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Land tenure conflict and agribusiness development in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

There is a growing demand of land by multinational commercial agribusinesses to meet the increasing demand for food in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the export market. Land tenure system is identified as one of the factors stymieing the growth of agribusinesses in SSA. The difficulties involved in land tenure for agribusinesses have been frequently attributed to the co-existence of conflicting customary and statutory tenure. However, there is paucity of literature on the variability in land tenure across SSA and their impacts on agribusinesses. This paper reviews the literature on different land tenure and their implication for the growth in agribusiness across SSA. The method used for the literature review involved an analysis of published literature accessed from credible online sources. The analysis reveals that differences between the land tenure systems have varying impacts on agribusinesses across SSA. The study also found that the lack of compatibility between the statutory and customary laws generates resistance by some local community members against agribusiness investors particularly when members of the local communities feel side-lined in the land negotiation processes. The paper therefore articulates a compelling need for SSA countries to harmonize the existing land tenure systems to foster the development of agribusiness sectors.