

UNMASKING THE REALITIES OF INVESTMENTS IN AGROFUELS.

PRESENTED BY NOBLE WADZAH ,FOE/OILWATCH- GHANA
AT THE 2ND ACP Science & Technology Programme project
WORKSHOP

**THEME : Production of non-food, bio-oil supply chains for
Renewable Energy in Ghana:**

Needs, Challenges and Opportunities

Date: 2 – 4, April, 2013

**Venue: Yiri Lodge, University of Ghana Campus
Accra, GHANA**

INTRODUCTION

- Energy is precursor to socio economic growth and industrial development.
- Its supply reliability and utilization underlie the scale of modes of production and social organization of society's development
- Fossil based energy (oil and gas) constitute the most frequently used energy sources in the world Today
- Accounting for about 40% of all energy use.

Introduction Cont.

- Fossil based energy (oil and gas) constitute the most frequently used energy sources in the world
- Accounting for about 40% of all energy use.

Where we Stand with Fossil Energy

- While Petro chemical products forms the basis of global production and consumption
- Consumption of oil and gas constitute the key implicating factor for the current state of the global climate crisis.
- With profound manifestations on The environment and Ecosystems, water sources , fisheries , forest ,Destruction of cultures & communities etc
- Fossil fuels Energy Resource almost at near peak level and thus provide a sound bases for alternatives

Energy transition; A justified Pursuit

- The desire to keep the energy consumption needs of developed. Economies – a major propelling force
- So Defines Africa as one of the hotspots for producing the badly needed alternative- agro fuels .
- Relevant for Africa and developing countries like Ghana who needs energy to propel its current slow pace of development.

Energy transition; A justified Pursuit Cont.

- The Great Land Rush- A new Tactic for Energy Security
- A number of EU companies Sometimes with backing from their governments are on record to have stepped Up action
- Buying/leasing large tracts of land for agro fuels production.

WHO'S ENERGY?

- Understandably many will dismiss any argument that may be at variance with the production of Agro fuels in Developing countries like Ghana as wasteful, irrational and anti development posture.
- Appreciating the historical role of Africa/developing communities in the global Energy Geo-politics- makes useful reference to the above question.
- Historical timelines provides useful evidence

WHO'S ENERGY? Cont.

- From slave energy provided power base for industry/infrastructure in the north -
- labor per se is not the issue but energy output of the labor offer some insight for broader context of the Topic under discussions – Energy (Agro Fuel)

WHO'S ENERGY? Cont.

- According to James Coleman Before a railway line was built to the export oriented mines in Jos 23,000 Africans had to carry tones of ore on their heads over a distance of 320 km - Referenced in , To cook A Continent
- Recent Oil discoveries in Africa (The Gulf of Guinea) is defined as a security issue for the US- .Bush Energy plan in the early 2000.

Appreciating The Realities 1

FOOD SECURITY SOVREINTRY POVERTY and EXLUSION

- Growing plants and trees to make agro fuels and replace declining fossil fuels was initially presented as an opportunity for farmers
- Agro fuels are competing with food crops and land for these fuels is competing with Farm lands Ghana ,sierra Leone Nigeria Ethiopia ,Malawi Swaziland Tanzania Kenya DRC and many others are countries whose lands are already being chipped away for external food and fuel.

Appreciating The Realities¹ Cont.

- Agro fuels is a crime against humanity – The UN Special Rappateur on the right to food
- Alienation of farmers from their land through dispossession arising out of contracts and agreements shrouded in opacity with unwary communities and their leaders .

Appreciating The Realities¹ Cont.

- Appropriation of vast agriculture lands highly skewed to ownership systems that favor plantation development compared with communal shared land tenure system which mainly support small or peasant agriculture
 - Referenced in A study conducted by CICOL .Ghana
- Peasant agriculture is the mainstay of global food production(70%) much against the widely held view that it is industrial agriculture

Appreciating the Realities 2

LAND GRAB: DISCONTENTS AND UNREST

- Land grab for agro fuels cultivation is at the center of civil strife in people against governments and generalized social divide and
 - Eg. The mabira forest Reserve give away and resistance
 - similarly in Tanzania Swiss Company Warri Basin intention to cultivate 400,000 hectares of sugarcane ignited widespread disapproval among citizens

Appreciating the realities 2 Cont.

- Seychelles, attempt by Daewoo Logistics Corporation to lease 1,3 hectare Land ,about half the arable lands of that country for purposes of cultivating maize and oil for palm and shipping the products to Korea triggered conflict .
- The was a contributing factor for the overthrow of the government in that country in 2009

Appreciating the Realities 3

THE CLIMATE ARGUMENT AND FALSE SOLUTION

- Proponents forcefully preach the argument that Agro fuels will contribute to carbon sequestration and a to fix to the climate crisis.
- However this position only “clears the conscience “ of producing companies and their backers.
- As it only guarantees that that you can keep stroking the atmosphere without liability, - **guarantees the fertile grounds for crisis capitalism.**
- Uncertainty surrounds the mathematics on how much carbon can a tree absorb.

Appreciating the Realities 3 Cont'.

- To start with agro fuels is monoculture based production and monoculture plantation is strong implicating factor for carbon emission, **Environmentally destructive**
- Study in South East Asia of agro fuels life emissions found out that 450 – 900 years of agro fuels crop plantation would be required to offset CO2 released from peat land cleared for it.

CONCLUSION & WAY FORWARD

- Alternative energy is an option whose time has however investment choices in should be informed by a thoroughly assessment of the array option available That guarantees the integrity of socio-economic and cultural values of peoples and communities while at the same time keeps vivid the principles of environmental and ecosystems health and safety
- Options for alternative energy must align with the principles of Energy Sovereignty – Community control, decentralization and access.

- *Thank you for your attention.*