



Brussels Rural Development Briefings
A series of meetings on ACP-EU development issues

**Briefing session n° 9: Land access and rural development:
new challenges, new opportunities**

25 February 2009

Agricultural land new challenges: a farmers' organization perspective
Philip Kiriro – Eastern Africa Farmers Organization (EAFF)

Executive Summary

Issues touching on land are of interest to a very wide category of stakeholders. This is mainly because of the different ways land can be applied as a critical resource. In Agriculture and development land is now subject to enormous pressure in view of the growing population and need to supply food. Competition for land has even been complicated by other challenges that have emerged i.e. Climate change and demand for agrofuels.

In agriculture land is a critical resource it is therefore important that those willing to till the land have access to it. Apart from access, it is also important that those who till the land have the confidence and adequate incentives to invest in agricultural production.

There are different dimensions to investment on land. For investment in crop and livestock production, to guarantee returns, there is need to fast and foremost invest in land development. There are enormous costs that go into land development that are on short term basis invisible. It is for this reason that we farmers do not measure our returns from land just out of the crop or livestock returns, but also the extent to which we are able to develop it. Investment on land for Agriculture development cannot take place in absence of a land tenure system that recognizes and respects ownership. It is important that tenure security is strongly linked to access to land.

The current crisis in high food prices have resulted to developments that might deny the poor access to land through demands for development by investors who want large tracks of land for food production to service external markets and biofuels.

Recently we have witnessed situations where governments have allocated huge amounts of land to investors at the expense of the landless and the National food security and sovereignty. This calls for urgency in addressing land issues within a well negotiated policy framework.

National government in Africa are currently in the process of either developing or approving land bills. Many have difficulties being accepted because the relevant stakeholders were not adequately involved in the process. In countries where land bills are ready for parliament approval there are protests against them.