

OUR LAND OUR BUSINESS

Questions & Answers

1. What does this campaign want?

The campaign has three primary objectives:

- To shut down the WB Doing Business and Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture indicators
- To delegitimize WB authority for benchmarking and ranking countries
- To open the space to redefine land 'value' and 'development' both globally and within countries

2. Who's behind it?

It originated with farmer organizations and NGOs in Africa and is now being coordinated by a core group of organizations including CICODEV Africa, Coordination Nationale des Organisations Paysannes du Mali, Ekta Parishad (India), The Oakland Institute, Green Scenery (Sierra Leone), INSAF (Indian Social Action Forum), /The Rules, and The Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia. The more people that get involved, the better.

3. Why target the Business indicators?

Because they are damaging at two levels.

Firstly, they do immediate damage by creating a race to the bottom, where countries are forced to create corporate friendly environment, or risk losing vital support from not just the World Bank but donors and investors of all kinds. The result of this business friendly environment is one where foreign corporations are allowed to buy up huge tracts of land for monoculture agribusiness, dispossessing and impoverishing the farmers who have lived and farmed on these lands. This breaches the sovereign rights of countries and locks everyone into the World Bank's idea of what development is. And we know from the disastrous Structural Adjustment Policies of the 1980s and 90s that the Bank has a history of getting things wrong on a massive scale.

Secondly the indicators represent and promote a neoliberal ideology. This ideology says that what's good for corporations is good for everyone; that privatization, low environmental and social standards, and low taxation for businesses are essential components of development. In short, they create systems that make it easy for large corporations to extract wealth from poor countries and communities.

4. What is the Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture?

Whereas the Doing Business ranking has been in place for over 10 years, Benchmarking the Business of Agriculture (BBA) is a new initiative that most people haven't heard of yet. It is being developed by the World Bank following the G8 demand to create a new index specifically addressing the question of doing business in agriculture. Endorsement and

financing by the Gates Foundation, the US, UK, Dutch, and Danish government gave birth to the BBA project in 2013.

The BBA is dangerous because it builds on the *Doing Business*' flawed methodology, and carries the same neoliberal pillars as its foundation. With this new instrument, the World Bank advocates for the opening of countries' agricultural sector to investments through land reforms, free circulation of commercial seeds, chemical fertilizers and pushes further an unsustainable model of industrial agriculture.

5. What is the problem with the World Bank's vision for development?

Land is so much more than a commodity to be bought and sold to the highest bidder. Yet that is the way the World Bank is leading people to see it. Land has deep cultural significance. It is the source of shelter, food; livelihoods, the very ingredients of life itself. It should be valued as such, and not just fed to the market with a \$ value attached.

Development means different things to different people. To the World Bank, it mostly means economic growth based on a corporate capitalist model. This model is based on the mistaken assumption that such growth will "trickle down" to benefit the poorest. This assumption is , and demands that multi-national corporations must be given every incentive to go into developing countries; things like low taxes, special exemptions from environment and labor standards, and preferential access to natural and human resources. We believe not only that this is a deeply flawed understanding of what constitutes human development. ; but that it prioritizes the need of a tiny elite over the majority; that it is an example of the World Bank using it's financial and political might to bully and cajole countries, thereby trampling on the sovereign rights to determine their own path; and that, crucially, most people are unaware that important global organizations like the World Bank are pushing this extreme, ideologically driven model. So we want to put forward a better story of development, starting with the fact that right now we have a single, extreme, model of corporate capitalism going largely unchallenged.

6. How many countries will it take place in?

The more the better. The aim is to make governments and the World Bank feel the pressure in multiple places at once; from its headquarters in Washington DC to its smallest offices, and everything in between. The more places people mobilize, the more impactful the campaign is likely to be.

7. What do we do to take part?

Firstly, sign your organization onto the joint statement. You can do that by emailing back to us.

Then, you will be put on a list of participating organizations and have access to a load of resources and tools. Everyone needs to run the campaign in the way they think will be most successful in their country and context but there will be some common elements everyone can use. Different types of action will be developed both at national and global level. Resources will be available for download and use, including policy reports, standard press statement, a short animated video, posters, leaflets, teaching resources and other such things. If you have ideas for what might be good to have, let us know and we'll do what we can to provide them.

8. How much will it cost me?

That depends partly on you, and how much you want to put into it. Various materials and activities will be developed and made available to everyone. But it will be also up to groups to define the best ways to take action and mobilize at country level. The Oakland Institute and /The Rules will provide a short video, downloadable resources (a policy report, materials for teach-ins and leaflets, posters etc), a website and email petition. But it's safe to say we are not rolling in cash and that the more people can help by supporting their own work, the better.

9. Will I need technical expertise to take part?

No. We will provide all the technical expertise necessary to run the website and petition. You will just need to promote the website in your country/area.

10. How can I get more involved in the strategy and coordination?

The campaign is being coordinated through a Core Group of organizations. If you would like to join that group, please email one of the people below. If you would like to get involved in a particular aspect that's great. A lot needs to be done and there are many opportunities for any group who want to be involved. Again, just email one of the people below; we need all the help we can get.

11. How likely is success?

In this case, because the Business Indicators are a shining light in the World Bank's toolkit for spreading corporate capitalism, we might be in for quite a fight. On the other hand there has been growing resistance to them from inside and outside the Bank for a while now, including a very challenging review of the indicators by an Independent Panel of Experts in June 2013, so we might be able to tip it over the edge. We certainly think it is possible that we can win by October, but we'd be crazy to say we know for sure it will happen. Whatever happens, we expect to have to campaign. Hard.

12. When will the campaign start and end?

We want to kick off before the Spring meetings of the World Bank (April 11 2014) and run through till the Annual meetings in mid-October.

13. What happens after October?

We will make decisions about that, as a group, based on where we've think we've got at that point.

14. Does joining the campaign mean we are joining an official coalition?

No. This is a loose collection of like-minded groups swarming round this one campaign. We want to keep it pretty light touch.

15. Who do I speak to if I have ideas, comments or questions?

Email doing.business@therules.org in English, Spanish or French.

If it is urgent – i.e. you need to speak to someone within a couple of hours - you can email:

Frederic Mousseau: fmousseau@oaklandinstitute.org (GMT-8)

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