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## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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### **Post-socialist Land Use between Abandonment and Land Grabbing**

**Halle (Saale), 20 June 2012 – More than 25 million hectares of former arable land have fallen fallow alone in Russia since the beginning of the transition process. Simultaneously, a considerable percentage of fertile soils in Russia, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine are under cultivation by gigantic agro-holdings. Both factors have multi-faceted impacts on the well-being of man and the environment. Hence, politics and academia are focusing increasingly on analyses and development of solution strategies for sustainable food production and rural development while minimising threats to biodiversity and climate.**

The IAMO Forum 2012 titled ‘Land Use in Transition: Potentials and Solutions between Abandonment and Land Grabbing’ started today and will be end at 22 June in Halle (Saale). The IAMO Forum 2012 provide a platform to discuss cutting-edge research about main trends and impact factors as well as future prospects of land use in transition economies of Eastern Europe, the Former Soviet Union, and East Asia. Renowned international scholars and decision-makers in politics and business discuss one focal topic per conference day in four plenary and 20 parallel sessions.

The IAMO Forum kicked off with a plenary meeting on ‘Land Use Transitions’ chaired by **Peter Verburg**, Head of the Department ‘Spatial Analysis and Decision Support’ at the Institute for Environmental Studies, VU University Amsterdam, and **Helmut Haberl**, Associate Professor at the Institute of Social Ecology Vienna. Discussions focus on the scope and direct causes of changes in land use. The conference is round off by lectures on setting aside and fragmentation of farmland, extensification and intensification in agriculture and forest cover changes.

On Day 2, **Jo Swinnen**, Director LICOS and Professor of Development Economics at Catholic University Leuven, and **Grigory Ioffe**, Professor of Geography at Radford University, will deal with the topic ‘Processes of Land Use Change’. This session will pick up and discuss processes, structures and factors of changes in land use and the resulting variety of impacts on food production, climate and the environment as well as flora and fauna habitats.

The concluding highlight of the IAMO Forum 2012 will on Day 3, 22 June: A panel discussion on 'Large-scale Farmland Investments and Land Grabbing'. **Max Spoor**, Professor of Development Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, World Bank Economist **Klaus Deininger**, the President of the Ukrainian Agribusiness Club **Alex Lissitsa** and **Christian Ebmeyer** of the Russian agricultural enterprise EkoNiva will discuss challenge and appropriate handling of a large-scale land purchase and lease by foreign investors. Their theoretical and practical findings shall be used to elaborate key solution strategies for sustainable land use and publicise results beyond science.

The IAMO Forum 2012 will be hosted by the Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Central and Eastern Europe (IAMO) in collaboration with Geomatics Lab at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and SILVIS Lab at University of Wisconsin-Madison and is supported by DFG and the Ministry of Science and Economic Affairs Saxony-Anhalt.

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### **Further information**

<http://forum2012.iamo.de>

Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Central and Eastern Europe (IAMO)

### **About IAMO**

The Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development in Central and Eastern Europe (IAMO) is an internationally recognised research institution. With more than 60 researchers and in cooperation with other renowned institutes, IAMO scientifically investigates fundamental issues in the agricultural and food sectors and rural regions. Central and Eastern Europe as well as Central and Eastern Asia are the main regions under review. Since its foundation in 1994, IAMO has been a member of the Leibniz Association as an extramural research institute.

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