



Green Revolution push in Africa the occupation of the Guinea Savannah- where the GM push fits in

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Overview

- AGRA and 'old hubs' of capital
- The Green Revolution agenda and AGRA
- Land, seed
- GM push
- Conclusions

AGRA and 'old hubs' of capital

The US, EU and African agricultural modernisation

G8 New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN), USAID and US foreign policy

AGRA – Gate Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation – philanthro-capitalism

Corporate drivers – Monsanto, Syngenta, Yara and many others

Gates – Monsanto shares, proprietary (privately-owned) technologies

Rockefeller – CGIAR institutions (2nd food regime)

World Bank – Guinea Savannah – “600 million ha ripe for commercial farming”

The Guinea Savannah



AGRA breadbasket areas



“increasing yields and expanding cultivated land in fertile areas already endowed with a minimum of essential infrastructure” - AGRA

SAGCOT and Beira Corridor



The Green Revolution agenda

Technological package

Institutions – legal, administrative, technical

Large-scale commercial farming, including plantation/contract farming arrangements

Recognition of importance of small-scale farming base in Africa

Two strategies:

- i) integrate into corporate chains for export
- ii) growth of commercial small-scale farming class, with increasing economies of scale over time

Green Revolution logic

Africa with huge resources but low productivity

Linear modernisation

Profit motive and competition as drivers of economy

Value chain approach

Subsidised inputs

Land

Higher investments in land will “induce land holdings to adjust” (AGRA, 2013) – concentration in land holdings and dispossession

NAFSN and land – surveying and individual title

Surveying as the first step in commodification and alienation of land (Craib, 2004)

Irrigation and water

Seed

Majority of seed recycled – plasticity – adaptation to local socio-ecological context – built up by African producers themselves with some external input

Colonialism - introduction of ‘non-local’ crops like maize, European fruit and vegetables etc.

Green Revolution in US-led second food regime to increase yields – expansion of profitable markets for proprietary technologies

Role of CGIAR and USAID – long-term vision, patient build-up – seed breeding and production - towards commercialisation

Private seed companies following structural adjustment/liberalisation

But focus on ‘core’ profitable crops – “row crops amenable to industrialisation” (Aline O’Connor, AGRA consultant)

‘Orphan’ crops ignored – failure to meet strong but localised demand for diverse improved seed

Preparing the ground

Legal and policy frameworks – private ownership of land and germplasm – IP and PVP - regional harmonisation

Technical and governance structures

Education and R&D – AGRA (higher education, variety development)

Contradictory processes – is value in expanding this technical knowledge, but question of competitive, profit-seeking orientation

Inappropriate quality criteria

PPPs

AGRA and NAFSN – Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership (SSTP), seed enterprises

The GM Push

In 20 years since global introduction only 3 African countries have approved cultivation – South Africa (1997 – cotton, maize, soya), Burkina Faso (2008, Bt cotton), Sudan (2012, Bt cotton)

42 Africa countries party to Cartagena Protocol but only a handful have implemented domestic biosafety frameworks

USAID has funded capacity building, technology transfer and infrastructural development, Gates has also been instrumental in funding both policy interventions and scientific projects particularly on indigenous crops.

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are developing biosafety policies to apply blanket-fashion to all member states reducing case-by-case risk assessment and promoting cheap and easy regional trade of GM seeds and commodities. COMESA has approved, ECOWAS is pending

On the horizon

Work on indigenous/traditional crops has been a strong tool to train local scientists, develop risk assessment and other regulatory procedures and win over lobbying power in scientific and government circles (e.g. cowpea, pigeon pea, sorghum, cassava, banana)

Particularly worrying – moving from commodities to food security crops, often “women’s crops”, shifting ownership to private hands. Hand in hand with new seed laws

African cotton growers and industry have become allies, calling for weak biosafety regimes and speedy introduction of GM cotton to boost productivity and increase global competitiveness

Gates/ Monsanto Water Efficient Maize for Africa – touted as “climate smart agriculture”

CROP	BURKINA FASO	EGYPT	GHANA	KENYA	MALAWI	MOZAMBIQUE	NIGERIA	SOUTH AFRICA	SUDAN	TANZANIA	UGANDA	ZIMBABWE
											CFT	
Bananas								CR, CFT				
Cassava				CFT			CFT	TR			CFT	TR
Cotton	CR, CFT	CFT	CFT	CFT	CFT	~CFT		CR, CFT	CR		CFT	CFT
Cowpeas	CFT		CFT				CFT					
Maize		CR, CFT		CFT		~CFT		CR, CFT		~CFT	CFT	~CFT
Pigeon peas				TR/GH								
Potatoes		CFT						TR				TR
Rice			CFT								CFT	
Sorghum	CFT			CFT			CFT	TR				
Soybeans								CR, CFT				
Sugarcane								TR, CFT				
Sweet potato			GH	CFT							GH	
Tobacco										CFT		
Tomatoes		GH										
Wheat		CFT										

Notes: ~CFT indicates that a trial has been approved or a mock trial has been conducted. In this table, “Sudan” refers to the former Sudan, which is now two independent nations, Sudan and South Sudan.

Conclusions

Occupation not only physical space, but also institutional space and assets

Altering seed systems and agricultural techniques

Directing public resources to supporting privatised profit

Advancement of some at the expense of others (e.g. land dispossession)

Alternative based on common, democratic ownership of resources and technologies, cooperation in economic activity, build on what exists rather than replacing

Thank you!

END

