



**Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
(CESCR) 48th Session
Meeting with Partners
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Examination of Ethiopia**

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Thank you Mr Chairperson,

In Ethiopia, where 80 percent of the adult population is engaged in small scale agriculture, equitable land policies which provide for security of tenure are central to the fulfilment of Ethiopia's human rights obligations set out in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, the Ethiopian Government, under the 2010 Growth and Transformation Plan, has instituted a land policy framework which severely exacerbates insecurity of tenure for small scale agriculturalists, increases the spectre of food insecurity and has led to large scale displacement across the country.

The government is the sole steward of land in Ethiopia. Peasant farmers and pastoralists do not have the right to sell, exchange or mortgage land. Since 2005, the government has leased over 3.5 million hectares of land to foreign and domestic investors. By 2015, the total amount of land transferred to investors will measure nearly seven million hectares, which is equivalent to 38 percent of all land currently utilised by smallholders.

There are no provisions in these contracts aimed at meeting the food security needs of the country and no contractual obligations for the investors to provide social services or invest in basic infrastructure for the surrounding and displaced communities. The investors are not obliged to supply the local market and are encouraged to export to their respective domestic markets.

In addition, despite claims by the government that the land being transferred is unused, in many cases the land being sold is not 'idle' as presented by government officials but used by pastoralists and farmers. In Gambela and SNNP Regions, there have been claims that thousands of persons have been forcibly removed from their land without the provision of a replacement plot or adequate compensation.

CIVICUS calls on the Ethiopian Government to ensure that its land investment policy does not undermine the rights of small-scale agriculturalists to an adequate standard of living including, inter alia, access to adequate food. The Government must institute a land tenure system that strengthens land tenure security, protects small landholder from displacement and provides for adequate compensation and social services in the event of expropriation.