

How The World Bank Destroys the Local Economy: REPORT UNCOVERS WORLD BANK FUNDED LAND GRAB IN UGANDA

By [Friends of the Earth International](#)

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Friends of the Earth International

NEW REPORT UNCOVERS WORLD BANK FUNDED LAND GRAB IN UGANDA

// EMBARGO: 23 APRIL AT 00.01 HOURS GMT: THIS ADVISORY, THE NEW REPORT, THE HI-RES IMAGES AND THE VIDEO MAY NOT BE USED IN THE MEDIA BEFORE 23 APRIL AT 00:01 GMT //

WASHINGTON DC / BRUSSELS (BELGIUM) / KAMPALA (UGANDA) 23rd April 2012:

Released on the eve of a World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty [1], a new report reveals widespread violations of people's rights and environmental destruction from World Bank funded land grabs in Uganda. [2]

The Friends of the Earth Uganda report provides first-hand accounts from communities forced to give up their livelihoods, food supply and access to water.

The report, hi-res images and video footage are available for media preview - and under embargo until 23 April- at <http://www.foei.org/media/landgrab>

The World Bank has provided millions of dollars in funding and technical support to palm oil expansion in forested islands off the coast of Lake Victoria in Kalangala, Uganda. Nearly 10,000 hectares have already been planted covering almost a quarter of the land area of the islands. [3]

Palm oil plantations have come at the expense of local food crops and rainforests. Local people have been prevented from accessing water sources and grazing land. Despite promises of employment, locals have lost their means of livelihood and are struggling to make ends meet.

David Kureeba from the National Association of Professional Environmentalists (NAPE) / Friends of the Earth Uganda said:

"People's rights to land are being demolished despite protection for them under the Ugandan Constitution. Small scale farming and forestry that protected unique wildlife,

heritage and food of Uganda is being converted to palm oil wastelands that only profit agribusinesses. The Ugandan Government must prioritise small scale ecological farming and protect people's land rights"

John Muiyisha, a farmer from Kalangala, tells of how he woke up one morning to find bulldozers destroying his crops. He had been on the land for 34 years. Other community members were contracted to plant palm oil and then forced to sell their land because of debts, low income from palm oil and no food crops.

Kirtana Chandrasekaran, Friends of the Earth International Food Sovereignty Coordinator said:

"These Ugandan testimonies show the fallacy of trying to make land grabbing work for communities or the environment. Decades of policies to privatise land and promote industrial farming from the World Bank have set the stage for a massive global land grab.

Governments around the world need to stop land grabbing, not just try to mitigate its worst impacts. Governments must abide by their Human Rights obligations on land and drastically reducing demand for commodities such as palm oil from the West."

The project is a joint venture between global agrofuels giant Wilmar International and BIDICO, one of the largest oilseeds companies in Eastern Africa with funding from International Financial institutions such as the World Bank and the Ugandan Government. [4

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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NOTES TO EDITORS

[1] The agenda of the April 24-26 Annual World Bank Conference on land and poverty is focussed on how communities can benefit from land acquisitions rather than on how they can retain access to land. <http://www.landandpoverty.com/agenda/index.html>

[2] The report, photo essay and video are available for media preview - and under embargo until 23 April- at <http://www.foei.org/media/landgrab>

[3] Kalangala islands cover 432.1 square kilometres or 43,210 hectares http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalangala_District

[4] The project is funded with \$120 Million from private finance, \$10 Million from the International Finance Corporation and World Bank, \$19.9 Million from the International Fund for Agriculture and Development and \$12 Million from the Ugandan Governmen

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