
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH

9239/12

Paper 1 Written Examination

October/November 2017

1 hour 30 minutes

INSERT (RESOURCE BOOKLET)

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Resource Booklet contains Documents 1 and 2 which you should use to answer the questions.

You should spend approximately 10 minutes reading the documents before attempting to answer the questions. This is allowed for within the time set for the examination.



This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

The documents below consider the issue of ethics and the economics of food. Read them **both** in order to answer **all** the questions on the paper.

Document 1: adapted from *Agricultural investment or third world land grab?*, an article by Peter Singer. The author is Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University (USA). In 2013, he was named the world's third "most influential contemporary thinker" by the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute. The article was published in 2013.

In recent years, rich countries and investors have been buying up land in developing countries. Since 2000, investors or state bodies from countries with rich or emerging economies have bought more than 83 million hectares (more than 200 million acres) of agricultural land in poorer developing countries. This amounts to 1.7% of the world's agricultural land. Investments, private and public, are from three different groups of countries including wealthy developed economies, oil-rich Gulf states and emerging economies like China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Malaysia and South Korea. Most purchases have been made in Africa, with two-thirds in countries where hunger is widespread, and equal an area of agricultural land the size of Kenya. This raises the issue of whether rich countries or foreign investors should be buying agricultural land.

Foreign investors claim they are purchasing land that has been left idle. By farming it, they are increasing the availability of food overall. However, a report by European research institutes and non-governmental organizations found that roughly 45% of the purchases involved existing croplands and most produce food or other crops for export. More than 40% of such projects export food to investors' countries. This suggests that one reason for buying the land is to secure their own food supply.

Foreign investors show little concern for local people. For example, a major German coffee company forced the eviction of several villages in Uganda to make way for a large coffee plantation. The evicted villagers are still living in extreme poverty. In November, the United Nations Human Rights Committee concluded that Germany failed to protect the Ugandan villagers' rights, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Germany is a signatory. So, countries agree to international rights but ignore them when it suits.

Oxfam International calls some of these deals 'land grabs'. Its report, *Our Land, Our Lives*, shows that, in the last five years, communities affected by World Bank projects have made 21 formal complaints about violations of land rights. Oxfam has called on the World Bank to freeze investments in land purchases until it sets standards ensuring that local communities are informed of purchases in advance, and can refuse. Oxfam also wants the World Bank to ensure that these land deals do not threaten either local or national food supplies. However, given the pressures of poverty and the attraction of cash, it is unlikely that local people can make genuinely free and informed choices about selling their right to land.

The World Bank agreed that there has been abuse of rights in land purchase, particularly in developing countries. But they also stress that increased food production is needed to feed the extra two billion people expected to be alive in 2050. So, investment in agriculture in developing countries is required to improve productivity and should not be frozen.

However, it is clear that we cannot depend upon rich countries, foreign investors and international agencies to respect local landholders' rights. Where they are able to make a profit or to provide food for their own populations, they quickly lose sight of international laws and agreements.

Document 2: adapted from *Land grabbing and future conflicts* by Nnimmo Bassey, Executive Director, Environmental Rights Action. The commentary is contained within the United Nations report on 'The Role of Changes in Land Use', 2013.

As the world jumps from one crisis to another, attempts to find solutions have been making matters worse. The food crisis and the financial crisis have encouraged speculators to invest in land for energy and/or food crops. The rush for land in countries in Africa, South-East Asia and Latin America by other countries and corporations has led to dreadful land grabs. The crops grown in the grabbed lands are not for feeding local populations, but are mainly for export back to the home countries of the "investors". Speculators are attracted by the possibility to exploit surface resources such as timber, and underground resources such as oil, gas and solid minerals. They aim to exploit their grabbed land in all possible ways. Arguably, this wave of land grabs is worse than colonialism.

Transnational corporations want more land to grow crops for export and for use in the production of biofuels, pulp and paper. Emerging economies, such as Brazil, China and India, need increasing amounts of other natural resources, including water and minerals. For example, it is said that the government of Mozambique is allocating 60 000 square kilometres of land (7.6% of the country) to 40 Brazilian commercial farmers for large-scale soy cultivation to supply the ever-expanding Chinese market.

Land grabbing is unsustainable and needs to be limited. Only a global examination and a global regulatory framework will be able to control it. Apart from regulation, there is also the need to secure land rights. Those land rights must be respected, especially in the more vulnerable regions and countries where such laws do not exist. The world cannot afford new forms of conflict arising from land grabbing. More and more people are being displaced by land grabs, livelihoods are being destroyed and hunger is being imported while food products are exported.

On ethical grounds, we must halt the unsustainable use of resources. If we do not stop this exploitation, resources will be lost permanently to future generations. Land grabbing is a sign of greed and shows people living as if there were no tomorrow. It is clearly not simply a desire to respond to food deficits somewhere, but a deliberate attempt to control the food systems of the world. This will leave people dependent on big business for their basic food supply. The unpredictability of food being traded on the stock exchanges of the world will make us victims of food price changes. We cannot allow ourselves to be colonised in this unsustainable and unethical way.

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