



## Session Report

*Please know you may design the structure of this report to better suit the session. It's important to capture the key outcomes and solutions proposed for the future.*

**Session Title:** Fanning the Flames: How Corruption is Enabling Land Grabbing and Exacerbating the Effects of Climate Change Across the Global South

**Date & Time:** Thursday, 08.12.2022, 8:30 am - 10:00 am GMT -5

**Report prepared by:** Irem Roentgen, Project Manager, Transparency International (TI-S)

**Moderated by:** Rukshana Nanayakkara, Global Policy and Advocacy Expert, International Land Coalition

### **Panellists:**

- Joachim Stassart - Transparency International (TI) Brazil
- Tafadzwa Chikumbu - Transparency International (TI) Zimbabwe
- Ketakandriana Rafitoson - Transparency International (TI) Initiative Madagascar

### **Share the thematic focus of the session, it's purpose and corruption risks?**

The main focus of the today's session is on land grabbing, its relationship with large scale land-based investments, with climate change; how corruption is contributing to land grabbing; the role VGGT can play in addressing and preventing land grabbing; the role green grabbing plays in people's (especially traditional communities; indigenous groups) land rights.

### **Summary of panellists' contributions & discussion points (please be as detailed as possible)**

**Land corruption and the role it plays in land grabbing (points made by Rukshana Nanayakkara (RN), Global Policy and Advocacy Expert, International Land**

### **Coalition)**

- 2051- more than 200 people have been killed for standing for the planet
- Addressing land grabbing and land investment is crucial in key land intensive countries (in Africa, Americas etc.)
- **Only 29% of land investments are compliant with the VGGTs**
- Increased interest on climate change and climate neutral projects and activities – Yet, with huge impact on land
- Corruption as a cross-cutting theme

### **Problems:**

#### **Joachim Stassart - Transparency International (TI) Brazil**

##### **Brazil:**

- Brazil: The country that has most number of killings of environmental defenders
- 342 killings of defenders in the country this year, according to Global Witness driven by land and forest rights
- More than 1000 land conflicts/year occur in the country.
- Brazil (Greenhouse gas) GHG - in principle driven by land exchange – deforestation forest exploitation
- About 50% of deforestation takes place on public land - mostly replacement of forest by cattle

Land grabbing connected to corruption – 3 forms of land corruption enabling land grabbing

1. FRAUDELENT DATA ON LAND CADASTRE  
Who is the legitimate owner of the area
  2. LAND TITLING PROCESSES (USING MIDDLEMEN TO FIT IN THE CRITERIA TO OBTAIN A TITLE)
  3. PYHSICAL INVADING AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE AREA
- Law enforcement official closing their eyes + police officers who are part of private militia
  - Land issues lacking from the debate on the so-called “Net zero” programs and investments, yet we are not sure who is owning the land
  - Example: carbon creditors issue for an international company

#### **Ketakandriana Rafitoson (KE)- Transparency International (TI) Initiative**

##### **Madagascar**

##### **Story and experience from Madagascar (MG)**

- Land grabbing from companies dealing with the land distribution + government itself are involved
- ALAC: more and more people complaining about corruption in land sector
- Easy for anyone to bribe land officials in MG
- Land officials, gendarmerie, police bribed easily
- cases of land grabbing shared by Ke:
  - **1st case:** Menabe Antimena region: Baobab trees disappearing because of corruption and land grabbing  
MG biodiversity – corruption hitting it hard  
Migrants are hired to plant maize in the protected areas

2009 vs 2020 \*: (4.1% forest lost vs 44.9%!!) – accelerates the climate change effects in the region

- **2<sup>nd</sup> case:** mining, lost land and corruption -Rio Tinto/WMM in Mandena: no fair compensation, health problems due to mining, water contaminated driven by mining, collusion btw company & govt  
Resulting in: Perpetual unrest in the region

- Produce soya in Amazonas for the UK poultry farms
- Then you clear forest land – destroy biodiversity
- **“We’re not against business or investment – but it has to be a people-centred approach!” - Rukshana Nanayakkara (RN)**

### **Tafadzwa Chikumbu - Transparency International (TI) Zimbabwe**

#### **Zimbabwean (ZIM) case:**

- Land grabbing – as one of the reasons of war in ZIM
- Political corruption + redistribution, especially involving the ruling party
- Allocating land without following specific procedures
- Role of land barons owning huge pieces of lands
- People creating cooperatives
- Allocation of land on people who are not on the waiting list for land
- State land being sold by private individuals
- Promise of housing for people – with no real action
- Poor urban planning
- Southern Africa – ZIM known for good urban planning now getting worse
- Exacerbate political capture
- **“We need to listen to work at the grassroots level to make real policy changes” - Rukshana Nanayakkara (RN)**

#### **Solutions:**

- **Joachim:** There are many individuals and farmers not visible in the land registers, and as they are not visible so they don’t exist for the state!
- Undesignated areas in Brazilian Amazon = (roughly equals to) Deforestation in undesignated areas – clear relationship
- Have some reporting mechanisms for the affected communities to report attempt of land grabbing
- Impact of Bolsanero administration
- Indigenous people- have been taking care of these lands for centuries, so they have to have a say.

#### **Give communities source of revenue other than forests (MG-KE)**

- MG – network of investigative journalists – looking for partners and trainings from various organisations
- More than 70 stories since 2018!

**“On 5<sup>th</sup> December – land env defender was killed in Guatemala in front of his home.**

***This is the price defenders have to pay*** - Rukshana Nanayakkara (RN)

- Protect the rights of journalists as well!

**ZIM – Tafadzwa**

- Major beneficiaries of corruption include land barons, cooperative owners and private land developers
- There should be a register for those who own the cooperatives
- BOT – in ZIM we refuse our companies act to include BOT information to identify the natural persons behind

**Questions from audience:**

- Issuing mining rights to a game park in ZIM – what should be done at international level? Human – wildlife conflict
- Gendered aspects of land grabbing – what gender sensitive solutions can be brought forward?

**KE:** Role of grassroots engagement + PWYP

National revenue largely coming from mining funds – how can you create independence out of that? (Rio Tinto and QMM)

- **KE:** Increase awareness + int'l pressure is important
- **KE:** gender impact of land grabbing & corruption – women are more vulnerable to corruption, they lack resources, education
- **Tafadzwa** – Green grabbing – the general picture is “this is good for society”. BHR frameworks need to be respected.
- Within ZIM, mining supersedes every economic activity
- Yet, we need to involve the vulnerable groups

**KE:** Transition minerals a real danger for poor extractive countries – more extraction, lithium, nickel and cobalt – however we don't have policies (PWYP policy on transition minerals)

***“Policies are developed, yet there are customary laws, doesn't enable real ownership in reality”*** - Rukshana Nanayakkara (RN)

- Land ownership of women contributes positively to household welfare, education of children etc.
- Journalists need to have knowledge on the different types of corruption. Movements like TI has these useful tools and resources
- More funding for journalists also needed.

**RN-** journalist word needs to be expanded. There is also citizen journalism. Responsible citizen journalism and story-telling

- Role of CSOs in influencing on the governance architecture
- We need “Local solutions, regional and int'l frameworks”
- **KE:** “Empower people, investigative journalists and get rid of corrupt politicians”

**RN:** 60-70% of food are produced by family farmers

- 50% of world surface looked after by indigenous, pastoralists, 10% of them only have land rights and title  
Secure land rights for indigenous communities.

## Main outcomes of session (include quotes/highlights and interesting questions from the floor)

Highlighted in yellow in the box above.

**Also:**

*“It’s extremely important for us [those working on policy] to listen to people at the ground level.”* – **Rukshana Nanayakkara (RN)**

*“We recommend a register...for those that own private companies, those that own cooperatives and the land developers themselves”.* – **Tafadzwa Chikumbu**

*“Inclusivity must be at the heart of the land administration system.”* – **Joachim Stassart**

## Key recommendations for the future and concrete follow-up actions

**Brazil:**

- Regularisation of collective rights in addressing land grabbing (although it definitely is a long process) and the land investments should involve all affected communities in a participatory way
- Have reporting mechanisms for affected communities to report misconduct/wrongdoing

**Madagascar:**

- Give communities source of revenue other than forests
- Investigative journalists can be a really powerful tool in addressing land grabbing
- Seizing international human rights mechanisms can be helpful. Special rapporteurs on HR, whistleblowers etc
- Journalists need to have knowledge on the different types of corruption. Movements like TI has useful tools and resources to support them.

**Rukshana Nanayakkara:**

- Protect the rights of journalists as well

**Zimbabwe:**

- BHR framework needs to be respected. Gov’t and private sector should seek free informed consent of the affected communities

## What can be done to create opportunities for scaling up the solutions discussed in the session? And by whom?

See recommendations above

**Is there a specific call to action to key stakeholders, such as governments, businesses, funders, civil society, young people, journalists or any other stakeholder that should be noted?**

**Please specify if relevant.**

- Governments and business alike need to listen to work at the grassroots level to make real policy changes.
- Certification companies need to be more aware of corruption risks before going ahead with the land intensive investments addressing climate change (**Joachim Stassart**)
- *“Carbon offsetting programs cannot be justified for people being expelled from their lands”*

**Rapporteur’s name and date submitted**

**Irem Roentgen, 09.12.2022**