ANNOUNCEMENT

DATE: March 24, 2011
VENUE: Utrecht University (Boothzaal, Library, de Uithof)
13.00-17.30

THE GLOBAL LAND RUSH
What’s real and what are the myths? Rushing for solutions

Aims of the conference
This seminar is organized by International Development Studies IDS (Utrecht University) and LANDac (see www.landgovernance.org), in collaboration with Development, the Society of International Development (SID International) and SID Netherlands Chapter (SID NL). It aims to give an update of the debate about large-scale land acquisitions, and assess the implications for equitable and sustainable development.

Background
The whole world seems up for grabs if you read national and international papers. In the last few years there are increasing reports on large-scale land acquisitions by investors, domestic and foreign, in the Global South. Some land deals aim at securing food production for land-scarce but increasingly wealthy countries such as China, India and the Gulf states. Others are motivated by environmental concerns, and the related rising demand for bio-fuels. At the same time, rapid urbanization in the South also demands an increasing toll in terms of rural land. Yet other land deals may serve no other purpose than speculation. Whatever the purpose, there is growing alarm about increasing land inequality in societies where many local people continue to depend on access to land for their livelihood. Not surprisingly, land-related conflicts are on the rise. The sense of urgency is growing. At the same time information about these developments is scattered and does not provide a coherent narrative of the state of play. What’s real and what are the myths?

Short presentations will share insights of studies undertaken in different parts of the world. In a dialogue with participants the focus will be on these questions:
- What is actually happening in terms of ‘land grabbing’?
- What does this mean for different stakeholders, especially ‘local’ people?
- What can be done to overcome problems?

Join us for insights, discussion and the launch of the Special Issue of the Journal Development on Global Land Grabs!

Collaborating institutes (LANDac):
Preliminary programme

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch (optional)

13.00 – 13.05 Intro
Guus van Westen (IDS, LANDac)

13.05 – 13.50 What’s the rush?
Oane Visser (RU): Russia’s vast land masses at stake. Large scale land acquisitions and responses by emerging rural movement (confirmed)
Waheed Kadiri (Nigeria). Land Alienation and Sustainability Issues in the Peri-urban Interface of South-West Nigeria (confirmed, dependent on visa)
Mayke Kaag/ Marieke Kruis (IDS, ASC): land conflicts in Senegal revisited: continuities and emergent dynamics (confirmed)

13.50 – 14.45 Glocal realities: Is big or small beautiful?
Paul Burgers and Rizki Pandu Permana (IDS). Fuelling Conflicts: Overcoming asymmetry between global interests in Vietnam and Indonesia (confirmed)
Guus van Westen and Men Prachvuthy (IDS). The effects of new economic land concessions to external investors on indigenous people in north eastern Cambodja (confirmed)
Gemma van der Haar and Nynke Douma (WU): land governance in the context of conflict: Congo (working title) confirmed
Marleen Dekker (ASC): land reform in Zimbabwe (working title)/ to be confirmed

14.45 – 15.00 Coffee Break

15.00-15.30 New research initiatives
Sandra Evers, Aad Kessler (WU), Rosanne Rutten (VU), Marcel Rutten (ASC), Annelies Zoomers (IDS).

15.30 – 17.30 Policy responses: roundtable & launch of Development
Roundtable discussion with (to be confirmed):
René Grotenhuis (SID NL and Cordaid), Duncan Pruett (Oxfam Novib), Frits van der Wal (Minbuza), Joost Nelen (SNV), Wendy Harcourt (SID)

Festive closure with launch Journal by Wendy Harcourt & Annelies Zoomers (short explanation and handing out complimentary copies of the journal)

Closure and Drinks

Registration:
If you are interested to attend, please send an email to sid-nl@socires.nl (Registration LANDac/SID Global Land Rush’ in de subject-line) before March 22 (capacity limited to 125 persons).