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CONFERENCE ON ASSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA BY 2020
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ASSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA BY 2020 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 1 APRIL 2004

The Conference on Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020: Prioritizing Actions, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships, organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), began today in Kampala, Uganda. Participants heard opening remarks and keynote addresses, and attended panel discussions and regional fora throughout the day. In the evening, the winners of the Youth Writing Contest and the World Food Prize 2004 were announced.

OPENING PLENARY

Rajul Pandya-Lorch, Head of IFPRI's 2020 Vision Initiative, welcomed participants and called the conference to order. Isher Judge Ahluwalia, IFPRI Board of Trustees Chair, said IFPRI's role at this event was that of a facilitator, stating that the conference was African-driven from its inception. Noting that sustainable democracy has never been built on empty stomachs, John Joseph Otim, Conference Advisory Committee Chair, said food and nutrition security are critical concerns not only for Africa, but also for the international community. Joachim von Braun, IFPRI Director General, stressed the importance of pan-African cooperation and highlighted five priority actions, namely: enhancing agricultural productivity; fostering pro-poor economic growth through trade and market development; building human and institutional capacity; improving health; and strengthening governance.

Wilberforce Kisamba-Mugerwa, Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda, spoke on collaboration with IFPRI in agricultural studies on issues of gender, HIV/AIDS, health, policies and institutions.

Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, officially opened the conference. He said Africa leads the way in hunger and malnourishment, and underscored the importance of education and market access for ensuring food security. He urged a reconsideration of the role of peasants, suggesting investment in large-scale agriculture. He noted that social transformation is the key to sustainable food security.

Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal, elaborated on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), highlighting the initiative's regional approach to development and focus on the private sector and good governance. Noting common problems among African countries, he called for increased inter-African trade and stressed the need to address food and nutrition security within the framework of internal development.

Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria, addressed external and internal constraints to agricultural production, highlighting, *inter alia*, the detrimental effects of subsidies, market barriers, conflict and poor governance. He recommended: prioritizing agriculture in national policies; focusing on areas of comparative advantage; developing sustainable strategies for managing soil and water; and introducing appropriate technologies.

PLENARY SESSIONS

KEYNOTE ADDRESSES: Africa's food and nutrition security situation – where are we and how did we get here? Isatou Jallow, National Nutrition Agency, The Gambia, said nutrition security is key to development, and depends on adequate food and health services, care practices and sanitary environments. She said nutrition insecurity goes beyond food insecurity, and added that, while the cycle of malnutrition is "vicious," it can be broken.

Looking ahead: Long-term prospects for Africa's food and nutrition security: Mark Rosegrant, IFPRI, presented on the prospects for Africa's food and nutrition security under alternative investment scenarios. He said current policies and level of investment will lead to increased childhood malnutrition in the long term, but underscored that food security goals and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on safe drinking water could be achieved with improved policies and increased investment in agricultural productivity.

Mitigating, preventing, and ending conflicts in Africa: Graça Machel, Foundation for Community Development, Mozambique, pointed to conflict as one of the main causes of food insecurity in Africa, and highlighted the pernicious effect of land mines long after conflict resolution, and the destabilizing role of refugees on neighboring countries. She called for incorporating women, youth and rural populations in reconstruction efforts and decision making.

Statement from the European Commission: Speaking on behalf of Poul Nielsen, Sigurd Illing addressed whether food security could be sustained by increased and more effective aid in the context of the EC's aid policies. Noting that food aid is not an appropriate instrument for fostering long-term agricultural development, he highlighted the EC's strategy to eliminate food aid, except in post-crisis situations.

Achieving sustainable agricultural growth in Africa: Lessons from experience: Recalling the achievements of the Green Revolution, Norman Borlaug, Sasakawa Africa Association, noted the role of technology in attaining sustainable agricultural growth. He identified the lack of infrastructure as "the curse of Africa" and political will as a crucial enabler in transforming agriculture.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS: Why has Africa not yet achieved food and nutrition security? This panel was chaired by Richard Mkandawire, NEPAD Secretariat.

Josué Dioné, UN Economic Commission for Africa, said the main cause for downgraded conditions in Africa lies in historical policy inconsistencies that have led to the undercapitalization of agriculture. He identified market development, water management, land tenure formalization, regionalization of research, and the treatment of HIV, as possible pillars on which a renewed long-term agricultural policy may be based.

Noting that producing food is not necessary for achieving self-sufficiency, Robbie Mupawose, Barclays Bank of Zimbabwe, emphasized the importance of income security and creating business enterprises. He urged land ownership by women and entrepreneurs, and recommended listening to farmers, creating viable farmer associations, and adopting biotechnology.

Mandivamba Rukuni, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, provided an interpretation of agricultural development since the 1960s. He recognized political will to invest in agriculture among African governments, but noted a time-lag in implementation. He highlighted weakness in key support institutions for small-holder farmers, praised traditional land tenure models, and encouraged investment in social and physical capital.

Rosebud Kurwijila, African Union, outlined causes of Africa's food and nutrition insecurity, highlighting among others: inadequate food supply, distribution and access; traditional cultural practices

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prohibiting women and children from eating certain foods; and changing food habits. She stressed the need to recognize the central role of women.

In closing, Chair Mkandawire summarized the key challenges for food and nutrition security, including translating political commitment into action, and addressing questions of gender, governance, transparency and mutual accountability within Africa and among development partners.

PARALLEL SESSIONS

REGIONAL FORA: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE REGIONS: Southern Africa: This regional forum was chaired by Bongiwe Njobe, Department of Agriculture, South Africa, and moderated by Tobias Takavarasha, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network.

Johann Kirsten, University of Pretoria, stressed the need to focus on how to implement priority actions. Noting that political concerns often impede the functioning of systems, institutions and markets and hinder business opportunities, he said food and nutrition security goals can be met if all stakeholders have a common vision and strategy for achieving these goals. He underscored the role of transportation networks in linking and developing regional markets, and argued that efforts toward good governance and infrastructural development are meaningless without the elimination of agricultural subsidies in developed countries.

Ajay Vashee, Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions, outlined examples of "negative" government interventions from the perspective of Southern African farmers. He noted the importance of providing social services, such as education, healthcare and roads, and stressed the need for macroeconomic stability, enabling national legislation and consistent policy requirements. He said uncontrolled food aid hinders sustainable agriculture, and urged building capacity of farmers to be better organized and better able to articulate their interests.

West Africa: Session Chair Mamadou Kone, Minister of Scientific Research, Côte d'Ivoire, welcomed participants. Moderator Achi Atsain, West African Economic Association, outlined regional concerns for food security, including: market access; negotiation capacity; governance; conflicts; migration; lack of implementation of agreed legal instruments; and investment in infrastructure.

Speaking on challenges to nutrition security, Rosanna Agble, Ghana Health Service, stressed technical, political and institutional issues. She suggested that nutrition be viewed as a development rather than a humanitarian issue. She urged strong political support, collaboration with and among sectors, and a proactive nutrition agenda.

Michel Benoit-Cattin, French Agricultural Research Center for International Development, provided several suggestions for moving forward to address regional food and nutrition security. He supported increased agricultural research, free movement of people and goods within the region, investment in infrastructure, and regional cooperation.

Uzo Mokwunye, UN University, identified restoration of soil nutrients as key to assuring food security and productivity. Observing that phosphorous is abundant in West Africa, he suggested its application to raise plant nitrogen fixation and increase productivity.

Kanayo Nwanze, The Africa Rice Center, noted that agriculture is the backbone of Africa's economic development. Highlighting the New Rice for Africa programme (NERICA), he said scientific and technological breakthroughs could boost Africa's productivity and urged African leaders to take ownership of such technologies.

East and Central Africa: This forum was chaired by Newai Gebre-ab, Ethiopian Development Research Institute, and moderated by Isaac Minde, Eastern and Central African Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis.

Joseph Wanjama, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya, noted that the problem is not one of lack of resources but of coordination of available resources, and stressed the need to identify partnerships and scale up successful experiences.

Asha-Rose Migiro, Minister of Community Development, Gender and Children, Tanzania, highlighted women's role in securing food and nutrition and called for empowering women through law and development policies, particularly those that address land tenure and public representation.

Kankonde Mukadi, Protestant University of the Congo, called for clarification on the 10% allocation of national budgets to agriculture called for under the Maputo Declaration. He urged close and equitable collaboration among researchers and between IFPRI and local agronomy faculties, to address topics of interest shared by academia, civil society and government.

Northern Africa: *This forum was reported on by IFPRI.* This session was chaired by Mohand Laenser, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry, Morocco, and moderated by Mohamed Ait-Kadi, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry, Morocco.

Mohammed El Mourid, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas, described the constraints to agricultural and rural development posed by climate change, lack of water, and limited land and soil resources, as well as the opportunities offered by the region's diverse agroecologies and its human resources. He emphasized the importance of science and technology in advancing development in the region.

Mustapha Guellouz, Enterprise, Livestock and Pasture Office, Tunisia, commented on efforts to promote livestock and milk production, stating that this sector faces many obstacles but provides substantial opportunities.

El-Sayed Zaki, Sudan, noted that most countries in the region share: a high level of population growth, populations distributed in narrow geographic areas, and preference for food self-sufficiency over food security. He noted a long-established dependency on trade in North Africa, encouraging integration of regional markets with global markets, as well as with markets of African neighbors.

WRAP-UP DISCUSSION: REGIONAL FORA

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE REGIONS: This session was chaired by Per Pinstrup-Andersen, CGIAR.

Reporting on the Southern African forum, Njobe said it focused on: markets and trade, food aid, human and natural resource productivity, and institutions. She identified among others the need for good governance within industry and developed countries, and noted calls for: exit strategies and alternatives to food aid; eliminating subsidies; and investing in transportation networks.

Gebre-ab summarized the regional forum on East and Central Africa, highlighting discussions on: the assigned 10% investment in agriculture under the Maputo Declaration; women's empowerment; trade; small-farmer credit; natural resource management; coordination; and partnerships.

For West Africa, Kone highlighted: linkages between food and nutritional issues; political commitment; moving from rhetoric to action; capacity building; and generating conditions for the promotion of successful technological breakthroughs. Other issues raised included: strengthening agronomical research; better linkages between research and education; better communication of research findings and results; and enhancing investment in material and financial infrastructures.

Laenser said the Northern African forum linked regional food insecurity to inadequate food productivity caused by lack of water, infertile soils and land fragmentation. He reported that participants called for, *inter alia*, investment in agricultural technology, water management, improved human resources, participatory approaches, and sound policy and legal frameworks for partnerships.

Chair Pinstrup-Andersen then summarized the needs identified in the regional fora, including: better governance; political commitment; further agricultural research; and improved water management.

PRIZE ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARD CEREMONY

King Oyo of Tooro, Uganda, presented the Youth Writing Contest Award to Nelisiwe Mbali Mtsweni, South Africa, who recited her winning essay entitled "Emancipation from emaciation."

Borlaug and Robert Havener, World Food Prize Foundation, announced Yuan Longping, China, and Monty Jones, Sierra Leone, as recipients of the World Food Prize 2004, both of whom were awarded for their contributions toward rice productivity.