
**UN HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Roundtable 1

**Intervention by IFAP Secretary General, David King
on behalf of President Ajay Vashee**

September 20, 2010

United National Headquarters

Mr. President, Excellencies, Delegates and Observers,

It is an honour for me to present four key messages on poverty, food security and gender on behalf of the farm families represented by IFAP. I also bring apologies from the IFAP President, Ajay Vashee, who is unfortunately retained on his farm in Zambia.

1. Investing in small-holder agriculture is essential to reducing hunger and poverty, and underpins success with all the Millennium Development Goals, including those regarding health and well-being.
2. Funding agricultural development programs is critical to achieving the MDGs so we are counting on the G-8 countries to follow through on their L'Aquila funding commitments.
3. Programs are needed that are 'Farmer-centred and knowledge-based' so that the full potential of farmers, both men and women, including small-holder and commercial farmers, can be harnessed in making food security and sustainable development a reality.
4. Farmer organizations have a vital contribution to make to the development of agriculture and rural communities. Unless small-scale farmers are organized, they will remain politically powerless and economically disadvantaged. One of the keys to a successful fight against hunger and poverty is therefore having well-organized partners to work with. Strengthening the institutional capacity of farmers' organizations therefore needs to be a cornerstone of any strategy for reaching the rural poor.

Farmers' organizations can contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals in four ways:

1. Policy definition and implementation: e.g. in country strategies

2. Research: defining research priorities that meet the real needs of farmers, including the special needs of women farmers.
3. Sharing knowledge and information among their members e.g. on prevention of HIV/AIDS, or on technology transfer
4. Strengthening the place of farmers in the market through farmer cooperatives and commodity associations.

Since the world food price crisis of 2008, agriculture has become a priority for many national governments, donors and international institutions. However, in order to translate good intentions into real impacts on the ground, governments need to work with their farmer organisations as partners in a process of continual improvement of all agricultural systems, creating rural employment, protecting eco-systems, delivering fair prices for safe and nutritious food for consumers, and allowing farmers a fair return for their work. In this way, we are convinced that the MDGs can be achieved by 2015.