

## Nairobi Action Plan to advance land-based investments that benefit Africa

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Nairobi, 05 October 2011 (ECA) - Participants at a 2-day High-Level Forum on *Foreign Direct Investments in Land in Africa* have resolved to promote land-based investment models that increase agricultural productivity and maximize opportunities for Africa's farmers.

The traditional leaders, government representatives, private sector and civil society actors at the Forum stressed that the majority of Africans derive their livelihoods from agriculture, including pastoralism, and that women comprise the majority of smallholder farmers.

The outcome - dubbed the Nairobi Action Plan - underscores the need to minimize the negative impacts of large-scale land acquisitions.

The Forum comes in the wake of what Festus Mogae, Former President of Botswana referred to as "dramatic trends in large acquisitions of land by multinationals for agricultural purposes as they seek to assure food security for industrialized nations." In many circles, this trend is equated to land grabbing.

Earlier today, the Kenyan Minister for Lands, Mr. James Orengo told the Forum that Africa's exports to the world market had remarkably declined in the last 10 years, mainly due to protectionist policies adopted by the industrialized countries.

"This is the crux of the scramble for Africa's arable land, as it is now apparently clear, that industrialized countries are willing to receive agricultural exports from Africa, only when such products are produced by their own multinationals."

Minister Orengo said that in Kenya, excessive fragmentation of land and encroachment into marginal areas has resulted in low productivity and severe land degradation. This, he added, "has culminated in high competition for the dwindling resources and eruption of violent conflicts."

The Government of Kenya has had to step in to stop leasing of large tracts of land to investors before exhaustive consultations with the local people and in consideration of the need to harmonize land laws with the National Land Policy and the Constitution.

The forum agreed to promote assessments of past, and on-going large-scale investments within the next 12 months; the assessments will be gender differentiated and indicate the impact on poverty. The move is aimed at supporting evidence-based advocacy to promote profitable, equitable and sustainable land-based investments.

The forum also agreed to establish, in the next 24 months, a monitoring and reporting mechanism for tracking large-scale land based investments and to ensure that these ventures are beneficial to national economic development and local communities. In this regard, they agreed to pay special attention to women's land rights.

Further, they agreed to develop principles that encourage sound and sustainable investments in land, and guide fiscal policy in this regard within 6 months.

In the medium-term, efforts will be made to implement land policies that facilitate equitable access and secure the rights of communities -including women, investors, both local and foreign.

President Mogae chairs the [Coalition for Dialogue on Africa - CoDA](#), which creates the space for discussions on issues that "may be controversial and where the usual policy processes may not yet have placed sharp enough focus."

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