

**‘Sea is our supermarket,
Land and Bush is our hardware,
together that’s a balanced meal’.**

Hon. Titus Philemon, Governor for Milne Bay

SABLs its Impacts and Way Forward. **(Presented at Southern Regional Development Forum)**

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Act NOW!

- Act NOW! is a community advocacy group that assists people make their voices heard on issues of national importance.
- Act NOW! promotes the National Goals in PNG's Constitution and advocates for those Goals and Directive Principles to guide our socio-economic development.
- Since independence, successive government's have ignored the National Goals and instead focused on promoting foreign owned extractive industries with terrible consequences for rural communities.
- Development issues we currently focus on are Land Grabbing (SABL), Experimental Seabed Mining and Stealing of Public Monies



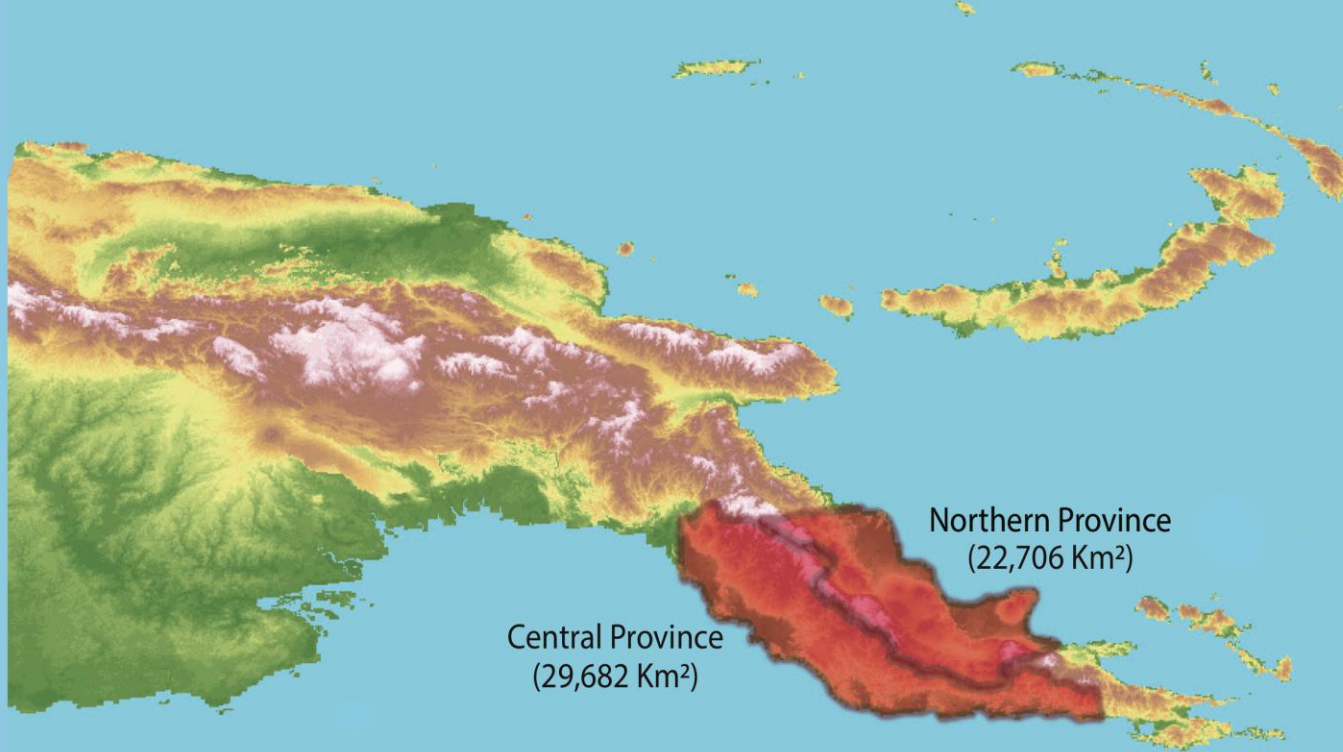
Background on SABL

- SABL leases were introduced in the 1970s to give customary land holders an opportunity to participate in small-scale agriculture activities on their own land.
- This scheme was abused from 2003 to steal over 5 million hectares of customary land, largely for logging.
- The area of land grabbed is as big as both Oro and Central Provinces put together
- The abuse of SABL leases is yet another example of corruption and land alienation and is a consequence of successive government's focus on the wrong model of development



SABL Land Grab in Papua New Guinea

How much land has been stolen?



5.2 million hectares is equivalent to about **7.4 million rugby fields**



which, if laid end to end would stretch for **740,000 kilometers!**

That's all the way to the moon and almost all the way back!



The total area covered by Special Agriculture Business Leases (SABLs) is **5.2 million hectares** (52,000 square kilometers).

This is the same as the land areas of the Central and Northern Provinces combined!

Commission of Inquiry

- In 2011, a Commission of Inquiry was launched.
- A total of 77 leases were referred to the COI for investigation but the reports covered only 42. The reports were published in 2013
- Summary of SABL COI Findings
 - Lack of informed consent from land holders
 - Widespread by fraud by public servants and politicians
 - Legal non- compliance



Current situation

- The government claims the leases have been cancelled, but leaseholders still remain on the land.
- National Forest Authority has not confirmed that logging in SABL areas has been stopped.
- In 2016, one third of total log exports came from SABL areas.
- Police still remain in SABL areas intimidating local people trying to defend their land against illegal logging and palm oil
- No compensation has been paid to the victims of the land grab



Impacts of SABL

- The SABL land grab has promoted corruption and undermined good governance.
- Large areas of forest have been illegally destroyed
- Local peoples lives are harder because of loss of gardens, cash crops, and small businesses.
- People are being forced to work in low wage jobs and depend on foreign companies for basic necessities
- Conflict and violence is now the norm in once peaceful communities.



Way Forward

SABLS

- Stop all logging in SABL areas.
- Withdraw all police personnel
- Evict the foreign companies trespassing on customary land
- Pay compensation to local communities

LAND ALIENATION

ACADEMIC RESEARCH SHOWS CUSTOMARY LAND IS MOST VALUABLE AND USEFUL WHEN LEFT IN THE CONTROL OF CUSTOMARY LANDHOLDERS.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST STOP PROMOTING LAND REGISTRATION AND TRYING TO TAKE CONTROL AWAY FROM LOCAL PEOPLE

INSTEAD GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROMOTE EXTENSION SERVICES AND OTHER SCHEMES TO HELP RURAL PEOPLE STAY ON THEIR LAND



For more information, visit our
website www.actnowpng.org



Thank You

