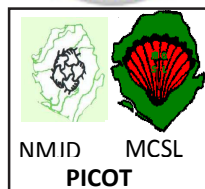


# Action for Large Scale Land Acquisition Transparency (ALLAT)

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## Press Release: For Immediate Release

June 26, 2013

A three-day (June 10 – 12) intense conference with the theme: Land Ahead, aimed at applying the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation's Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security (VGGT) ended in Berlin with recommendations of how the VGGT should be applied.

The conference which was organised by the Federal Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection saw in attendance diverse participants from many countries; including developed and developing, governments, civil society and private sector. All converged to frankly talk about challenges posed by foreign investments in land for agriculture and proffer recommendations for the application of the Voluntary Guidelines (VGGT). Sierra Leone's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security was in attendance and contributed to the debate.

ALLAT was represented in the conference and members have seen and carefully read the recommendations. ALLAT therefore acknowledges the recommendations with the conviction that if applied by states it will smother out the conflictual fault lines associated with the growing large scale land acquisition for industrial agriculture.

Noting what the FAO Director General, Graziano da Silva stated recently, "that most countries where land grabbing takes place have little consultation with farmer organisations or have weak or repressive governments..." and that "... the key is the implementation of the voluntary guidelines at country level."

- We therefore urge the government of President Ernest Bai Koroma to adopt the VGGT into a policy thereby internalizing it as a country document especially as it will contribute to the Agenda for Prosperity,
- We ask the UN FAO to urgently facilitate the process of application of the VGGT by states, especially those affected by the phenomenon of land grabbing and in this vein, we appeal to donor countries to provide technical and financial support to Sierra Leone as one of the five pilot countries to initialize the application of the VGGT,
- Furthermore, we appeal to the government and donors to ensure the practical involvement of civil society organisations such as Action for Large scale Land Acquisition Transparency, in the popularization of the VGGT and its application in Sierra Leone,
- We are convinced that the application of the Voluntary Guidelines will go a long way in urging states and none state actors to respect human rights,
- We believe that respect for tenure rights as guaranteed by the VGGT should not be discounted for investment of any sort,
- We appeal to countries around the world to adopt the recommendations and start applying the VGGT,

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