Acknowledgements

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The image of Africa seen by people elsewhere in the world has often been two-fold:

It is a continent teeming with life and overflowing with resource-rich, fertile land...

...and a continent ravaged by disease, poverty, war and corruption.

While Africa is in fact vibrant and dynamic, there are many urgent problems facing the continent that need long-term solutions.
Many international institutions, like the World Bank, are promoting agricultural investment deals as solutions for Africa’s economic problems. Investors have been pouring into the continent, buying land for cheap in order to grow crops for export and energy production.
Investors and companies claim these projects will have vast economic, social, health and energy benefits not just for Africa, but for the whole world.

A closer look at the picture... shows a more dire situation.
INVESTORS AND COMPANIES PROMISE THEY WILL BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE, MODERNIZE AGRICULTURE AND PROVIDE JOBS AND BENEFITS TO LOCAL POPULATIONS.
They want to use the land for industrial agriculture, which they claim will solve the problem of hunger in Africa...
... and around the world.

Some also want Africa to produce plant-based fuels to replace fossil fuels.
In order to attract the business and investment that supposedly will save Africa's economy and feed the world, African governments are told to provide massive incentives:

1. Land is leased for pennies to dollars per hectare and granted for 50-99 years at a time.
2. Access to water and rights to exploit resources like timber are often unlimited and provided with few or no fees.
3. Labor laws and environmental regulations are often lax or not present at all.
THE ARGUMENT IS THAT BY MAKING THEMSELVES ATTRACTIVE TO INVESTORS WITH TAX BREAKS, INCENTIVES AND LAX LABOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS, COUNTRIES WILL BE REWARDED WITH GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.
NONE OF COMPANIES' AND INVESTORS' CLAIMS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF LAND DEALS AND DEVELOPMENT ARE TRUE.
Far from bringing development, these monumental land grabs are devastating the continent.
Land investment deals are driving millions of people off their land. Most of them are pastoralists, family farmers, and indigenous people who for generations have grown food and managed their land and natural resources efficiently.
Most products are cash crops for export, not food for local consumption. Low taxes and cheap land and water allow investors to siphon most of the profit.
INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE USES MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF CHEMICALS AS FERTILIZERS AND PESTICIDES AND FOSSIL FUELS FOR PRODUCTION AND TRANSPORTATION.
IT ALSO USES TREMENDOUS AMOUNTS OF WATER, THREATENING THE ENVIRONMENT...

...AND COMMUNITIES’ WATER SUPPLIES.
Industrial agriculture plantations transform farmers and indigenous people into low-paid and often seasonal farmworkers, while rendering many more landless and jobless after the destruction of their livelihoods.
Because environmental regulation is seen as bad for investment, companies can often run logging and other destructive operations that strip away the resources communities depend on for food, shelter, and culture.
There are viable alternatives to the development model in place. Family farms employ far more people, provide food security, and protect the environment and biodiversity better than industrial agriculture.
They use far less water and center on techniques that do not rely on chemicals, minimizing harm to the environment and preserving long-lasting soil fertility.
Around the world, people are resisting the takeover of their land. Much is being done and much more can be done to halt land grabs.

The time to act is now!

Stop the land grab.