

## Volatile Food Markets – what Issues for Land Policy and Administration in Developing Countries?

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### Context

- Number of food insecure increased by 100 million in 2008
- Variety of causes. Requires variety of linked responses
- One element: Need to greatly increase agricultural productivity in developing countries.
- DFID has issued the challenge of doubling agricultural productivity in Africa, from 2008 to 2015.
- Character of food insecurity has changed: no longer the peak prices of mid-08 – now global crisis and declining household incomes
- Leading to increased hunger, especially among children

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### Food Production and Food Security

- Global food production has to rise 50% by 2030 to meet needs of growing populations
- Some developing countries aiming for food self-sufficiency
- Practically all aiming for some increase in food production

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### Role of land

Land – whether owned or rented – is a crucial element in:

- raising agricultural productivity (but **secure** tenure is a prerequisite for investment);
- providing collateral for loans;
- providing platform (including a source of capital) for those leaving agriculture.

But what kinds of demands will increased food production make on land administration, what threats does it face, and how can it best respond?

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### Growing challenges to land policy and administration

Include:

- Conversion of land into urban uses, infrastructure and leisure, and "rent capture" by officials and elites to the exclusion of the poor
- Large-scale acquisition by corporate (including foreign) investors
- Allocation of land to biofuels

### Central agriculture/food questions facing land policy and administration

Apart from these issues, for the future, land policy will be influenced by four major questions:

- Will the best prospects for productivity growth lie with small or large farms? For either, how can tenure be made secure enough to permit necessary investment?
- How can the rights of the poor be better protected in the face of land "conversion"?
- How can a balance best be struck between people's rights and land leases to large (sometimes foreign) corporations?
- Who, at what pace, and from what areas will wish to exit agriculture? How can land policy and administration best allow "good" exits, yet still permit the land to be used productively?

### Conclusions

- It takes a long time for land policy and administration to change and for change to impact on rural people.
- BUT the food economy has changed rapidly in the last 3 years and is likely to continue to evolve in the future.
- What *will* African agriculture look like in 20 years from now, and are there ways of getting land policy and administration to respond more quickly to emerging issues and trends?