

## **Abstract**

### **The scramble for productive resources in Africa: the threats and the way forward**

Two major productive resources to the smallholder are land and Seed. To these groups of workers, access to and control over land and seed are relevant to their socio-economic development, food security, right to food and poverty reduction. With about 70% of our household food provided by smallholders, access to and control over these productive resources influence food prices on the market and how much food a day's wage can buy at a point in time. Additionally, access to and control over these productive resources contributes to the identity, dignity and social inclusion of smallholders.

In recent times, evidence show that large tracts of customary lands in Africa have been purchased by companies owned either wholly by a foreign investor or in partnership with a local or domestic investor. Such purchases pose threats to local right holders such as smallholder farmers. In spite of the laid down procedures and principles guiding purchases of large tracts of land, evidence show that the principles of free, prior and informed consent is not adhered to. In addition, the requirements for the payment of fair, adequate and prompt compensation to those dispossessed of their rights, are not enforced adequately. These smallholders become landless peasants who offer their labour to these companies. Another dimension to the development of this phenomenon is the attribution of food insecurity to the quality of seed. These instances have led to a massive attack on seed laws in some countries to ensure a complete takeover of the right to produce and hold seed from smallholders and handed to the private sector. Not only that; there are quest to also influence national land policies to ensure that private sector can easily have access to large tracts of land without going through the traditional bureaucratic processes. Fortunately, there have been series of struggles led by social movements, civil societies, NGOs and in some cases trade Unions- even though they have not been at the forefront of the struggles. In some countries, Unions have stated their position clearly on the matter. In the face of these developments, few questions emerge: who are the actors involved in the scramble for productive resources in Africa and what are the evidences on the ground; what are the threats to smallholders and labour and the implications for decent work in agriculture; why are unions not seen to be leading the struggles and finally, what is the way forward?. The objective of the paper is to attempt to find answers to the various questions listed above.

Depending on secondary data, Ghana will be a case study with examples from other countries such as Burkina Faso. Collation of primary data will be based on interviews with social movements, CSOs and Trade Unions. The major ones include Food Sovereignty Ghana, Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana, General Agricultural Workers Union of TUC Ghana and other individuals.

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