Land conflicts and food insecurity in Mexico Province

Organization: Angola Round Table of German NGOs

Sabino Calucango Caseno, Lutheran World Federation
Mexico, 03/11/2021
Political, economic and cultural meaning of land

- criterion for citizenship
- economic asset
- medium or carrier of identities and collective memories
Who owns the land in Angola?
Legal considerations on land ownership

- According to the Angolan constitution, land is public property.
- It can be transmitted to a natural person or a legal entity, having in mind the rational and effective use according to applicable law.

- The Angolan law recognizes:
  1. Local communities' access to and use of land
  2. Public ownership of natural resources
  3. Compensation and benefit of citizens living in the vicinity of oil or diamond extracting zones.
Due to persistently low oil prices, Angola's petroleum-based economy is in crisis since 2014. Economic diversification was seen as an answer to the dependence on oil. The answer on oil-dependence was Political shift towards the fostering of agricultural production. In 2016, Ex-President dos Santos promised to support agricultural enterprises in Moxico with favourable credits by the national development bank BDA. Many entrepreneurs got engaged in the acquisition of rural community lands. Often without following the legal procedures which require the consultation of local communities.
The Ministry of Natural Resources, Oil and Gas started mapping natural resources in the entire region.

This mapping process provided influential politicians with information to areas with unexplored potentials of extractive reserves such as diamond and copper.

Consequently, some political entrepreneurs started to negotiate deals on rural community lands as speculative objects in several provinces such as Moxico ignoring legal requirements.

Many land titles were emitted in Luanda without involvement or even knowledge of local administrations.
In the last years, logging has become one of the most profitable businesses in Angola.

Especially Chinese companies engage in this business, using licenses of Angolan citizens, mainly political businessmen.

Angolan law does not allow foreigners to have licenses for this type of business.
Impacts of 'land grabs' in Mexico

- Peasant villagers must travel up to 15 km to find land for cultivation because the land near their homes is occupied.
- Many are forced to move to live on their farms because of the distance.
- In the new places, usually there are no basic social structures such as schools for the children, medical posts, so communities become more vulnerable.
- Communities are no longer able to cultivate since they fear that some day someone with a title will come along and tell them to leave the area because the land has already been bought.
- Legal insecurity exacerbates existing food insecurity due to climate change (overall less precipitation, a shorter rain season and more intense single rainfall events with more run–off).
Food insecurity

- The agricultural culture of the people of Moxico is based on cassava production.
- Cassava (also manioc, yuca) crops need 2–3 years to be harvested, i.e. the farmers rely longer on one particular cultivation area.
- With increasing land denials and legal insecurity for farmers, they are afraid to invest too much in land that could be taken away from them.
- Due to climate change, in 5 of the 9 municipalities, cassava harvest is getting poorer because of higher temperatures and less rain.
- This causes food insecurity, aggravating poverty and vulnerability for communities.
Moxico does not have public companies such as the diamond companies in the Lunda provinces.

Honey production was once one of the main sources of income for families in Moxico.

With the emergence of logging, honey production is more difficult and less fruitful.

Many former forests are devastated and ecologically degraded due to the use of chemicals by Chinese logging companies.
Mitigating actions by civil society organizations

- Empowerment of communities by supporting their local initiatives:
- Delimitation of rural lands communities, facilitating and capacity building
- Supporting the initiatives of community based social organizations such as:
  - Village Development Committees, Agricultural Associations/Cooperatives, trainings on DH approach to land law, trainings on sustainable agricultural and climate adaptation techniques etc.
- Facilitate and promote rights–based approaches and advocacy: Local–National–Global
Fazenda de Camaiangala, 16 mil hectares, só cerca de 1500 hectares explorados, 55 milhões de USD investidos e vendida num privado a cerca de 10 milhões de USD.
Fazenda de Camaiangala
Exploração de Madeiras e seu impacto negativo
Produção de Mel
Estiagem faz aumentar a Temperatura e a mandioca apodrecer em 5 municípios dos 9 municípios.
THUNASAKWILA MWANE/
Thank you/Obrigado

SABINO CALUCANGO CASENO