

Land Expropriation for Cooperative Housing in Amhara Region, Ethiopia: Process and Impacts on the Peri-Urban Farming Communities

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SUMMARY

The urban development strategy of Ethiopia is mainly based on expropriation of peri-urban agricultural land from local peri-urban farmers. However, its economy still depends on agriculture, which accounts for more than 42% of the GDP, 90% of the exports, and 85% of total employment.

In Amhara region, cooperative housing program has been implemented in almost all towns of the region to solve the current affordable housing problem of urban residents based on the existing urban land lease policy. The Government delivers land for this program through taking compulsorily the nearby agricultural land from local peri-urban farmers who have given a lifetime right through giving cheap price as compensation in advance. In this case, those farmers lose their main means for generating a livelihood totally when the compensation is in cash; and the compensation calculated with high negotiation between the dispossessed (evicted) and the new settler parties. The main aim of this paper is to assess and examine impacts of expropriation for the current extensive cooperative housing program on peri-urban farming communities in Amhara region. The methodology employed here is mainly case study and analysis of legislations using both primary and secondary data to make the analysis more reliable.

This paper reveals that there is high competing interests on peri-urban areas; peri-urban farmers to sustain their life with agriculture and urban residents especially the members of housing cooperatives for their basic need (shelter). This competing interest should be balanced through conducting reform on land expropriation laws mainly the compensation payment and rehabilitation support for those farming communities to build sustainable urban development, social stability and to get win-win outcome.

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