

**Videoconference Briefing for Parliamentarians on the
Key Findings for Africa of the WDR 2008, Agriculture for Development**

Organized by

*the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) jointly with
the World Bank Parliamentary Unit (EXTEU) in collaboration with the Parliamentary
Network on the World Bank (PNoWB)*

The External Affairs Parliamentary Unit jointly with the Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) in collaboration with the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB), proposes a video conference on the subject of “Agriculture for Development”, theme of the World Development Report 2008. The meeting to be held on February 21 at 9:00 am EST will gather parliamentarians from 7 countries in Europe, America and Africa with the lead author of the report.

Background

The World Development Report 2008, *Agriculture for Development*, calls for greater investment in agriculture in developing countries. The report warns that the sector must be placed at the center of the development agenda if the goals of halving extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 are to be realized.

- While 75 percent of the world’s poor live in rural areas in developing countries, a mere 4 percent of official development assistance goes to agriculture.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, a region heavily reliant on agriculture for overall growth, public spending for farming is also only 4 percent of total government spending and the sector is still taxed at relatively high levels.
- For the poorest people, GDP growth originating in agriculture is about four times more effective in raising incomes of extremely poor people than GDP growth originating outside the sector.

The report says agriculture can provide pathways out of poverty for millions of rural poor who would otherwise be left behind in transforming economies. It says one way out is through a high-value agricultural revolution. Incentives to diversify into high-value horticulture, poultry, fish and dairy products could be provided via pricing reforms and an overhaul of subsidy supports for cereals.

In agriculture-based countries, most of which are in Sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture accounts for about a third of overall economic growth and most people live in rural areas. Agriculture remains critical to overall growth, food security, and poverty reduction. The report calls for smallholder-based productivity revolution to Africa in order to trigger growth.

This Briefing for Parliamentarians on the WDR 08 Agriculture for Development via videoconference will represent a unique opportunity to discuss the findings of the WDR with a major stakeholder, and will provide a platform for dialogue between MPs and agricultural experts from the CGIAR and the WB on agriculture. It intends to provide specific tools for parliamentarians to seek more support in the field of agriculture in their respective parliaments, and to find innovative policy actions to implement new developments in agriculture.

Objectives

- Provide parliamentarians with timely information on current issues related to agriculture and agriculture research for development.
- Engage MPs, CGIAR and WB agricultural experts in a discussion on the findings of the WDR and their implications for policy and development assistance in Africa, but also from donor country governments.
- Build support for the creation of an Agricultural Chapter within PNoWB

Date: February 21, 2008

Time: 9:00 AM EST

Length: 90 minutes

Language: English

Panel

- **Derek Byerlee**, Team Leader, World Development Report
- **Ren Wang**, Director, CGIAR
- **Jean-Christophe Bas**, PNoWB (tba)

Sites to be connected

- **Africa:** Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa
- **Europe:** WB Paris Office, Berlin (GTZ)
- **Americas:** WB Headquarters (PNoWB Chair US Congresswoman Betty Mc Collum will join other participants from World Bank HQ)

Format of session:

- Welcome by PNoWB Chair, EXT Representative and CGIAR Representative
- 12 mn -15 mn presentation by lead author of the report
- First round of questions and remarks from parliamentarians will be made in an order defined beforehand. At each site, a nominated parliamentarian makes the first remark or question. We then move on to each of the other sites in turn, and then come back to the author of the report to respond to the first round of questions. We can then go on to the next round of questions etc.
- The first round of remarks/questions will address general questions about the importance of agriculture for development and the role of legislators in this regards; the second and third rounds will address more specific questions about agriculture and development.

There should be time for two to three rounds of questions.

Times

Place	Start time	End time
<i>GMT</i>	<i>2:00 PM</i>	<i>3:30 PM</i>
	<i>(14:00hrs)</i>	
Abuja	3:00 PM	4:30 PM
Washington DC	9:00 AM	10:30AM
Paris – France	3:00 PM	4:30 PM
Brussels	3:00 PM	4:30 PM
London	2:00 PM	3:30 PM
Addis Abeba	5:00PM	6:30 PM
Kampala	5:00 PM	6:30 PM
Maputo	4:00 PM	5:30 PM
Cape Town	4:00PM	5:30 PM