

***Issues on MCC as perceived by Sri Lankan Media
MCC Land Projects in Africa***

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MCC implemented compacts with the governments of Mozambique, Madagascar, Ghana and Mali from 2005 to 2013. The compacts focused on the roads, agriculture, water, and land administration sectors. There was no civil unrest in any of these countries as a result of the compacts as it has been alleged by commentators in the Sri Lankan media and blog sites. The allegations below about MCC's land projects in Madagascar and Mali have no basis in fact.

Madagascar

- *Allegation: MCC began proposals to decentralize Madagascar's agriland. It was in December 2008 that the natives of Madagascar learnt from the media that their government which had been using MCC funds to allocate land certificates to thousands of citizens were SELLING LAND to foreign investors via the revised National Land Program (isn't this what the UNP Govt plans to do via the Land Privatization Bill?) 1.3million hectares of land had been given to a Korean company Daewoo Logistics and certificates were given to Madagascar land owners on the condition that they would make their land available to an Indian company Varun.*
- *Allegation: The Madagascar government was negotiating giving 3m hectares of land to foreign investors on a 99 year lease. These 2 scenarios are most likely to happen to Sri Lankans newly given title deeds to privatized state land.*

Mali

- *Allegation: MCC commenced in Mali 2006 with a \$461m compact grant - US 'interest' was in Mali's 2 major assets - Niger River 8z Bamako-Senou International Airport. MCC Mali has taken over some 20,000 hectares of land - the most important irrigated land in Mali to foreign investors which is an extraterritorial zone putting its own land management & laws.*

- *Allegation: Eventually the people of Mali who want to irrigate land have to buy land from the MCC compact foreign investors and loans given to settle in 20 years. So what has happened is foreigners have bought over Mali land and agree to sell off land to the natives obviously at a higher price! Those unwilling to buy land will eventually have no land, no livelihood & no place to live!*

MCC Land Activities in Africa

What follows are the facts about MCC's activities in Africa to strengthen government land administration and provide people with secure title to land. MCC land administration and titling projects in Africa and elsewhere do not involve land acquisition. When partner governments must acquire land, it is in order to build roads or other infrastructure funded by MCC. When land is acquired to build roads and other infrastructure, MCC requires partner governments to follow the IFC Performance Standards, which are an international benchmark for identifying and managing environmental and social risk. They set a very high bar for stakeholder engagement, consultation, and compensation of people affected by MCC-funded projects. MCC never acquires land for itself or the US government. MCC compact grants provide funding to implement a specific set of agreed projects over a period of five years. All MCC projects focus on raising household incomes in the eligible country.

Mozambique

The land project in Mozambique, which ended in 2013, strengthened government capacity for land administration and provided titles for some 160,000+ citizens and their families. Government continued with systematic land titling activities after the compact ended, using the capacity-building and other technical inputs put in place with MCC funds to provide citizens formal titles to land. The government now has a program called Terra Segura which aims to issue titles to 5 million citizens in the coming years.

Madagascar

In Madagascar, the MCC compact, which ended in 2009, enabled national, regional, and municipal governments to implement new land legislation that the Government of Madagascar adopted, including issuance of land certificates to legally recognize traditionally held rights. The MCC project rehabilitated or constructed regional land administration offices and initiated a major document

conservation and archiving activity improving the ability of the existing regional land administration institutions to serve communities' needs.

The Government of Madagascar began legal reform prior to MCC's compact support to the Government. Legal reform decentralized authority to local governments to issue certificates providing legal recognition of customary land rights held by Malagasy farmers, making it possible for farmers to obtain more secure rights to their land. The Government of Madagascar requested MCC assistance to help implement the legal reform, building long-term capacity of local officials to issue land certificates to Malagasy farmers. Land certificates were issued during the period of MCC's funding, and local authorities have continued to issue land certificates.

Ghana

In Ghana, the first compact ended in 2012 included a pilot project to map and survey more than 2,500 hectares of land on which inhabitants did not have formal land rights.

Mali

In the Mali compact, which ended in 2012, the government requested that MCC work on 20,000 hectares of land as part of the Compact; MCC did not initiate this activity nor did it take over any of this land. The land was transferred from management by the "Office du Niger" to control of the Office of the President of Mali to expedite reforms. MCC was unwilling to make a substantive investment in improving this land to benefit local farmers if reforms were slow or blocked. With MCC funding and technical assistance 5,000 hectares were eventually developed for irrigation. MCC did not put in its "own land management and laws". MCC followed all existing laws of Mali to assist farmers become owners of irrigated land.

Ownership of all of the developed irrigated land went to the people living in the immediate vicinity or to Malian farmers from the region. No land was given to or purchased by foreigners. A total of 1,600 hectares was given free of charge to people in the immediate vicinity affected by the infrastructure construction. The rest of the land was sold by the local government to those same people and the farmers in the region. Virtually everyone who had the opportunity to buy the land did so because the land was so valuable, the purchase price was spread out over 20 years, and the price was calibrated to be affordable. The local government used the money from the sale of these lands to set up a community development

fund. None of this money went to the national government, to foreign investors, or to MCC; it all remained with the local government.