

# Land lease, bane of food security in Africa — Research

By Sebastian Syme,  
LEGON

**F**OOD security in Ghana and Sub-Saharan Africa at large is threatened by the leasing of large tracts of farmlands for industrial crop expansion.

According to research conducted on impacts of industrial crop expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa, local food security in the sub-region was under threat, if lands meant for the cultivation of food crops were not protected.

## Findings

At a stakeholder workshop at the University of Ghana last Tuesday to disseminate the findings of the research, the researchers made presentations on their respective research areas.

The study, which was conceptualised in 2014 and started in 2015, were carried out in Ghana, Swaziland, Burkina Faso, Malawi and Guinea, with focus on jatropha, sugar cane, cotton and oil palm.

Setting the tone for the workshop, a lecturer at the University of Tokyo, Prof. Alexandros Gasparatos, made a

presentation on the impact of industrial crops on local food security, income and poverty alleviation in Ghana, and said the reduction of food grown in the country was affecting households and poor diet therapy was causing stunted growth among children in the country, adding that the results applied to the countries in which the research was conducted.

## Jatropha collapse in Ghana

A doctoral student at the University of Tokyo, Mr Ahmed Abubakari, gave an overview of why jatropha collapsed in

Ghana, recalling the several draft policies on the product in the past.

He said all jatropha projects began to collapse in the country between 2008 and 2013 and identified the improper acquisition of land as one of the reasons for the collapse.

Mr Abubakari further identified weak business planning, poor land administration, civil society opposition against jatropha, community conflict and poor productivity as some of the other reasons that accounted for the collapse of jatropha in Ghana.

## Cotton

The Executive Director of the Cotton Development Authority, Mr James B.Y. Wiyor, decried the current state of the cotton industry in the country, stating that the production of cotton had declined drastically because of the falling price of the commodity.

He told the Daily Graphic that production levels in

Quick  
Read

Research conducted on the impacts of industrial crop expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa has established that local food security in the sub-region was under threat with the taking over of lands meant for the cultivation of food crops.

• Prof Alexandros Gasparatos, Associate Professor of Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IRSSS) at the University of Tokyo, Japan, making a presentation at the Stakeholder Workshop on "Food Security Impacts of Industrial Crop Expansion in Sub-Saharan Africa". Picture: MAXWELL OCLLOO



He said while Burkina Faso produced 1,200 kilograms per unit of cotton, Ghana produced only 800 kg per unit.

Mr Wiyor said the sector was not properly organised in Ghana, coupled with poor collaboration among stakeholders and that repelled investors.

A member of the research team, Dr Yaw Agyeman Boafa of the University of Ghana, had earlier presented the perceptions of the impact of reforms on the performance and sustainability of the cotton sector in Ghana and Burkina Faso.