

Massive Land Grabs and Dispossession: Demanding an End to the World Bank's Morally Bankrupt Development

By [Global Research News](#)

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[Our Land Our Business](#)

Washington, D.C. — On October 10, 2014, NGOs, farmers' groups, and indigenous organizations from across the world are coming together as part of the [Our Land Our Business](#) campaign to denounce the World Bank's Doing Business rankings. The campaign, endorsed by over [235 organizations](#), will be staging "creative resistance" events at the Bank's annual meetings in Washington D.C. and nine other cities around the world. The D.C. event is drawing support from a wide range of activist communities, including Occupy groups who will join representatives of impacted communities from Kenya, Mali, and Ethiopia.

"Under the banner #WorldVsBank, this movement is calling for the end of the Doing Business rankings and the new Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture project. They are tools of a pro-corporate, anti-poor, environmentally unsustainable model of development. If the World Bank keeps promoting economic activity that destroys biodiversity and the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, pastoralists, and indigenous communities, they should not have a mandate to exist," said Alnoor Ladha of /The Rules.

The World Bank's lending to developing countries reached \$35 billion in 2012. The Doing Business rankings play a critical role in determining what form of economic development takes place around the world. According to the World Bank's own literature, they are "an incomparable catalyst for business reforms initiatives." In practice, this has meant liberalizing developing country economies so that large-scale land investment and western corporations can move in unimpeded. The casualties are the smallholder farmers and providers who currently feed 80% of the developing world but who are all too often rendered invisible or actively dispossessed.

"Working for the World Bank's Social Fund in Gambella, I protested the widespread coercion and forced relocation of people. Today I live in political exile in Kenya. I am protesting the World Bank on October 10 because I know firsthand how their policies negatively impact communities," said Okok Ojulu who will share his experiences at actions planned in D.C.

To coincide with the #WorldVsBank mobilization, the Oakland Institute, one of the world's leading think tanks on land issues, is releasing a new study tackling the Bank's approach to land, agriculture, and development, [Unfolding Truth: Dismantling the World Bank's Myths on Agriculture and Development](#). In addition, the Institute will also release six new country fact sheets that expose the reforms promoted by the World Bank in Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Laos, Cambodia, and Uruguay. In each country, the Bank's policies have served as a catalyst for

massive land grabs, dispossession, and forced eviction of countless small-scale farmers.

“If you look behind many of the recent land grabs, you will find World Bank policies that enable investors to come in with projects that promise benefits to communities but don’t follow through. We can keep going after each corporation and investment group but it would be more effective if the World Bank stopped using their immense political and financial power to pave the way for what has become the systematic exploitation of land and people,” said Anuradha Mittal of the Oakland Institute.

Our Land Our Business is also launching the world’s first transnational “missed call” campaign—uniting a call-to-action across multiple countries. The idea is to make a call to a local phone number; the mobile number is then registered as an expression of support, then supporters receive free text messages to get further involved (e.g. showing up at a creative resistance). In parts of the world where first-generation mobile phones are ubiquitous but computers and the Internet are costly and inaccessible, this is a new powerful tool for mass engagement in political action.

On October 10, a street mobilization featuring speakers and artists will take place at 4pm in Rawlins Park, Washington D.C. This is followed by further action on October 11 when activists and concerned citizens from around the world will again gather outside the World Bank at 11am to protest the Bank’s attempt to dismantle critical protections for people and the planet that are currently enshrined in its operational policies. These changes come at a time when the Bank is making plans to scale up its lending to the private sector and return to the sort of risky mega-projects that characterized its now-discredited structural adjustment programs in the 1980s.

The October 10 – 11 actions send a message to the Bank that the world won’t stand for its exploitive practices.

For more on the two-day event, please visit www.ourlandourbusiness.org.

Download [Unfolding Truth: Dismantling the World Bank’s Myths on Agriculture and Development](#) and the country fact sheets.

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