

Human rights, development and agrofuel

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Overview

- On human rights and development
 - Human rights-based development and the right to development
 - State obligations, individually and through international cooperation;
 - Extraterritorial obligations
 - Avoid harm
 - Avoid being complicit in harm, the duty to protect
 - Cooperate for the full realisation of human rights
- Main points in the presentation
 - Freedom from want as a fundamental human rights concern: Visions and reality
 - Biofuel, agrofuel and its intended benefits
 - Reality check of the alleged benefits
 - Agrofuel is often harmful to human rights and the environment
 - The drivers and factors of influence
 - Conclusions : The cure is often worse than the disease
 - What can be done with the diseases?

On freedom from want

- The Four Freedoms as source of inspiration for UDHR
- UDHR article 1 and 25, ICESCR article 11
- The fundamental right to be free from hunger
- The World Food Summit and the Millennium goals
- The reality: 925 million hungry and numbers increasing

From biofuel to agrofuel

- The concept of biofuel
- The emergence of the agrofuel = liquid biofuel for transport
- Curing diseases? The alleged benefits
 - Reduce global warming
 - Improve income and livelihood for the rural poor in developing countries
 - Delaying or solving the energy crisis: Providing a renewable source

A reality check of the alleged benefits: an overall assessment

- Does not reduce GHG emissions except under limited conditions; apart from Brazilian ethanol, more likely to increase emissions – and even there...
- Does not on the average provide net benefit for rural poor, meets strong local opposition, though not from governments...
- Does not contribute **substantially** to mitigate the pending energy crisis
- Overall assessment: Is the cure worse than the diseases?

Harmful to human rights and the environment

- Towards a 'food versus fuel' battle?
- Impact on soaring food prices
- Land speculation and evictions
- Structural transformation of agriculture:
Impoverishment at the bottom
- Impact on rural women
- Accelerated competition for water
- Environmental harm

The drivers and the causes of harm

- The drivers and their motivations
 - USA: Energy security in face of unreliable suppliers
 - EU: Lingering hope of GHG reduction; income from farmers when subsidies of food have to go
 - The artificial market: Subsidies, tax breaks, mandatory blending or other devices
 - Brasil, sugarcane to ethanol; the vast agro-industrial complex
 - Argentina, Paraguay and others: Soya plantations, urban profit and the macrofundia curse
 - Indonesia – reducing petrol import, ensuring urban elite profit while neglecting rural vulnerability
 - Interplay between political inequality and dismal legislation on land and natural resources

Conclusions

- The cure is often worse than the diseases, though not always.
- What should be done to avoid harm?
 - Embargo?
 - Certificates?
 - End all market enticements (subsidies, blending quota, tax breaks and others)

Diseases are real. They need to be addressed

- Global warming needs to be slowed down
 - Find other energy sources
 - Reduce energy consumption
- Improve the livelihood of the rural poor:
 - Strengthen the smallholder conditions.
 - Develop social security
- Refocussing agriculture in developing countries?
 - World Bank/FAO project:
 - The International Assessment of Agricultural knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, April 2008
- **Research on human rights in development is vital**
 - Thank you