Pivotal Land Conference – Nairobi, Kenya

Sub Saharan Africa has for a long time been considered a land-abundant region with more under-utilized land than any other continent. However, mounting evidence indicates that rising rural population densities in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa -- combined with policy choices, broadly defined -- are profoundly affecting farming systems and indeed the overall trajectory of economic systems in ways that are underappreciated in current discourse on the region’s development. As in a growing number of African countries, rising population pressures in Kenya are linked in one way or another to (i) the shrinking size of most smallholder farms over time; (ii) more continuous cultivation of fields, contributing to land degradation and unsustainable forms of agricultural intensification; (iii) the rise of land rental and purchase markets and changes in land allocation institutions, all of which are rapidly altering farm structure; and (iv) the difficulties in achieving broad-based and inclusive forms of farm income growth.

Against this backdrop, Kenya Land Alliance and Michigan State University organized a National Land Conference in Nairobi on October 30, 2014. The Conference convened policy makers, government institutions, civil society organizations, farming communities, farmer organization and universities. The objective of the conference was to provide:

(i) Evidence of the linkages between population density, farm size and rural welfare outcomes, using both cross-country analysis and in-depth case studies of several African countries (Kenya included);
(ii) Fresh insights on how land allocation policies are affecting the farm size structure of agriculture, based on case studies of several African countries and a broader Africa-wide review; and
(iii) A timely appraisal of the implications of our analysis for African agricultural development and poverty reduction strategies, including policies toward land allocation and development.

Presentations


Post Conference Highlights: The Star (Saturday, November 8th, 2014); and The Sunday Nation and The Standard (Sunday, November 9th 2014).

Media Coverage
Videos:
- KBC (Kenya), Land speculators a threat to Kenya’s food security efforts. November 7th, 2014.
- KTN (Kenya). Small scale farming under threat and governments asked to come up with agricultural policies. October 28th, 2014.

Print: