

THE HARVEST OF THE LOCUSTS

A dossier about land grabbing and Europe's responsibility

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Summary

Locusts reap the harvest while others suffer from hunger

In the brochure "DIE ERNTE DER HEUSCHRECKEN" (the harvest of the locusts), the author Stephan Börnecke describes the extent and impact of the global land grabbing process and identifies actors and driving forces. He clarifies that land grabbing has now also arrived in Europe. And beyond that he concludes that Europe is responsible for part of the world's land grabbing process - at least indirectly because of the incentives for the use of biofuels.

There is an urgent need to develop valid and binding international sustainability guidelines for land purchases. On the other hand we have to examine in detail the direct and indirect consequences of policy decisions that we take in Europe as well as their impact. And change them, if necessary. Especially the European Union as the world's biggest actor in agricultural trade bears a particular responsibility. The Treaty of Lisbon commits the EU to fight poverty in developing countries. According to Article 208 policy objectives and programmes at EU level must meet the needs of developing countries and not contradict the objective to reduce and, in the long term, to eradicate poverty. Especially the EU Directive on renewable energies, but also the EU raw materials initiative will present particular challenges in this context.

Demands

Martin Häusling

1. The EU Renewable Energy Directive (Directive 2009/28/EC) must be changed. The ten percent admixture obligation, Directive 2003/30/EC (Biofuels Directive), must be repealed for reasons of climate protection as well as a driving incentive for land grabbing processes.
2. For the import of energy crops, food and feedstuff strict sustainability criteria have to be developed which also take into account the socio-economic impacts.
3. The promotion of European protein crop cultivation must be implemented across the pillars of the CAP as an important principle.
4. The EU should advocate for inclusion of environmental and social standards in international trade standards and in WTO negotiations.
5. For all ongoing trade negotiations, especially for bilateral free trade agreements with MERCOSUR countries and India, detailed impact assessments must be submitted.
6. The EU must support the actions of the international community to prevent land grabbing.
7. Traditional agriculture, municipal and customary rights must be included in the "International Guidelines for the responsible use of land resources" and these guidelines should be legally binding. They are an important component to enforce the right to food.
8. We urge the EU Commission to submit a proposal to regulate speculation with agricultural commodities in financial markets.
9. We request a report from the EU Commission on the equity and debt capital formation of agricultural farms in the EU and on the socio-economic impacts in the regions.
10. Both the CAP in Europe as well as the EU support of less developed countries have to focus on a real "green revolution" to guarantee for global food security. Support and promotion must be tailored to quality and environmentally friendly production methods in order to develop the local markets and to increase the added value in the regions.