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Time for the African Green Revolution is now

International leaders at the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) in Accra have renewed their commitment to transform agriculture in Africa into a productive and profitable business aimed at ending hunger, whilst eliminating poverty in the sub-region.

Inspired by the potential that exists on the African continent, the leaders called for the strengthening of agricultural institutions, increasing investments and creating policies that will sustain agriculture in the sub-region. They also stressed the need to foster public-private

partnerships, as this is crucial to sustaining success in the agricultural sector.

‘While technology, especially improved crop varieties, fertilizers and irrigation are essential components for productivity, agricultural policies actually drove the success that was achieved in Asia. Until African countries shape their own agricultural policies based on realities, they will not be able to achieve a sustainable Green Revolution’, noted Mr. Miz-

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NEPAD sets agenda for poverty eradication

NEPAD Business Group Nigeria plans to unveil a Global Fund that will be linked to the micro-credit scheme for the informal sector’s empowerment and poverty eradication.

The body said, that the move was in line with the tenets of the International Monitoring Scheme which was initiated in Africa as a Global Partnerships Development Initiative aimed at transforming the informal sector business practices and uplifting them into the formal sector for improved international competitiveness.

Former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, while receiving some members of the group said the NEPAD initiative was targeted at building global partnerships for development to promote international resource mobilisation and accelerate the attainment of the MDGs in Africa.

Obasanjo, who inaugurated the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria in 2004, said the group, however, was not a money-spending

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engo P. Pinda, Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania.

According to him, for Africa to achieve its aim of becoming self-sustainable in food production, it must revamp its agricultural policies, focus on support for its farmers on a consistent basis, support the private sector and ensure that markets work for millions of its farmers.

‘Africa must take the bull by the horn and end the structural reason for not being able to feed itself. The global food crisis has provided that impetus for action, where we can say never again, Africa has the potential’, he added.

AGRF, chaired by former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, is being held for the first time in Africa. With more than 800 delegates in attendance, it is one of the continent’s major gatherings of both public and private players focusing solely on agricultural development.

The event was opened by Kofi Annan, alongside the Vice President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, JÅ,rgen Ole Haslestad, CEO of Yara International and Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD. Current Ministers and former Ministers from Nigeria, Tanzania and Malawi also attended AGRF.

Mr. Annan in his address stressed the need to empower Africa’s smallholder farmers, the majority of whom are women. ‘They are the people who grow our food. Transformative change will enable them to leave behind subsistence farming to run their farms as businesses and to market their surpluses’.

According to Mr. Annan, African agriculture must take a quantum leap by joining forces to achieve transformative change. ‘Working

together, we have the power, and partnerships are crucial to success’, he said to the applause of the gather.

Experts estimate that Africa will need \$US32-39 billion annually to achieve the full economic potential of its farm sector, not including the cost of climate adaptation, he added.

To that effect, he urged governments in the sub-region to take the challenge of developing Africa’s breadbaskets and transport corridors. ‘This is the time to scale-up progress to achieve a uniquely African Green Revolution. So much is at stake, and the time is ripe.’

The Vice President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, addressing delegates at the forum tasked African leaders not to lose sight of initiating programs aimed at food security.

Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, CEO of NEPAD, stated that ‘the success of 21st century Africa will be defined by efforts drawn around agriculture and infrastructure in order to move crops and agricultural products from the land to existing and new markets. Cooperation must stretch from the highest levels of government and business to the farmers who toil our fields.’

AGRF builds on meetings held in previous years in Oslo, Norway, at which governments and private sector companies agreed to energise an agricultural revolution through better policy and new catalytic private sector investment.

Executives from agribusiness and finance companies are preparing to form new partnerships to help Africans transform agricultural production in a way that improves food security and builds a greener future for the continent.

Source: <http://www.modernghana.com/news/294630/1/time-for-african-green-revolution-is-now.html>

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body but a partnership programme for African countries.

He added that, NEPAD will continue to encourage business meetings among members of the Economic Community of West African States, promote close working relation in all relevant initiatives, programmes' and projects as well as effective collaboration with its programmes' directorates and departments. Chairperson of NEPAD Group Africa, Al-haji Bamanga Tukur, noted that following the adoption of NEPAD in 2002, the body had focused on taking maximum advantage of global partnerships to energize itself and mobilize resources from the international community to Africa.

He said the group planned to meet with the Minister of Finance, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Director-General of the Debt Management Office, on external debt management in Nigeria, given that Nigeria's external debt overhang was liquidated under the framework of NEPAD.

Also speaking at the ceremony, the Chairperson of the NEPAD Group Nigeria, Mr. Goddie Ibru, said in line with the groups mandate and in its effort to enhance public-

private-partnership towards making the private sector the catalyst for economic development, NEPAD Nigeria had played the role of advocacy and enlightenment through the organization of conferences, seminars and workshops to educate the private sector.

According to him, NEPAD has a lot of provisions, benefits and opportunities for the liberation of Africa from poverty and the achievement of the MDGs, but he explained that public-private-partnerships were critical towards realising these goals.

He said that the near future NEPAD would renew its efforts at wealth creation and would continue to act as a catalyst of economic development, working closely with investment promotion agencies to mobilise entrepreneurs to create new businesses and generate employment opportunities as an antidote to poverty.

Ibru said agriculture had the greatest potential of employment generation as the sector employs the highest number of the populace, and that NEPAD was leveraging hugely on this opportunity.

Source: Nigeria Best Forum <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/generaltopics/?p=64217>

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