

4TH LONDON INTERNATIONAL OROMO WORKSHOP

On 3rd July 2010

At City University London

The Scramble for Land, 'Investment' and Environmental Degradation in Oromia: Consequences for the Future

As the world population is growing food security is becoming one of the most challenging issues facing the world leading to a global scramble for lucrative farmlands. Subsequently, some governments and private investors are buying up farmland in Africa to grow not only food but other commercial products. This high-stakes game of real-life monopoly of farmland is leading to 'neo-colonialism'.

Oromia is an oasis on the frontline of the ever expanding Sahara desert. Its ecosystem is very fragile and requires delicate balancing act in terms of the environment and its sustainability. Notwithstanding this, the Ethiopian regime has already leased millions of hectares of fertile Oromo farmland to foreign investors by displacing Oromo farmers from their lands.

What is more, it is not known if these companies carry out environmental impact assessments or do anything to protect the ecosystem. The environmental impact of such unregulated large-scale farming is alarming. Evidence is emerging that underground water and rivers are being severely polluted from unregulated pesticides use by commercial flower plantations as a result of which a number of people are dying.

On the other hand, there are some who argue that the activities of the investors may help poor nations to achieve the development and modernization of their ailing agricultural sectors, and that the foreign investors will be able to produce enough food for the overpopulated planet.

This one-day multidisciplinary workshop will examine the scale of the problem and the environmental degradation, economic, social and health problems facing the Oromo people as the result of the farmland wholesale to foreign investors and will aim to formulate a consensus on how to mitigate its burden on the Oromo people.

PROGRAMME

09:30-09:45 Registration

09:45-09:50 Opening Announcements

Chair: Mrs Addise Dheressa

09:50-10:30 Keynote Speech:

Land Use and Ownership in Oromia: Historical Perspective

Speaker: Prof. Mekuria Bulcha, Sweden

10:30-11:10 Land Sale in Ethiopia: The Drivers and Consequences

Speaker: Dr. Bahiru Dhuguma, USA

11:10-11:50 Global Farmaland Grab with Emphasis on Ethiopia

Speaker: Mr. Delvin Kuyek, Canada

11:50-12:30 Q&A panel with morning speakers

12:30-13:30 Lunch & networking

Chair: Dr. Tesema Taye

13:30-14:10 Environmental Degradation as a Consequence of Poor Investment Policy - Case Study in Oromia

Speaker: Mr. Gosaye Fida, UK

14:10-15:00 Territory, Livelihoods & Identity: Indigenous Rights and the issue of Land Alienation in Ethiopia

Speaker: Dr. Marco Bassi, Italy

15:00-15:40 A Critical Assessment and Analysis of Land Lease Policy and its Impact on the Indigenous People in Ethiopia

Speaker: Mr. Nyikaw Ochalla, UK

15:40-16:30 Q & A panel with afternoon speakers

16:30 Chair sums up the day's highlights & Close

Venue: Room C304, City University London,
Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB

Bus: 4, 56, 153

Underground: Angel Station on Northern Line

WORKSHOP ORGANIZING COMMITTEE