17 May 2012
For immediate release

Farming First Calls for G8 Leaders to Live Up to Food and Nutrition Commitments
World leaders need to build on past food security and nutrition pledges at the G8 Summit in order to address urgent global hunger, health and poverty issues

With food security a prominent feature in this year’s G8 Summit, the Farming First coalition urges world leaders to follow through on the pledges made during the 2009 L’Aquila Summit.

As part of their focus on global health and food security this year, G8 leaders will discuss a global partnership made under the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) in 2009. At that time leaders pledged to partner with global governments to improve agriculture and bolster food security through $22 billion worth of new investments, over three years, towards a comprehensive strategy focused on sustainable agriculture development.

Since then, world leaders have failed to keep their pledges, with donors delivering only 22% of the funds promised.

Recently, President Obama invited four leaders from African countries, Ghana, Benin, Tanzania, and Ethiopia to join G8 leaders at the Summit for a session on food security. Many parts of Africa are facing a food crisis as they struggle to cope with high levels of drought, poverty, high grain prices, disease and environmental degradation, and it is important they are involved in the discussions too.

Farming First welcomes the agenda but, in light of neglected promises from L’Aquila, calls for measurable, new funding which is aligned with existing initiatives.

Robert Carlson, President of the World Farmer’s Organisation, says: “G8 leaders should take action and build on the food security pledges they made in L’Aquila. Renewed funding should be coordinated, transparent and farmer-centred as well as being inclusive and broad-based. It should recognise agriculture’s role reducing poverty, stimulating growth, and ensuring food and nutrition security.”

To implement smarter programmes for food security and nutrition, Farming First recommends a focus on:

1. Including agricultural activities in national nutrition strategies and promote the role of farmers as nutrient providers.

2. Specifically addressing the needs of women farmers and recognising their roles as key partners in improving household nutrition and delivering nutritional interventions, such as dietary supplements.
3. Increasing the productive capacity of farmers in food insecure countries through a focus on:
   a. Land tenure security
   b. Access to financial services, including savings, financing and risk mitigation for farming and value addition
   c. Access to technology, inputs and water harvesting
   d. Agricultural extension services to share knowledge with farmers
   e. Reduced post harvest losses through storage
   f. Improved rural infrastructure

Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, a Farming First spokesperson and CEO of FANRPAN, says: “Engaging with African heads of state could be an important opportunity for G8 leaders to establish a broader set of solutions and make the global partnerships formed under the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative more productive and enable mutual accountability.”

ENDS

Media Contact
Katie Start
c/o Glasshouse Partnership
+44 (0)207 908 6484 (office)
+44 (0)7817 923375 (mobile)
katies@glasshousepartnership.com

About Farming First
Farming First is a global coalition representing the world’s farmers, scientists, engineers and industry as well as more than 100 national farmers’ associations and agricultural development organisations. Farming First calls for a broad-based, knowledge-centred approach to increase agricultural output in a sustainable and socially responsible manner.

To view Farming First’s position on relevant topics, visit:
Food Security: www.farmingfirst.org/food-security
Climate Change: http://www.farmingfirst.org/climate/
Women: http://www.farmingfirst.org/women/

Website: www.farmingfirst.org
Twitter: www.twitter.com/farmingfirst
YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/FarmingFirst/