

## The Workshop

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with financial support of the French Government, and in collaboration with the AU/NEPAD Secretariat and other Regional Economic Organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa, is organizing a high-level workshop for English speaking SSA countries to discuss the justification and urgent implementation of existing political commitments in favour of agricultural development and food security in the region through the creation of a conducive policy environment and greater public support.

## Background

Today, Africa is facing the world's gravest hunger and poverty problems, and these problems are getting worse. According to the FAO estimates, close to 200 million Africans are going hungry every day. Even more disturbing, Africa is the only continent where hunger is projected to worsen over the next two decades. The continent had the largest absolute increase in the number of the poor in the last decade. Nearly half of all Sub-Saharan Africans live on less than \$1 a day, a level of income that is lower than three decades ago. Many contributing factors have been identified, but poor performance of the agricultural sector lies at the heart of the problem. Agriculture employs 70 percent of the population, and accounts, on average, for 33 percent of GDP and 40 percent of export earnings. The health of the economies in SSA is therefore closely linked to the performance of agriculture.

Yet its performance in recent decades has been very disappointing. With few exceptions, reforms associated with structural adjustment, which were expected to lead to rapid and sustained economic agriculture performance, failed to deliver on their promises of economic turn-around, including in the agricultural sector. Africa's agricultural production and productivity remain inadequate. Yields have remained low and land under cultivation has not significantly expanded. Productivity has been further restricted by poor access to arable land, capital and technology as well the impact of HIV/AIDS. Consequently, Africa remains food insecure, increasingly reliant on food emergencies and, as a whole, a net agricultural importing since 1980. Agricultural commodities now account for only 20 percent of total merchandise exports, having declined from over 50 percent in the 1960s. There is therefore a need to once again critically review the appropriateness of the policies pursued and the level support provided to agriculture and rural development in light of the recurring food crisis observed in many parts of SSA.

In 2001 AU launched the NEPAD initiative retaining agriculture as the only economic sector in its first Action Programme. In June 2002 African Ministers, at their meeting in Rome, endorsed the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme developed with FAO's technical assistance. In July 2003, AU Heads of State and Government declared to increase budgetary allocation to agriculture and rural development to 10% within the subsequent 5 years.

In this context, in 2003 FAO embarked on preparing case studies and background documents to build a stronger case for more budgetary and policy support for sustainable agricultural development in SSA countries. This workshop is the culmination of those efforts.

## Objectives

The workshop broadly aims at drawing the attention of Senior Policy Makers in English Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa to key issues pertaining to policies and public support for sustainable food and agricultural development. It provides a forum for reviewing the justification and options for increased resource allocation and effective policy support to agricultural development, and to deliberate on how such support could effectively be implemented. The workshop will also discuss the progress countries have so far made towards meeting the Maputo Declaration of increasing budgetary allocation, and recommend options to ensure accelerated implementation of the commitment SSA countries have made in Maputo and all other related pledges made towards addressing food insecurity and poverty reduction.

## The Programme

The workshop programme includes the following:

- Presentation of objectives and structure of the meeting;
- Brief presentations of Country Case Studies on agricultural development and food security, and a Background Document highlighting conceptual issues underpinning agricultural development strategies, food security and success stories from outside Africa;
- Presentation of a Main Report which synthesises the findings from case studies, the background document, and supplementary literature review and statistical analysis;
- Group work and discussions.

## Expected Outcomes

- Improved understanding of the food and agriculture situation in Africa and rationale as to why agriculture should be allocated more resources.
- Appreciation of the progress made in fulfilling AU commitments to support agriculture, and agreeing on the way forward to accelerate their implementation.
- Government representatives provided with ammunition to argue in favour of increased and effective public support to agriculture with, especially, Ministries of Finance and development partners.
- Agreement reached on priority policy agenda for Governments, regional organisations and other development partners, including FAO, to advance implementation of these commitments and agricultural development in SSA.

## Participants

Participants to the workshop (around 40 - 45 in total) are senior government officers, and representatives of academic and research institutions, Regional and Continental Organizations – AU, NEPAD Secretariat, SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS, etc – FAO experts from Rome, Accra and Harare and experts from Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD). Furthermore, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and private sector organizations will be invited to send representatives.

## Co-ordination and Funding

The Workshop is jointly organised by FAO and the AU/NEPAD Secretariat, and jointly funded by FAO and the French Government. Coordination is ensured primarily by the Policy Assistance Unit (SAFP) of the Sub-regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa in Harare on behalf of the Policy Assistance Division of FAO (TCA). FAO will pay a round trip ticket to all selected participants from member countries, the AU and the Regional Economic Organizations. Participants from partner development agencies, however, are expected to pay their travel and subsistence expenses.

## Resource Persons and Facilitators

The main resource persons of the workshop will be FAO experts, senior international, regional and national consultants, staff from the NEPAD Secretariat and invited participants.

## Venue and Duration

The workshop will take place at the Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi from 14-16 September, 2005. Participants are expected to arrive one day before and depart on or a day after the workshop ends on 16 September. The address of the venue is:

Safari Park Hotel  
Kasarani off Thika Road  
Nairobi  
Tel: +254 020 3633 000  
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## For further information

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# High-level Workshop

*Agricultural Development and  
Food Security in Sub-Saharan  
Africa:*

*Building a Case for  
More Support*

**Nairobi: 14-16 September, 2005**