

Japanese civil society statement on ProSAVANA program in Mozambique

Call for an Immediate Suspension and Fundamental Review

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Call for an Immediate Suspension and Fundamental Review

September 30, 2013

We, as like-minded civil society organizations in Japan, call on the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), for the immediate suspension and fundamental review of the ProSAVANA program. ProSAVANA is a large-scale agricultural development program in Mozambique, conducted as part of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) and initiated by the governments of Japan, Brazil and Mozambique. This statement is based on the gravity of concerns repeatedly expressed by the farmers and civil society organizations of Mozambique, as well as on the findings of our field research conducted between July and August this year in Mozambique.

Background

ProSAVANA will potentially affect 14 million hectares of land in three northern provinces of Mozambique, an area inhabited by more than 4 million people. The area is equivalent to three times of all the farmland in Japan. Farmers represent over 80% of the entire population in Mozambique. Small-scale farmers make up the overwhelming majority (99.99%) of these farmers and work 95% of all cultivated land in Mozambique. However, under ProSAVANA, farmers have not been respected as right-holders nor have their participation in the program been duly ensured. The National Union of Peasants (UNAC), the largest farmers confederation in Mozambique composed of 2,200 farmers organizations, and civil society organizations have repeatedly raised their concerns regarding the possible negative impacts of large-scale agricultural development and investment schemes of ProSAVANA on the livelihoods of the local small-scale farmers.

It is worth highlighting the importance and significance of the Open Letter, which was released ahead of the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) on May 28, 2013. 23 organizations representing farmers, religious groups and civil society in Mozambique came together to draft, sign and release this Open Letter addressed to the respective heads of state of Mozambique, Japan and Brazil. The Open Letter, calling for the immediate suspension of ProSAVANA, is unprecedented both in representation and gravity as an objection to aid programs in Mozambique. Mozambican representatives travelled to Japan and successfully hand-delivered the Open Letter to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of TICAD V this June.

With such developments taking place, Japanese civil society organizations have been engaging with

MOFA/JICA on ProSAVANA through the established periodic consultative meetings between Japanese NGOs and MOFA. The importance of consulting local farmers and civil society was recognized in these meetings, and the governments promised to review the program in order to enable the participation of local farmers and civil society.

However, the drafting of the master plan, the preparation of Quick Impact Projects (QIP) (programs where “quick impacts” and visible outcomes are expected), and pilot projects funded by the ProSAVANA Development Initiative Fund (PDIF) continued to be prepared and implemented without review. Information disclosure remained to be limited, and neither transparency nor accountability improved in the process. Consequently, anxiety has increased among local farmers and civil society organizations. In addition, no official response has been made to date on the Open Letter, and though cursory consultation meetings have been held with limited participants, it has only served to deepen the concerns and increase the distrust of the majority of farmers and civil society.

At the same time, incidences of land grabs, by both international and domestic investment and businesses in the Nacala Corridor, are being witnessed at an alarming scale. Pressure on land is increasing, and so are conflicts over land. Local farmers in vulnerable positions have been forced off their land, and pushed into hunger and poverty. Local farmers raising their voices have been reportedly harassed and threatened.

ProSAVANA, as it stands, threatens the livelihood of the local small-scale farmers, and risks the destabilization of Mozambican society. It also raises questions concerning the respectability and legitimacy of Japanese official development assistance. We, as like-minded organizations of Japanese civil society, hereby request the government of Japan to initiate the immediate suspension of, and fundamental review of ProSAVANA.

Requests

1. We request the Japanese government to immediately reply, in writing, to the Open Letter, submitted by the Mozambican civil society dated 28th of May 2013. This reply should specifically provide a direct response to the immediate suspension of ProSAVANA as requested in the Open Letter.
2. The environmental, political, and social context in Mozambique has deteriorated since the signing of the ProSAVANA agreement in 2009. There have been increased incidents of environmental degradation and of land conflicts arising from land grabbing. Political space to question government policies has steadily decreased. We request that a renewed and independent field research be conducted in the pertinent areas, and that appropriate consultations be held with local farmers and civil society. The fundamental framework of the ProSAVANA should be revisited according to the results.
3. In the consultative meetings held between MOFA/JICA and Japanese civil society groups, the fundamental review of the consultation process with local farmers and civil society was agreed upon. However, not only has the consultation process failed to improve, but the process has increased mistrust toward the program amongst the civil society groups of Nampula and Niassa Provinces, and also among the farmers associations and civil society groups representing the whole of Mozambique. We request that the Japanese government make an effort to accurately understand this situation, and to clarify how and why UNAC and other member organizations of UNAC, which not only legitimately represent the small farmers of Mozambique, but have been extensively involved in the discussion, were excluded from the various discussion arrangements under ProSAVANA.
4. In the fourth and fifth consultative meetings held between Japanese civil society and MOFA/JICA,

both of which took place after the delivery of the Open Letter, MOFA/JICA emphasized that ProSAVANA would only be implemented after a thorough consultation process. However, the second round of submissions for the PDIF opened in July, despite an absence of progress in the consultation process, serving only to further deepen local confusion and mistrust. We request that the Japanese government make an assessment of facts, and clarify how and why project implementation proceeded regardless of the promises made.

5. The consultation process with local farmers and civil society should fully uphold the principles of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), and must ensure sufficient disclosure of information and accountability. In due consideration of both the scale and gravity of impact the program is foreseen to have on the local communities, it is absolutely crucial to ensure the meaningful participation of local farmers and civil society in the process. We request MOFA/JICA to immediately suspend the program, and engage in dialogue with local farmers and civil society on how to move forward.

6. 2014 is the International Year of Family Farming, where the importance of family farming will be recognized and celebrated internationally. Concurrently in Mozambique, farmers represented by UNAC, together with civil society, are preparing the "National Plan for the Support of Family Farming." If ProSAVANA purports to support the Mozambican farmers, it would be most appropriate to recognize and provide due support for such initiatives. We request that MOFA/JICA consider and respond to this proposal.

7. ProSAVANA promotes the registration of land titles (DUAT) with the purpose of facilitating investment. However, the premise nor implications of DUAT registration is not yet fully understood by the local farmers, and public debate regarding land policy in Mozambique has only begun. The Mozambique Land Act recognizes the right to land use based on customary tenure without the registration of DUAT. The hasty promotion of DUAT registration risks limiting present and future land rights for farmers. We request that farmers are provided appropriate support enabling them to uphold their rights to their land.

Signatory Organizations:

ATTAC Japan

Citizens Concerned with the Development of Mozambique Africa Japan Forum (AJF)

Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)

Oxfam Japan

Endorsing Organizations (31 organizations as of November 8, 2013):

パシフィックアジアリソースセンター(Pacific Asia Resource Center)

アジア農家交流センター(AFEC)

アジア太平洋センター(APC)

ノー! GMOキャンペーン (No! GMO Campaign)

アール・トレード・ジャパン(Alter Trade Japan)

アフリカとアジアを共に(Together with Africa and Asia Association)

(株)コミュニティアクション開発機構(Community Action Development Organization)

(株)持続可能な環境と社会のための日本センター (Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society)

(株)飢餓のない世界(Hunger Free World)

(株)関西 NGO 協議会 (Kansai NGO Council)

(株)日本 NGO 国際協力センター(Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation)

(株)名古屋 NGO 協議会 (Nagoya NGO Center)

(株)APLA (Alternative People's Linkage in Asia)

(株)福岡 NGO ネットワーク(Fukuoka NGO Network)

(株)WE21 日本 (WE21 Japan)

公益財団法人 千代田 (Gihyakusho)

子どもたちの未来をつくる会 (Kodomotachino miraiwo tsukurukai)

全日本農業者連合会 (All Japan Federation of Farmers Union)

NPO 地球の友 FoE Japan (Friends of the Earth Japan)

無農薬東京アクションネットワーク (No Pesticides Tokyo Action Network)

北海道国際財団 (Hokkaido International Foundation)

北海道 NGO ネットワーク協議会 (Hokkaido NGO Network Council)

北海道アイヌ協議会札幌 (Hokkaido Ainu Council Sapporo)

村町ネット (Mura-Machi Net)

メノヴィレッジ 長沼 (Meno Villege Naganuma)

ComiccAFRICA

No! to Land Grab, Japan

NPO 持続可能な開発に関するアドボカシーと監視ネットワーク (Advocacy and Monitoring Network on Sustainable Development) NPO

札幌自由学校 YUU (Sapporo Free School YUU)

ODA 改革ネットワーク (ODA Reform Network)

TPP 検討市民グループ (Citizens Group Considered about TPP)
