



Farming First Calls on G8/G20 Leaders to Put Food Security First for Sustainable Development

24 June 2010. Farming First welcomed the G8 commitments to food security taken in 2009 in L'Aquila and we urge leaders to renew these this year. We believe food security should be a recurring item on the G8/G20 agenda.

Since the food crisis erupted in 2008, a large number of initiatives have been launched or strengthened that address food security. The L'Aquila statement and the subsequent launch in 2010 of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) are important illustrations of the commitment to action of countries around the world.

However, while this renewed attention and action are welcomed and needed, the proliferation of parallel separate initiatives also requires addressing the risk of overlapping, competing or disjointed activities, with the aim of having a clear joint focus on a common goal. How the many current programmes (as outlined in the Farming First Guide to Food Security Initiatives) are coordinated and jointly contribute to food security is unclear. In the UN system, the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (HLTF) represents an effort at giving an overarching direction but how non-UN efforts relate, for instance, to the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA) developed by the HLTF, is not articulated. G8 guidance on how to further promote policy and operational coherence would be a worthwhile outcome of this meeting.

Howard Minigh, President and CEO, CropLife International, says, "According to the UN, at the start of the millennium, farmers in the least developed countries were producing just one per cent of the amount of food per acre as their counterparts in the developed world. Closing this productivity gap requires a new wave of innovation - not just in improved technology and knowledge transfer, but also in markets, in policy-making, and in collaboration at all scales of agriculture."

Ajay Shriram, President, International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA) says: "In most countries the main constraint to food security is not the availability of technology or knowledge, but how these are delivered to the farmer's gate. We call this "last-mile delivery" – of knowledge, services, tools, innovation and markets – and it is essential to addressing the key challenges of food and nutrition security."

Additionally, despite a great amount of funding pledged by many countries to support food security initiatives, we do not know how much and in what ways it has been delivered. Increased transparency on how commitments are being realised is an important component of ensuring

that multiple programmes are working together more efficiently toward a shared goal. For instance, the L'Aquila statement included targeted investments as well as support for innovation, research and technology as essential components of long-term food security. Greater information on how this is being actioned would be important.

Dr. Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chief Executive Officer, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) says, "African countries rely on their agricultural sectors not only as the basis for their food security but as a key driver of broader economic development. World leaders have pledged their commitment to food security, but now it is time to make sure these promises translate into fewer people going to bed hungry each night."

Finally, how the relevant stakeholders required for successful policy implementation can interact with these programmes is also in many cases undefined. Farmers, scientists, civil society and the private sector need to be involved in order to ensure plans meet existing needs and are successfully implemented. For instance, Farming First suggests that the GAFSP does have a dedicated seat for farmers and the private sector on its Steering Committee, given the essential role that the Committee will play in supporting initiatives around the world that will affect farmers.

Ajay Vashee, President, International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) says, "There can be no food security without farmer security. Farmer leadership is critical in developing food security strategies and implementing the commitments that the G8 made last year in L'Aquila. Agricultural policies must reflect the key role which farmers play in producing our food and supplying our markets in the face of a changing climate and increasingly limited access to natural resources."

Food security is a complex issue requiring concerted efforts over the long term. Increased attention and leadership around this issue is a very positive development. However, as we move towards action, it will be essential to engage a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that our efforts are coordinated, clear, collaborative and ultimately successful."

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About Farming First

Farming First is a global coalition of 131 organisations representing the world's farmers, scientists, engineers and industry. Farming First calls for a broad-based, knowledge-centred approach to increase agricultural output in a sustainable and socially responsible manner.

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