

Foreign Investments and Livelihoods in Northern Zambia



**Presenter:
Dr Phillan Zamchiya**

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Senior Researcher, PLAAS, UWC**

This study employs a wider livelihoods approach to challenge some insular neo-classical economic narratives on the nature, process and impact of large-scale land acquisitions on smallholder farmers living on Africa's customary land. Large-scale land based acquisitions are often justified as a vehicle to utilise idle land, improve land productivity, modernise the countryside, commercialise the agrarian sector, create jobs and ensure macro-economic returns, conversely portraying smallholder land-based livelihoods as pristine, unproductive, unable to support national development and enhance poverty reduction. This approach is problematic, since the diverse land uses by smallholder farmers are narrowly examined, the production and poverty reduction value to rural livelihoods is largely ignored and the social implications, psychological ramifications and economic benefits of the large-scale capitalist ventures are not explored in-depth. Even the process of land acquisition is hardly regulated by an array of international, regional and national guidelines on responsible investments. This is because of the intersection of the state and private sector interests staked against the smallholder farmers in hierarchical relationships. Of course investors create some jobs with some differential benefits but these are often seasonal and too precarious to augment sustainable alternative livelihoods. This article therefore provides rich empirical data from Zambia's newly created Chembe district to demonstrate the limitations of the romanticised neo-classical economic benefits and the need for a wider livelihoods lens. From such a wider perspective, we debunk both the notion of an agrarian trajectory based on a capitalist transition to large-scale farms and co-existence premised on voluntary regulation. Thus opting for an alternative path hinged on securing livelihoods for the rural smallholder farmers.

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SmallholderFarmersZambia

Date: Tuesday, 30 October 2018

Time: 13h00-14h00

Venue: PLAAS Boardroom

For more information, contact **Babongile Malama**
Tel: **021 959 3733** or Email: bmalama@plaas.org.za