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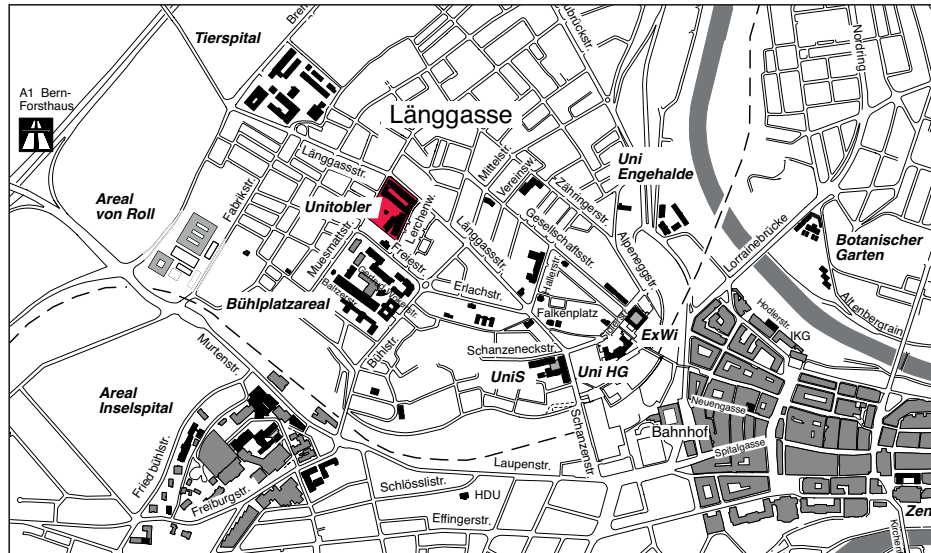
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UNIVERSITÄT  
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**Venue**

University of Bern, Unitobler Building, Lerchenweg 36, Room F005

**Organisers**

University of Bern  
Institute of Social Anthropology  
Länggassstrasse 49a  
CH-3012 Bern  
www.anthro.unibe.ch

University of Bern

Centre for Development and Environment (CDE)  
www.cde.unibe.ch

**Supported by**

Swiss Academy of Humanities and  
Social Sciences (SAHS)  
www.sagw.ch

Swiss Society for African Studies (SGAS/SSEA)  
www.sagw.ch/africa

**Conference programme online**

[http://www.anthro.unibe.ch/content/conference\\_on\\_land\\_acquisition\\_debate\\_in\\_africa/index\\_eng.html](http://www.anthro.unibe.ch/content/conference_on_land_acquisition_debate_in_africa/index_eng.html)

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CONFERENCE ON THE "LAND GRAB" DEBATE IN AFRICA

Friday, 11 October 2013

9:00 – 12:30, 13:45 – 17:00

University of Bern, Unitobler Building, Lerchenweg 36, Room F005

Organised by the Swiss Society for African Studies (SGAS) with the Institute of Social Anthropology and the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), University of Bern

## Land Rush or Development Through Investment? Conference on the "Land Grab" Debate in Africa

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Large-scale international land investment in Africa has recently attracted a lot of attention among the media, NGOs, development cooperation, and researchers. Many concerned about its effects on millions of African land users describe a new "land rush" or post-colonial wave of land expropriation. Still others – including World Bank representatives and neoliberal scholars – perceive opportunities for Africa's economic development, in particular its historically under-supported agricultural sector.

As indicated by the International Land Coalition (ILC) – a worldwide platform of scholars, civil society, and intergovernmental organisations – the land deals that are visible are likely only the tip of the iceberg. Evidence-based information is still largely lacking about international land investment. However, a 2013 report based on research conducted by ILC, the University of Bern's Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), and others found evidence of more than 750 concluded global land deals equal to about 32 million hectares of land. The majority of the documented deals occurred in African countries whose institutional framework is considered weak.

Switzerland is one of the many countries involved in international land deals on the African continent. The investment strategies of companies such as Geneva-based ADDAX Bioenergy, currently seeking land in Africa to produce biofuels, will illustrate some issues to be discussed.

Despite the increasing attention to international land deals, more in-depth research and analyses are needed from diverse perspectives, including anthropological, geographical, and institutional viewpoints. In 2012, a common seminar on large-scale land investments was organised at the University of Bern by the Institute of Social Anthropology, the Institute of Geography, and CDE, establishing a basis for interdisciplinary collaboration on the issue.

This one-day conference, organised by the Swiss Society for African Studies (SGAS/ SSEA) together with the Institute of Social Anthropology and CDE, continues the collaborative exchange, providing space for experts in Switzerland to debate the pros and cons of such investments for people's livelihoods and the environment. Prof. Pauline Peters of Harvard University, a renowned anthropologist and Africanist with long-standing knowledge of African land-tenure systems, will kick off the discussion with a keynote speech on how analysis of current land deals must pay closer attention to the role of national (and not just international) agents and to the increased vulnerability of customary land tenure to appropriation.

## Programme

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- 9:00     **Registration**
- 9:30     **Welcome and introduction**  
*Tobias Haller, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern and SGAS*
- 9:45     **Keynote speech**  
Land Appropriation and the Vulnerability of Customary Tenure in Africa Today  
*Pauline Peters, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA*
- 10:45    **Coffee break**
- 11:00    **Conceptual papers: Investment, Land Grab, and Social Responsibility?**  
– Current Efforts to Create More Transparency on Large-Scale Land Acquisitions Through Global and National Observatories  
*Markus Giger, Peter Messerli, and Thomas Breu, CDE, University of Bern*  
– Large-Scale Land Acquisitions in the Context of Trade and Investment Agreements and Corporate Social Responsibility Policies  
*Elisabeth Bürgi Bonanomi, CDE / World Trade Institute, University of Bern*
- 12:30    **Lunch break**
- 13:45    **Case studies**  
– Thoughts on Complex Linkages between Land Acquisitions, Biofuels, and Food Security in East Africa  
*Urs Wiesmann, Albrecht Ehrensperger, and Brigitte Portner, CDE, University of Bern*  
– "Investors Are Good, If They Follow the Rules": Power Relations and Local Perceptions in the Case of Two European Forestry Companies in Tanzania  
*Martina Locher, Department of Geography, University of Zurich*  
– The ADDAX Deal in Sierra Leone: Development or Broken Promises by a Swiss Firm?  
*Miges Baumann, Bread for All, Switzerland*  
– Foreign Direct Investment in the Zambian Sugar Industry: The Impact of Outgrower Schemes and Large-Scale Farm Employment on Wealth  
*Jan Schüpbach and Rolf Kappel, Centre for Development and Cooperation (NADEL), ETH Zurich*
- 15:45    **Coffee break**
- 16:00    **Round table with**  
Pauline Peters, Elisabeth Bürgi Bonanomi, Miges Baumann, and Urs Wiesmann  
*Moderator: Tobias Haller, Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Bern*

If you wish to join the conference, please send an email to [claudia.schauerte@anthro.unibe.ch](mailto:claudia.schauerte@anthro.unibe.ch) by 1 October 2013.

Conference fee: CHF 20.– for students / CHF 40.– for all others