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African Agricultural Growth Corridors and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition.

Who benefits, who loses?

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Overview

This brief report looks at how governments, international finance institutions and global corporations are collaborating in major new projects in Africa (currently in Mozambique and Tanzania) to reorder land and water use and create industrial infrastructure over millions of hectares in order to ensure sustained supplies of commodities and profits for markets. The Corridors concept first emerged at the World Economic Forum and a number of major corporations are involved. African Agricultural Growth Corridors are described as development opportunities, especially for small farmers, but are likely to be most advantageous to corporations and client governments. They have the backing of international institutions including the World Economic Forum, the G8 and G20 groups of the major global economies, the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Bank. More recently many of the same players have come together to create the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which promises to reinforce and extend the Corridor concept.

The report is divided into three parts, 1) an introduction to the Corridors and the New Alliance and who is behind them, 2) the corridors themselves, and 3) the potential impacts.

1) THE CONCEPTS AND WHO IS BEHIND THEM

What are African Agricultural Growth Corridors?

The concept of 'African Agricultural Growth Corridors' is designed to facilitate the conversion of millions of hectares of land to industrial agriculture, to be served by building infrastructure (roads, railways, irrigation, storage, processing and ports) and led by private companies. It refers to regions of Africa whose agricultural potential 'has not been realized' and whose population remains 'almost entirely reliant on subsistence agriculture'.[1] Areas identified for corridors currently consist of regions in Mozambique and Tanzania with good water supplies, to focus mainly on agriculture, but also including forestry and mining for coal and valuable minerals.

The declared aim of the corridor projects is to establish infrastructure specifically to attract investment and facilitate the development of commercial agriculture. The ports are vital for the export of agriculture, biomass, mining and timber products, and also for importing the basic requirements for industrial agriculture such as fertilisers and agricultural machinery. The importance of smallholder farmers and how they can benefit from becoming outgrowers in industrial production is constantly highlighted. Promoters consider that without infrastructure in place, investment in agriculture will be hard to attract and without commercial agriculture to attract them, states will not be willing to invest in infrastructure. The corridors are meant to tackle both issues at once. The two best-known are the Beira Corridor (BAGC) of Mozambique and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT). There are two more in Mozambique: the Nacala Corridor and the Zambezi Valley, as identified by Mozambique's Agriculture Minister Pacheco in June 2012, who also highlighted three other potential corridors in the south of

Mozambique. However, the three that are currently being developed 'hold most of the country's water resources'.[2]

Assumptions behind the proposals are well summed up here:

> The majority of soil in sub-Saharan Africa is infertile. To achieve intensive productivity of cash crops, the use of inorganic fertilisers, pesticides and GM "high-yielding" patented seeds will be increasingly portrayed by these companies as indispensable to reducing hunger levels on the continent and providing food for export.[3]

Where did the concept of 'African Agricultural Growth Corridors' come from?

The 'African Agricultural Growth Corridor' concept was first proposed at the UN General Assembly in 2008 and then at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2009 and 2010 at meetings in Switzerland and WEF Africa in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The World Economic Forum describes itself as: 'committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.'[4] It organises an annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, which brings together the directors of major corporations, bankers, financiers, government leaders, representing billions of dollars. Others involved include global institutions such as the UN, the World Bank and FAO.

In 2011 WEF put forward a '*Roadmap for Stakeholders*' in preparation for their '*New Vision for Agriculture*', which, according to WEF, aims to promote food security, environmental sustainability and economic growth and opportunity and to identify the particular role of the private sector in achieving these things. This is all presented in the context of 'feeding the 9 billion in 2050' and the asserted need to increase production by 70%. The New Vision initiative includes the G8 and G20, plus 11 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. WEF also jointly convenes the Grow Africa Partnership with the African Union and The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The African Agricultural Growth Corridor Projects are just one part of the New Vision initiative.

New vision - old names

According to WEF, the New Vision project is led by 28 of their global partner companies,

> which include: 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.[5]

This represents the whole supply chain, from seeds, chemical inputs, production, processing, transport and trade, to supermarkets.

The last company on the list, **Yara International**, is a global nitrogen fertiliser company from Norway that has played a key role in the promotion of the African Agricultural Growth Corridors. It was Yara that presented the idea to the UN in 2008 and then at the WEF in Davos (where it presented the idea in 2009 and 2010) and also at WEF related meetings in Africa. It offers an annual prize for 'an African Green Revolution'. As an international fertiliser company, Yara obviously has a lot to gain from new markets for its products in Africa, made accessible by new or improved infrastructure such as ports, rail and roads. Yara has already invested some US$20 million in a port terminal in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania for packaging and distributing fertiliser in the SAGCOT corridor and beyond.[6] Like other companies in WEF circles, its chief executive seeks incentives and reduced entry barriers, public private partnerships, to help the private sector to increase food production, which Yara claims will require almost twice as much agricultural output.[7]

Yara has also been instrumental in the Grow Africa Partnership. According to its own website:

> Yara played a key role in establishing Grow Africa, a public-private platform designed to accelerate investments and transformative change in African agriculture that support national policy priorities.[8]

The largest shareholder in Yara is the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry, with 36.2 percent of shares in November 2012.[9] Yara has also had to address incidents of corruption involving payments and offers of payment in India, Libya and Switzerland.[10] This is particularly important in view of the prevalence of corruption identified by local communities and organisations in both Mozambique[11] and Tanzania, and their fears that the corridor projects will increase this (see later: Some major issues for SAGCOT and for all the corridors).

Key players in the corridors

Other company partners in the corridors include Monsanto, Dupont, Syngenta, Unilever, General Mills and SAB Miller (SAGCOT, Tanzania). In Beira, supporters include DuPont, Vale and Rio Tinto, several banks and companies with interests in sugar and in biofuels.

As well as corporations, there are other major players including the Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA), The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), World Bank and FAO and governments including the US, the UK, Norway and the Netherlands.[12]

In particular the UK government is playing an important role in facilitating the development of the corridors. There are three development companies closely involved, **AgDevCo**, **Prorustica** and **InfraCo**, the last two of which are registered in the UK, while AgDevCo has its headquarters in London. **Prorustica** is an international development consultancy based in the UK whose website logo proclaims 'Public Private Partnerships - the answer to African Agricultural Growth'.[13] **InfraCo** focuses on the development of infrastructure services (e.g. irrigation)[14], using funding from the UK Department for International Development (DfID) to start up projects until private companies are willing to invest, with the stated aim of recovering that money later.[15] It is a member of the Private Infrastructure Development Group.[16]

AgDevCo is a not-for-profit agricultural project development company, which says it acts as an investor to develop agriculture enterprises at an early stage, seeking to provide 'transformational benefits' for smallholder farmers and communities. It counts AGRA, USAID, Rockefeller and DfID among its funding partners[17] and manages a 'catalytic fund' to help projects get underway (see below: catalytic or up-front funding). The chairman of InfraCo is also the Executive Chair of AgDevCo.[18] InfraCo developed the Investment Blueprint for the Beira Corridor (BAGC),[19] *Delivering the Potential*, while AgDevCo and Prorustica produced the Investment Blueprint for SAGCOT.[20]

What do they all intend to get out of it?

The corporations see major potential for developing commercial high input agriculture in regions, primarily African countries, which have not yet experienced it, opening fresh opportunities for the sale of proprietary seed, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery and business for the whole supply chain. By bringing together governments, corporations and international institutions in the corridor projects, they hope to generate advantages and economies of scale to increase profits. The combination of expanses of land variously described as empty, underused, idle or degraded, apparently waiting for exploitation, plus the availability of water and cheap labour is a big attraction. The region also has major natural resources – coal, gas, precious metals, rare earths, and timber. Its ports, set for major improvement and expansion, have good potential access to destinations such as China and the EU, both major markets for agricultural commodities for feed, food, fibre and fuel.

The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition: The G8, Grow Africa and WEF

The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN)[21] is the latest initiative for Africa from many of the same group that developed the Corridors. It also involves The African Union (AU), the AU planning and technical body, The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), NEPAD'S Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), governments of several African countries and 45 companies. WEF has been building up the Alliance at its meetings, especially at the WEF Africa meetings.[22]

According to Yara, which has been at the forefront of creating these initiatives, from which it has a great deal to gain:

> The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) is a commitment by G8 nations, African countries and private sector partners, to lift 50 million people out of poverty over the coming ten years. The alliance was launched at the G8 summit at Camp David in 2012... [23]

The aims of the Alliance are to identify suitable land for investors; to help the private sector to control and increase the use of agricultural inputs (fertilisers) and 'improved' (hybrid or GM) seeds and halt the distribution of free and 'unimproved' seeds (farmer varieties, often well adapted to local conditions and needs); and to mobilise public services to assist investors. The Alliance looks set to contradict and override existing regional initiatives such as the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS), and its agricultural policy, ECOWAP, which has already set up policies to address investment, internal trade and food reserves and has national agricultural investment programmes. These initiatives see small farmers as key players in achieving food sovereignty in a bottom-up process, in contrast to the New Alliance, a top-down initiative that talks about the importance of smallholders, but actually sees them as outgrowers contracted to serve corporate interests.

According to USAID, the Alliance 'will catalyze private sector investment in African agriculture.' 21 African and 27 multinational companies signed letters of intent to establish projects on irrigation, processing, trading, financing and infrastructure, while 60 more have signed the Private Sector Declaration of Support for African Agricultural Development through 'responsible public-private partnerships'. Entities involved in the letters of intent include SAB Miller, Syngenta, Swiss Re, Cargill, Diageo, Unilever, DuPont, Monsanto, Vodafone and Yara. Signatories to the Declaration include some of the same corporations, plus Archer Daniels Midland, PepsiCo, BASF, Bayer, Kraft Foods and Novozymes.[24]

The first three African countries to be involved in the Alliance were: Ethiopia, Ghana and Tanzania, joined since by: Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Mozambique, so the list already includes the 2 main Agricultural Growth Corridor countries. In June 2013, they were joined by Benin, Nigeria, Malawi, and Senegal. Each one is working with one or more G8 member countries. In the case of the two main corridor countries, Mozambique is working with Japan and the USA and Tanzania with the USA. The New Alliance and the Corridors will obviously reinforce each other.[25]

Modernising African Agriculture: Who Benefits?

A letter of protest with this title was circulated in spring 2013 with a range of African organizations and networks as founding signatories. [26]

It sets out the issues starkly:

> Africa is seen as a possible new frontier to make profits, with an eye on land, food and biofuels in particular. The recent investment wave must be understood in the context of consolidation of a global food regime dominated by large corporations in input supply (seed and agrochemicals) especially, but also increasingly in processing, storage, trading and distribution.

And then outlines some African alternatives to the New Alliance vision:

> First and foremost, differentiated strategies are required, so that local and informal markets, proven low-input and ecologically sustainable agricultural techniques including intercropping, on-farm compost production, mixed farming systems (livestock, crops and trees), on-farm biofuel production and use, and intermediate processing and storage technologies are recognised and vigorously supported. The emphasis here is on individual and household food security first, with trade arising from surpluses beyond this. The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) provides detailed and scientifically sound proposals in this regard.

Organisation of the corridors

This section looks at how the corridors are being designed so as to attract and facilitate investors.

The lack of infrastructure and storage facilities is often cited as a major barrier to agricultural development and food security in Africa. However, it is important to ask what kind of infrastructure is required to benefit Africans, as opposed to corporate interests. Private capital is not interested in investing in infrastructure, although companies are happy to be paid to build it. A major aim of these projects is to provide a context where private capital will be attracted to invest. Since private capital wants guaranteed returns on investment, export agriculture is likely to be a major focus, with infrastructure leading out of the country, probably towards other regions, rather than benefiting other African countries. The participation of corporate partners such as Cargill, Bunge and ADM link the Agricultural Growth Corridors projects firmly to the global commodity trade.

Central to the development of the corridors concept are roads, railways, ports, irrigation, and farming hubs, nucleus farms or irrigated farm blocks. According to the theory, these nucleus farms will provide processing and storage services, inputs (seed, fertilisers and pesticides) plus machinery to smallholders or outgrowers and their communities living in the surrounding area. The idea is that all these should be concentrated, along with other service providers such as extension and credit, into clusters of companies:

> Clusters are defined as geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions. For SAGCOT, this includes suppliers of farm inputs, machinery, and agriculture support services (extension agents, financial services), commercial farmers (large and small), processors and providers of infrastructure such as irrigation and rural roads.[27]

The projects also emphasise the importance of 'last mile' infrastructure, ie: linking everything into the network – including smallholders and local communities.

Smallscale farmers as outgrowers and contract farmers

Promoters of all these projects, along with the World Bank and FAO, constantly emphasise how they want to help smallholder farmers gain access to credit, farm inputs and protection for their land rights and speak of major benefits for them and for local communities. However, once again it is important to look at the context. The infrastructure diagrams for the corridor proposals suggest that production is more likely to focus on commodities for international markets, rather than helping local communities practice agriculture for local food security/sovereignty, placing them in the role of contract farmers and outgrowers rather than independent food providers.

Jatropha and oil palm plantations both require labour, for example, so it is convenient for companies, but not necessarily beneficial for local people, to contract them as outgrowers. Although poor farmers may be attracted by the idea of signing contracts to obtain up-front loans to set themselves up, the reality is that they are the ones who take the risks and encounter the problems – and have to repay the loans. The companies meanwhile dictate all the terms. It is also important to realise that traditional land use patterns may be very different from the kind of land rights process promoted by companies seeking to turn local communities into outgrowers for their projects.

Incentivising investment: Public Private Partnerships, Catalytic funding and Patient Capital

Public private partnerships (PPPs)

These are seen as key to establishing the corridors and as fundamental to the New Alliance by the major promoters such as Yara International above. The international development consultancy Prorustica is dedicated to establishing PPPs and, as mentioned above, worked with InfraCo and AgDevCo to develop the investment blueprints for Beira and SAGCOT in order to facilitate them. The government of Tanzania considers PPPs to be the foundation for its agricultural policy. A major question regarding such partnerships is always: how are they accountable to the public and to governments? Mandatory company accountability remains limited to financial matters. Who really takes the risks in such partnerships? How can participants be brought to account in the case of failures? Will the contents of the agreements be publicly accessible? What secret clauses may they contain that will shift liability towards the public realm?

Catalytic or up-front funding

This type of funding is designed to encourage companies to set up projects, for example, for the Beira Corridor:

> The Catalytic Fund provides low-cost funding of $50,000 to $500,000 to eligible businesses. Recipients must agree to enter into a joint venture with AgDevCo, the manager of the Catalytic Fund, to develop the business opportunity. AgDevCo works closely with project sponsors to make the business "bankable" and secure third-party debt and equity investment as soon as possible.[28]

Apparently the Beira Catalytic Fund has more than $20 million, which has been provided by the governments of the UK, the Netherlands and Norway and which invests in projects, 'with direct benefits for many smallholder farmers'.[29] Elsewhere we learn that the UK Department for International Development, DfID, has provided an 'Accountable Grant Arrangement' of up to £6,500,000 through AgDevCo.[30] The aim is to support the initial costs and risks of getting new businesses underway and so attract new investment. SAGCOT also has a Catalytic Fund, of some 40 million USD.

Patient capital

The need for so-called patient capital is constantly emphasised, especially for developing infrastructure. It is capital invested with no prospect of the kind of quick return companies are generally looking for. The preferred source of capital is thus public funding. South Africa also plans massive infrastructure development, and intends to use one of the largest reserves of patient capital: pension funds.[31] Pension funds in the OECD countries alone totalled over 20 trillion USD in 2011. The OECD considers that pension funds may be needed to help to bridge the global infrastructure gap and assist with investments in climate change adaptation and mitigation.[32] Obviously the public, whose funds these are, should be properly engaged in the debate as to how they are invested, as the risks are considerable, but may also be very difficult for non-specialists to understand or calculate. Members of the public might also not approve on ethical grounds of the way their pension funds are invested.

The chair of AgDevCo and InfraCo, Keith Palmer, also happens to be the author of a paper on patient capital: *Agricultural growth and poverty reduction in Africa: The case for patient capital*.[33] As AgDevCo notes on its website: 'Patient capital is long-term capital made available by the international community on concessional terms. It is used to part-fund the capital costs of irrigation and related agriculture supporting infrastructure.' [34]

2) THE CORRIDORS THEMSELVES

The Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC)

This covers the Mozambique provinces of Tete, Sofala and Manica. 'The Beira corridor is the gateway to South Eastern Africa. It is a road and rail network linking Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique to the port of Beira on the Indian Ocean.' [35] The project was launched in 2010.[36] According to the 'Delivering the Potential' document on Beira, the BAGC covers some 10 million ha of arable land, of which 1.5 million are currently farmed by subsistence farmers with just 25,700 of commercial farming of which 22,000 were under sugarcane. The aim is to increase irrigation from 1,200 ha to 200,000 ha by 2030. The World Bank has funded the PROIRRI irrigation project at US$ 70M for the Beira and Zambezi Corridors. According to figure 6, on page 11 of the Beira document, the EU and Japan have contributed funds to upgrade the port of Beira. The Beira document also mentions several biofuel firms as planning to invest in production there: Principle Energy, Sun Biofuels, Enerterra, Grown Energy Zambeze and Envalor.[37] Principle's own website reports that it intends to produce sugarcane for ethanol on some 20,000 ha of irrigated land in Dombe (Beira Corridor)[38] that is likely to be exported from Beira port. In July, 2011, Zambeze Grown Energy was reported as investing US$320 million to raise sugarcane on 24,000 ha.[39] In June of the same year, the Portuguese company SGC Energia was reported as working with Enerterra SA on a project to produce biodiesel from jatropha seeds in Sofala province (BAGC) on 19,000 ha.[40]

What is really happening

However, it is difficult to be sure what the current status of projects is without monitoring on the ground. In the BAGC Partnership report of June 2012 there are several 'project concepts' for irrigation in collaboration with PROIRRI for an area of 1.2 million ha, and also 'pipeline opportunities'. The Catalytic Fund is meant to provide finance to kick-start agricultural production in cooperation with agricultural commodity buyers, for example. According to the report 860,000 dollars were disbursed by the Fund in the six months to end June 2012, plus around 1 million by the Smallholder Facility, plus loans of 1.4 million, plus some equity investments.[41] According to its brochure for 2012, AgDevCo has currently invested in 12 projects in Mozambique and was planning to invest in 5 more in 2012.[42]
But we will have to see what actually comes of all these projects, and at what cost.

How the corporations see the potential interaction between mining and agriculture

Tete province in the Beira corridor is rich in coal, which two major international companies, Vale (a Brazilian multinational metals, mining and logistics corporation) and Rio Tinto have recently begun to mine. To stimulate coal exports, Mozambique has been seeking international bids for a US$3 billion railway and port development project – from Tete to Macuse on the coast.[43] Meanwhile the Sena railway line from Tete to the port of Beira, which was damaged in the civil war, is being upgraded. According to the Beira website, the mining sector is helping to create demand for food and agriculture:

> The Government of Mozambique, the British Government, Rio Tinto and AgDevCo have teamed up to assist thousands of small farmers who live in the vicinity of mines in Moatize, central Mozambique, to boost their crop yields for commercial food production.[44]

In February 2013 it was reported that Rio Tinto had run into trouble because it could not export the coal it had acquired access to by purchasing Riversdale Mining Ltd in 2011 due to the refusal of the Mozambique government to allow it to ship coal down the Zambezi River and absence of the rail and port facilities, which meant it had to write down its assets. This forced the resignation of its Chief Executive Officer and the man responsible for the project.[45]

Then in April 2013 Rio Tinto was named as one of the preferred bidders to undertake the construction of the railway. A decision is likely to be made in July. The potential advantages to mining and agriculture corporations of collaborating so that the latter produce food for the workers of the former, are clear. [46]

The impacts of previous colonial efforts and years of war in the region

The core region of the Beira Corridor has already experienced quite large-scale commercial exploitation and its original population was used as forced labour on plantations for export crops[47] under the Mozambique Company, established in 1891 with British, German and South African investment. Rebellions against the Mozambique Company in 1902 and 1917 meant that the Portuguese government (the colonial power) had to intervene to restore order.[48] The role of such companies as the Mozambique Company, the Niassa and Zambezi Companies, the Africa Company and the East India Company in the past helped to begin the process of reordering land and people and provides prophetic warnings about current developments such as the agricultural growth corridors, if we choose to heed them.[49] Mozambique's civil war of 16 years that ended in 1992 caused some 1 million deaths and uprooted 6 million in a country of 17.5 million people. This probably makes Mozambique seem an easier target for landgrabs than other countries where populations have not been displaced to the same degree.

The Nacala and Zambezi Corridors in Mozambique

There are two other corridors under development in Mozambique: the Nacala Agricultural Growth Corridor (which consists of Nampula and Niassa provinces) and the Zambezi Agricultural Corridor. However, part of Zambezia province is being included in the Nacala proposals so here we treat them together. They are dominated by the Pro-Savana Programme, of which the National Farmers' and Peasants' Union (UNAC) of Mozambique says:

> The ProSavana Programme is a triangular project between the Republic of Mozambique, the Federal Republic of Brazil and Japan, for the development of large-scale agriculture in the Nacala Development Corridor affecting 14 districts in the provinces of Niassa, Nampula and Zambezia, covering an area of approximately 14 million hectares.[50]

The Programme is being promoted on the basis that the region resembles the Cerrado region of Brazil, where Japan co-operated with Brazil to promote industrial agriculture over the last three decades,[51] with devastating impacts on soils, biodiversity, water resources and local communities.[52, 53]

However, according to the Gates Foundation website, under the heading Forging Innovative Partnerships,

> Brazil is working with Japan to help poor farmers in Mozambique grow soybeans, in a story that goes back 30 years. As part of a major technical assistance program in the 1980s, Japan helped adapt the soybean to Brazil's tropical savanna, the Cerrado. It became one of Brazil's most important crops. Now, with Japanese financial support, the Brazilians are helping Mozambiquan farmers in the Nacala corridor, an area with very similar climate and soil conditions. Meanwhile, the Japanese are looking to upgrade Mozambique's port and railroad infrastructure to make it easier for farmers to export the beans.[54]

Brazilian and Japanese investors are now being offered large areas of land on long leases at minimal cost. It is being asserted that this land is abandoned but La Via Campesina states that in fact there are actually millions of small farmers in the region.[55] As seen above, Japan is one of the G8 countries partnering Mozambique in the New Alliance, along with the USA. This will help it to strengthen its hold on the Nacala Corridor.

It is also worth noting in this context that in 2010, Brazil, Mozambique and the EU signed a Bioenergy pact involving Brazilian companies, land and labour in Mozambique and exports to EU markets, focusing on jatropha and sugar cane.[56]

What the peasant organisations of the Nacala region, members of the National Peasant Organisation of Mozambique, have to say about this project could equally be applied to the other corridor projects:

Considering the way in which the ProSavana programme was drafted and the process for implementing it, we peasant farmers warn of the following expected impacts:

- The appearance of landless communities in Mozambique, as a result of land expropriation and resettlement;
- Frequent social upheaval along the Nacala Corridor, and beyond;
- The impoverishment of rural communities and a reduction in the number of alternatives for survival;
- An increase in corruption and conflicts of interest;
- The pollution of water resources as a result of the excessive use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers, as well soil degradation;
- Ecological imbalances due to vast deforestation for agribusiness projects.[57]

For this reason, La Via Campesina, in August 2012, called for: 'an immediate moratorium on all large-scale agricultural investments such as the Pro-Savana project in Mozambique' plus demands ranging from recognition of common land titles in favour of the communities to ' the direct involvement of peasants in the definition of agricultural policies based on sustainability, food sovereignty and agroecology;' [58]

The Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT)

There are two possible corridors inland from the port of Dar es Salaam – SAGCOT focuses on the southern highlands and involves 7.5 million ha, of which some 2 million ha are farmed by smallholders, who also keep cattle, goats and poultry. 110,000 ha are farmed by commercial farmers, mainly for sugar cane and tea (for export), according to the SAGCOT Investment Blueprint of January 2011. This corridor stretches all the way to the Zambia border and Prorustica points out that it could provide a gateway to Zambia, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo as well.[59] As Farming First notes: 'With Dar es Salaam port providing access to the Indian Ocean for the interior of Tanzania and its neighbouring landlocked countries – Malawi, Zambia and the Congo - Tanzania has a large agricultural potential.' [60] In October 2012, those three countries were accepted as member of SAGCOT.[61]

Some major issues for SAGCOT and for all the corridors

The Government of Tanzania's strategy for economic development and poverty reduction is the *Kilimo Kwanza* (Agriculture First) policy. Unlike previous attempts at rural strategies, it is led by the private sector and involves the creation of a public private partnership framework. The SAGCOT programme is an integral part of this policy. The aim is to bring 350,000 ha of farmland into commercial production for regional and international markets over the next 20 years and to bring smallholders into profitable agriculture through increasing linkages with commercial agribusiness.

However, the government of Tanzania's '*Strategic Regional Environmental and Social Assessment*' interim report of July 2012 [62] notes concerns about lack of institutional capacity, endemic corruption, the likelihood of conflicts over land, especially in view of local perceptions that all land is already in use. There are fears that investors will simply grab the land. Lack of transparency and accountability, and lack of strategies to minimize risks to smallholders and herders from the commercialization of agriculture are also mentioned. In addition there were comments on lack of security of tenure and limited rights and negotiating power over land-transfers and land use planning. There are also concerns about impacts on biodiversity from intensive agriculture and associated inputs. Even though women form the majority of farmers, they are often disadvantaged by custom and tradition, underrepresented and frequently unaware of their rights. However, will these broad concerns be heeded and is there capacity to address them?

On 28th November 2012 it was announced that the government of Tanzania had set a 10,000 hectare limit on land holdings for investment in sugar and 5,000ha for rice. The Tanzania Investment Centre is preparing guidelines for investors regarding the involvement of small-scale outgrowers.[63] However, 10,000 hectares is still a very large area by the standards of small African farmers, averaging less than 2 ha.

3) AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL GROWTH CORRIDORS: POTENTIAL SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

A Major Reordering of Land and Water Use

We argue that the corridors are part of a major reordering of land and water access and use in the global south not dissimilar to the enclosures that took place for example in the UK (with Scotland perhaps the best known example, but it occurred all over the UK), where many of those who were driven off the land became labour for emerging industries or were forced to leave the country. Current patterns of land use, such as shifting cultivation or other traditional forms of cultivation and use, already seriously threatened and often completely misunderstood, may cease to be possible across wide areas. This would threaten to eliminate the livelihoods of local communities that do not wish to collaborate with this externally imposed re-ordering. Existing local patterns of water use will also be adversely affected, indeed the threat to water may be even more serious, in view of the many proposals for new irrigation schemes to serve industrial farming. Pastoralism and seasonal grazing, often well adapted to local conditions if able to operate according to traditional practice, are already under great pressure, which this reordering will certainly increase. In Zambia for example there are local agriculture systems such as Chitemene and the more recent Fundikila[64] or Mambwe mound cultivation system developed by local people[65] . Small farmer innovation, often combining new and traditional ideas, is insufficiently acknowledged but vital.[66] Such systems are often dismissed as unable to accommodate population increase, but have tremendous potential, especially in a context of participatory, bottom-up innovation, and have even been shown to yield higher in multicropping systems compared to conventional farming. However, the intention of the corridor projects discussed below is to impose top-down intensive agrochemical use plus irrigation on 'smallholders', even though in the long term history clearly shows us that intensive use of inputs and water are not sustainable and lead to increased emissions, contamination, salinisation, degradation and waste of soils and water. Indeed the obsession with 'efficiency' of agricultural methods and machinery, now under the guise of 'sustainable intensification' has the potential to greatly accelerate this process of destruction. We urgently need research centred on small-scale food producers, who still produce 70% of the world's food in spite of years of policy decisions that have generally marginalised them. We need to start from the problems small farmers face, rather than imposing yet more top-down policy on them, which largely ignore the fundamentals of ecologically and socially sustainable systems.

High dependence on land yet land rights not recognised

In many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, the majority of local people depend on the land for their livelihoods (some 80% in Ethiopia,[67] Tanzania and Mozambique[68] for example). In Tanzania and Mozambique agriculture is overwhelmingly (90-95%) the work of smallscale, often subsistence farmers, of whom the majority are women, but many do not have any legally recognised right to that land. It is also unusual for collective use of land to be recognised in law or understood in policy-making, yet land is quite often managed collectively, sometimes according to well-defined rules, local customs and uses, eg: pastoralists.[69] In Africa, some 65% of the land is estimated to be held, managed and used collectively.[70] Such use may be seasonal, or on a long cycle that enables it to recover in between. It may also be invisible to western eye. People may also depend on collecting food, fodder and materials from forests and other land (which may appear marginal to outsiders), during droughts or simply to supplement income.[71]

Land titling needs the right context

In this context, land titling is only part of the answer, because without the right policy context it can simply lead to the land being sold, either voluntarily or under pressure, resulting in concentration of land in the hands of the most powerful players. More subtly, it may also facilitate changing from traditional land use, involving collective, shifting and nomadic practice, to industrial agriculture, with titles only for those who have been captured by the system, outgrowers, for example. This caution also applies to the recently developed Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security, welcomed by the White House, which then mentioned applying the Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investment.[72] But the White House meant those developed by the World Bank rather than those emerging from the civil society process within the Committee on World Food Security. See below: *Are African Agricultural Growth Corridors Responsible Agricultural Investment?*

Shifting cultivation[73] means that local people's livelihoods depend on access to considerably larger areas of land than what is under cultivation at any given point in time. As a typical low-input agricultural system, it is adapted to areas of low population density and subsistence farming. But this also means that local peoples acquire 'user rights' over larger areas than may be evident if assessments only take into account currently cultivated plots.[74]

Titling of collective land is unusual – it is mostly done on an individual basis. Large commercial interests and institutions such as the World Bank and FAO increasingly speak of their desire to help smallholders and of the importance of land titling but their reasons for doing so may not be the same as those of advocates for local communities. Indeed, unless titling takes place in a context of bottom-up agrarian reform, it is likely to have a negative impact on local people. The EU Biofuels Baseline[75] for example, mentions titles mainly in the context of inequality in rights between men and women without discussing titles in an overall policy context, or without recognising the cultural differences between men and women. It does not mention agrarian reform at all.

Impacts on women particularly problematic

Although they are the majority of African farmers, women are often worst affected by 'modernisation' of agriculture[76] because in many societies they still have limited rights to land and may well lose those should they be widowed. They often face discrimination under both customary practice and law, as well as gender-based violence.[77] Women often have the task of gathering fuel, fodder, medicine, water and food and may rely more on access to common land for this purpose, as well as for additional resources to sell to pay for their children to go to school, for example. This means they will be more adversely affected by the loss of common resources that frequently occurs with the shift to contract farming for industry. They may also be marginalised in changes from subsistence agriculture to cash crops, where men commonly take control. In addition, women are often assigned the worst jobs in cash crop production, such as spraying chemicals with inadequate or no protective clothing and often little access to water to wash off residues (and often with very little instruction and no information on health risks, and no access to health care). In addition, women are increasingly being left as the sole carers for family, as men leave to find work in cities or extractive industries, or as relatives are decimated by AIDS. Yet women are central to household food security and the health of their children. They are the main users of locally adapted livestock breeds[78] and frequently the seed-keepers in their communities, using locally adapted seed that has been handed down, with skills in selecting and storing it. The impact of hybrid, input dependent crops on women is to deprive them of an essential resource. In discussing the role of women, advisers often look at solutions in terms of access to markets and jobs, which does not always correspond to the true importance of their role. What the woman mentioned here needs, for example, is protection of her rights to save, exchange and hand down seeds and knowledge, not access to hybrid and patent protected seeds:

> The crops she grows today are from seeds that have been handed down from generation to generation, over decades, she says. Other seeds come from exchanges with neighbouring farmers. "My seeds are very important to me. I hope the day will never come when I have to buy seeds from a shop," [79]

Are African Agricultural Growth Corridors Responsible Agricultural Investment?

In July 2009, Taro Aso, briefly prime minister of Japan, wrote:

> I will also make a new proposal to promote responsible foreign investment in agriculture, in the face of so-called "land grabs"… We think a regulatory approach is not desirable…We believe non-binding principles would promote responsible investment and sustainable farmland management." [80]

The outcome was a set of 7 voluntary Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI), developed by the G8, G20, FAO, World Bank, the EU, Japan and others.[81] In April 2010, 130 organisations, including organisations representing farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolk, denounced the RAI in a statement: "Stop land grabbing now! Say NO to the principles on responsible agro-enterprise investment promoted by the World Bank".[82] Soon afterwards, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food publicly criticised RAI.[83] According to the Campaign for the Reform of the World Bank: "The World Bank's RAI principles are an attempt to legitimise corporate land grabs and the expansion of an industrial model of agriculture that is destroying people's livelihoods and the planet." [84] Now the Committee on World Food Security[85] will begin to develop its own principles on responsible agricultural investment, which as it says, are 'NOT to be confused with PRAI - Principles developed by the World Bank, UNCTAD, IFAD and FAO'.[86] Consultations on the principles were set to begin to begin in November 2012.

Even if much of the corridor discussion to date is promotion, not reality, local people still suffer

It appears that, certainly in the case of SAGCOT, the reality on the ground is less impressive than the hype would have us believe. The investment is not coming in at the rates expected. Some potential donors are apparently cautious about contributing to the project because environmental and social problems have not been addressed. However, we have seen how, even with projects that fail to take off, the companies and institutions that developed the ideas are not the losers: it is the local people who are worst affected, relocated on the promise of compensation, wells or clinics, or encouraged to move from feeding their communities to producing cash crops. One example is Kisarawe in Tanzania, where the inhabitants of 11 villages were relocated so that Sun Biofuels could produce jatropha. They received little compensation, and even when the project failed, they had great difficulty in regaining access to their land.

Summary and Conclusions

African Agricultural Growth Corridors are being established across millions of hectares of African land, currently in Mozambique and Tanzania, with the potential for extending to Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, The Democratic Republic of Congo and beyond. While claiming to increase agricultural productivity, these projects are likely to facilitate the appropriation of land and the displacement of small-scale farmers, while imposing high-input, industrial agriculture using hybrid and GM seed. The vision of the Corridors is to replace local small-scale agriculture producing for domestic markets and using local seed resources, with an export-led focus. That focus is likely to put Africa's land, water and seeds under the control of international traders and investors.

The concept of the African Agricultural Growth Corridors was first promoted at The World Economic Forum (WEF). It is part of their New Vision for Agriculture, led by 28 global partner companies representing the whole supply chain, from seeds, chemical inputs, production, processing, transport and trade, to supermarkets. It includes: ADM, BASF, Bayer, Bunge, Cargill, Coca-Cola, DuPont, Monsanto, Syngenta, Unilever, Wal-Mart and Yara. The African Union (AU), the AU planning and technical body, The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), NEPAD'S Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) plus the Alliance for a New Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and Grow Africa are also involved.

More recently, many of the same actors developed the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which was launched at the G8 summit in 2012. The governments of Tanzania and Mozambique, already the leading Corridor countries/states, are members of the Alliance, and this is likely to intensify the process of reordering of land and people begun in those countries by the Corridors.

These initiatives were not proposed by Africa's peoples to address the continent's most pressing challenges. Instead they actually threaten to override current regional, national and local initiatives developed by Africans.

Promoters of the projects narratives of "underdevelopment" and "lack of infrastructure" in Africa to promote their agenda. They promise to lift millions from poverty and provide opportunities for smallholders. However, the impacts are more likely to be the privatisation of African land and seed to generate profit for foreign investors, as well as opening up new markets for agribusiness corporations. Although promises have been made to help smallholders, especially women, it is more likely that the livelihoods, seed and land rights of farmers, indigenous communities, pastoralists and women are likely to be ignored, undermined and taken over in these plans to exploit Africa's best agricultural land and valuable mineral and other resources.

We must therefore take the insights of the peasants and farmers movements regarding Nacala and the conclusions of the government of Tanzania's '*Strategic Regional Environmental and Social Assessment Interim Report*' of July 2012[87] very seriously. As noted above, the latter mentions concern among local communities about endemic corruption and lack of transparency and accountability. Many local communities fear that investors will simply take their land over because local people lack security of tenure and the power to negotiate. They predict the likelihood of conflicts over land, including between farmers and pastoralists if the latter are displaced by commercial agriculture. They also predict the loss of local and regional food security if commercial crops displace food crops. The Tanzania interim report reveals that many local people foresee quite clearly what is likely to happen to them, but feel powerless to prevent it.

La Via Campesina has expressed similar fears about the Nacala Corridor in Mozambique, while African networks and NGOs see the New Alliance and the Corridors as part of the consolidation of a global food regime where everything from seed and fertiliser to infrastructure, processing and distribution is under corporate control. The whole process should be halted to give time for deeper analysis and a wide public debate on the impacts and implications of the African Agricultural Growth Corridors and the Alliance.

There are currently two fundamentally contrasting projections of the direction in which agriculture should go, either towards more chemically intensive, hi-tech mechanical approaches or towards more diverse, people-intensive, knowledge-focused approaches. We know that the latter can generate ecological and livelihood sustainability. A report from UNEP and UNCTAD in 2008: Organic Agriculture and Food Security in Africa concluded: 'The evidence presented in this study supports the argument that organic agriculture can be more conducive to food security in Africa than most conventional production systems, and that it is more likely to be sustainable in the long term.' [88]

We would add that the best systems of agriculture are in the hands of the farmers themselves, to innovate, exchange ideas, develop plant varieties appropriate to their needs and the infrastructure they require, with the information, support and collaboration they decide they need. Moreover scientific comparisons between monoculture systems and agroecological polycropping systems have shown that the latter can also give significantly higher yields.[89]

However, the New Alliance aims to halt the distribution of free and 'unimproved' seeds (farmer varieties). This will mean the loss of vital farmer knowledge of local conditions, for which there is no substitute, and their locally adapted diverse varieties. Agriculture is multifunctional; there are many different kinds of agricultural systems developed to flourish according to local circumstances and cultures. Climate change will be a major challenge to these systems, but farmers are the best placed to find ways to adapt, if given the right kind of support. Agricultural research and development must therefore be centred on farmers, who, in Africa, are still mostly women. Allowing it to be led by investment and implemented through public private partnerships, especially in situations where local communities lack the power to assert their rights, is dangerous and unethical. We now know that intensive agriculture systems in developed countries contribute to carbon emissions, destroy and contaminate soil and water resources, destroy biodiversity and degrade land. We know they are not sustainable. We have a clear obligation not to be complicit in imposing that model on Africa.

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