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Land Accessibility among Rural Farmers in Border Settlements of Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined land accessibility among rural farmers in border settlements of Ogun State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to obtain information from 492 small scale farmers for this study. The study established that majority of the respondents were within the active and productive population (31 – 60 years). The common methods of accessing land among farmers were through renting (35.4%), leasing (21.3%) and by community allocation (12.5%) while none of the farmers had access to land through government allocation. It was also discovered that most of the farmers use the land for commercial farming, residential and subsistence farming. Furthermore, there was significant relationship between farm sizes across the village categories (p=0.005). Most of the respondents could not increase their farm size due to high cost of land (96%), tenure insecurity (62.9%), difficulty of land transaction (62.3%) and inability to transfer land (57.6%). The study concluded that rural farmers should be encouraged to cultivate bigger farm size and campaign should be intensified on area of opportunity in land distribution and land management to encourage more acquisition of land in the study area.

Keywords: Land, Accessibility, Border Settlements, Rural Farmers, Ogun, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Border settlements according to Benneth (2009) are the settlements closer to the international border line between two countries. Border settlements are characterized with vast land which can be used for farming, housing development, rural market, work area among others (Weber, 2012). Land according to United Nation (2006) is an economic resources and an important factor in the formation of individual and collective identity, and in the day-to-day organization of social, cultural and religious life. It is also the primary means of generating a livelihood and a main vehicle for investing and accumulating wealth (Deininger 2005).

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The need to access land according to Omirin (2003) is therefore very important especially in improving the quality of life in rural area as it plays a vital role in poverty reduction and development among rural residents (especially small scale farmers).

Land accessibility as defined by Cotula et al (2006) are the processes by which people (individually or collectively) gain rights and opportunities to occupy and utilize land primarily for productive purposes and other economic and social purposes, whether on a temporary or permanent basis. In another words, access to land is the opportunity or capacity to own, hold, use, manage or control land (Nichols *et al.,* 1999). Moreover, access to land in rural area is a promising strategy for increasing farmers' productive capacity resulting in the

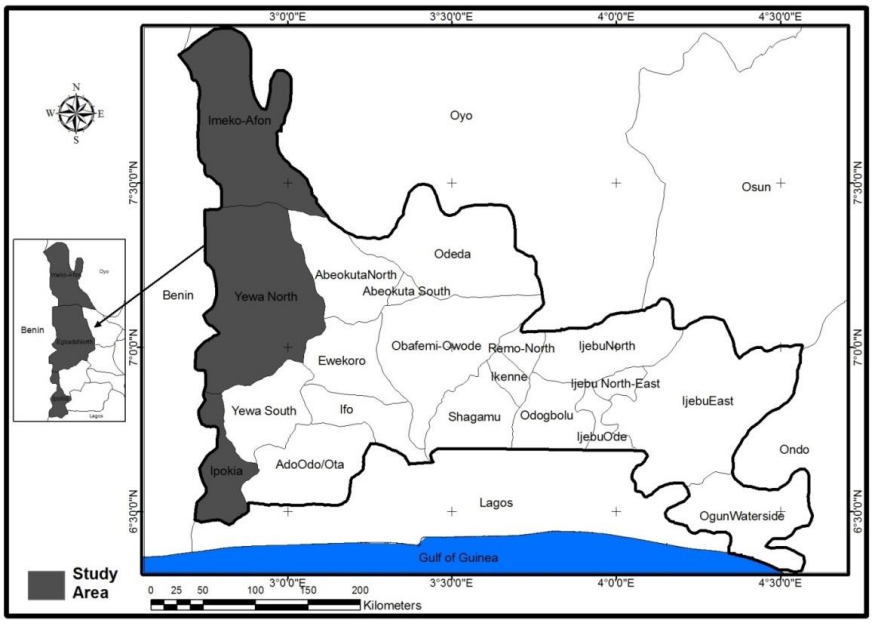

Figure 1.1: Map of Ogun State showing the Study Area: Ipokia,Yewa North, Imeko/Afon.
Source: Ogun State Ministry of Land and Housing (2015)

promotion of human development and poverty reduction (OECD, 2001; World Bank, 2003). However, Land is either not available, or when available it may not be accessible, and when accessible it may not be usable (based on land tenure) for a particular use (Mushamba *et al.,* 2003) especially for the small scale farmers. Farmers (especially the landless) are less privileged and often face discriminations and limited access to rural land because of the inherent and supposed natural dominance of land owners who control rights to land (Department for International Development, 2007; Cornhiel and Frais, 2009). Similarly, the type of land tenure system (private, communal, open access and state) practiced in the different rural communities determine how land can be accessed (Baden, Green, Otoo-Oyortey and Peasgood, 1994; Kameri-Mboti, 2005). For instance, access to land for the rural farmers is often based on custom, ranging from purchase, donations, leasing, sharecropping, inheritance, and squatting illegally on land (Mahamadou, 2010).

In rural communities, the landless or near landless and those with insecure tenure rights typically constitute the poorest and most marginalized and vulnerable groups (United Nations, 2013). The rights of these groups tend to be secondary, rarely extending beyond use rights; moreover, these rights are often unprotected and weak, especially for rural farmers. However, The Habitat Agenda's (1996) position is that access to land and security of tenure are strategic prerequisites for the progressive integration of the rural poor and the development of human settlements. The introduction of Nigeria land law (land use Act 1978 and 1999 constitution) which ensured equal access to land for all Nigerians irrespective of the tribe, religion, level of education, occupation, political affinity and gender has made land to be outside the reach of farmers. As a result of this, access to land in Nigeria has not only become a major threat to food security in the country, it has also led to increase the number of rural poor.

Land accessibility in rural border areas constitutes major challenges in Nigeria. However, these challenges are scantly addressed in researches and policies in spite of the significant place rural border areas hold in the country.

Also, the condition of farmers in rural border settlements of Nigeria requires greater attention because of their nature of vulnerability. Similarly, despite the fact that several scholars have offered substantial insight on land accessibility issues (Omirin, 2003; Odudu, 2015; Agwu *et al.,* 2010; Bello, 2010 and Idoma *et al.,* 2013), yet there has been little concerted effort to incorporate small scale farmers into land accessibility in border studies. It is against this background that the study examined land accessibility among rural farmers in border settlements of Ogun State, Nigeria. The questions addressed in this paper are:

1). Who are the rural farmers in the study area?
2). What are the methods of accessing land in the study area?
3). What are their challenges to land accessibility?

LGA	Villages Category	Identified Rural Border Settlements	Number of Settlements	Number of Settlements to be sampled	Number of Selected settlements	Farmers' Buildings in the selected settlements	Sample size (50%)
Ipokia	Small villages	*Ago Egun, Ibatefin, Ago sasa, Tube	4	1	Ago Egun	127	64
	Hamlets	*Idabata, Ileodun aye, Itaegbe, Oniro, *Paagbon	5	2	Idabata, Paagbon	138	69
	Huts	*Bode Ase, Sekoji, Ikefin, Idoforo, *Idolosa, Idimarun,	6	2	Bode Ase, Idolosa	73	37
Yewa North	Small villages	*Pedepo, Ohunbe, Igbeme, Ojumo	4	1	Pedepo	156	78
	Hamlets	*Gbokoto, Abepe, Obelle, Ibayun, *Ijoko, Amiju	6	2	Gbokoto, Ijoko	143	72
	Huts	*Abule Idi, Arete, Ago Ajeri, Ologori	4	1	Abule Idi	22	11
Imeko/Afon	Small villages	*Iwoye, Idiyan, Idofa	3	1	Iwoye	198	99
	Hamlets	*Ajekota, Ijumo, Ishukun	3	1	Ajekota	75	38
	Huts	*Wasimi-okuta, Ajirin, Tobolo	3	1	Wasimi-okuta	48	24
		Total settlements	38	12		980	492

Source: Adapted from UN Habitat (2009) and Author Field Survey, (2016).
Note: Number of farmers' house was obtained from actual counts of houses in the selected settlements. Also, the identified buildings were the total number of building occupied by farmers in each of the selected settlements.
*Settlements Selected from the Identified Rural border settlements

The Study Area

The study area, Ogun State, is one of the fast developing state in Nigeria; lying in the south western part of the country between latitudes 2061 and 306 east of the Greenwich Meridian. The state is bounded on the West by the Republic of Benin and on the East by Ondo State. To the North is Oyo State while Lagos State and the Atlantic Ocean are to the South (Figure 1.1). The geographical location of the state makes it accessible to the economically developed regions in Nigeria.

Ogun State is made of up 20 local government areas, of importance to this study is Ipokia, Yewa North and Imeko/Afon, because they share border with Benin republic (see figure 1.2). The population of Ipokia, Yewa North and Imeko/Afon are 150,426 (2006 census), 181, 826 (2006 census) and 118,339 (1991 census) respectively (Ogun State Central Department of

Table 2. Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
0 – 30	116	23.6
31 – 60	375	72.7
Above 60	18	3.7
Gender		
Male	318	64.8
Female	173	35.2
Marital Status		
Single	53	10.8
Married	350	71.3
Separated	55	11.2
Widow/widower	33	6.7
Educational qualification		
No formal education	252	51.3
Primary school	171	34.8
Secondary school	57	11.6
Tertiary	11	2.2
Monthly Income		
Below 18000	152	31
18001 – 55000	323	65.8
55001 – 74000	12	2.4
Above 74001	4	0.8

Source: Author fieldwork (2016)

Statistics, 2008). And also the local governments (Ipokia, Yewa North and Imeko/Afon) has made Ogun State to be called 'gateway' to Nigeria from other coastal West African countries like Benin and Togo Republic, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia (Solanke, 2000). Residents in these local government areas are called Yewa (after the name of Yewa river), a clan of the Yoruba people, they inhabit the eastern area of Ogun west senatorial District, Ogun State, in the south-west Nigeria. Yewa clan comprises of four local governments, this include Yewa-south, Yewa North, Imeko-Afon and Ipokia (Ojiako *et al.,* (2014). The major occupation of the people in these communities is arable farming. They cultivate cassava and maize. Also fishing is practiced on Yewa River by some inhabitants of the area to supplement their food crops (Adeyinka, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

Multi-stage sampling technique was employed for the survey in the selected rural border settlements. The first stage involved identification of local governments that shared boundary with Republic of Benin in Ogun State. Information from the pilot survey revealed that out of twenty local government areas in Ogun state, three LGAs shared boundary with the Republic of Benin. These local government areas are Yewa North, Imeko/Afon and Ipokia Local Government Areas (LGAs) and all of them were selected for the study.

The next stage was the identification of settlements with clustering of farmers in the three local government areas. The identified settlements were those that fall within 15km from the International Boundary line (Harvey 2008). These settlements were thereafter stratified into small villages, hamlets and huts based on their sizes (see table 1). The area regarded as small villages are settlements with more than 100 buildings. The hamlets are those with 51 to 100 buildings, while huts are settlements with less than 50 building. This grouping was adopted from UN-Habitat Global Report on Human Settlements (2009). Summary of the villages in each strata are as presented in table 1.

In the third stage, one out of every four villages in each of the settlement stratum was randomly selected without replacement. The list of the selected villages according to their grouping is as presented in Table 1. In the fourth stage, sampled farmers were selected through systematic random sampling techniques. This started with selection of the first farmers' building randomly. The subsequent unit of the investigation were every second (2nd) farmers' building in each of the selected settlements. A household head was sampled in each of the selected building, and questionnaire was

Table 3. Farmers' Methods of Accessing Land in the Study Area

Mode	Villages		Hamlet		Huts		Study area	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Rent	221	37.9	161	33.4	69	32.9	451	35.4
Leasing	120	20.6	103	21.4	48	22.9	271	21.3
Community allocation	77	13.2	57	11.8	25	11.9	159	12.5
Share cropping	24	4.1	40	8.3	20	9.5	84	6.6
Purchase	28	4.8	43	8.9	8	3.8	79	6.2
Inheritance	34	5.8	17	3.5	12	5.7	63	4.9
Gift	34	5.8	10	2.1	8	3.8	52	4
Government allocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others means	45	7.7	51	10.6	20	9.5	116	9.1
Total	*583	100	*482	100	*210	100	*1275	100

Note: * *Higher than the total survey because of multiple responses*
Source: Author's Field survey (2016)

administered appropriately. The Identified buildings were the total number of buildings occupied mainly by farmers' household in each settlement. Using this procedure, a total of four hundred and ninety two (492) questionnaires were administered in the study area. It must be noted that out of 492 questionnaires administered only 491 questionnaires were duly completed and retrieved.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The generated field data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages and table

Socio-economic characteristics

Table 2 shows that majority (72.7%) of the respondents were in the age bracket of 31 – 60years, 23.6% were in the 1 – 30years category while 3.7% were in the range of 60years and above. About 64.8% represented male farmers while 35.2% were female farmers. The result showed that majority (71.3%) of the respondent were married while 11.2%, 10.8% and 6.7% represented separated, single and widow respectively. The table also revealed that 51.3%, 34.8%, 11.6% and 2.2% of the respondents had no formal education, primary school education, secondary school education and tertiary education respectively. About 65.9% of the respondents earned between N18,000 and N55,000 per month.

Method of Accessing Land in the Study Area

Table 3 revealed that 35.4% of farmers accessed their land by renting, 21.3% by leasing and 12.5% by community allocation. Also, 6.6% of the farmers accessed the land by share cropping, while 6.2% and 4.9% accessed the land by purchase and inheritance respectively. The proportion of farmers that accessed the land by gift was 4% while 9.1% accessed the land by other means (i.e squatting, borrowing, permission to use, among others). In addition, none of the respondents had access to land through government allocation. The findings generally agreed with Velez-Guerra (2004) and Nuwagaba *et al.,* (2003) who identified multiple means of land access as renting, inheritance, borrowing, squatting, leasing among others. It can also be observed that informal method was the fundamental source of access to land in the study area.

Further analysis across the settlements (see table 3) revealed that out of 100% in the small villages, 37.9% of the farmers accessed their land by renting, 20.6% by leasing, 13.2% by community allocation, 5.8% by inheritance, 5.8% by gift, 4.8% by purchase, 4.1% by share cropping and 7.7% by other means (i.e squatting, borrowing, permission to use among others). Also, out of 100% in the hamlets settlements, higher proportion of farmers accessed land through rent (33.4%). Other methods include, leasing (21.4%), community allocation (11.8%), purchase (8.9%), sharecropping (8.3%), inheritance (3.5%), gift (2.1%) and other means (i.e. squatting, borrowing, permission to use among others) (10.6%). While out of 100% in the huts settlements, 32.9% had access through rent, 22.9% had access through leasing, 11.9% had access through community allocation, 9.5% had access through share cropping, 5.7% had access through inheritance, 3.8% had access through gift, 3.8% had access through purchase and 9.5% by other means (i.e squatting, borrowing, permission to use among others).

Table 4: Different ways in which Farmers use the Land

Different ways	Villages		Hamlet		Huts		Study area	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Commercial farming	242	24.8	168	22.9	71	23	481	23.8
Residential	230	23.4	172	23.4	68	22	470	23.3
Subsistence Farming	157	16.1	109	14.8	53	17.2	319	15.8
Commercial purpose (i.e trading)	96	9.8	94	12.8	32	10.4	222	11
Workshop (i.e. warehouse)	102	10.4	95	12.9	24	7.8	221	10.9
Grazing	56	5.7	37	5	32	10.4	125	6.2
Rearing	32	3.4	36	4.9	12	3.8	80	4
Others economic activities	62	6.4	24	3.3	17	5.4	103	5
Total	977*	100	735*	100	309*	100	2021*	100

Note: * *Higher than the total survey because of multiple responses*
Source: Author's Field survey (2016)

Plate 1.1: Land used for farming in the study area (Agricultural purposes i.e Yam and Beans)

Plate 1.2: Land used for shelter in the Study Area (Residential Purposes)

Plate 1.3: Land used for working in the Study Area

Plate 1.4: Farmers working on the farm

General observation across the settlements revealed that higher percentage of farmers with 37.9% in small villages, 33.4% in hamlets and 32.9% in huts accessed the land through rent. This shows that farmers' easiest method of accessing land was through rent and also access through rent was perceived as being reliable across the settlements. It was also discovered that none of the farmers had access through government allocation.

Farmer's use of Land, Size of land and Duration of Usage

Table 4 shows multiple responses of different ways in which farmers use land in the study area. The table revealed that 23.8% of the farmers use land for commercial farming, while 23.3% and 15.8% of the respondents use it for residential and subsistence farming respectively. Also 11% of the farmers use the land for commercial purpose (i.e. trading) while 10.9% use it for workshop (i.e. warehouse etc). The proportion of farmers that use the land for grazing, rearing animals and other economic activities were 6.2%, 4% and 5% respectively. It can be observed that farmers use the land based on their preferences of needs (such as better income, housing etc).This is in consonant with Henriques *et al.,* (2011) and Idoma *et al.,* (2013).

Further analysis across the settlements in table 4 revealed that out of 100% of the respondents in small villages, 24.8% use the land for commercial farming, 23.4% for residential purposes, 16.1% for subsistence farming, 10.4% for workshop (i.e. warehouse), 9.8% for commercial purposes (i.e. trading), 5.7% for grazing, 3.7% for rearing and 6.4% for other economic activities.

Table 5. Farm size and Duration of land usage

Farm size (ha)	Village Category			Total	Chi-square (χ^2)	*P*-value
	Small Villages	Hamlets	Huts			
below 1ha	144(59.5%)	74(41.8%)	36(50%)	254(51.7%)		
1 – 1.9 ha	87(36.0%)	99(55.9%)	33(45.8%)	219(44.6%)		
2 – 2.9 ha	9(3.7%)	4(2.3%)	3(4.2%)	16(3.3%)	18.356	0.005
above 3 ha	2(0.8%)	0(0%)	0(0.0%)	2(0.4%)		
Total	242(100%)	177(100%)	72(100%)	491(100%)		
Duration of land usage						
below 1 yrs	15(6.2%)	21(11.9%)	9(12.5%)	45(9.2%)		
2 - 3 yrs	169(69.8%)	120(67.8%)	56(77.8%)	345(70.3%)		
4 - 5 yrs	45(18.6%)	23(13%)	5(6.9%)	73(14.9%)	8.229	0.732
6 - 7 yrs	6(2.5%)	7(4.0%)	0 (0%)	13(2.6%)		
above 8 yrs	7(2.9%)	6(3.4%)	2(2.8%)	15(3.1%)		
Total	242(100%)	177(100)	72(100%)	491(100%)		

Source: Author's Field survey (2016)

Table 6: Challenges to Land Accessibility among Farmers

Challenges of farmers' land accessibility	Responses		% of farmers affected
	No of farmers	Relative % of challenges	
High cost of land	473	28.5%	96.3%
Inadequate land	140	8.4%	28.5%
Inability to use land	149	9.0%	30.3%
Inability to transfer land	283	17.0%	57.6%
Difficulty in land transaction	306	18.4%	62.3%
Insecure tenure	309	18.6%	62.9%
Total	*1660	100.0%	

Note* More than sample size because of multiple responses allowed

Source: Author's Field survey (2016)

In the hamlets, 22.9% of the approximately 100% use the land for commercial farming. Other uses include; residential (23.4%), subsistence farming (14.8%), workshop (12.9%), commercial purposes (12.8%), grazing (5%), rearing (4.9%) and other economic activities (3.3%). Also in the huts settlements (100%), 23% use the land for commercial farming, 22% for residential, 17.2% for subsistence farming, 10.4% for commercial purposes (i.e. trading), 10.4% for grazing, 7.8% for workshop (i.e. warehouse), 3.8% for rearing and 5.4% for other economic activities. It can be concluded that reasonable proportion of farmers use land for Commercial farming (i.e. cultivation of crops like pepper, beans, cassava, maize, yam among others) and residential purposes, this is especially true of small villages, hamlets and huts where land were used for shelter and farming. Shown in plate 1.1 – 1.4 is an example of different land uses.

Also, the analysis of duration of land usage as shown in table 5 revealed that majority (79.5%) of the respondents' duration of land usage were below 3 years. Followed by 4 – 5years (14.9%), 6 – 7 years (2.6%) and above 8 years (3.1%). It can be observed that majority of the respondents' duration of land usage was below 3 years. This can be as a result of different modes of accessing the land in the study area (i.e. purchase, rent, least, inheritance, gift among others). It supports the assertion of Chup, (2004) and Ghebru *et al.,* (2014) that duration of land usage can be attributed to method of accessing the land. In other words, the existing methods of land accessibility have an influence on duration of land usage in the study area.

Further analysis across the settlements revealed that 76% of the respondents' duration of usage was below 3 years, about 18.6% of the respondents' duration of land usage was between 4 – 5 years while 5.4% were above 6 years in the small villages. Also 79.7% accounted for duration of land usage below 3 years, 13% between 4 – 5 years and 7.4% above 6 years in the hamlets. However 90.3% of the respondents' duration of usage was below 3 years, while 6.9% and 2.8% of the respondents' duration of land usage was between 4 – 5 years and above 8 years respectively in the hut settlements. It can be observe that farmers' duration of land usage varies across the settlements. The use of chi – square test shows that there is no significant relationship between the duration of land usage across the settlements categories ($\chi^2 = 8.249$; p-value 0.732).

Analysis on the farm size in table 5 showed that 95.5%, 97.7% and 95.8.9% of the respondents have farm size (ha) of less than 1.9ha in small village, hamlets, and huts settlements respectively, while 4.5% in small villages, 2.3% in hamlet and 4.2% in hut represented small proportion of the respondents that have farm size of above 2.0 ha in the study area. This implied that majority of the farmer are small scale land holders. It could be attributed to the land tenure system in the study area. Also the farm sizes could be due to the financial constraint which makes purchase or rent of land difficult in the study area. The use of chi-square test to know whether there is significant relationship between farm size across the village categories shows that there is significant relationship between the size of farm owned by the farmers across the village categories ($\chi^2 = 18.356$, p-value = 0.005). This shows that size of farm which rural farmers have access to vary with increase in number of farm size across the settlements.

Challenges of Land Accessibilities among Rural Farmers

Studies (Adamu, 2014 and Odudu, 2015) have shown that people encounter different challenges in the process of accessing land. These challenges include; high cost of land, inadequate land, limited use of land, inability to transfer land, insecure tenure and difficulties in land transaction. Presented in Table 6 were the findings which were viewed from two perspectives. The first was consideration from the proportion of farmers who might have one challenge or the other in relation to the total farmers. The second was the proportion of each challenge occurrence relative to the total challenges experienced by all farmers. The table revealed that high cost of land (28.5%), insecure tenure (18.6%), difficulty in land transaction (18.4%) and inability to transfer land (17%) were the main challenges land accessibility among farmers in the study area. It therefore implies that land may be available and usable for different purposes but high cost, tenure insecurity, difficulty in land transaction and transferability constrain make farmers unable to access land in the study area. This finding is not farfetched from the assertion of Bello (2009), Odudu (2015), Omirin (2003) and Boonyabancha (2009) that land is physically available; the major difficulty in land accessibility include high cost of land, tenure insecurity among others.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Nigeria as a nation is blessed with natural resources (land) which can make it self-reliant in food production but the country is threatened by food insecurity. One of the reasons why rural farmers cannot produce enough food has been attributed to inaccessibility to land. This study has examined land accessibility among rural farmers in rural border settlements of Ogun State. In doing this, it examined socioeconomic characteristics of rural farmers, their method of land accessibility and challenges of land accessibility among farmers. It has been established in this study that majority of the respondents were within the active and productive population (31 – 60 years). Many of the farmers had no formal education with quite a few having primary, secondary and tertiary education. The common methods of accessing land among farmers were through renting, leasing and by community allocation while none of the farmers had access to land through government allocation. Majority of the respondents' (70%) duration of land usage were below 3 years. It was also discovered that land was available in the study area but high cost, tenure insecurity, difficulty of land transaction and transferability constrain make farmers unable to access land in the study area.

There is need for integration programs to be organized at the local level for rural farmers so that farmers could access land easily. Similarly, Campaigns should be intensified on area of opportunity in land distribution and land management in the study area. Such campaign should be targeted toward rural farmers. There is also the need to review the Land Use Act to facilitate land accessibility most especially to the rural farmers.

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