

8 February 2015

The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Africa: focus on land and seeds

A new report prepared by the international NGO [GRAIN](#) and by [AFSA](#) (Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa), entitled “[Land and seed laws under attack: who is pushing changes in Africa?](#)” provides details on actions taken by the [New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition](#) of the G8 in the area of land and seeds in Africa.

We have already had the opportunity on [hunger explained.org](http://hungerexplained.org) to draw attention to the activities of this New Alliance that is supported by the richest countries in the world, some international organisations (African Union Commission, World Bank, IFAD, African Development Bank, Millenium Challenge Corporation, AGRA and IFPRI in particular) and in which several large agrofood multinationals take part (Syngenta, Yara, MIMRAN, AGCO, [World Cocoa Foundation](#), Monsanto and Mars. We have already seen that the Alliance was aiming at facilitating private investment in the food and agricultural sector in Africa, while imposing a series of changes in food and agricultural policies that could have a devastating impact for African farmers.



The GRAIN/AFSA report now allows to have a much clearer idea on the policy changes induced by the Alliance, two years after its creation. It shows how “*a battle is raging for control of resources in Africa*”, in particular land, water and seeds:

- official demarcation, registration and titling of farms, delivery of land titles and approval of legislation allowing the emergence of markets for land and for land leasing
- creation of an official seed catalogue, on the model of those existing in rich countries, and establishment of a rule whereby only varieties registered in this catalogue can be legally commercialised
- introduction of intellectual property rights over plant varieties.

All these measures, often introduced on the ground that they will better protect small farmers, will in fact help to open up avenues in the traditional customary management system for private interests and facilitate their legal recognition. For example, the delivery of land titles will *de facto* extract a given plot from the traditional management land system and give individuals the right to negotiate the sale or lease of this land to individuals outside of the community, without allowing any possibility of control by the community, which obviously undermines the community and its ancestral rights. Similarly, the introduction of the new seed regulations prevents any informal sales of seeds and threatens producers of financial sanctions who would wish to reutilise part of their harvest as seed.

According to the GRAIN/AFSA report, the following measures have already been taken in the ten countries who have signed an agreement with the New Alliance:

Country	Formalisation of the land regime	Reforme of seed regulations
Bénin	X (rural land ownership plan)	
Burkina Faso	X (on-going)	X (on-going)
Côte d'Ivoire	X (on-going)	X (new law)
Ethiopia	X (advanced)	X (new law)
Ghana	X (partial)	X (en cours)
Malawi	X (new law, but it is contested)	X (new law under preparation)
Mozambique	X (new regulation)	X (on-going)
Nigeria	X (commitment made)	X (modified law, new seed policy)
Sénégal	yet to be defined	X (commitment made in favour of a new seed legislation)
Tanzania	X (partial)	X (new law, commitment made for more reform)

The report also gives a series of detailed and precise on the role and interests of various Alliance members, as well as on the content of various policy measures taken by African governments.

This report is a must read for those who want to know how rich countries allied with large multinationals are sharing Africa to their profit and to the disadvantage of local farmers and communities.

A good example to mention to show concretely what is going on now in Africa, is the case of the State of Taraba, West of Nigeria (near the Cameroonian border) where farmers are threatened to be evicted by the authorities who want to give 30,000 hectares of rice fields

to the Kenya branch of the US-based [Dominion Farms](#). This project is actually supported by the New Alliance ! The land involved is part of a public irrigation scheme and provides their livelihood to thousands of families. As is always the case, the government justifies this project by 'the increase of production it will generate and that will contribute to food security of the country', carefully forgetting to mention the dramatic consequences the project will have on tens of thousands rural people who live in the concerned area. Once again, like in many other cases, 'consultation of the population' has been limited to consulting the local elites and not the mass of small farmers...

To know more:

- ['Land and seed laws under attack: who is pushing changes in Africa?'](#) GRAIN, January 2015
- [Dominion Farm's land grab in Nigeria](#), GRAIN, janvier 2015
- [The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition: a coup for corporate capital? by N. McKeon](#), hungerexplained.org 2014
- [A first analysis of the implementation of the G8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition confirms worries about this initiative](#), hungerexplained.org 2013.