

**15th Annual International Sustainable Development Research Conference
July 5-8, 2009**

***"Taking up the Global Challenge: Analysing the implementation of
innovations and governance for Sustainable Development"***

CALL FOR PAPERS

**Track nr 3F: *Sustainable development – Liberalization of land markets and new
processes of land grabbing***

Track chair: Prof. dr. Annelies Zoomers (International Development Studies, Utrecht University), Dr. Alan Bojanic (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), San José de Costa), Rica Prof. dr. Peter Ho (Centre for Development Studies, University of Groningen), Dr. C. Ramachandraiah (Centre for Economic & Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad), Dr. Guus van Westen (International Development Studies, Utrecht University)

Empirical evidence suggests that opportunities to buy land through the market and the use of internet have resulted in new processes of land grabbing, and an upward trend in the ownership of land by foreign and other non-local buyers. In addition to 'traditional' large land holders (cattleholders, agroindustrial firms etc), new actors are now entering the stage. On the internet, large numbers of real estate companies offer large tracts of land to private investors: *'Now is the time to purchase the dream home you've always wanted. You have your choice of living, in the charming colonial city of Granada, at the beach or on the slopes of a volcanic lagoon with a breath taking view. There is something for everyone in Nicaragua'* (from an internet advertisement). Elsewhere, new industrial development contributes to a massive conversion of rural land to urban uses, as in the business parks surrounding several 'globalizing' Asian cities and their associated real estate 'booms' and infrastructure mega-projects. In the process, local communities are uprooted and existing land use patterns dramatically changed. Large-scale interventions in local land markets also include NGOs and public sector agencies acquiring extensive areas for use as nature parks, often associated with a tourism development strategy. Tourism operators increasingly buy the most scenic areas, and UNESCO world heritage sites are increasingly expropriated and managed by non-locals. Many small-scale interventions are undertaken by migrants living abroad who invest in land holdings back home, for use after retirement or speculating on the future rise of land prices. Recently, huge areas are bought for the purpose of growing bio-fuel crops, resulting in important land use changes. In many countries any foreigner may buy and own property, while in others, public sector agencies act as intermediaries to facilitate access to land for non-local users. In all of these cases, commoditization of land, globalization and the rise of new technologies are reshaping access to land for local and non-local actors. Little is known about the scale of this 'land rush' and about the implications for the local population and sustainable local development.

This panel aims to explore current processes of land alienation; who are the main actors in land grabbing and what interests are behind it? Who are the sellers (part of exit strategies) and intermediaries, and what is the position of local groups? What is the role of policy and markets in the processes of land acquisition and conversion? And what are the implications of the new land acquisition for local development, in terms of environmental, economic and social sustainability? The panel is intended to result in publications and follow-up activities.

Key words: land alienation and conversion; land grabbers and speculation, land policy, sustainable local development.

Please look at the detailed instructions and deadlines for submitting your abstract and paper, using the [Submission & guidelines](#) button at the left side.