

The Global Land Grab

13-17 November. Farmers organisations and social movements converging on Rome

By [Global Research](#)

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[GRAIN](#) 16 November 2009

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

- ROME – 16 November 2009 at 10h00
- Venue: Food Sovereignty Tent in the park across the street from the FAO building
- Interview opportunities with people directly involved in this fight.
- Organised by La Via Campesina and GRAIN

Last year's elephant in the room at the FAO's World Summit on Food Security was the outrageous profits corporate agribusiness were amassing during the peak of the global food crisis, while over a billion people went hungry. This year it is the global farmland grab. Investors are colluding with governments to take control of tens of millions of hectares of prime farmland in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Governments pushing these deals, such as Saudi Arabia or South Korea, see outsourced food production as a new strategy to feed their own people without relying on international trade. Private investors see agricultural land in emerging economies as a new source of guaranteed returns in light of ongoing high food prices. Either way, this farmland grab is turning the food crisis into an opportunity for even more profits as the expansion of export-oriented agribusiness is at the heart of it. More than \$100 billion is on the table, and over 40 million hectares have already been acquired from Ethiopia to Indonesia. Small scale farmers are losing critical access to land and water, and local communities will be further cut off from access to food. Yet they are usually kept completely in the dark about these deals, without any involvement in the decisions that affect lands they have cultivated for generations. The implications for the global food system are dramatic.

For farmers organisations and social movements converging in Rome, this global land grab is unacceptable. It has nothing to do with strengthening family farming and local markets, which in our view is the only way forward to achieve food systems that actually feed people. It must be stopped. The "win-win" land grab scenarios that will be proposed to governments at the official FAO Summit are dangerous and unrealistic. Of course we need investment. But investment in food sovereignty, in a million local markets and in the four billion rural people who currently produce most of the food that our societies rely on — not in a few mega-farms controlled by a few mega-landlords.

From 13-17 November 2009, representatives from peasant organisations and social movements that have been directly involved in struggles against this new wave of global land grabbing will be in Rome. NGOs and activist groups that have conducted extensive

research and analysis of the issue will also be present. This is an excellent opportunity for media to speak with people directly involved in this fight. On 16 November, a specialised briefing and a symbolic action on the global land grab will be conducted for media by Via Campesina and GRAIN (details below).

Speakers at the press conference:

Ms Renée Vellvé (GRAIN), Mr Mugi Ramanu (Indonesian Peasant's Union),

Mr Ralava Beboarimisa (Collectif pour la défense des terres malgaches)

Moderator:

Nettie Wiebe (Via Campesina)

Media contacts (English, French, Spanish):

Devlin Kuyek (GRAIN):

+1 5145717702 (until Nov 12)

+39 3490657014 (Nov 13-17)

devlin@grain.org

<http://www.grain.org> and <http://farmlandgrab.org>

Annelies Schorpion (Via Campesina):

+32 474847280 (until Nov 11)

+39 3312861096 (Nov 12-18)

a.schorpion@eurovia.org

<http://www.viacampesina.org>

La Via Campesina is an international movement which brings together millions of peasants, small producers, landless people, rural women and agricultural workers around the world. Our movement is made up of 148 member organisations active in 69 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

GRAIN is a small international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems.

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