Under a scrappy tarpaulin, Siasa Kasanura sits on a plastic chair surrounded by the impeccably organised records of his village. Wedged among the piles of folders and papers, Kasanura, the community chairperson, says he is uncertain he can keep it all in order for much longer.

The Razaba Farm in north-eastern Tanzania is the site of a proposed 5,000-hectare industrial sugarcane project by Swedish-owned company EcoEnergy. The new project was announced in 2011, and there was excitement at the time within the community as the villagers were promised a long list of sweeteners, which, Kasanura says, never materialised.

"When the project came, we were told many things about how our lives would improve," he said. "But now it's like we are living on this land as refugees because we have been told we don't belong here."

Four years after what is called the "Bagamoyo project" was announced, many of the 1,300 inhabitants who need to be resettled to make way for the plantation still do not know how much they will be compensated, where they will be resettled, or when the project will happen.

"Obviously when you're placed in such uncertainty, any human being remains unhappy," said Sudi Machupa, a 56-year-old farmer living in nearby Bozi village, also to be resettled. "For a human being to have their land evaluated by a company and then have to suspend all their economic activities, they have nothing to look forward to, so we cannot be happy."

The Bagamoyo project is one of the flagship initiatives in Tanzania's drive to industrialise and commercialise its agricultural sector. Tanzania is the poster boy in a push by Western donor agencies like the World Bank and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for what they call the "African Green Revolution".

It is a project that civil society organisations warn threatens smallholder farmers like those in Bagamoyo, and reconfigures agriculture in the interests of big, often Western, multinational companies.

The original 'Green Revolution' saw productivity gains across post-war Asia and Latin America by a huge process of industrialisation and new commercial inputs including seeds and fertiliser. But critics point out that increased yields did not always increase food security for the people of those regions. "It failed once and they're trying it again," said Michael Farrelly, who works for the Tanzania Organic Agriculture Movement.

Many argue that if successfully implemented in Tanzania the model will be pushed out across the rest of Africa. "Tanzania is an emblematic case," added Doug Hertzler, senior analyst on land rights issues at ActionAid.

"All the aid agencies point to Tanzania as being a big case for them. I would say in this whole model, Tanzania and Ethiopia were really the starting points because there wasn't a lot of private sector there." Interest in the 'African Green Revolution' among multinational corporations picked up after the world food price crisis of 2007-08 when prices for agricultural commodities spiked. It is also backed by influential groups like the Gates Foundation.

In 2012, Barack Obama launched the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (New Alliance) at the G8 Camp David Summit. It was to be a partnership of G8 (now G7) countries who would work along African governments and some of the biggest transnational companies in the world, including Monsanto and Cargill, with the stated aim of lifting 50 million people out of poverty in a decade.

Tanzania was among the first 10 countries to sign up. The African governments involved made promises about how they would ensure a healthy business climate, while multinationals made commitments to start investing. The UK, which held the leadership of the G8 in 2013, and with it the New Alliance, committed at least £63m of British aid money to the initiative in Tanzania alone.

As part of this push, the Tanzanian government has pushed for investments in what it calls the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (Sagcot), an initiative unveiled by President Jakaya Kikwete at the World Economic Forum in 2011.

It was meant to streamline investment into the most attractive agricultural regions in the country, stretching from the eastern coast near the capital Dar es Salaam to the western border with Zambia.

But in the rush to attract investors, many say that local communities are having their lands grabbed and have not been properly compensated or consulted over mega-projects, as in Bagamoyo.

One of the major problems is that land titling in Tanzania, as in much of east Africa, is rudimentary, so farmers often have no legal backing to hold on to land they may have lived on communally for generations.

Smallholder farmers complain that the Tanzanian government in their rush to commercialise agriculture takes the sides of the investors instead of the people they are meant to represent. Timothy Paul, who works for Mviwata, a network of smallholder farmers in the country, put it simply: "The government is always on the side of the investor."

On top of this, the Sagcot center, which is primarily funded by American aid agency USAID, has been called a de facto Chamber of Commerce which lobbies the government on the part of foreign investors.

One company operating in the Sagcot region they often point to is Agrica, which is registered in tax haven Guernsey but run by London-based social entrepreneur Carter Coleman, and has a 6,000 hectare rice project in western Tanzania.

"We're the sort of showcase Sagcot project," he said, adding, "The most value Sagcot has been to date is advocacy to improve the business environment. When the government's done certain things that have been damaging to agricultural investors, [Sagcot] lobbied them to stop."

For his part Geoffrey Kirenga, chief executive of the Sagcot centre, denies this. "We do not do lobbying," he said. "We are just facilitating, we are like honest brokers that can allow for responsible investments to happen."

It's not just the Tanzanian government: Western governments are complicit, too, say civil society groups, which complain that public funds are being filtered through aid agencies to help already-rich corporations penetrate new markets.

"The unfortunate reality is that many aid agencies, whether it's USAID or DfiD, have become the handmaidens for the corporate sector," said Anuradha Mittal, executive director of the Oakland Institute, a thinktank in the US.

"They have become the handmaidens for privatising and the commodification of resources in the developing world. They come in cloaked in the language of development and poverty eradication but if you look at the impact of the projects that they are investing in, they are eradicating the poor themselves."

Another place this tension is obvious is the bustling city of Morogoro which sits in Tanzania's southern highlands, better known for its safari tours, but also the country's agricultural capital, surrounded by smallholder farmers working the land.

A 20-minute drive in a 4x4 takes you to the Kidago Farm where this battle -- between western donors, investors, and a government wanting to industrialise against farmers trying to maintain their way of life -- is heating up.

The farmers, many who have lived in the area for generations, are in the middle of a dispute with a local investor, Mgolole Agro, who bought the land in 2005. The government have given 600m Tanzanian shillings ($300,000) in loans from its development bank's "Special Window for Agriculture" to help the project along.

But, since the new investor took over, there have been attempts, some successful, to evict the farmers who were residing there.

"After this investor took this land, many things have happened," Saif Litei, head of the farmers group at Kidago Farm, told us. "Firstly, no one is now allowed to live inside this area, and no production is taking place by the farmers, because the investor has taken over all the land. And then the houses which were inside, he just burnt them."

The Tanzanian government - as shown by its willingness to disburse public money to investors - has enthusiastically embraced the "Green Revolution" model. Many of the farmers said, consequently, that they did not feel supported by their elected representatives, pointing to alleged corruption all the way up the chain, from the local councillors to the national administration, which meant that their concerns were not heard.

They also claimed that a lack of literacy and legal knowhow among the community had been taken advantage of by investors, alongside their government, to trick them into signing disadvantageous agreements.

"Life has been difficult, particularly for women," says Amina Zengwe, 40, and resident of Kidago Farm. "During the bad times the women couldn't run away because they had to stay with their children. And staying with children meant they then starved. They were hungry, they had no food, and sometimes in those years even girls who were studying were afraid to go to school because of the conflict." She pauses and adds: "We have no hope."