



**MEDIA ADVISORY: MAJOR CONFERENCE ON FOOD 1-2
DECEMBER 2008**
Press conference on Monday, 1 December from 11:15-11:45am

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World's Largest Alliance of Agricultural Researchers to Gather In Mozambique as Food and Financial Crises Deepen Risk of Hunger And Poverty for Millions of World's Poor

***"Best-Bet" Technologies and Policies for Improved Agricultural Productivity in Africa
to be Featured; Could Cut Poverty Rate in Half***

*The world's largest alliance on agricultural research will convene more than 700 leading food and environmental scientists, policy makers and donor representatives in **Maputo, Mozambique, on 1-2 December 2008** to discuss the best approaches for meeting the food needs of the poor in Africa.*

Four crises have shaken the global food system to its core—climate change, skyrocketing food prices, high energy costs and an explosive worldwide financial crisis. In just the past three years, the number of hungry people in the world has increased by at least 75 million and most likely will grow. Decades of low food prices led many governments and donors to pull back investment in agriculture, and this has left agriculture highly vulnerable to the crises and their tragic consequences for people. The effects have been especially pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa, where hunger was already a daily reality.

Infertile soils, unsustainable farming practices and diverse farming conditions; the high costs of farm inputs like fertilizers; and slow adoption of modern agricultural technologies have put Africa especially at risk.

In response, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) conducted a detailed analysis to identify and recommend investment in "best-bet" approaches for spurring agricultural productivity growth, with benefits for small-scale farmers and consumers in Africa. According to the CGIAR, these proven approaches have the potential to reduce by almost half Africa's poverty rate—from 48 to 25 percent—in the next 10 years.

Who:

- Armando Guebuza**, President, Mozambique
- Katherine Sierra**, Vice-President, Sustainable Development, World Bank
- Dennis Garrity**, Director General, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)
- Hartmann**, Director General, International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)
- Hans Herren**, President, Millennium Institute
- Monty Jones**, Executive Secretary, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
- Justin Lin**, Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, World Bank
- Venâncio Massingue**, Minister of Science and Technology, Mozambique
- Namanga Ngongi**, President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)
- Soares Nhaca**, Minister of Agriculture, Mozambique

Papa Abdoulaye Seck, Director General, Africa Rice Center (WARDA)
Carlos Seré, Director General, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
Joachim von Braun, Director General, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

Where: Joaquim Chissano Conference Center, Maputo, Mozambique

After two decades of declining per capita output, agriculture in the region as a whole has shown positive growth rates over the last 10 years, “suggesting that the stagnation in sub-Saharan African agriculture may be over,” according to the *World Development Report 2008*. New investments in agriculture and political will are needed to make African agriculture more productive and resilient. The CGIAR warns that unless the world addresses these challenges, the livelihoods and food security of millions of poor people, as well as the economic, ecological and political situations of many African countries, will deteriorate.

According to a new 88-country report by a CGIAR center, nine of the ten countries with the highest level of hunger are in sub-Saharan Africa.

For more than 35 years, CGIAR scientists in over 100 countries have studied every critical component of the agricultural sector in developing countries. This includes research on agroforestry; biodiversity; food, forage and tree crops; fisheries; livestock; the varied agro-ecological zones that farmers operate in, and the food policies that underlie agriculture in developing nations.

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About the CGIAR:

The CGIAR, established in 1971, is a strategic partnership of countries, international and regional organizations and private foundations supporting the work of 15 international Centers. In collaboration with national agricultural research systems, civil society and the private sector, the CGIAR fosters sustainable agricultural growth through high-quality science aimed at benefiting the poor through stronger food security, better human nutrition and health, higher incomes and improved management of natural resources. For more information, please visit www.cgiar.org.