangement for land administration. Ethiopia has developed an innovative approach to securing land rights, which is large-scale, fast and cost effective. However, there are limitations in the maintenance and updating of records (LANDac, 2015c).

International frameworks

Attention was also given across all learning trajectories to processes at the international level, namely global frameworks that aim to contribute to improved land governance and food security. One of the most relevant frameworks, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), was developed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in partnership with a range of international, regional and national organizations and as a result of increased global awareness on issues of land governance and food security (FAO, 2012a). According to FAO (2012a), the overarching goals of the VGGT are centred on food security realization for all people as well as supporting 'the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.' As a framework of principles and international best practices and standards, the VGGT also aims to provide a reference point for responsible land tenure governance for states to develop strategies, policies, legislation and programmes as well as a set of guidelines for various stakeholders to measure the actions of others.

An additional international framework discussed in the learning trajectories included the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Table 1 provides a few examples where the SDGs address land governance, food security, and the linkages between them.

Stakeholder dialogue is an important instrument that can be used to improve the linkages between land governance and food security as well as the outcomes of projects, programmes and policies. In fact, the VGGT encourages states to establish multi-stakeholder platforms and frameworks at local, national and regional levels to discuss, monitor and evaluate VGGT guidelines implementation as well as to evaluate their impact on tenure and resource governance as well as food security and the right to adequate food (FAO, 2012a).

For these dialogues to be effective/, all stakeholders require access to quality public information. Such information can help governments to formulate policies, to identify implementation gaps, and to perform essential regulatory functions. Civil society can also use such information to raise awareness in local communities in relation to land rights and the potential uses and value of land, as well as to assist in specific negotiations, and to monitor agreements for adherence. Moreover, quality public information can help investors to effectively design and implement profitable projects that not only respect local rights but also generate local benefits (Deininger, et al., 2011). The learning trajectories

showed that many participants either had limited awareness of land governance and food security information and frameworks (including the VGGT and the SDGs) or were not aware of how to utilize available information and frameworks. Additionally, participants across all learning trajectories acknowledged that stakeholders involved in policymaking and implementation of land and food security programmes have limited contact and so are not sharing available information.

As each event was held over four days and at some distance from the capital, participants were able to meet and discuss a variety of topics linking land governance and food security in a neutral environment. In Uganda, the meeting of stakeholders resulted in a large private company inviting civil society organizations to engage in the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Additionally, participants taking part in the Bishoftu learning trajectory in Ethiopia met with local government officials at an agricultural office where they discussed the food security objectives of land policies. These exchanges provide examples of different stakeholders generating improved linkages and outcomes of projects, programmes and policies on land governance and food security.

In addition to particularly disconnected stakeholders, the learning trajectories also revealed a general lack of coordination between land- and food-related policies and regulations as well as between their relevant institutions (see Box 2). It is the joint responsibility of both the government as well as civil society to compel close working relationships and to stimulate policy coherence. This applies to governments characterized by weak land governance as well as donor governments who, for example, finance land administration projects or aim to stimulate private sector investments. Donors and others need to take local food security outcomes as well as other project impacts into account.

Box 2. Uganda: Policy, programme and practice reflection from the Food Rights Alliance

In Uganda, Food Rights Alliance (FRA) presented the findings of their reflection study on policies, programmes and government agencies working in land governance and food security. The study included policies such as Vision 2040 of Uganda and the National Development Plan II as well as key institutions including the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Trade. After analyzing and comparing the different policies, programmes and practices, FRA concluded that although the institutional ideologies aligned and the frameworks addressed similar objectives, each operated as an island or silo due to a lack of coordination and interaction.

Box 3. Ghana: Rural parcel right demarcation and the Ghana Land Administration Project

In Ghana, a government policy maker shared Ghanaian experiences in relation to the Land Administration Project (LAP), a rural parcel right demarcation and documentation project implemented in important food producing regions of the country. The logic behind LAP is that the demarcation, survey and documentation of rural parcel rights will boost the general confidence of landowners and users and this in turn will increase productivity. The learning trajectory showed that civil society participants would prefer to be actively engaged in the process; at the same time, the government stressed that organizations had a responsibility to participate. Civil society participation could focus on the local and sometimes unintended outcomes of the process, as well as critically assess food security outcomes.

The discussions on the role of international frameworks in improving land governance and food security in Africa resulted in the following recommendations.

Policy and practice recommendations

- Link food security policies to land policies as both are strongly interdependent;
- Promote multi-stakeholder dialogues to guide, implement, monitor and evaluate land and food policies as well as conflict transformation;
- Ensure and monitor local implementation of national land and food policies; decentralize responsibilities and human and financial resources to local government land and agricultural offices to ensure access to information, quality land and food services for citizens;
- Promote awareness that land may be perceived as 'available' for acquisition or investment yet may actually be in use locally;
- Inform and communicate about and implement the VGGT and SDGs; include these frameworks and guidelines in the formulation of national policy so that: civil society may hold governments accountable and better inform communities about their rights; investors are able to effectively design and implement profitable projects that respect local rights and generate local benefits.

Box 4. Ghana and Ethiopia: Sharecropping

Discussions in both Ghana and Ethiopia made clear that traditional sharecropping arrangements were an effective and efficient way for landless farmers to access land and produce food. However, due to the increased pressure on land and continuous efforts to scale up the number of official land registrations, these systems have deteriorated in the past years, making it more difficult for landless farmers to access land and to produce food for their families. In Ghana, such developments are seen especially in the Eastern and Western regions where the expansion of the cocoa and oil palm sectors spurred an influx of migrants. Nonetheless, traditional sharecropping arrangements are not a "magic bullet" for landless farmers. For example, Ethiopian participants highlighted the fact that access to land for youth through sharecropping used to be very limited.

3.2 Merging land administration, land use planning, and food security

The second key area to emerge was the role of land administration and land use planning, especially in relation to food security and the complex nature of land tenure and perceived tenure security; land conflicts; and agribusiness investments.

Land tenure and food security

Land rights systems are complex, dynamic and involve multiple interests. As these rights form a continuum, it is not simply a matter of secure or insecure ownership. In fact, many smallholders are tenants who cultivate land owned by others, while other smallholders have only tenuous rights to land that the government regards as publicly owned. Unfortunately, many governmental and donor programmes are implemented without an appreciation of the complex nature of land rights. As a result, such programmes often not only inadvertently reduce the tenure security of smallholders but risk making them even poorer. The most economically and socially marginalized smallholders tend to be the most vulnerable (Landesa, 2012). The complexity of ownership and land use emerged from each of the learning trajectories. In Ghana and Ethiopia, for example, the importance of traditional sharecropping arrangements in relation to the ability of landless farmers to access land and produce food was highlighted (see Box 4). In an additional example, Ghana trajectory field visits pointed to complexity resulting from absentee ownership and speculation (see Box 5).

Perceived land tenure security

Land tenure complexity also results from the level of perceived tenure security in local communities. In Ethiopia, much discussion took place around the idea that improved tenure security leads to better land use and land management by farmers which eventually leads to improved food security. As mentioned above however, this relationship is not automatic and other effects need to be taken into account. For example, farmers make decisions on land use based on different information flows. In the case of the Ethiopia learning trajectory for example, it was brought forward that despite the fact that land redistribution in Ethiopia no longer takes

place, people still expect that it might happen to them and this influences their behaviour. It was suggested that legal awareness campaigns could address some of the issues related to this disconnect between formal land tenure security and perceptions of tenure security.

Perceptions regarding secure tenure are important in additional ways. For example, while one driver for land administration is urban expansion and the acquisition of land for industry and housing, another driver is protection against acquisition in urban and rural areas where populations secure the land they are using in order to defend against outside planning pressure or outright land grabs. In fact, acquiring land titles or certificates out of fear of losing land is often more important than using these documents to secure investments in land (Box 7).

Land conflicts and food security

According to a learning trajectory participant in Uganda, the most food insecure regions in Uganda are also the areas with the largest number of registered parcels. This implies that any focus on land governance has to address all of its potential components: land management, land use, and land conflict. At the same time, food security requires that we look beyond agricultural production to aspects such as the nutritional



value of food, the accessibility of food, as well as potential shocks in food access and availability. Box 6 shows that land conflicts affect food stability with both complex short-term and long-term impacts on the food situation in the Northern region.

Land use planning, investments, and food security

The learning trajectories revealed that governments very often do not take food security or food production into account when developing land use plans (see Box 7). This is in stark opposition to planning for industry, urban expansion and infrastructure uses. When looking at the investments, we found that out growers or contract farmers are sometimes obliged to acquire land titles or certificates to become suppliers for a company. In addition there might be provisions in place to use only a percentage of their land for

Box 5. Ghana: Field visit to Ocieba farm, Ho district

During learning trajectory field visits in Ghana, discussions were held with men, women, youth and decision makers of a community located next to a farm in Ho District called "Ocieba." Ocieba was established through a large-scale land acquisition by a Ghanaian investor who first invested in mango and cashew production and allowed cassava research to be conducted on his farm. Later on, his trees became overgrown and he abandoned agriculture. Ocieba farm represents a frequent phenomenon in Ho District: absentee landlords disregard their farms yet keep the land for speculative purposes. Such absentee landownership results in complex outcomes in relation to local land use patterns and food production including among others encroachment of the land by neighbouring communities and the underutilization of fertile land that is potentially well-suited for food production. Discussions with the community focused on their relationships with the investor and food security as well as land availability and use. While food security was not directly at risk in this community, their access and control over land is compromised because their grandparents were newcomers to the area. This could have future food security implications, for example when the absentee landlord decides to sell the land to outside investors and the community members lose their access to farm land. Community members, without formal rights to the land, are not entitled to any form of compensation or resettlement (LANDac, 2015b)

Box 6. Uganda: Land conflict as a driver of food insecurity

In the Amuru district of northern Uganda, residents of Apsa village have been evicted by the Uganda Wildlife Authority to make way for a national park. The history of this region and the manner in which land is governed makes the situation especially tenuous. After two decades of civil war, two million people have been displaced and 63 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. Moreover, 90 per cent of the land is customarily owned; it is also the only source of livelihood for the communities. Land conflicts continue to threaten the relative peace and food security of many for a number of reasons. First, agricultural extension services cannot be offered on disputed land. Moreover, farming tools were confiscated and people were beaten by game rangers when they insisted on farming their gardens. Unresolved land conflict not only halted food production, it has stopped trade. Before the conflict, food production was stimulated as local farmers sold surplus produce to middle men transporting and selling it in South Sudan; this trade has effectively vanished. As dry food was wasted and looted, granaries were set on fire, garden crops were destroyed, and goats and hens were stolen, the evictions have led to both immediate food shortages and long-term hunger.

Box 7. Uganda: Jinja District Land Office

The Jinja District Land Office in Uganda is seen as one of the most advanced in the country. During the Q&A with the officials at this land office, participants learned that land offices do not plan for food production; planning is done instead for land uses such as infrastructure and factories. Moreover, most of the demand for land registration is for urban land. The drive behind this is either to secure infrastructure investments or because people want to secure their land against the mounting land pressure related to urbanization. Physical planning is conducted separately from land use planning (which is undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture). Currently, while there is more exchange between physical and land use planning, it remains insufficient (LANDac, 2015a).

production because the investor wants to ensure that enough is produced to keep the business running. Sometimes this is also paired with an obligation to produce food crops on 10 or 20 per cent of the farmland to promote household food security, as was found at Kakira Sugar in Uganda during the

Box 8. Uganda: Field visit to the Kakira Sugar Limited

The Uganda learning trajectory included a field visit to Kakira Sugar Limited, a large-scale and land-based investment that focuses on the production and sourcing of sugar cane. The company operates on 10,000 hectares (ha) of nucleus farm as well as through 3,700 ha satellite plantations (in other parts of the country). The company also works with smallholders cultivating an additional 25,000 ha; at the time of the visit, this share of production by outgrowers had seen a sharp increase from 25 to 70 per cent. As a result, Kakira Sugar has had huge food security impacts in the region. Land previously used for food production has been converted into a sugar cane plantation and large numbers of smallholder farmers have lost their land due to the establishment of the nucleus and satellite plantations. In addition, while out growers are required to use at least 10 to 20 per cent of their land for food production (a maximum of 80 per cent can be used for sugarcane production), focus group discussions showed that farmers did not adhere to this formal requirement. Farmers prefer to grow more sugar cane as opposed to food crops because they feel that they can make more profit. Moreover, growing food is viewed to be riskier than growing sugar cane. As a result, farmers provide false compliance information to the company. An additional contributing factor is the fact that extension services are only provided for sugar cane production, not food production. As a result, the sugar cane growers in general stated that sugar cane production has negatively influenced their diets and their ability to access food (LANDac, 2015b).

field visit. However, according to trajectory participants in Ghana, coffee farmers in the Eastern and Western regions of Ghana are sometimes restricted in growing food crops in their coffee fields. This raises several issues: the ability of all family members to benefit equally from farm income; the impact of such developments on local food markets (e.g., prices may go up if more farmers produce cash crops); and how farmers cope with failed harvests or shocks in the production process (as resilience may be jeopardized by a dependency on purchased food). This topic was also discussed during the learning trajectory in Uganda (see Box 8).

Policy and practice recommendations

- Merge land administration and land use planning for improved food security;
- Implement adequate and effective land administration systems to address land insecurity, to promote agricultural investments, to ensure access to credit, and to strengthen the land rights of vulnerable groups;
- Develop 'fit for purpose' land administration mechanisms which are less technical, less expensive and less time consuming;
- Link land administration to land use planning at the livelihood, community and local government levels to ensure livelihood food security, to produce food crops for local markets, and to produce cash crops for increased on-farm income; this will contribute to an overarching vision on agricultural development – something that is often lacking.
- View land registration as just the start as other incentives are needed to reach food security;
- Pay attention to traditional systems such as sharecropping and the ways in which traditional systems provide land to landless farmers who might lose access to land as a result of registration;
- Address discrepancies between perceived and actual land tenure security through legal awareness campaigns;
- Reduce agricultural risk and explore innovative ways to address outgrower farmer food security such as combined extension services for cash and food crops.

3.3 Encouraging responsible agribusiness investments to increase food security

Agricultural investments were neglected in Africa for many years. Today it is generally accepted that investments can be an essential tool in the battle for food security, whether done by small-scale producers and local businesses, private multinationals, states or international institutions (SDC, 2014). At the international level, frameworks such as the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems and the Guiding Principles on Large-scale Land Based Investments have been developed to guide agricultural investments so that they contribute to, rather than undermine, food security (FAO, 2014; ECA, 2014). Along these same lines, the Dutch government sees a clear role for its private sector and other players from the Netherlands in contributing to global food security. According to the Netherlands Ministry

of Foreign Affairs, the country can contribute significantly to global food security as a result of its 'extensive knowledge of farming, innovative business sector and excellent international reputation' (2014).

Investments, inclusive business models and access to land

Despite the fact that agriculture is in large part the domain of smallholder farmers, especially in Africa, smallholder farmers do not yet receive much attention from governments in relation to responsible public and private investments. Rather, the governments of Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia position foreign investment high on the policy agenda. In Uganda, land is mainly transferred to public and private sector investors. Investors are basically Ugandan citizens that have originated elsewhere or local Ugandan elites who have entered into agreement with the Uganda Government and aim to produce largely for export. In comparison, the public sector mainly promotes or acquires land for food security or energy and investment purposes (LANDac, 2016h). Ghana, keen to attract FDI, has adopted liberal regulatory regimes, especially in the agriculture and mining sectors (LANDac, 2016j). Similarly, Ethiopia established a 'land bank' at the federal level in 2010 to facilitate investor access to land. The number of foreign flower companies in the country in recent years shows a strong increase in land-based investments (Kirigia et al., 2016). Yet, investments should not only focus on large-scale public or private agricultural development but on smallholder agriculture as well. In recent years, alternative business models and innovative initiatives such as impact investments – investments in companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate a measurable, beneficial social or environmental impact alongside a financial return – have emerged to connect investments and businesses to smallholders as well as to strengthen locally-controlled land management. These include arrangements that provide mutual and long-term security and the equitable sharing of benefits and responsibilities.

Across the three countries, three different companies were visited as part of the learning trajectories (see Box 5, 8, and

9). The companies differed in terms of: land size (from a few hectares to more than 10,000 hectares); investor origin (foreign or domestic); the stage of the investment (early versus later stage); and the relationship with the surrounding communities and employees.

Policy and practice recommendations

- Implement the Voluntary Guidelines and urge investors to meet criteria such as the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (FAO, 2014) or the Guiding Principles on Large-scale Land Based Investments (ECA, 2014);
- Minimize loss of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses by prioritizing effective and enforceable land use planning, including links to food security, food production and physical planning at different policy-making levels;
- Include regulations or incentives in policy frameworks to promote responsible investments and inclusive business models;
- Prioritize food security in CSR initiatives to reduce smallholder risk such as through extension services that include food crops;
- Involve private sector stakeholders more thoroughly in multi-stakeholder processes including the implementation of the VGGT.

3.4 Promoting gender equity for improved food security

In Africa, 60 percent of malnourished people are women and girls (WFP, 2009). This condition is related to their limited access to resources such as land, information, and credit, as well as social norms and practices. For example, gender shapes power relations in the household to determine how food is distributed among household members; women often eat after other household members and not always the same amounts or the same types of food. Despite their reduced social status, women play a key role as direct food producers and as guarantors of household and child food security, yet their access to and control over land is very limited because of widespread gendered legal and social norms.

Box 9. Ethiopia: Field visit to Solagrow PLC

Different stakeholders were visited during the field day in Bishoftu, Ethiopia. These included: a community located at the outskirts of the rapidly expanding Bishoftu urban area that is surrounded by foreign-owned agribusiness investments; a local agricultural office in Bishoftu; and a Dutch-owned farm in the Bishoftu region that grows potatoes for the local market. Urban and foreign investment pressures on land are common in Ethiopia where the government has a policy to attract FDI and where urbanization rates are high. During the field visit farmers expressed that they experience severe pressures from both FDI and urbanization as land availability is limited and land prices are high. Community members near the Bishoftu urban area also stated that they will be relocated in the near future and the majority of the displaced will not receive compensation or relocation support because they have no official documentation of their right to the land. Discussions at the local agricultural office in Bishoftu especially focused on the projected food insecurity in the area which is expected to reach its peak in the first half of 2016. After learning about the activities at Solagrow PLC, its relationship with neighbouring communities, and a Q&A session with the owner, participants of the learning trajectory referred to this business as one "best practice" example of the integration of land governance, food security, and FDI.

The link between land and household food security is stronger when women in the household have secure land rights. When women own the rights to the land that they till, they gain improved status which leads to greater influence over household decisions. This in turn often translates into improved household welfare, including reduced food and nutrition needs. The inequitable distribution of land must be addressed by building the capacity and knowledge of women as well as by developing participatory approaches that influence policies and help to secure access to land, natural resources, credit and inputs (Landesa, 2012). An NGO representative in the Ghanaian learning trajectory presented one such approach by showing a role play video her organization uses to increase the awareness of women, men, decision makers and local chiefs on how women's limited access to land directly affects their livelihood options and influences household food security.

It is additionally essential to promote – from the beginning – gender equality in the formulation and the implementation of national food and land policy strategies, as well as agricultural policy more broadly. Most importantly, women must be allowed meaningful voice and equitable representation in decision-making processes. Having a clear picture, based on reliable data of intra-household food security and gender dynamics related to food, is a first essential step in this direction (ILC, 2012a; FAO, 2012b). However, gendered norms and institutions as well as plurality of laws have caused women's land rights to be compromised in many developing countries (LANDac 2016f).

Despite the now widely-recognized role that women play in agricultural production (in Uganda's learning trajectory for example it was highlighted that women grow 70-80 per cent of the country's food) as well as their role in the livelihood and food security of rural households, female farmers generally hold fewer and weaker rights to land than male farmers; they receive less agricultural extension training and credit and are generally under-represented in farmers' organizations. Disparities in control, ownership and benefits from land rights are mainly premised on the cultural belief that women should access land through their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons, thus keeping a woman's rights to land in the private domain and dependent on a good relationship with her male relatives. In comparison, men's rights to land are in the public domain and defined and reinforced by law and customs. For example, a woman's access to land in Uganda is primarily conditioned by marital regimes and inheritance regimes in the customary domains.

In rural Ghana, women's land rights generally fall under customary law and so tend to be secondary rights; rights are derived through membership in households and lineages and secured primarily through marriage or gifts. These rights are not clearly defined or documented, may be subject to change, are of uncertain duration, and are often subject to the maintenance of good relations between the parties involved.

Access to land by women, especially for agricultural use, is generally possible, but through highly insecure agreements that can be revoked at any time (LANDac, 2016j).

Box 10. Ethiopia: Gender, food security, and the productive safety net programme

The Ethiopian government introduced the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) in 2005 to provide a combination of cash and food transfers so that chronically food insecure people may survive food deficit periods. Although the PSNP recognizes a woman's role in agriculture and food security, the research findings of PhD researcher Azeb Assefa Mersha show that the programme only partially targets participatory decision making and can actually reinforce gender stereotypes. The programme furthermore fails to address the local gender norms that construct agriculture as a masculine domain. More attention for these deeper root causes of gender inequality in food security would strengthen the PSNP and its positive outcomes for Ethiopian women.

In Ethiopia, official land certification should protect women's access to land. However, in practice, the local context, social norms and the nature of marriage can have a negative and overriding influence. In addition to land rights and social norms, women face discrimination in relation to the access and provision of inputs, technology and services which makes it more difficult for them to farm and produce food. At the same time, the learning trajectory participants recognize that the number of female-headed households are increasing, because of migration, divorce and increasing numbers of widows. There is a movement of men leaving their wives in the countryside to migrate to cities and urban areas, making a gendered approach to land governance and food security even more pertinent.

Based on the above synthesis, gender inequality in land rights and food security can be addressed through the following recommendations.

Policy and practice recommendations

- Recognize that women manage land and household resources as farmers and food security providers yet lack access to necessary resources;
- Inform and be informed about widespread gendered norms, both legal and social, that limit women's access to and control over land as well as in the sharing of benefits;
- Empower women and men to develop and participate in actions and decisions related to sustainable land governance and improved food security;
- Include gender disaggregated data and analysis to inform land and food security planning, tools, strategies, and policies as women play a key role as direct food producers and as guarantors of household food security.

4. Conclusions

In the last few years, almost all African countries have developed and installed new land laws that regulate land tenure, acquisition and rights. Additionally, national governments have adopted the VGGT and the SDGs thus subscribing to a series of principles for improved land governance and food security. Decentralized land offices have been established at the district level to administer land, to provide land conflict resolution services and to secure land tenure at either the individual or community level. In addition, most countries have agricultural development and food security policies with strategies to enhance local food production as well as increased food access and affordability. The learning trajectories in Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia revealed that policies relating to land governance and those relating to food security are often not linked and institutions dealing with these issues operate as silos. In many cases there is also a lack of involvement of stakeholders most impacted by land-based programmes. Recommendations therefore aim towards better linking land and food policies in multi-stakeholder processes, in line with recently developed international frameworks.

This stakeholder and institutional disconnect is also reflected in the drive behind land titling, which is mostly used to secure land against land acquisition by others rather than being based on a larger vision at either a livelihood, community, or local government level; this is important as agricultural or local economic development influence household income and contribute to food security. Additionally, land titling does not automatically lead to land tenure security as some groups are left out and different contexts require different approaches. Sustainable land governance thus requires an awareness of the complex nature of land tenure and perceived tenure security as well as more incentives to create an enabling environment for improved food security and economic development. In line with these realities, recommendations provided in this reflection paper include giving due attention to vulnerable groups in land administration programmes, applying fit-for-purpose land administration and campaigns for legal awareness raising, and merging land administration with land use planning. One of the most vulnerable groups of stakeholders is women; although women are crucial managers of farm and household resources and primary actors ensuring household food security, women's rights to ownership, access or use of land are generally not addressed; they may even be violated. Much more can be gained in terms of good land governance and improving food security when women's participation in political processes and development is duly taken into account.

Agribusiness investments comprise another important topic due to their impacts on both land governance and food security. While investments often aim to increase food production, to intensify land use and to increase wealth, not all agri-investments, including those specifically for food



production, have a positive impact on the people living in the area (e.g., former land users, surrounding communities, and employees). This shows that even within CSR activities, a more explicit link with food security should be made and pursued. The implementation of international frameworks such as the VGGT and the SDGs could provide direction in this regard, both for investors as well as for others holding investors accountable for their local impacts.

The three learning trajectories in Uganda, Ghana and Ethiopia have clearly shown that there are diverse and complex linkages between land governance and food security. The research, experiences, and the case studies brought forward in the different countries also show that these linkages are highly context-specific and dynamic. As reflected in the policy recommendations provided in this paper, this indicates that any intervention – whether it is a government implementing a land registration programme, an NGO working on sustainable livelihoods and local food security, or a private business engaging in agriculture – each should take into account the linkages between food security and land governance. It also means that recommendations in the area of land and food issues can never be tackled by one actor alone; in fact, multiple actors and sectors, sometimes in multi-stakeholder collaborations, are needed.

We hope that the topics discussed in this paper provide a good starting point for the diversity of actors involved to pursue a more integrated approach to land governance and food security. LANDac and its partners will continue to engage in this area by continuing our research agenda, by developing land governance and food security learning platforms, and by stimulating the interaction between researchers, practitioners, policy makers and businesses.

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About LANDac

LANDac, the Netherlands Academy on Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development, is a partnership between Dutch organizations working on land governance. The partners are the International Development Studies (IDS) group at Utrecht University (leading partner), African Studies Centre, Agriterro, the Sociology of Development and Change (SDC) group at Wageningen University, HIVOS, the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The LANDac network conducts research, disseminates information, and organizes courses and training, focusing on new pressures and competing claims on land and natural resources. Guiding question is how to optimize the link between land governance, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

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About F&BKP

The Food and Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) is one of the five Knowledge Platforms initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is an open and independent initiative where representatives from international networks and organizations of business, science, civil society and policy come together. The Platform shares, critically reflects on, generates, deepens and improves (interdisciplinary) knowledge and feeds practices and policies on food and nutrition security. Land governance is one of the prioritized themes in its mission to develop a more focused knowledge agenda.

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