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Forum on Global Land Grabbing

# Challenges posed by the new wave of farmland investment

Klaus Deininger 

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## Abstract

Despite recent headlines about the ‘land rush’, scant empirical evidence implies that the debate is often theoretical and dominated by preconceived notions. To provide evidence we find that... spike, re... weak lar... frequent... proc... asses... increase... demand... policies... transfers... areas. First, commodity price... countries with... stores, due to weak... and with an... tivity... where... of country... on voluntary... onmental

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viability as necessary—though by no means sufficient—conditions to reduce the likelihood of negative impacts.

Keywords: Land tenure; farm size; agribusiness; farmland investment

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Peru uses very transparent and competitive processes for divestiture of state lands for agricultural use along the Pacific Coast. In the Amazon, processes for land transfer are less open and have many loopholes.

<sup>2</sup>The example of semi-mechanized sorghum and sesame production in Sudan illustrates the risks of investing in large-scale farming in Africa and holds lessons for more recent investments in the region, e.g. in Ethiopia. The scheme, which dates from colonial times, expanded rapidly in the 1970s, when financing from the Gulf States aimed to transform Sudan into a regional breadbasket through favorable access to land and subsidized credit for machinery. The scheme attracted civil servants and businessmen, who mostly hired managers on farms of 1,000 ha or larger. Official statistics indicate that some 5.5 million ha were converted to arable land under the scheme, with up to 11 million ha occupied informally (Government of Sudan [2009](#)). Land rights of traditional small-scale farmers and pastoralists were neglected, and encroachment by mechanized farms is identified as a serious contributor to conflict (Johnson [2003](#), Pantulia

<sup>3</sup>Elementary operations (Braun and Meiri, 1999) on the same

<sup>4</sup>To keep into 2.2

million people in the  
disaggregated  
model is  
2008. Su  
percent  
less than



<sup>7</sup>Efforts to formulate and implement principles for agricultural investment can be justified by noting that similar arguments apply to competition for investment between countries.

## Notes on contributors

This work draws heavily on Deininger et al. (2011). The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the World Bank, its



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