

KOLONGOTOMO FARMERS FORUM ON LAND GRABS IN MALI

KOLONGO APPEAL

We, the farmers belonging to the Collective of Farmer Organisations and the Coalition of the Forum of Civil Society Organisations, having come from every administrative region of Mali, and having met on 20 November 2010 at the Kologontomo Forum on agricultural land grabs in Mali, launch the following appeal:

- Responding to demand from farmer organisations and their members in the Office du Niger area;
- Having noted farmers' lack of tenure security in the Office du Niger area, and the difficulty of obtaining information about Government policy on large-scale allocations of agricultural land to foreign investors;
- In light of the provisions of the Framework Law on Agriculture regarding agricultural land;
- In light of the flagrant violations of citizens' and human rights through numerous shocking attacks on the physical and moral integrity of rural populations in developed areas of the Office du Niger;
- In light of the sudden and brutal occupations of agricultural lands by foreign and national investors to the detriment of family farms, which need access to large amounts of agricultural land and secure tenure of this land;
- In view of the fact that the allocation of vast tracts of agricultural land to private investors is undermining national sovereignty and will contribute to the almost inevitable disappearance of family farming.

As members of farmer organisations and participants in the Kolongo civil society forum, we hereby:

Urge the Government to respect the provisions of the Framework Law on Agriculture through the concerted adoption of a policy on agricultural lands (article 77);

Remind the Government that every Malian citizen has the right to land ownership under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and that Mali must respect these rights;

Remind the Government that all the land, water, forests and natural resources in Mali constitute part of the national heritage and are inalienable;

Encourage the Government and the Office du Niger to freeze ongoing works to develop disputed sites and suspend transactions and/or talks until conflicts have been resolved;

Urge the Government to engage in policy dialogue with farmers, by organising a national round table to discuss the issue of agricultural lands and its investment policy for this sector, and inform the public about these matters;

Put in place a committee to follow up the recommendations of the Kolongotomo Farmer Forum (FPK);

Mandate this committee to:

1. Identify and document cases where farmers have been dispossessed of their land and citizens' human rights have been violated, in addition to those cases raised at the Forum;

2. Call upon the services of a lawyer to follow up cases where the physical and moral integrity of farmers has been violated as a result of Mr Modibo Keita's actions, and producers' physical and intangible assets have been destroyed;
3. Engage in consultations with the Office du Niger regarding compensation for the victims of Samandougou;
4. Widely disseminate information about land grabbing among the public at home and abroad;
5. As a last resort, having exhausted all attempts to find a solution through policy dialogue, call upon various courts and special Citizens Commission(s) on Human Rights to defend the material and moral interests of agricultural producers: those under Malian jurisdiction, the ECOWAS Court of Justice, the International Court of Human Rights in Geneva, and others.

Kolongotomo, 20 November 2010

<http://farmlandgrab.org/17414>