

Chapter 65

Factors Influencing Foreign Land Acquisition and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Yusuf Noah

University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Olatunji Abdulganiy

University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Issah Moshood

University of Ilorin, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Of the major factors of production, land is considered the most important. Land is such a valuable resources that the desire to acquire it has been a cause of struggle among the people virtually in all hitherto existing human societies. Land acquisition is influenced by numerous factors in which all play relevant roles in understanding the dynamics of land and its utilization among the people in the society. In Africa, foreign land acquisition has become a topical issue because of the richness of the African land resources, and the scamper for these resources has been a source of concern for many observers. This chapter analyzes the factors inhibiting foreign land acquisition in a developing country like Nigeria and examines the challenges posed by such practices to the attainment of sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Land is fundamental to human life in many ways. Apart from the fact that it is the place of dwelling, there is virtually no human activity that could be achieved without considering the land factor. All human endeavours from religious to economic and even political activities take place on the land (Adedipe, Olawoye, Olarinde, Okediran, 1998). The Creationist theory of human evolution conceived that man is

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created from land and he would eventually return into it after his demise (Quran 20:55 and Genesis 2:7). Land is a free gift of nature and a fundamental necessity of life because it remains the platform on which the social, political and economic activities of a society dwell upon (Enikuomehin, 2005).

The importance of land in human general life could also be inferred from the fact that food, clothing and shelter which are the basic essentials of human living have substantial linkages to land. "Foods grow out of land while shelter is affixed to it, and man's clothing is made largely from what grows out of land" (Babalakin, 2004:1) cited in Famuyiwa & Omirin (2011). In other words, whether in ancient times or modern society, land constitutes a significant index and an unavoidable necessity for socio-political and economic development. There is hardly any social, political or economic venture that does not require land. No wonder the classical economists such as Adams Smith and Alfred Marshal classified land as one of the fundamental factors of production (Alade, 2005). Land is an essential economic commodity. It is limited in supply and as such; the demand for it often outweighs its supply.

Land has an enormous importance to people's life generally. However, despite its huge importance, it is limited in supply. According to Alade (2005), land accounts for approximately 20% of the whole earth surface and it is not everybody or all nations that has it in abundance because of its finite quantity and essential quality. There has always been a high quest to acquire it by all and sundry. A search into the economic history of many human societies revealed several social conflicts among tribes and within nations all as a result of struggle for land acquisition. This is because of the significant relationship that exists between land acquisition and the general development of the nation. Land is a fundamental factor of production in the agricultural sector; it has an essential role to play in increasing as well as sustaining agricultural production. The extent to which this role is performed is determined in part by methods of land acquisition and arrangements for the ownership and use of land. Aside agriculture, land is also useful and needed for various other human activities which would make life easier and better for the human folk.

Land acquisition pattern do enhance the general developmental status of a nation and it has been empirically examined through the history of all hitherto existing societies that land play enormous roles in the political economy of the people in a given society. However, despite the prominent relevance of land in man's life, it is also generally influenced by several factors. Therefore, it is important to consider these factors because of the important roles that land acquisition system plays in attaining sustainable socio-economic development of any nation. Such an effort will go a long way in enhancing the optimal utilization of land resources in our nation and it would also go a long way in bringing about the socio-economic sustainable development that is generally lacking in a country such as Nigeria. It is against this background that this chapter wants to examine the linkages among the varying factors determining land acquisition, land acquisition patterns and sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

In order to make the work more comprehensive, there is the need for conceptual clarification of terms relevant to the chapter.

Foreign Land Acquisition

The history of foreign land acquisition in Africa could be traced to the coming of major European powers, such as Portugal, Spain, France and Great Britain, to Africa in search for Africa's rich mineral and

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