



Official Participant

## Rapporteur Template for Scientific Events

Event Title :	LAND, WATER & RESOURCES RIGHTS - Global Governance among the Centrality of Human Life, Environment Sustainability and Commercial, Extractive & Industrial Production	Date:	6-8 July 2015
Event Organiser:	Cristiana Fiamingo (University of Milano, Dept. International, Legal, Historical-political Studies), on behalf of the SIII (Interdisciplinary, Interuniversity and Interfaculty Seminar of the University of Milan)		
Event Target Group:			
Rapporteur:	Giovanni Bidoglio (Joint Research Centre – European Commission)		

### 1. Which research themes are concerned? (Tick all relevant areas)

- A: Improve public health through nutrition – healthy and sustainable consumption
- B: Increase food safety and quality
- C: Reduce losses and waste – more efficient food chain
- D: Manage the land for all ecosystem services – sustainable rural development
- E: Increase agricultural outputs sustainably – sustainable intensification
- F: Understand food markets in an increasingly globalised food system
- G: Increase equity in the food system

### 2. What is the challenge and why does it exist?

- The Conference addressed the issue of rights of access to land and water resources and food. All key global documents recognize the importance of land rights, but real life is different. Disconnections exist in national and international policies from peasant livelihoods with an imbalanced legal framework generally in place where foreign investors have statutory rights that often prevail over customary rights of local communities.
- Grabbing of land is an increasing challenge worldwide causing not only local problems, but also offsite effects. We need to demystify the role of China as land grabber, as it scores only 10<sup>th</sup> in the world list where it is preceded for instance by UK. Sweden has less than 1/100 of China's population, but it represents 1/3 of China's grabs. Moreover, grabbing has started also in Spain, Greece, Italy, Eastern Europe etc., but we are not aware of that.

### 3. What will happen if the challenge is not addressed?

- Short Term Consequences
- Long Term Consequences

- What happens when local supply of resources is less than local demand? If you are a rich country you import food or you go for land acquisition. If you are a fragile country on the institutional and political side either you migrate or you sell your land.
- The lack of a democratic, inclusive systems of land ownership can lead to social conflicts, worsening of social, ethnic and political tensions, food insecurity, droughts and new waves of famine.
- Polarization of farms in Europe, i.e. big farms or factory farms, often with external capital, producing for the global market, then a drastic change of the model farm. Small farms resist in niche and local markets.

5. What were the suggested solutions, research insights and/or policy proposals? Were specific new research or development actions identified?

- Reframe land tenure in the EU legal system in order to regulate land consumption watching at an unfair distribution of European subsidies. Formalization of land rights should be backed by structural reforms and here the EU has something to do also in its own territory, for instance by finding a way to strengthen help for small farmers by moving from subsidies per ha to subsidies per farmer. Small-scale farmers should be supported and not excluded from the market and should also have access to credit.
- Mainstream VGGT (FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security) among assistance programmes. EU land policy initiatives for Development Cooperation should make sure that initiatives involving private actors in agricultural sector provide for VGGT compliance mechanisms.
- Need for treaty and contractual clauses suitable to strike a balance between host states and investors' rights protection. Among the suggested contractual clauses the first concerns the collaboration with local communities and local farmers, which also is a highly agreed upon priority. The enhancement of Investment Banks and Export Credit Agencies' conditionality mechanisms has also been envisaged as an effective tool that the EU and its Member States could use to commit themselves to the protection of land and resources rights. Both the approaches seem to deserve further research.
- Reconcile the different legal regimes governing water and farmland investments, so as to integrate the management of water and land. Obligation to conduct a transboundary environmental impact assessment binding all states where a farmland investment occurs near an international border or shared water body.
- Strengthen evaluation of future trends by simulation and scenario analyses cutting across different land- and water-using economic sectors. Conceptual representation of biophysical aspect is relatively well developed, less the valuation of ecosystem services provided by land and water.

6. What are the expected benefits and risks of such initiatives?

Implementation of policy proposals would bring in transparency and public participation in the negotiation process regarding land investments.

7. Does this event address research challenges others than those in the discussion document ?

Many of the points addressed at the conference are touched on in the discussion document. However, more relevance in the final version should be given to land grabbing, which is also a way to get access to water resources.

8. Did this event point out gaps in the private and public research infrastructure/systems which should be addressed?

Major attention should be paid to the civil society movements (both organized in NGOs and as spontaneous forms of protest) acting from below in the societies from developing countries and able to interact transversally through e.g. the African continent and its needs. An observatory of good practices would be welcome in order both to favour the most reliable local NGOs and support a sustainable politics of investments. The Coordinated Centre of Research "Sustainability and human security: cooperation and governance agendas" under establishment at the University of Milano endorsed the idea of an observatory of good practices for the African continent as its first forthcoming act.

9. What best practices were mentioned at this event?

- Participatory research supporting the management of forest resources in Cameroun and Gabon (Brainforest) with local farmers becoming partners in the oil palm cultivation for export.
- European example: Danish law of compulsory residence on agricultural land to prevent the use of land as an investment by companies and depress land prices.
- Intermediate solutions between small individual farming and big private agro-business investments: contract farming and incentives for inclusive models.

10. What follow-up actions emerged from this event?

Development of an observatory on good practices for sustainability and human security to strengthen the role of civil society movements in Africa (see some details under bullet 8) to be developed at the University of Milano.