

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA and the occupation of the Guinea Savannah


Rural transformations and food systems:

The BRICS and agrarian change in the global South

20-21 April 2015, Cape Town



Overview

- AGRA and 'old hubs' of capital
 - The Green Revolution agenda and AGRA
 - Land, seed and synthetic fertilizer
 - AGRA and South African capital
 - Conclusions
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AGRA and 'old hubs' of capital

The US, EU and African agricultural modernisation

G8 New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN), USAID and US foreign policy

AGRA – Gate Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation – philanthro-capitalism

Corporate drivers – Monsanto, Syngenta, Yara and many others

Gates – Monsanto shares, proprietary (privately-owned) technologies

Rockefeller – CGIAR institutions (2nd food regime)

World Bank – Guinea Savannah – “600 million ha ripe for commercial farming”



The Guinea Savannah



AGRA breadbasket areas

The Potential of Africa's Breadbaskets

Programs in seeds, soils, markets, policy and innovative finance are creating transformational changes across the entire agricultural value chain. The goal is ambitious but achievable: a food-secure and prosperous Africa with a highly efficient and sustainable agricultural system.

The map shows Africa with several countries highlighted in green, representing breadbasket areas. These include Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and South Africa. Other countries are highlighted in light green, representing additional countries where AGRA works. These include Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya. A legend at the bottom right indicates that dark green represents 'AGRA breadbasket countries' and light green represents 'Additional countries in which AGRA works'.

Africa is blessed with unique regions characterized by good soils, adequate rainfall, basic rural infrastructure and large numbers of smallholder farmers. These are Africa's breadbaskets – areas where there exists tremendous potential to increase farmer productivity as well as implement ideas and solutions that, if successful, can be scaled up in other countries.

AGRA's work is focused on catalyzing public and private partnerships to effectively concentrate investment in the breadbasket regions of four countries – Ghana, Mali, Mozambique and Tanzania – in order to achieve breakthroughs in agricultural production.

“increasing yields and expanding cultivated land in fertile areas already endowed with a minimum of essential infrastructure” - AGRA

SAGCOT and Beira Corridor



The Green Revolution agenda


Technological package

Institutions – legal, administrative, technical

Large-scale commercial farming, including plantation/contract farming arrangements

Recognition of importance of small-scale farming base in Africa

Two strategies:

- i) integrate into corporate chains for export
 - ii) growth of commercial small-scale farming class, with increasing economies of scale over time
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Green Revolution logic

Africa with huge resources but low productivity

Linear modernisation

Profit motive and competition as drivers of economy

Value chain approach

Subsidised inputs



Land

Higher investments in land will “induce land holdings to adjust” (AGRA, 2013) – concentration in land holdings and dispossession

NAFSN and land – surveying and individual title

Surveying as the first step in commodification and alienation of land (Craib, 2004)

Irrigation and water



Seed

Majority of seed recycled – plasticity – adaptation to local socio-ecological context – built up by African producers themselves with some external input

Colonialism - introduction of 'non-local' crops like maize, European fruit and vegetables etc.

Green Revolution in US-led second food regime to increase yields – expansion of profitable markets for proprietary technologies

Role of CGIAR and USAID – long-term vision, patient build-up – seed breeding and production - towards commercialisation

Private seed companies following structural adjustment/liberalisation

But focus on 'core' profitable crops – “row crops amenable to industrialisation” (Aline O'Connor, AGRA consultant)

'Orphan' crops ignored – failure to meet strong but localised demand for diverse improved seed



Preparing the ground

Legal and policy frameworks – private ownership of land and germplasm – IP and PVP - regional harmonisation

Technical and governance structures

Education and R&D – AGRA (higher education, variety development)

Contradictory processes – is value in expanding this technical knowledge, but question of competitive, profit-seeking orientation

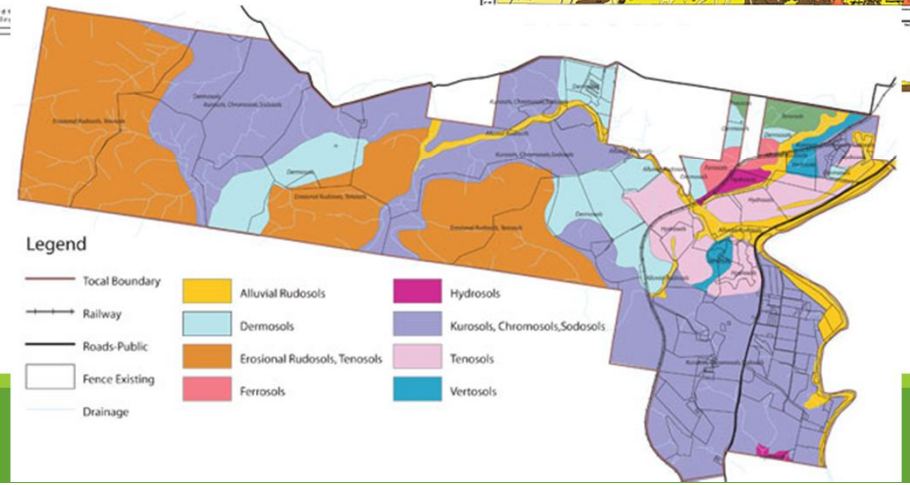
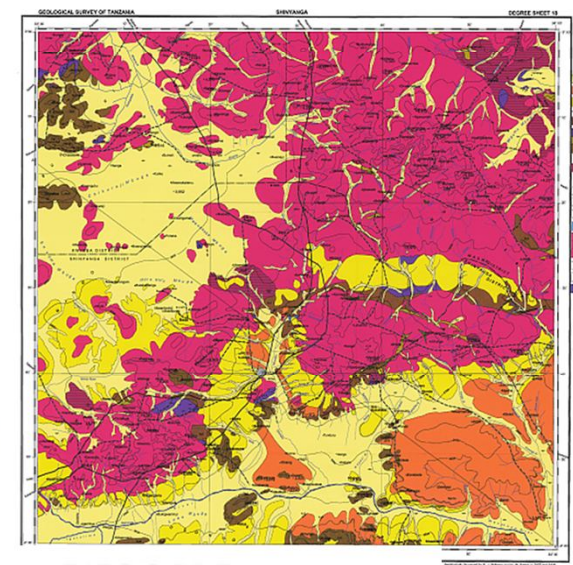
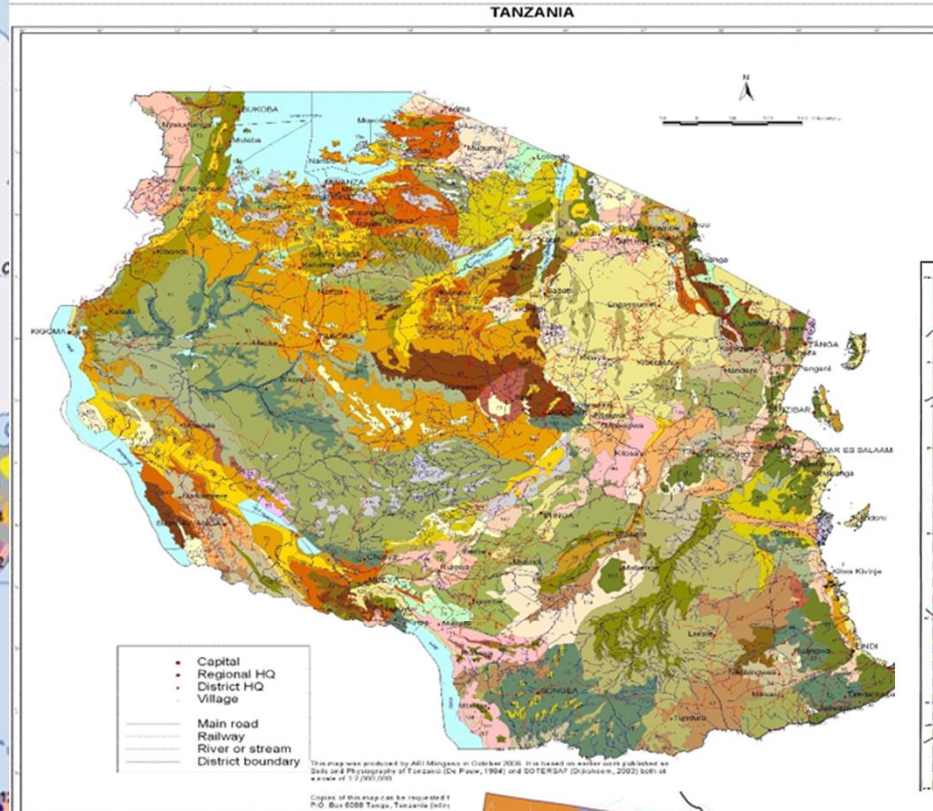
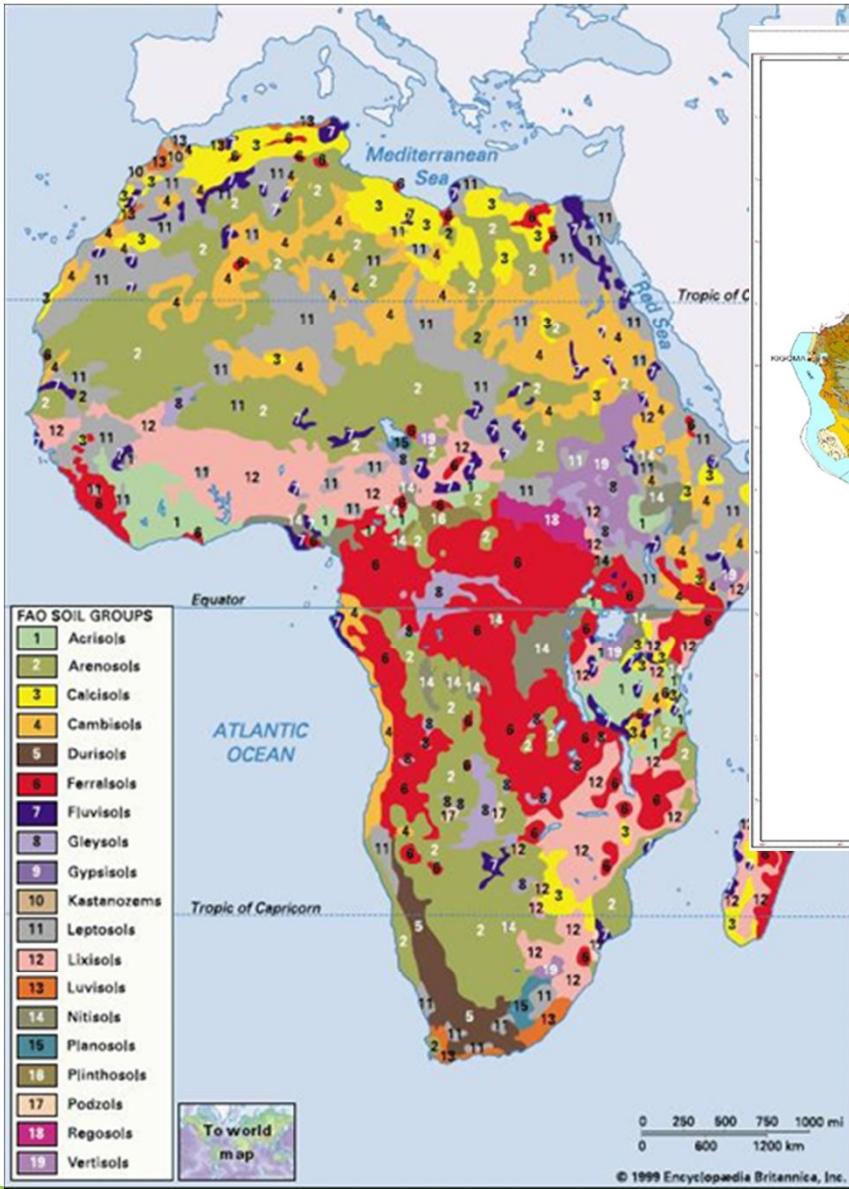
Inappropriate quality criteria

PPPs

AGRA and NAFSN – Scaling Seeds and Technologies Partnership (SSTP), seed enterprises



Synthetic fertilizer




SA capital and AGRA

SA government and BRICS

SA capital and 'old hubs'

Directly working with AGRA: Standard Bank-managed agricultural investment fund, AgriSA/SACAU/PAFO, UKZN training, Senwes in Malawi



Conclusions

Occupation not only physical space, but also institutional space and assets

Altering seed systems and agricultural techniques

Directing public resources to supporting privatised profit

Advancement of some at the expense of others (e.g. land dispossession)

Alternative based on common, democratic ownership of resources and technologies, cooperation in economic activity, build on what exists rather than replacing

Thank you!

END

