AMMAN - The Kingdom's stalled Sudan agricultural investment project is no longer feasible.

Meanwhile a proposal by Spanish investors to market the Kingdom's olive oil in Europe has also failed to take off, the government said on Monday.

The Sudan project started in 1998 when Jordan signed a 70-year agricultural protocol with the Sudanese government, entitling the Kingdom to utilise over 350,000 dunums of highly fertile land on the banks of the Nile: 268,000 dunums in the north and 88,000 dunums in the south.

But due to Jordan's failure to put the project into effect after nearly a decade, the Sudanese government reclaimed the project's lands in the north and handed them over to the local communities for utilisation, leaving only the 88,000 dunums in an area to the south for the Kingdom to invest in.

During the 2008 spike in food prices on international markets, the government started talks with the private sector to partner in the project, but the talks reached a dead end due to demands from the private sector regarding the infrastructure needed for the project.

In an interview with The Jordan Times yesterday, Minister of Agriculture Mazen Khasawneh said: "The lands remaining for the project are 107 kilometres from the nearest water source. The cost of carrying water to the project's location will require over JD60 million, and the government cannot afford that, not in the short run at least."

Khasawneh said the prospective private sector partners insisted that the government pay for infrastructure expenses and lost interest in the project when the government refused to do so.

"The Sudanese government agreed to the government's request to extend the deadline for the project for one more year, but under the current situation I can't see how it is possible to implement it," the minister added.

Also, Khasawneh said yesterday that a group of Spanish businessmen who had expressed interest in investing in Jordan's olive oil sector have not contacted the ministry since visiting the Kingdom several months ago.

The investors had expressed interest in marketing the Kingdom's olive oil after tests showed that it is among the highest quality oil in the world.

The delegates visited the Kingdom earlier this year and discussed with local officials the feasibility of carrying out the project, which, once approved by the government, would have enabled local farmers to sell their produce in European markets.

But Khasawneh said the project will no longer go ahead as the investors have not followed up on these talks.

The minister noted that the government is open to talks with any local, regional or international private sector party regarding investment in Jordan as long as the proposed investment is in the interests of the country and the public.

Source: Jordan Times
### Links (resistance and actions)

- Act Now! for a better PNG
- Alliance paysanne « Stop aux accaparements des terres »
- Asian Peasant Coalition
- awasMIFEE!
- Cameroon Veritas
- Clean sugar campaign (Cambodia)
- CNOP
- Coalición contra el Acaparamiento - Colombia
- Collectif NOPALME
- Collectif pour la Défense des Terres Malgaches
- Dakar Appeal | Llamamiento de Dakar | Appel de Dakar
- FIAN
- Friends of Yala Swamp
- Gardarem la terre et la mer
- Global Land Grabbing II
- Green Scenery
- La Via Campesina
- Land Inc.
- Le Hub Rural
- MILDA
- Oakland Institute
- PANAP
- Paren aquí vive gente
- PCSF
- Plateforme pour une agriculture socialement durable
- Re:Common
- SiLNoRF
- Stop Africa Land Grab
- Synergie Paysanne
- Thoranéy: the land issue in Cambodia
- Zamana
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