



Group of 78 Luncheon Speaker Series

Obang Metho

“A New Colonialism for Africa?

Hunger, Aid Dependency and the Selling Off of Land & Resources”

DATE: Tuesday, February 28, 2012

TIME: 12:00 noon

PLACE: Palais Imperial Restaurant, 311- 313 Dalhousie St., Ottawa

COST: \$30 for luncheon and presentation

\$5 for presentation only

(For presentation only, please plan to arrive by 12:45. Coffee and tea will be available.)

RESERVATIONS: group78@web.net or 613-230-0860 by Friday February 24, 2012.

We regret that late registrations cannot be accepted.

The group is required to pay for those who reserve but do not come.

Therefore, individuals who do not cancel their reservations at least 24 hours before the luncheon will be billed \$30.

Ever since the food crisis of 2008, the sale or long-term leasing of prime African agricultural land, especially land with access to water, has intensified into a rapid-paced scramble for millions of hectares of land on the continent. Those leading the race may be Middle Eastern countries, like Saudi Arabia, or Asian countries, like India and China, but many more are vying for the best deal of the century. Corrupt and autocratic regimes are offering an array of incentives to attract foreign investors who will mostly export the food or bio-fuels produced on the land while continuing to depend on the West to feed millions of its people. Does this trend represent Africa's future?

In Ethiopia, over 815 foreign agricultural land deals have been made, all without consulting the local people. Promises of benefits are not materializing; instead, Ethiopians, 86% of whom are subsistence farmers, are losing the means to feed themselves as they are forced off land they have occupied for centuries. Those who do protest can face intimidation, assault, imprisonment or even death. In 2009, the intent to lease half the land in Madagascar to South Korea, for 99 years, led to the collapse of the regime.

Mr. Metho, a Canadian citizen, originated from Gambella, Ethiopia, the current epicenter of land grabs on the continent, and is deeply engaged in the these issues and human rights. Mr. Metho will talk about the problem and solutions, including how Canadians can help. He is the Executive Director of the Solidarity Movement for a New Ethiopia, which recently partnered with the Oakland Institute (OI) in completing the Ethiopian portion of an extensive on-the-ground investigation of land investment deals in Africa, a study that includes Ethiopia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Madagascar. Mr. Metho has briefed leaders and officials at the US Department of State, the US Senate and House of Representatives, the World Bank and the Council for Foreign Relations. He has also met with their counterparts in Canada, Sweden, Norway, the U.K. and in the European Union in addition to testifying at the EU, the British House of Commons, the United Nations and the U.S. Congress. See also www.solidaritymovement.org.