

Global Hunger Event: Agricultural Innovation Roundtable

Attendees

- Dr. David Nabarro - UN Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition, Co-ordinator Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (moderator)
- Honourable Minister Akinwumi A. Adesina - Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Nigeria (rapporteur)
- Dr. Maria Andrade – Sweet potato Breeder and Seed Systems Specialist, International Potato Center, Maputo, Mozambique
- Dr. Debisi Araba - Technical Advisor on Environmental Policy, Office of the Honourable Minister Adesina
- Dr. Pedro Arraes - President, Embrapa, Brazil
- Dr. Howarth Bouis - Director, HarvestPlus
- Sir Gordon Conway - Professor of International Development, Director of Agriculture for Impact, Imperial College London
- Ms. Ertharin Cousin - Executive Director, World Food Programme
- Dr. Alan Dangour - Senior Research Fellow, Department for International Development
- Mr. Sam Dryden - Director of Agricultural Development, Global Development Program, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Professor Douglas Kell - Chief Executive, BBSRC
- Ms. Rachel Kyte - Vice President Sustainable Development, World Bank
- Dr. Barbara Noseworthy - Office of Honourable Minister Adesina
- Mr. Gerson Valença Pinto -, Vice President R&D – PepsiCo South America, Caribbean and Central America Foods
- Mr. Brendan Rogers - Director General, Irish Aid
- Mr. Ashish Wele - President, Nirmal Seeds, India
- Professor. Tim Wheeler - Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser, DFID

Summary of Discussion

David Nabarro, UN Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition Introduced the roundtable discussion, commenting on the importance of bringing together the research community, government, business and international leaders.

Q.1 How can we embed links between agriculture and nutritional outcomes?

Minister Adesina, Government of Nigeria

- Place agriculture back at the centre stage of development.
- We must look at agriculture as a business, not only as a development programme. View it as a private sector process that adds value.
- We can only make progress if we give agriculture the appropriate financing to encourage productivity growth, and investment in science and technology.

- Raise political awareness about nutrition, with indices to measure the political awareness of leaders. Rate politicians when they come into office on their performance and make the cost of political action high.
- Raise awareness and levels of information about what people should eat.
- Mainstream nutrition in agriculture programmes, which is what is being done in Nigeria.

Rachel Kyte, World Bank

- We should increase yield for the long-run and have a long-term risk management strategy.
- Focus on trade and private sector development, with increased trade in food.
- Pursue a climate smart approach to agriculture.
- Underlying question has to be what does agricultural research (eg CGIAR) do for people; make CGIAR a public endowment and put it into the hands of people who need it.
- Have a real focused dialogue between research, health and nutrition communities.
- Follow both a bottom up and top down approach.
- World Bank will step up to the challenge with new knowledge platforms, such as SecureNutrition, and a reorientation of agriculture.

Brendan Rogers, Irish Aid

- Dual-approach to agricultural innovation of evidence-based research and innovation to drive forward policies.
- Find political champions to drive forwards the issue.
- Include nutritional objectives in agricultural programmes. Shouldn't just be about ensuring higher yields/more produce, but also nutritional outcomes. Integrate livestock/poultry information.
- Accountability – requires some objective monitoring.

Sam Dryden, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been supportive of nutrition and agriculture through grantmaking already and we'll continue to do this in the future.
- We hope that in the new Sustainable Development Goals agriculture and nutrition are united under a common metric or set of metrics. We may want to think about how we make agriculture more accountable to nutrition, perhaps through something like nutrition per hectare, not just biomass per hectare.
- We should be thinking about how agriculture contributes from molecule to market. We now have the genomic information to make this more powerful for nutrition. However, need to harness this to turn vast information into knowledge and then, to take local needs and diets and use wisdom to create new products that suit them.
- We need new models of collaboration and coordination: referenced partnerships with Brazil.

- We need to empower and education families on what good nutrition is as it's not intuitive.
- BMGF sees itself as a facilitator of collaboration. We encourage everyone to be open to new systems to support agriculture and nutrition so that we can meet our goals.
- We need to solve problems starting with demand, both on the human consumption side and on the animal feed side. Demand for maize and beans will far outstrip supply so we have to look at alternative crops, particularly those that are drought tolerant, like sorghum and millet.

Q.2 How can private sector expertise help to increase uptake of proven agricultural technologies and practices?

Ertharin Cousin, WFP

- 75 countries receive food assistance from WFP.
- It is not just about filling the bowl, but what is in there.
- Purchase for Progress (P4P) works with partners and smallholder farmers to improve their output, quality and capacity to engage with local food supply chains. WFP is the catalyst and encourages the development of markets.
- For example WFP will support 1,750 Rwandan farmers to grow biofortified high iron beans next season. This leads to more income for farmers and is a new commercial opportunity.
- A second initiative is WFP's engagement with Ethiopia's Chickpea Alliance, which links Gov of Ethiopia with the PepsiCo Foundation and USAID. Encourages smallholder farmers to scale up production of chickpeas, some of which will be used for local production of ready to use supplementary foods, to help prevent stunting.

Pedro Arraes, Embrapa

- Partnerships are essential to eliminating hunger; we can't do it alone.
- Science and technology can also accelerate our efforts; new technology can change results.
- Government-led programmes are essential, as are public/private efforts.
- South – South cooperation is critical as a mechanism for joint research for development.
- Relevance of Africa – Brazil and LAC-Brazil Agricultural Innovation MarketPlace as a new, promising mechanism to bring science, technology and innovation to development to where it is needed most.
- Reaffirm Brazil's commitment to tackling hunger and the willingness of Embrapa to contribute.

Gerson Pinto, PepsiCO Do Brasil

- Private sector has to be engaged.
- PepsiCo's Human Sustainability Strategy where apart from reducing salt, sugar and saturated fat, they are committed to using nutritious products.

- Increase ingredients with a strong nutrition profile.
- Proud of their partnership with Embrapa to apply biofortification for snacks.
- Combine Embrapa's expertise in biofortification with food processing, in a genuine public-private partnership which can drive positive change.

Ashish Wele, Nirmal Seeds

- Pearl millet is an important crop in India. More than 50 million people in the drier states with 9 Million Ha area rely upon it. While pearl millet is a nutritious crop and already rich in iron, Nirmal Seeds is proud to be in a public-private partnership with Harvest Plus to distribute newer varieties that have even more iron and higher yield of about 15% too (*ICTP 8203 Fe*). An estimated 300,000 farmers grow non Biofortified version of ICTP pearl millet. We believe that entire area can be converted to the biofortified high iron Pearl Millet
- Focusing efforts in Maharashtra, the state with the second largest production of pearl millet at 1 million ha, with hopes of expanding to Rajasthan, the major state for pearl millet production, in the future.
- Trying to create consumer/farmer/grower awareness regarding the importance of iron in human diet through rallies, banners, pamphlets.
- One of our biggest challenges was seed production with the growers, which we have been doing for the past 2 years.
- Second challenge is to distribute truthful labelled seeds to farmers.
- Third challenge is the distribution of the product to the consumer
- Now that we as a private sector partner and Harvest Plus have overcome market doubts in one of the highest pearl millet-growing areas in India, we are focused on whether the government will purchase high iron pearl millet with minimum support price for the supply chain through its public distribution system? This would encourage farmers that it has the potential to really change the entire scenario.

Q. 3 How can we ensure that agricultural innovations reach their potential to contribute to improved nutrition of women and children?

Howarth Bouis, HarvestPlus

- Agriculture and food systems are most important for enabling people to lead healthy and productive lives. Nutrition is often neglected In this sense, Agriculture is broken and needs fixing.
- Biofortification is ready for scale-up. It is a cost-effective and sustainable means of delivering nutrients to the poor.
- Promote more partnerships, in particular with women farmers.
- HarvestPlus is partnering with private sector, eg in Zambia where the government is expected to release 3 new varieties of Vitamin A maize next month. Working with the seed sector for distribution.
- Most important partners are smallholder farmers.
- During 2012/2013 HarvestPlus will reach ½ million households in Africa and Asia.

Maria Andrade, International Potato Centre

- Importance of orange-fleshed sweet potato as a crop for women and a vitamin A powerhouse.
- 15 drought-tolerant varieties were released in Mozambique in February 2011.
- We must invest in nutrition training at community level – this is already taking place in Malawi.
- Farmers adapt technologies faster when there are market opportunities.

Gordon Conway, Imperial College

- Challenge is to ensure that nutritious foodstuffs are available for poor families.
- Require targeted education and extension.

Q.4 How can we build the evidence required to drive new investments, programmes and policies?

Douglas Kell, BBRSC

- Evidence for biofortification exists.
- Genomes will drive research.
- Select for yield and nutrition outcomes; high nitrogen use efficiency; increasing the diversity of wheat germplasm; deep roots for drought tolerance.
- Take a holistic approach to the issue.