

**Issues paper for ECOSOC Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast discussion on:
“A Green Revolution for Africa: What does it mean?”
Hosted by UNECA
1 July 2003
8:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.**

Agricultural development is a prime pre-condition for broad-based economic growth, food security and poverty reduction in Africa. At this juncture, Africa does not have much of an alternative path to development, but to pursue an agricultural revolution because of the spatial distribution of the population, the widespread poverty and the structure of most of the African national economies.

On 21 February 2003, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan urged African countries and their global partners to promote a “Green Revolution” in Africa, to help the continent move towards self-sufficiency in food, reduction of hunger, and eradication of poverty. This call to action is therefore a major UN policy imperative and a challenge for all key players and stakeholders to deliver their part of the bargain for the transformation of African agriculture through a Green Revolution.

The ECA has undertaken some research and reflection on the promise of a Green Revolution in Africa. The key questions it has pondered include: What does a Green Revolution mean for Africa? Has Africa missed the Green Revolution? Is it possible for the continent to catch up? What are the key challenges and opportunities, options and necessary actions for a way forward?

There are reasons to believe that Africa did not miss the Green Revolution – it was rather delayed. There is also evidence that Africa is now poised at the threshold of triggering a Green Revolution. The question to address, therefore, is rather how, not when the African Green Revolution shall be designed, triggered and sustained.

In addition to reflecting on the above questions, the Roundtable meeting is requested to discuss the following issues:

- 1. Focus on Africa:** How can the international Green Revolution institutions (the International Agricultural Research Centers of the CGIAR) be reconfigured to generate the necessary pipeline of Green Revolution technologies for Africa?
- 2. Community and National Level Design of the Green Revolution:** How can African governments take the first steps in promoting, over the next 5-10 years, a Doubly Green Revolution -- one that combines the techno-scientific elements with a thoroughly participatory approach to development? How can they ensure that the requisite technology, infrastructure, institutions and policies (TIIP) are developed and put in effective use for triggering a sustainable modernization of agriculture and rural transformation (SMART) in Africa?
- 3. NEPAD:** How can the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program adopted by NEPAD focus on a Green Revolution for Africa as an explicit goal, and achieve it within 5-10 years? How can NEPAD contribute to ensuring the market access that will be necessary to stimulate a Green Revolution in Africa?
- 4. Learning Curve:** How will the international community assist Africa to master the inter-sectoral, multidisciplinary, regional and socioeconomic issues that accompany a

Green Revolution, in order to learn from the experiences of others while avoiding their mistakes?

How will Africa tackle issues of governance, conflict, peace and security, equity, gender, environment, land policy, education, health and regional integration that could hinder or enhance the Green Revolution in Africa?