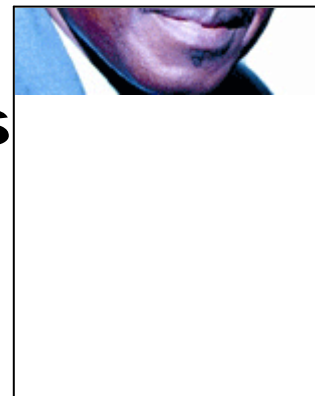


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News from high-level seminar on hunger

New NEPAD programme is focused on nutrition



An African Nutrition Initiative, launched by NEPAD in partnership with GAIN (the African Civil Society Governance and Aids Initiative) was revealed by Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu (right), Chairperson of the NEPAD Steering Committee, at a meeting of African Heads of State and Government as well

as distinguished international delegates in Addis Ababa on 5 July 2004.

The one-day seminar -- held the day before the African Union Summit -- discussed "Innovative approaches to meeting the hunger Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in Africa."

The Professor said there are 200 million people in Africa affected by nutritional deficiencies and this results in lost productivity for African economies of \$2.3 billion annually.

Eliminating malnutrition, including vitamin and mineral deficiencies, will not only help reduce poverty, it will build human capital, and eventually national wealth.

"NEPAD therefore proposes to commit itself, in partnership with GAIN, to initiating a programme which will deal with nutrition concerns broadly, and with a specific focus on vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

"The programme will be implemented in the context of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP), which has identified food security and nutrition as one of its priorities.

"NEPAD will work closely with RECs and national governments in the design and implementation of the programme."

Professor Nkuhlu said the elimination of hunger in Africa is at the epicentre of NEPAD's development agenda.

Among the main constraints to achieving food security in Africa, he said, were: governance; policy and institutional weakness; access to food; low levels of agricultural productivity; public expenditure on the agriculture sector; technological stagnation; HIV/AIDS and trade.

He outlined NEPAD's response to addressing hunger and food insecurity in Africa:

■ Increasing budgetary allocation to agriculture

Under the banner of NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), African governments are beginning to prioritise agriculture in the allocation of their public resources.

In July 2003, African governments through the Assembly of the African Union (AU) committed themselves to allocating at least 10% of their national budgets to agriculture within a period of five years.

■ Promoting consultations between stakeholders

NEPAD is facilitating sub-regional dialogues between all agriculture stakeholders on policies, institutions and investments by focusing on proven commodity and community successes.

■ NEPAD food reserve system review

The NEPAD Secretariat is facilitating a comprehensive continent-wide review of food reserve systems. A framework will be put in place to assist RECs and member countries to implement new strategies for dealing with food reserve and early warning systems.

■ Home grown school feeding programme

In the context of addressing food insecurity without mitigating long-term development, NEPAD is involved in the development of a Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in nine pilot countries, working closely with the World Food Programme (WFP). The emphasis is on supplying food grown by farmers in the locality of the school or within the region.

■ Harnessing Africa's key successful crops

While there are a range of key crops cultivated throughout Africa, NEPAD has identified and focused on two key commodities which are regarded as African agriculture successes -- cassava and NERICA (New Rice Varieties for Africa).

NEPAD is calling on the development community to support the upscaling of these two key commodities, among others, in its efforts to address food insecurity.

■ **Agribusiness development**

The NEPAD Secretariat in consultation with Regional Economic Communities (REC) is in the process of initiating an agribusiness and trade programme. The Secretariat has consulted the World Bank and USAID to support the preparation of a technical framework document leading toward the implementation of this initiative.

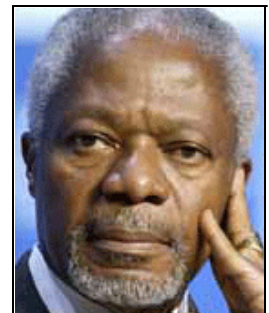
Professor Nkuhlu said NEPAD is grateful to the Hunger Task Force of the UN, the various multilateral agencies of the UN, (UNDP, FAO, UNECA, the World Bank) and bilateral agencies that are championing the fight against hunger in the continent.

“Through the NEPAD process African leaders have committed themselves to renewed attention to agriculture as an engine for Africa’s economic growth.

“With the emerging international support to save the lives of millions of hungry people in Africa, NEPAD stands ready under the African leadership to provide the required enabling political, economic and policy environment to accelerate the pace of reducing the numbers of hungry people by half by 2015”.

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Kofi Annan calls for a “uniquely African” green revolution



One of the most serious problems on earth

call for a “uniquely African 21st-century green revolution” to end the continent’s plague of hunger

**What would
a green
revolution
look like?**

**Each African
government
must commit
wholeheartedly**

**Success will
require a**

was made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan (right), at the presidential-level hunger seminar in Addis Ababa on 5 July.

A Describing hunger as one of the most serious problems on earth, the Secretary-General said the plague has blighted hundreds of millions of African lives – “and will continue to do so unless we act with greater purpose and urgency”.

He continued:

Tragically, the past decade has seen very little progress. For dozens of countries, the Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger by the year 2015 seems more a far-off fantasy than an achievable target.

Moreover, the AIDS pandemic is exacerbating the hunger crisis by robbing the continent of a generation of farmers. In Africa, fighting hunger and fighting AIDS must go hand in hand.

Hunger is a complex crisis. To solve it, we must address the interconnected challenges of agriculture; health care; nutrition; adverse and unfair market conditions; weak infrastructure and environmental degradation.

In Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, a green revolution tripled food productivity and helped lift hundreds of millions of people out of hunger.

Given the right kind of national and international support, Africa can achieve the 21st-century green revolution it needs.

What would such a revolution look like?

- We would see proven techniques in small-scale irrigation and water harvesting scaled up to provide more crop per-drop.
- We would see improved food crops, developed through publicity funded research focused specifically on Africa.
- We would see soil health restored, through agroforestry techniques and organic and mineral fertilisers.
- We would see rural productivity increased by electrification and access to information technologies, such as cell phones.
- We would have social safety nets – from grain reserves to early warning systems – that protect the most vulnerable.

This list could, off course, go on. But taken one by one, such solutions are bound to remain inadequate.

It makes little sense to help with soils and water, while leaving impoverished villages without improved roads, energy or seeds.

And few productivity improvements will be achieved if soils are healthy, but farm families continue to die of preventable and treatable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.

political breakthrough

Success will require each African government to commit itself wholeheartedly to the Millennium Development Goals, by developing national strategies consistent with the timeline and targets for 2015.

We will need more convincing action from the developed countries to support those strategies by phasing out harmful trade practices, by providing technical assistance, and by increasing both the volume of aid to levels consistent with the Goals, and the percentage invested in agriculture, which is half what it was two decades ago.

And we will need close partnerships, with the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), civil society, the private sector and, of course, African farmers.

Most of all, success will require a political breakthrough. Knowledge is not lacking. The basic policy directions are well established and widely accepted. What is lacking, as ever, is the will to turn this knowledge into practice.

So let us show the meaning of global solidarity.

Let us generate a uniquely African green revolution – a revolution that is long overdue, a revolution that will help the continent in its quest for dignity and peace.

I pledge the full support of the United Nations.

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