



OUR LAND OUR BUSINESS



Date: March 19, 2014

Subject: Call to join OUR LAND, OUR BUSINESS campaign

Dear friends and colleagues,

The World Bank is a structural driver of the land grabs that is dispossessing and impoverishing rural communities across the globe. It is a central player that is using its financial and political might to force developing countries to follow a pre-prescribed model of development, based on the neoliberal principles of privatization, deregulation, low corporate taxation and 'free market' fundamentalism. Evidence clearly shows that this model overwhelmingly favors large agribusiness interests at the expense of smallholders, and is designed to extract the maximum value from developing countries' natural and human resources.

Since 2002, the World Bank has been promoting this model by ranking countries through the Doing Business rankings. These score countries according to how well Washington bureaucrats think they are improving the "ease of doing business." We know from the Bank's own statements that the annual rankings are closely followed by foreign investors; that they influence the World Bank programs and that they are used by bilateral donors to guide funding. It is thus a key instrument for further liberalizing economies in order to attract foreign investment.

The *Doing Business* have already had a substantial impact on agricultural sectors in many developing countries and are known to facilitate large-scale land acquisitions by encouraging governments to see all land as primarily a marketable commodity, sellable for short-term profit to the highest bidder, regardless of environmental or social impacts.

But there is more to come.

At the demand of the G8 in 2012, and with funding from the Gates Foundation, the UK, US, Dutch, and Danish governments, the World Bank is now developing a new instrument to benchmark the business of agriculture (BBA). Started in late 2013, pilot studies are now underway in 10 countries, to be scaled up to 40 countries in 2014. The BBA builds on the Doing Business model and adapts it to agriculture. Despite a language that claims concerns for small-farmers, the goal of this new agriculture-focused ranking system is far too clear: it aims at further pushing for the opening of countries' agricultural sectors to foreign corporations.

The Doing Business ranking must be shut down and the Bank must stop the development of its new Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture instrument. This is the ask of the OUR LAND, OUR BUSINESS campaign that is launched today.

Please join us to tell the World Bank that it has no business in ranking countries and opening them up to foreign corporations thirsty for the extraction of their resources and the exploitation of their work force.

Become an active member of the OUR LAND, OUR BUSINESS campaign and ensure that citizens, Civil Society Organizations, and governments firmly reject the World Bank ranking of their countries and refuse to be scored by technocrats based in Washington on their ability to liberalize and deregulate their economies to aid foreign interests.

We encourage all organizations concerned with the way the World Bank is doing 'development' and delivering developing countries to foreign interests to join the OUR LAND, OUR BUSINESS campaign:

1. Sign on your organization to the attached statement by sending an email to ourlandourbusiness@therules.org indicating your name, organization, country and contact email. The statement with all signed organizations will be formally presented to the World Bank at the spring meeting in Washington on April 11, 2014.
2. Become an active member of the OUR LAND, OUR BUSINESS campaign by mobilizing groups and citizens, engaging with media, government officials and parliaments, coordinating action and sharing your experience and ideas with other groups that could become active in this movement.

Together we can stop this!

Note:

- *Stay tuned, a campaign website will be put in place soon.*
- *A campaign email list is being set up soon to share and receive campaign updates and information on available materials, upcoming events, etc.*
- *To join the email list and for any information on the campaign please contact ourlandourbusiness@therules.org or any of the organizations below.*

ORGANIZATIONS:

CICODEV Africa

L'Institut panafricain pour la Citoyenneté, les Consommateurs et le Développement / The pan African Institute for Consumer Citizenship and Development, BP 29198. Dakar-Yoff, Senegal

Email: cicodevafrica@cicodev.org, Website: www.cicodev.org

Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali

Kalabancoura Rue 200 Porte 727, BP : E 2169 Bamako, Mali

Email: cnopmali@yahoo.fr – Website: www.cnop-mali.org

Ekta Parishad

Gandhi Bhavan, Shyamla Hills, Bhopal 462 002, Madhya Pradesh, India

Email: epnationaloffice@ektaparishad.com – Website: www.ektaparishad.com/

Green Scenery

31 John Street, P.O. Box 278, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Email: info@greenscenery.org, Website: www.greenscenery.org

INSAF (Indian Social Action Forum)

A-124/6, First Floor Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi, India - 110 016

Email: insaf@vsnl.com, Website: <http://www.insafindia.org>

The Oakland Institute

P.O. Box 18978, Oakland CA 94619, USA

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/The Rules

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Email: contact@therules.org, Website: <http://www.therules.org/en>

The Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia

PO Box 857, USA Stillwater, MN 55082, USA

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