



Nigeria: Stop Corporate Land Bazaar in Edo State!

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Okomu Oil Palm Plc, the Dangote Group and United Food Industries Ltd representing Indonesia's Salim Group are to benefit from plans by the Edo State Government to allocate 410,000 hectares of forest land belonging to community people in order to establish large scale monoculture plantations. Only 30,000 will be left for the over 170,000 local farmers in the communities who earn their livelihood from

farmlands and forest resources.

In a statement issued in Benin city, ERA/Friends of the Earth Nigeria said that it was unacceptable for the Edo state Government to shun the original landowners who have lived all their lives and depended on the forests for their sustenance and enter into deals with corporations to pave way for large scale monoculture plantations. ERA/FoEN Executive Director, Godwin Ojo said: "This land bazaar is simply outrageous and unacceptable. We will not sit back and watch as forest concessions including reserves and communal farmlands are taken over by transnational companies with the consent of the Edo state Government. We have said it time and again that plantations are major drivers of deforestation and biodiversity loss."

Ojo explained that the development is even more disturbing when viewed from the prism that the lands are shared out with reckless abandon for plantation cultivation without due process or free, prior and informed consent of community men, women and children who depend on forests and its resources for survival.

He revealed that in communities bordering Iguobazuwa Forest Reserve where French Rubber Plantation giant Michelin is operating and fronting as Rubber Estates Nigeria Limited (RENL) there are cases of human rights abuses like forceful eviction, servitude, hunger and starvation, among others and pointed out that other players of corporate land grab in Edo State include: PRESCO PLC in Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of the State and Okomu Oil Palm Company PLC at Udo, Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, South-south Nigeria.

ERA/FoEN demands the state government to "put a brake on this plan."

See ERA/FoEN press release at <http://www.farmlandgrab.org/post/view/23364-stop-corporate-land-bazaar-in-edo-state-era-foen-cautions>

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