



G8 Leaders Must Address Future Food Crisis

- G8 Summit Can Use Agriculture to Boost Development Worldwide -

July 8 2009. World leaders must not back away from addressing the future food crisis, say supporters of the 'Farming First' coalition ahead of the G8 summit in Italy.

Since global food prices surged in July 2008, world leaders have begun to address agricultural productivity and farmers' livelihoods. After a generation of neglect, the World Bank and UN Commission for Sustainable Development, among other bilateral and multilateral bodies, have announced progressive agricultural policies and increased funding.

'Farming First' is a comprehensive framework for a more sustainable global agricultural model. The 'Farming First' plan consists of six interlinked principles, which together aim to help farmers grow enough food, improve their livelihoods, and safeguard the world's natural resources.

Dr. Lindiwe Sibanda, a native Zimbabwean and CEO of the Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) said:

"During the 2008 food crisis, it became clear that global governance systems on food security were unable to protect those most at risk. There is the promise of money now, but it must be used wisely."

Ajay Vashee, a Zambian farmer and the first African President of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), said:

"Farmers feed the cities. If we continue to neglect the agricultural sector, as has been the case over the past 20 years, this farmers' ability to feed cities is in jeopardy. It's not vast sums of money; it's the political will and the connections which have been lacking."

For the first time, in April 2009, the G8 Agriculture Ministers met to discuss the global food crisis. They warned of the potential for increasing hunger and political instability from structural inadequacies in the global food production system.

Dr. Marjatta Eilitta, Director of the IFDC's North and West Africa Division, said:

"In sub-Saharan Africa today, smallholder farmers still lack the fundamental resources which they need to manage their farms and make them profitable and sustainable. Markets in these regions are underdeveloped and fragmented, and farmers often do not have access to the information they need to make wise decisions."

In July 2008, increasing prices for staple foods caused a global food crisis with prices doubling and tripling in many regions. While prices in the developed world

have since dropped, food prices in much of the developing world remain high.

To address these concerns, a number of multilateral and bilateral policy bodies have since reprioritised agriculture in their policy and funding decisions:

- The World Bank has tripled agricultural funding from \$4bn to \$12bn
- The UN Commission for Sustainable Development has “stressed that agriculture lay at the centre of sustainable development.” (UNCSD press release)
- US President Barack Obama has announced \$448 million in new funding for African and Latin American agriculture with a commitment to double funding to \$1bn by 2010
- The Chinese administration has increased agriculture spending by 20% (an extra 121bn yuan or £13bn) to boost yields and raise rural incomes
- The African Union summit in Libya focused on the theme of “Investing in agriculture for economic growth and food security”

Nonetheless, in June 2009, the FAO announced that global hunger levels have surpassed the 1 billion person mark, higher than at any other time in history. Rising food demand, climate change pressures, water scarcity, and market price volatility are still threatening global food security in the poorest and most vulnerable regions in Africa and South Asia.

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Notes to Editors

Farming First' (www.farmingfirst.org) is a global campaign to put agriculture back at the centre of the international development agenda. The supporters are a group of global organisations, representing a cross-section of the agricultural production chain. These organisations include the world's farmers ([IFAP](#)), the world's scientists ([ICSU](#), [FANRPAN](#), [IFDC](#)) and business and industry ([CropLife](#), [IFA](#)).

'Farming First' aims to have its 6 principles incorporated into global agriculture policy in order to avoid future food crises and to help avoid the social unrest which may come from 3bn people being in food poverty.

See www.farmingfirst.org or www.youtube.com/user/FarmingFirst or follow us on Twitter on www.twitter.com/farmingfirst.