



## OPEN LETTER TO THE MEDIA

**July 10 2009.** G8 leaders' \$20bn funding commitments at L'Aquila represent a crucial step forward in addressing the causes of world hunger. We applaud world leaders in recognising that 900 million smallholder farmers can only overcome hunger if agricultural policies are reformed in an integrated and systematic way. Farming First coalition members have articulated a six-point global action plan for a new agricultural model, reforming agriculture with smallholder farmers at the centre.

Much knowledge exists currently that could be used immediately by farmers and capacity building must focus on actively sharing what is known. Farmers need accessible agricultural inputs and other resources, locally relevant knowledge on best management practices and functional markets across the agricultural value chain. To achieve sustainable agriculture, they also need incentives for improving ecosystem services, protection from unnecessary harvest losses and a pipeline of R&D which particularly supports those regions and crop-types most vulnerable to climate change.

These measures can help transform the world's subsistence farmers into small-scale entrepreneurs. We invite national governments and development institutions to work closely with all farming stakeholders to build on existing, proven experience. Moreover, we encourage the G-8 to invest funding in farmers' organisations directly, to enable them to deliver a wide range of services to farmers down to the grassroots level.

The productivity gap between the developed and developing worlds is often ten-fold. Closing that gap holds the key to future food security. We need a concerted, collaborative and comprehensive response to achieve it.

Yours truly,

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