

African Green Revolution Forum meets next month

The African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) will meet for the first time in Africa in Accra, Ghana in the first week of September 2010. Chaired by Kofi Annan, chair of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), it is expected that African heads of state, industry representatives, the international donor community and farmers will meet to create an action plan on the acceleration of a Green Revolution in Africa. It is expected to be one of the continent's major gatherings of both public and private players to focus solely on agriculture development.



"We will be looking to governments for leadership to create an environment that will enable agriculture to prosper and grow and we will be looking to the private sector to drive and sustain that growth," says Annan. "Working together we can achieve a food secure and prosperous Africa."

The AGRF promotes investments and policy initiatives that will drive income growth for African farmers in an environmentally sustainable way. The AGRF will also show progress in unlocking Africa's agricultural potential and facilitating sustainable economic growth thanks to new investment and public-private partnerships.

"As Secretary General of the United Nations, I called for a uniquely green revolution in Africa to meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger by 2015 and, six years later, I am encouraged to see that the it has taken hold and is gaining momentum. We have reached global consensus that agriculture is Africa's lifeline and, from that realisation, we are gaining global support and funding commitments as well as the support of African governments and the attention of the private sector. But we need an action plan to translate this momentum into tangible support for Africa's farmers," adds Annan.

To increase food production substantially in Africa requires a comprehensive and integrated approach to improve the productivity, profitability and sustainability of smallholder farmers. The new expansion must take into account its effect on climate change - the warming planet is expected to reduce yields by 20-30% by 2050 if left unchecked.

Private players at AGRF

Jørgen Ole Haslestad, chief executive, Yara International ASA, says, "At the AGRF we expect to continue the momentum from other recent summits. We need both the entrepreneurship attitude from business and political leadership to create environments that enable financing and smallholder farmers to flourish."

"Commercially viable agriculture can yield food for millions and eliminate hunger. Farmers, NGOs, public and private partners will sit at the same table at the AGRF and together we will support the real progress on the ground," adds Clive Tasker, chief executive, Standard Bank Africa.

The NEPAD Agency CEO, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, says, "Africa has the potential to become a major food producer ensuring food security on our continent and beyond. This opportunity can only become reality if systemic transformation takes place at all levels. Moving AGRF to Africa, is a clear statement on the need for rooting the Green Revolution on the ground, and will be a key driving force, in eliciting stakeholders' commitments to transformation."

"Governments must create the right policy environment to allow for appropriate investments in research and development to enhance productivity and increase production," states Kanayo F Nwanze, president of the International Fund for Agricultural development (IFAD).

Judith Rodin, president, The Rockefeller Foundation, comments, "The Rockefeller Foundation is proud to continue our almost century long commitment to food security around the world. As we look back on the lessons of our own Norman Borlaug and his colleagues, we are proud to now work with dedicated partners to bring a Green Revolution to Africa. The AGRF is an enormous opportunity to connect partners to find new ways to increase food security in an era of climate change and establish Africa as a thriving and innovative global agricultural market."

Tasks

The ministers, private sector partners and donor representatives at the AGRF will launch national breadbasket projects for Ghana and Mali. The projects, which enable agricultural areas with high production potential to gain access to new markets, are a model for delivering on its aims to achieve food security through sustainable agriculture and to reduce poverty in Africa.

The AGRF will also review progress of the Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor in Mozambique and the second corridor project in Tanzania.

For full details of the program and speakers list, go to www.agrforum.com

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