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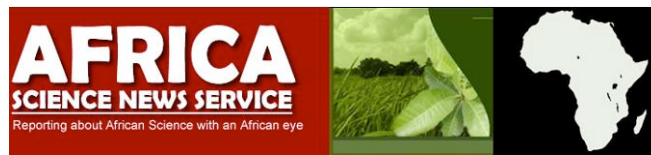
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(Kenya)

Europe asked to Accelerate Agriculture Aid to Africa

Written by Henry Neondo

Tuesday, 26 October 2010

An expert panel convened with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has challenged the European Union (EU) donors to match rhetoric with action as Africa focuses on farm sector. Investors outside of Europe are taking note.

A dangerous gap between Europe's bold rhetoric pledging billions to aid African agriculture, and a reality that has failed to channel new investments to promising projects, risks squandering a rare opportunity to transform food production across the continent, according to a new report released today from a panel of European and African development experts.

The analysis from the Montpellier Panel notes that the commitment at a 2009 G8 summit to dramatically escalate the fight against malnutrition in Africa has yet to bring critically needed support for a ³rich diversity² of activities already underway that ³could achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development.²

³If we do not bridge the gap there is risk that new investments will dissipate into more small scale activity and we will not see transformational change that is needed,² the report concludes.

The panel is particularly concerned that European donors have not used their influence and abilities to create a safety net. A system of grain reserves, for example, could prevent another round of price shocks to commodities markets from spreading malnutrition to millions more Africans, as they did in 2007 and 2008.

³We want to see European donors paying closer attention to immediate threats to food security, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that African governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity,² said Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London, who chaired the panel.

³Today, European aid to Africa can be especially productive because it can support emerging strategies already owned, operated and driven by Africans, which is a relatively novel situation in the history of European-African relations,² said Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chief Executive and Head of Diplomatic Mission, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN).

The report, Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development, The Montpellier Panel, is focused on the follow-through, and lack thereof, from the 2009 L'Aquila G8 summit in which wealthy governments in Europe and the United States pledged US\$22.5 billion to seek food security worldwide, with much of the funds to be spent on agriculture development in sub-Saharan Africa. The analysis presents a situation in Africa in which investments are needed to address the extreme perils and exploit the extraordinary opportunities that today exist side by side.

On one hand, the nutrition challenges are profound. Some 337 million Africans consume less than 2100 calories a day, and 200 million are chronically malnourished. An astounding 50 percent of children are stunted and in Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half of all pregnant women in the region and 40 percent of women of child-bearing age suffer from anemia. Every minute, 12 Africans die from poor nutrition.

On the other hand, 22 African governments have signed on to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme, or CAADP, which commits signatories to investing 10 percent of national budgets toward improved food production. And they increasingly have the means to do so. GDP is now rising in 27 of Africa's 30 largest countries. Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Senegal are among the countries where agriculture spending already has reached or exceeded the 10 percent threshold.

Meanwhile, on the ground, an array of new national and regional initiatives—many of them innovative public-private partnerships—are successfully boosting food production and building a self-sustaining agriculture infrastructure. Nigeria has surpassed Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava, which is now Africa's second most important source of calories. The introduction of new rice varieties for Africa (NERICAs) is boosting harvests and nutrition for 20 million rice farmers, most of whom are women, and the families and communities they serve.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has funded 60 crop breeding programs, introduced 125 new crop varieties into the field, and provided start-up capital for 35 African seed enterprises that are producing 15,000 metric tons of certified seed. AGRA also has enlisted 9200 agro-dealers who have provided smallholder farmers with US\$45 million worth of seed and farm inputs.

³While Europe has always been a strong supporter of African agriculture, its investments today are not coordinated or aligned fully with the opportunities available,² said Namanga Ngongi, AGRA's president and a member of the Montpellier Panel. ³Where we are directly supporting the smallholder farmers, we are seeing increased yields and profitable farms; we are seeing this success in pockets all across Africa. What is critical now is for focused investments so we can replicate this success on a large scale and truly revolutionize African agriculture.²

For example, the report points to estimates that Africa has the potential to increase the value of its annual agribusiness output from US\$280 billion today to around US\$800 billion by 2030. And the benefits could be broadly distributed. The experience with agricultural development in Asia shows that for each 1 percent acceleration in agricultural growth there is about a 1.5 percent acceleration in non-agricultural growth.

Outside of Europe, a growing number of emerging economic powerhouses are waking up to the potential for food production in Africa to soar. In particular, the so-called BRIC nations—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—are increasingly visible in Africa's agriculture sector. But the Montpellier Panel believes Europe is especially well-positioned to be Africa's most important partner in developing its agricultural bread-baskets.

European Union (EU) countries already are collectively the largest agriculture development donor in Africa. They have been early supporters of the CAADP process and the largest donor to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), whose crop improvement work in Africa is essential to improving nutrition on the continent. The panel calls for deepening Europe's commitment to Africa's agriculture development efforts through increased support that brings more focus and coordination to the activities already underway and shifts attention from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term capacity building.

In addition, the panel seeks immediate action from Europe to counter the danger that another spike in commodities prices along the lines of what occurred in 2007 and 2008 could reverse hard-fought progress to address nutrition problems through agriculture development. The report proposes establishing regulatory processes, along with global and national grain reserves, that could be employed

to reduce extreme price volatility in global markets for cereals and staple crops, which have their greatest impact on poor countries.

³Intensifying its engagement with Africa is in Europe's interest because if we don't seize on this opportunity, the costs will be felt both at home and abroad,² said Lord Cameron of Dillington, who hosted the report's release as co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Agriculture and Food for Development. ³We could see greater poverty, an increase in social unrest, a deterioration of diplomatic and economic relations and the diversion of investments in long-term programs to pay for repetitive emergency humanitarian aid.²

(Link not available)



(Kenya)

Africa should seize opportunity to Unlock European Aid

By Pius Sawa

18 November 2010

Text Not Available

http://africasciencenews.org/asns/index.php?option=com_jcs&task=add&Itemid=2



(Spain)

Las ayudas prometidas por Europa a África no han llegado a materializarse

26 de octubre de 2010 • 05:20

Las ayudas económicas prometidas por los países europeos para la agricultura de África han quedado en simple retórica, lo que ha impedido la realización de proyectos que iban a impulsar la producción de alimentos en el continente.

Esto es lo que denuncia el último informe anual del grupo de expertos europeos y africanos conocido como el Panel de Montpellier y elaborado con el apoyo de la Fundación Bill & Melinda Gates.

Según el informe, el compromiso adquirido en la cumbre del G-8 el año pasado en L'Aquila (Italia) de luchar contra la malnutrición en África se ha reducido a "un montón de acciones todavía pendientes de ponerse en marcha".

En aquella reunión los gobiernos europeos y el estadounidense, que conforman el G-8, se comprometieron a donar 22.500 millones de dólares (16.000 millones de euros) para lograr la seguridad alimentaria en todo el mundo.

La mayor parte de estos fondos se destinarían a proyectos agrícolas en el África Subsahariana, una de las regiones del mundo más azotadas por las hambrunas y la desnutrición.

"Hay que cerrar la brecha que lleva 'del dicho al hecho' y garantizar la seguridad alimentaria mediante el desarrollo de la agricultura", explican los expertos del Panel de Montpellier.

Los expertos se muestran especialmente preocupados por el hecho de que los donantes europeos no usen sus influencias para crear una "red de seguridad" como, por ejemplo, un sistema de reservas de cereales que podría evitar una nueva oleada de malnutrición por reducción de las cosechas, como la que tuvieron lugar en 2007 y 2008.

"Queremos ver cómo los donantes europeos prestan especial atención a las amenazas inmediatas a la seguridad alimentaria, mientras aumentan simultáneamente su apoyo a los esfuerzos de las autoridades africanas encaminados a alcanzar la prosperidad en esos países", indica Gordon Conway, presidente del panel de expertos.

Conway precisa que las ayudas europeas son especialmente productivas en estos momentos porque son la financiación que necesitan varios proyectos de desarrollo puestos en marcha por primera vez por los propios africanos.

El informe advierte de que alrededor de 337 millones de africanos consumen menos de 2.100 calorías al día y unos 200 millones sufren malnutrición crónica, lo que implica que cada minuto mueren por desnutrición doce africanos.

En el caso del África subsahariana, la mitad de los niños están raquíticos y cerca del 50 por ciento de las embarazadas y del 40 por ciento de las mujeres que amamantan a sus hijos sufren anemia.

Lo único positivo es que 22 países del continente han suscrito el Programa Africano de Desarrollo Agrícola (CAADP), que obliga a los firmantes a invertir el 10 por ciento de sus presupuestos nacionales en mejorar la producción alimentaria.

Países como Ghana, Etiopía, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso y Senegal han superado ese porcentaje de inversión y el Producto Interior Bruto de 27 de las 30 mayores economías del continente crece en los últimos años.

<http://noticias.terra.com.ar/sociedad/las-ayudas-prometidas-por-europa-a-africa-no-han-llegado-a-materializarse,daf16910115eb210VgnVCM10000098f154d0RCRD.html>

(Brazil)

UE precisa da África para garantir oferta de alimentos, dizem europeus

Mundo | 26/10/2010 | 16h55min

Relatório destaca preocupação dos europeus com a crescente volatilidade de preços nos mercados agrícolas

A Europa vai precisar da produção agrícola da África para garantir a oferta de alimentos para sua própria população, segundo o All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food Development, um grupo multipartidário de representantes governamentais do Reino Unido, especializado em alimentação e agricultura.

Relatório divulgado pelo grupo nesta terça, dia 26, destaca a preocupação dos europeus com a crescente volatilidade de preços nos mercados agrícolas e o risco de a Europa ficar para trás como parceiro fundamental para explorar o grande potencial da agricultura africana. O crescimento econômico do continente (o PIB está aumentando em 27 das 30 maiores economias locais), novos recursos financeiros e o compromisso das nações desenvolvidas de fornecer US\$ 22,5 bilhões para combater a fome mundial, firmado em 2009 na cidade italiana de L'Aquila, estão criando um ambiente fértil para investimentos no setor.

– A segurança neste país (Reino Unido) depende da segurança global, e a segurança global depende da segurança alimentar – disse Gordon Conway, professor de Desenvolvimento Internacional no Colégio Imperial de Londres.

A União Europeia já é o maior parceiro comercial da África e agora quer ser o maior parceiro agrícola.

– A Europa deve agarrar a oportunidade para assegurar a oferta de alimentos por meio do desenvolvimento da agricultura na África – disse Lindiwe Sibanda, chefe da Rede de Análise de Políticas de Alimentos, Agricultura e Recursos Naturais.

Ela lembrou do sucesso do Programa de Desenvolvimento Agrícola Africano (CAADP), que tem o objetivo de aumentar os gastos dos governos locais no setor de 4% para pelo menos 10% dos orçamentos nacionais nos próximos cinco anos.

Outros países estão de olho no potencial agrícola da África. Um relatório do Banco Mundial informou que investidores estrangeiros compraram 45 milhões de hectares de terras agrícolas no continente apenas em 2009. Entre 1999 e 2008, as aquisições de terras ali foram de quatro milhões de hectares por ano, em média.

– Se a Europa investir na África, nos beneficiaremos do desenvolvimento agrícola e econômico daquele continente", disse Conway durante almoço para o lançamento do relatório, em Londres.

– É o que Brasil e China já perceberam.

O relatório, intitulado África e Europa: parceria para o desenvolvimento agrícola e lançado no Parlamento britânico hoje, pede que sejam criados novos mecanismos para reduzir a volatilidade nos mercados de alimentos, incluindo a melhora na regulação dos mercados de commodities e a formação de estoques de segurança para lidar com futuros choques de oferta. "É evidente que os mercados de

alimentos não podem ser excluídos da regulação necessária já que eles estão muito conectados às atividades especulativas nos mercados financeiros", diz o relatório. As informações são da Dow Jones.

<http://www.canalrural.com.br/canalrural/jsp/default.jsp?uf=2§ion=Canal%20Rural&id=3088064&action=noticias>

Africa Will Be Key To EU Food Security-Expert Panel

By Caroline Henshaw

LONDON, Oct 26, 2010 (Dow Jones Commodities News via Comtex) -- Boosting agricultural production from Africa's farmers will be key to securing Europe's food supplies in the future, a new report launched by a cross-party U.K. government group said Tuesday.

As concerns mount over increasing volatility in food markets, Europe risks being left behind as a key partner to tap the huge potential of African agriculture, a report launched by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food Development found.

Increasing economic growth in Africa (gross domestic product is now rising in 27 out of 30 of the region's largest economies), a raft of new investment frameworks, and the commitment of more than \$22.5 billion to combat world hunger at the 2009 L'Aquila summit are all creating a fertile climate for investment.

"Security in this country depends on global security and global security depends on food security," said Gordon Conway, Professor of International Development at Imperial College London who chaired the panel.

Already Africa's largest trade partner, increased investment from the European Union will be key to increasing the region's agricultural output, the report found. The EU is responsible for over 60% of overseas development aid worldwide, including around EUR800 million per year to agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa.

"Europe should grasp the opportunity to achieve food and nutritional security through agricultural development in Africa," said Lindiwe Sibanda, the head of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network.

She pointed to the success of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme, or CAADP, at increasing local government spending on the sector from an average of 4% to at least 10% of national budgets within the next five years.

The findings come at a time when many food importers are scaling up their investments in Africa's agricultural sector in a bid to secure food supplies. A report from the World Bank found that international investors bought 45 million hectares of agricultural land in 2009 alone, compared with an average expansion rate of four million hectares a year in the decade leading up to 2008.

"If Europe is seen to be investing in Africa we are going to benefit from the agricultural and economic development of Africa," said Conway at the launch of the report by the Montpellier Panel.

"That's what Brazil and China and India already perceive."

The report, entitled Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development, launched in the U.K. Parliament today, called for new mechanisms to reduce volatility in food markets, including improving regulation of commodity markets and building up stocks to buffer against future supply shocks.

"It is now evident that food markets must not be excluded from the appropriate regulation of the banking and financial system as the staple food and feed markets are now closely connected to the speculative activities in financial markets," the report said.

-By Caroline Henshaw, Dow Jones Newswires; 4420-7842-9478; caroline.henshaw@dowjones.com

<http://news.reportlinker.com/n04007659/DJ-Africa-Will-Be-Key-To-EU-Food-Security-Expert-Panel.html#>



(Belgium)

African agriculture 'coming of age'

Published: 27 October 2010

A growing African food sector can yield private sector returns on the back of government support, said a report on Tuesday (26 October), which also said that a global grain reserve may be needed to protect consumers from price spikes.

Local initiatives aiming for an African equivalent of the Green Revolution, which swept developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s, needed coordination, the report added.

For example an African Union (AU) strategy aimed to drive economic development through investment in agriculture at a tenth of national budgets, given new impetus by a 2008 food crisis which prompted \$20 billion aid for agriculture.

"It's a focus on the great and proven potential of African agriculture," said Imperial College London's Gordon Conway, chair of a panel of authors of the report, titled 'Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development'.

"We can continue to parachute in sacks of grain, but it's much better to focus on making sure the seeds and fertilisers are present in the hands of the dealers in the villages."

"We are in a period of optimism about the prospects for Africa and African agriculture," the report concluded.

The Green Revolution in Mexico, India and elsewhere met large increases in yields through steps such as investment in irrigation, fertilisers and high yielding crops.

In Africa cereal yields were as little as one third those in developed countries, said Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, another author, but she pointed to successes for example in Nigerian cassava and of the adoption of higher yielding rice varieties.

"Africa is now organised and ready for business," she said.

The AU initiative aimed to achieve 6% annual growth in farm output by 2015 compared with 3% annually over the past decade. Tuesday's report cited estimates that the sector may be worth \$800 billion by 2030 compared with \$280 billion now.

It intended to galvanise European private and public sector investment, following similar investment in African farmland and businesses by large emerging economies including China.

Private sector investment would not over-turn problems of malnutrition, however, where 200 million Africans are under-fed and five million die annually from hunger. That required public support, possibly including a global grain reserve to ease food price spikes which hurt the poor more, the report said.

"Food price spikes, particularly the one in 2007-08, had a devastating impact on African consumers. Speculators drive these spikes higher than they would otherwise be," said Conway.

"These spikes need some form of physical grain reserve to moderate them," he added, saying that he was not advocating a government takeover of commodity markets.

(EurActiv with Reuters.)

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/cap/african-agriculture-coming-age-news-499229>

(UK)

African agriculture coming of age-report

- * Local funding given new impetus by 2008 crisis
- * Potential for trebling cereal yields

LONDON, Oct 26 (Reuters) - A growing African food sector can yield private sector returns on the back of government support, said a report on Tuesday, which also said that a global grain reserve may be needed to protect consumers from price spikes.

Local initiatives aiming for an African equivalent of the Green Revolution, which swept developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s, needed coordination, the report added.

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<http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFLDE69P1V120101026>

www.xinhuanet.com



(China)

Europe urged to increase agriculture aid to Africa

October 27, 2010

Leading experts say time is ripe for Europe to accelerate agriculture aid to Africa or miss a rare opportunity to help transform food security across the continent.

According to a new report released late Wednesday by a panel of European and African development experts, EU donors were also challenged to match rhetoric with action as Africa focuses on the farm sector and investors outside of Europe take notice "Today, European aid to Africa can be especially productive because it can support emerging strategies already owned, operated and driven by Africans, which is a relatively novel situation in the history of European-African relations," said Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chief Executive and Head of Diplomatic Mission, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) .

The report says a dangerous gap between Europe's bold rhetoric pledging billions to aid African agriculture and a reality that has failed to channel new investments to promising projects, risks squandering a rare opportunity to transform food production across the continent.

The analysis from the Montpellier Panel notes that the commitment at a 2009 G8 summit to dramatically escalate the fight against malnutrition in Africa has yet to bring critically needed support for a "rich diversity" of activities already underway that "could achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development." "If we do not bridge the gap there is risk that new investments will dissipate into more small scale activity and we will not see transformational change that is needed," the report says.

The panel is particularly concerned that European donors have not used their influence and abilities to create a safety net.

A system of grain reserves, for example, could prevent another round of price shocks to commodities markets from spreading malnutrition to millions more Africans, as they did in 2007 and 2008. "We want to see European donors paying closer attention to immediate threats to food security, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that African governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity," said Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London, who chaired the panel.

The report, Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development, The Montpellier Panel, is focused on the follow-through, and lack thereof, from the 2009 L'Aquila G8 summit in which wealthy governments in Europe and the United States pledged 22.5 billion U. S. dollars to seek food security worldwide, with much of the funds to be spent on agriculture development in sub-Saharan Africa.

The analysis presents a situation in Africa in which investments are needed to address the extreme perils and exploit the extraordinary opportunities that today exist side by side.

On one hand, the nutrition challenges are profound. Some 337 million Africans consume less than 2,100 calories a day, and 200 million are chronically malnourished.

An astounding 50 percent of children are stunted and in Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half of all pregnant women in the region and 40 percent of women of child-bearing age suffer from anemia.

Every minute, 12 Africans die from poor nutrition. On the other hand, 22 African governments have signed on to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), which commits signatories to investing 10 percent of national budgets toward improved food production.

And they increasingly have the means to do so. GDP is now rising in 27 of Africa's 30 largest countries.

Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso and Senegal are among the countries where agriculture spending already has reached or exceeded the 10 percent threshold.

Meanwhile, on the ground, an array of new national and regional initiatives -- many of them innovative public-private partnerships -- are successfully boosting food production and building a self-sustaining agriculture infrastructure.

Nigeria has surpassed Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava, which is now Africa's second most important source of calories.

The introduction of new rice varieties for Africa (NERICAs) is boosting harvests and nutrition for 20 million rice farmers, most of whom are women and the families and communities they serve.

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For example, the report points to estimates that Africa has the potential to increase the value of its annual agribusiness output from 280 billion dollars today to around 800 billion dollars by 2030.

And the benefits could be broadly distributed. The experience with agricultural development in Asia shows that for each 1 percent acceleration in agricultural growth there is about 1.5 percent acceleration in non-agricultural growth.

Outside of Europe, a growing number of emerging economic powerhouses are waking up to the potential for food production in Africa to soar.

In particular, the so-called BRIC nations - Brazil, Russia, India, and China - are increasingly visible in Africa's agriculture sector.

But the Montpellier Panel believes Europe is especially well-positioned to be Africa's most important partner in developing its agricultural bread-baskets.

European Union (EU) countries already are collectively the largest agriculture development donor in Africa.

They have been early supporters of the CAADP process and the largest donor to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), whose crop improvement work in Africa is essential to improving nutrition on the continent.

The panel calls for deepening Europe's commitment to Africa's agriculture development efforts through increased support that brings more focus and coordination to the activities already underway and shifts attention from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term capacity building.

In addition, the panel seeks immediate action from Europe to counter the danger that another spike in commodities prices along the lines of what occurred in 2007 and 2008 could reverse hard-fought progress to address nutrition problems through agriculture development.

The report proposes establishing regulatory processes, along with global and national grain reserves, that could be employed to reduce extreme price volatility in global markets for cereals and staple crops, which have their greatest impact on poor countries. "Intensifying its engagement with Africa is in Europe's interest because if we don't seize on this opportunity, the costs will be felt both at home and abroad," said Lord.

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90855/7179559.html>



(China)

African vow to farm programs, critical to unlocking European aid

By Peter Mutai

NAIROBI, Nov. 21 (Xinhua) -- African governments have a historic opportunity to simultaneously secure significant new investments in agriculture and redefine relations with European partners by embracing a clear, African-led commitment to boosting food production.

According to a new report from a team of African and European development experts, the researchers links African leadership on food security to establishing balanced partnerships with outside investors; calls for urgent action to stabilize rising prices

The analysis from the Montpellier Panel, a group of ten African and European experts from the fields of agriculture, sustainable development, trade, policy, and global development convened with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, reflects concern that Europe risks squandering a rare moment to scale-up a "rich diversity" of activities already underway across Africa that "could achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development." "Europe needs a strong signal from African governments that the continent is primed to pursue a major transformation in food production," said Namanga Ngongi, president of the Alliance for a Nairobi-based Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and a member of the Montpellier Panel. "We can make this a more balanced and mutually beneficial partnership by boosting our support for the farm sector and presenting a strategy that directs European investments to the most promising programs and most perilous problems."

The report examining Europe's role in supporting African agriculture comes as policy makers in both regions prepare for the third Africa-EU summit, to be held Nov.29-30 in Tripoli that will define Africa-EU cooperation for years to come.

The analysis also coincides with ominous signs that global commodities markets could rock Africa with another round of sharp increases in food prices.

The report which was received here on Sunday says sudden spike in food prices that occurred in 2007 and 2008 spread hunger and hardship to millions of Africans.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) recently warned that prices in some cereals are approaching 2008 levels.

The Montpellier Panel is urging European and African leaders to move quickly to build a firewall against another surge. "Africans are making admirable progress but the fact remains that the enormous growth required cannot be accomplished by Africans alone," Ngongi said. "From rebuilding our neglected university programs to boosting seed production and improving markets, there are many opportunities for Europeans and Africans to achieve a new level of consensus and cooperation and bridge the gap that has emerged between bold pledges of assistance and thus far a failure to deliver on the ground."

The panel proposes establishing regulatory processes, along with global and national grain reserves, that could be employed to reduce extreme price volatility in global markets for cereals and staple crops, which have their greatest impact on poor countries.

"We want to see Europe and Africa working together to counter immediate threats to food security, like a new round of high food prices, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that African governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity," said Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College in London, who chaired the panel.

The report, Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development, The Montpellier Panel, is focused on the follow-through from the L'Aquila summit in which wealthy governments in Europe and the United States pledged 22.5 billion dollars to seek food security worldwide, with much of the funds to be spent on agriculture development in sub-Saharan Africa.

The analysis presents a situation in Africa in which investments are needed to address chronic problems and exploit the newly emerging African-led Green Revolution that is focused on increasing production on smallholder farms.

For example, 22 African governments have signed on to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program, or CAADP, which pledges signatories to investing 10 percent of national budgets toward improved food production. Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Senegal are among the countries where agriculture spending already has reached or exceeded the 10 percent threshold.

Ngongi and Conway discussed the panel's findings at a joint meeting of African agriculture, education, and finance officials meeting in Kampala on Nov. 18 to discuss the need for greater investments in agriculture-oriented higher education.

Conway and Ngongi believe that developing a strong cadre of Africa-trained agriculture experts will be critical to ensuring Africa's smallholder farmers have access to the technology and knowledge required to increase food production and participate competitively in regional and global markets.

Conway pointed to a recent World Bank study, which found relatively modest investments in graduate level education programs in Africa could boost per capita GDP by 12 percent.

He called for African governments that have committed within the CAADP to spending 10 percent of budgets on agriculture to invest a defined portion in programs at African universities that offer advanced degrees in agriculture-related studies. "Pledging a significant amount to agriculture education is an example of how African governments help establish priorities for their European partners to follow," Conway said. "European universities have played a direct role in the rapid growth in farm production we experienced in the 20th century, so surely European policy makers understand the link between investments in homegrown agriculture expertise and a viable and competitive farm sector."

Conway and Ngongi said overall there is a need for creating a new partnership between African and European governments based on their mutual interest in solving urgent food-related problems confronting African countries but also in scaling-up the successes now increasingly common across the continent. For example, most Africans depend on local farms - theirs and other's - for sustenance.

Evidence of the current inadequacy of production includes that fact that today 40 percent of African children exhibit stunted growth, a key indication of malnutrition.

According to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), millions of Africans are suffering the effect of poor nutrition in the critical first "1000 days" - the period from conception to a child's second birthday - after which the effects of malnutrition are "largely irreversible."

Yet today many regions are demonstrating that with the right kind of assistance, African farmers can produce far more food and provide the foundation of a more food-secure and prosperous continent.

An array of new national and regional initiatives - many of them innovative public-private partnerships - are successfully boosting food production and building a self-sustaining agriculture infrastructure.

Nigeria has surpassed Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava, which is now Africa's second most important source of calories.

The introduction of new rice varieties for Africa (NERICAs) is boosting harvests and nutrition for 20 million rice farmers, most of whom are women and the families and communities they serve.

AGRA in just a few years of existence has funded 60 crop breeding programs, introduced 125 new crop varieties into the field, and provided start-up capital for 35 African seed enterprises that are producing 15,000 metric tons of certified seed.

AGRA also has enlisted 9200 agro-dealers who have provided smallholder farmers with 45 million dollars worth of seed and farm inputs.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-11/21/c_13616061.htm

BROADCAST



Interview in Accra with Dr Ramadjita Tabo

Deputy executive director, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa

by Jean Jaffré 26 october 2010 ex London

LEAD Fin octobre un groupe d'experts a présenté un rapport au Parlement britannique à Londres sur la nécessité de relancer l'agriculture en Afrique sur de nouvelles bases en renforçant la coopération avec l'Europe. Ramadjita Tabo est l'invité de BBC Afrique au micro de Jean Jaffré

(AUDIO)

Malgré la malnutrition qui a frappé 265 millions d'habitants au sud du Sahara en 2009, leur conclusion est optimiste : la valeur de la production agricole annuelle du continent pourrait augmenter de 280 milliards de dollars aujourd'hui à environ 800 milliards de dollars en 2030. Rappelons que les Etats se sont engagés lors d'une réunion de l'Union africaine à consacrer 10 % de leur budget pour investir dans les zones rurales (communication, irrigation) et dans le développement agricole (semences, régulations des prix, enseignement). Les membres de l'Union européenne continuent d'être les plus gros pourvoyeurs d'aide au secteur agricole en Afrique, ils risquent de perdre de leur influence au profit de pays comme la Chine et le Brésil. J'ai contacté Ramadjita Tabo, membre du panel de Montpellier, une initiative soutenue par la fondation Bill and Melinda Gates. Il est directeur exécutif adjoint du Forum pour la recherche agricole en Afrique, un organisme coordonnateur au niveau continental dont le siège est Accra, et je lui ai fait remarquer le paradoxe entre l'optimisme affiché par les auteurs du rapport et la crainte que les objectifs du Millénaire pour lutter contre la pauvreté ne soient pas atteints. Ramadjita Tabo

Vous écoutez l'interview de BBC Afrique, Ramadjita Tabo, membre du panel de Montpellier qui vient de remettre un rapport pour relancer l'agriculture en Afrique.



(UK)

"Focus on Africa"

Audio: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/audioconsole/?stream=focusafrica1700>

Listen at 23:54.

(UK)

BBC World Briefing

(Audio Clip Available)



(UK)

BBC Network Africa

(Audio Clip Available)



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN AFRICA AND EUROPE

The Montpellier Panel on Agricultural Cooperation between Africa and Europe was released in Kenya.

Joining ABN from Nairobi on Europe and Africa's partnership for agricultural development is Dr Namanga Ngongi, President of the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

Video: <http://www.abndigital.com/multimedia/video/featured-interviews/868961.htm>

(Television Clip Available)



(South Africa)

“Channel Africa”

Wandile Kallipa Interviews Dr RamadjitaTabo

(Audio Clip Available)

BUSINESS DAILY

(Kenya)

Group seeks increased aid for Africa agriculture

Posted Wednesday, October 27 2010 at 00:00

By ALLAN ODHIAMBO

The creation of strategic grain reserves could help boost growth in food deficit nations in Africa, a group of experts said on Tuesday, and urged key donors such as Europe to shift their current strategies on aid provision.

The experts, under an international group known as the Montpellier panel and supported by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, claimed that lack of specific intervention measures on bolstering food reserves continued to expose millions of people in Africa to suffering despite huge fortunes pledged in aid each year.

Panel chair

“We want to see European donors to pay closer attention to immediate threats to food security, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that the governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity,” Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London, who chaired the panel, said.

The panel claimed that the commitment at a 2009 G8 summit to dramatically step up the fight against malnutrition in Africa was yet to bring change.

At the summit in L’Aquila, Europe and the US pledged \$22.5 billion to seek food security worldwide, with most of the money to be spent on agriculture development in sub-Saharan Africa.

“If we do not bridge the gap there is risk that new investments will dissipate into more small scale activity and we will not see transformational change that is needed,” the panel said in a report titled: Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development, The Montpellier Panel.

The report released in London on Tuesday is focused on a following up on the L’ Aquila pledges.

The panel said a system of grain reserves, for example, could prevent another round of price shocks to commodities markets from spreading malnutrition to millions more Africans, as they did in 2007 and 2008.

“Today, European aid to Africa can be especially productive because it can support emerging strategies already owned, operated and driven by Africans, which is a relatively novel situation in the history of European-African relations,” Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, CEO and head of diplomatic mission, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) said.

The panel claimed that close to half of children in Africa were stunted due to poor nutrition while nearly half of all pregnant women in the region and 40 per cent of women of child-bearing age suffered from anaemia.

“While Europe has always been a strong supporter of African agriculture, its investments today are not coordinated or aligned fully with the opportunities available,” said Namanga Ngongi, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (Agra) and a member of the Montpellier Panel said.

“Where we are directly supporting the smallholder farmers, we are seeing increased yields and profitable farms; we are seeing this success in pockets all across Africa. What is critical now is for focused investments so we can replicate this success on a large scale and truly revolutionise African agriculture”.

But the panel lauded action by the 22 African governments including Kenya that have signed the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme, or CAADP, which commits signatories to investing 10 per cent of national budgets toward improved food production.

Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Senegal are among the countries where agriculture spending has already reached or exceeded the 10 per cent threshold.

The panel said urgent contributions by donors such as Europe towards the creation of food reserves could greatly help in countering the danger that another spike in commodities prices such as those witnessed in 2007 and 2008.

“Intensifying its engagement with Africa is in Europe’s interest because if we don’t seize on this opportunity, the costs will be felt both at home and abroad,” Lord Cameron of Dillington, co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Agriculture and Food for Development said when he presided over the launch of the report.

<http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/Corporate%20News/Group%20seeks%20increased%20aid%20for%20Africa%20agriculture/-/539550/1040886/-/ctvpgs/-/>

Cape Argus

(South Africa)

Agriculture in Africa shows an upturn, but the continent needs help

December 07, 2010 Tuesday

By Namanga Ngongi and Gordon Conway

Today, for perhaps the first time, an increasing number of African farms are harvesting not just a surplus of crops, but also a surplus of optimism.

With European and African policymakers working on refining the priorities of Africa-EU co-operation in the years to come, Africa should strongly define how Europe, Africa's strongest partner, should invest in African agricultural development.

Overall, the trends in African agriculture are unmistakably positive. This year, maize harvests in Uganda topped 2 million tons, a new record. Such bounty did not happen by accident. Yes, the weather co-operated, but the surplus is also the result of an intensive effort to produce and avail to farmers improved maize seeds that produce higher yields.

Similar successes have been reported in Western Kenya, where maize productivity improved 115 percent last year. In Tanzania, farmers have taken advantage of improved seeds to generate surplus harvests even in the midst of drought conditions. Nigeria's focus on farm improvements has led it past Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava.

Of course, the scenario is not so rosy everywhere in Africa.

In parts of Niger this year, food shortages have led to a distressingly familiar humanitarian crisis. We still live on a continent where the nutrition challenges are profound. About 200 million people are chronically malnourished.

A key reason for this progress is that more and more African governments are embracing agriculture as the foundation for a food-secure and prosperous continent. There are now 22 countries that have signed on to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, or CAADP, and pledged to commit 10 percent of national budgets toward improving food production.

Africa's long-term food security, nutrition and growth depend on a clear, unwavering commitment to agricultural investment. The continued growth in Africa's agriculture sector cannot be accomplished by Africans alone. African countries need to continue to partner with Europe. We need to make sure these partnerships are scaling up the most promising programmes and resolving the most perilous problems.

We recently served on a panel of agriculture development experts from Europe and Africa that considered how Europe can improve its support of Africa's agricultural reawakening. We found that while European donors have substantially increased their commitments to agricultural development in Africa in recent years, their investments are not always fully aligned with the opportunities available — opportunities that would boost both Africa's and Europe's interdependent economies.

We want to see European governments targeting their investments in ways that build on existing African-based projects and institutions that bring more focus and co-ordination to the activities already under way, and shift attention from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term capacity building.

Ultimately, the best way for African governments to secure effective investments in agriculture is to demonstrate leadership in seeking improvements across the agriculture value chain.

Governments must be willing to simultaneously support better access to seeds, soil inputs, capital, markets, and the latest in agriculture research and expertise. Bold commitments from African governments will, in turn, serve as a magnet for attracting investment from abroad.

(Uganda)

New report warns on Africa's food production

By Dorothy Nakaweesi & Agencies

Posted Tuesday, November 2 2010 at 00:00

The gap between Europe's bold rhetoric pledging billions to aid African agriculture, a reality that has failed to channel new investments to promising projects, risks squandering a rare opportunity to transform food production across the continent.

A new report released on last week from a Montpellier panel of European and African development experts said: "Commitment at a 2009 G8 summit to dramatically escalate the fight against malnutrition in Africa has yet to bring critically needed support for a "rich diversity" of activities already underway that "could achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development."

"If we do not bridge the gap, there is risk that new investments will dissipate into more small scale activity and we will not see transformational change that is needed," the report Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development reads in part.

The panel is concerned that European donors have not used their influence and abilities to create a safety net. A system of grain reserves, for example, could prevent another round of price shocks to commodities markets from spreading malnutrition to millions more Africans.

"We want to see European donors paying closer attention to immediate threats to food security, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that African governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity," said Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London, who chaired the panel.

"Today, European aid to Africa can be especially productive because it can support emerging strategies already owned, operated and driven by Africans, which is a relatively novel situation in the history of European-African relations," Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, the Head of Diplomatic Mission, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network said.

It's in this arrangement that wealthy governments in Europe and the US pledged \$22.5 billion to seek food security worldwide, with much of the funds to be spent on agriculture development in sub-Saharan Africa.

The analysis presents a situation in Africa in which investments are needed to address the extreme perils and exploit the extraordinary opportunities that today exist side by side.

On the other hand, 22 African governments have signed on to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme, or CAADP, which commits signatories to investing 10 percent of national budgets toward improved food production. And they increasingly have the means to do so. GDP is now rising in 27 of Africa's 30 largest countries. Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Senegal are among the countries where agriculture spending already has a reached or exceeded the 10 percent threshold.

Meanwhile, on the ground, an array of new national and regional initiatives—many of them innovative public-private partnerships—are successfully boosting food production and building a self-sustaining agriculture infrastructure.

Nigeria has surpassed Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava, which is now Africa's second most important source of calories. The introduction of new rice varieties for Africa (NERICAs) is boosting harvests and nutrition for 20 million rice farmers, most of whom are women and the families and communities they serve.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has funded 60 crops breeding programs, introduced 125 new crop varieties into the field, and provided start-up capital for 35 African seed enterprises that are producing 15,000 metric tons of certified seed. AGRA also has enlisted 9200 agro-dealers who have provided smallholder farmers with US\$45 million worth of seed and farm inputs.

“While Europe has always been a strong supporter of African agriculture, its investments today are not coordinated or aligned fully with the opportunities available,” said Namanga Ngongi, AGRA's president and a member of the Montpellier Panel.

“Where we are directly supporting the smallholder farmers, we are seeing increased yields and profitable farms; we are seeing this success in pockets all across Africa. What is critical now is for focused investments so we can replicate

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Business/Business%20Power/-/688616/1044972/-/1514f3bz/-/>

(Uganda)

Africans hold the key to agricultural awakening

By DR. NAMANGA NGONGI & PROF SIR GORDON CONWAY

Posted Wednesday, November 24 2010 at 00:00

Today, for perhaps the first time ever, an increasing number of African farms are harvesting not just a surplus of crops, but also a surplus of optimism. As European and African policymakers prepare for the third Africa-EU Summit in Libya, which will help define the priorities of Africa-EU cooperation in the years to come, Africa should strongly define how Europe, Africa's strongest partner, should invest in African agricultural development.

Overall, the trends in African agriculture are unmistakably positive. This year, maize harvests in Uganda topped two million tonnes, a new record. Such bounty did not happen by accident. Yes, the weather cooperated, but the surplus also is the result of an intensive effort to produce and avail to farmers improved maize seeds that produce higher yields. Similar successes have been reported in Western Kenya, where maize productivity improved 115 per cent last year. In Tanzania, farmers have taken advantage of improved seeds to generate surplus harvests even in the midst of drought conditions. Nigeria's focus on farm improvements has led it past Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava.

Of course, the scenario is not so rosy everywhere in Africa. In parts of Niger this year, food shortages have led to a distressingly familiar humanitarian crisis. We still live on a continent where the nutrition challenges are profound. 200 million people are chronically malnourished.

10 per cent of national budget

A key reason for this progress is that more and more African governments are embracing agriculture as the foundation for a food-secure and prosperous continent. There are now 22 countries that have signed on to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, or CAADP, and pledged to commit 10 per cent of national budgets toward improving food production. Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Senegal are among the countries where agriculture spending already has reached or exceeded the 10 percent threshold.

The challenge that confronts us today is making sure that Africans define the engagement they want from Europe. Africa's long-term food security, nutrition and growth depend on a clear, unwavering commitment to agricultural investment. The continued growth in Africa's agriculture sector cannot be accomplished by Africans alone. African countries need to continue to partner with Europe. We need to make sure these partnerships are scaling up the most promising programmes and resolving the most perilous problems.

We recently served on a panel of agriculture development experts from Europe and Africa that considered how Europe can improve its support of Africa's agriculture reawakening. We found that while European donors have substantially increased their commitments to agricultural development in Africa in recent years, their investments are not always fully aligned with the opportunities available—opportunities that would boost both Africa's and Europe's interdependent economies.

We want to see European governments targeting their investments in ways that build on existing African-based projects and institutions that bring more focus and coordination to the activities already underway, and shift attention from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term capacity building.

Volatile global markets

In addition, Africa should seek immediate action from Europe to counter the danger that another spike in commodities prices, along the lines of what occurred in 2007 and 2008, which could reverse hard-fought progress to address nutrition problems through agriculture development. The panel proposes establishing regulatory processes, along with global and national grain reserves, that could be employed to reduce extreme price volatility in global markets for cereals and staple crops, which have their greatest impact on poor countries.

Ultimately, the best way for African governments to secure effective investments in agriculture is to demonstrate leadership in seeking improvements across the agriculture value chain. Governments must be willing to simultaneously support better access to seeds, soil inputs, capital, markets, and the latest in agriculture research and expertise. Bold commitments from African governments will in turn serve as a magnet for attracting investment from abroad.

The world is recognising the long-dormant potential of African agriculture. Europe remains Africa's largest agricultural trading partner, but investors from China, Brazil, Russia, India and elsewhere are suddenly taking intense interest in Africa's farm sector.

It is remarkable that many countries now look to Africa not as the land of food shortages, but as a future breadbasket for the world. The challenge for African governments is to create a strong framework for agriculture development that ensures attainment of the first priority of our partnerships that is to contribute to food security and the prosperity of Africans through the transformation of agriculture.

<http://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/Farming/-/689860/1059200/-/2mv77jz/-/index.html>

(Nigeria)

Donors, other may increase agric aid to Africa

AFRICAN governments may now have a historic opportunity to secure significant new investments in agriculture and redefine relations with European partners by embracing a clear, African-led commitment to boosting food production, says a new report by a specialist group on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

The CCAFS is a team of African and European development experts. According to a statement issued yesterday by the CCAFS, the analysis from the Montpellier Panel, a group of 10 African and European experts in the fields of agriculture, sustainable development, trade, policy, and global development convened with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, reflected concern that Europe risks squandering a rare moment to scale-up a "rich diversity" of activities already under way across Africa which could achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development.

President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and a member of the Montpellier Panel, Namanga Ngongi said: "Europe needs a strong signal from African governments that the continent is primed to pursue a major transformation in food production. We can make this a more balanced and mutually beneficial partnership by boosting our support for the farm sector and presenting a strategy that directs European investments to the most promising programs and most perilous problems."

The report examining Europe's role in supporting African agriculture comes as policy makers in both regions prepare for the third Africa-EU summit, to be held between November 29 and 30 in Tripoli, which would be expected to define Africa-EU cooperation for years to come.

The analysis also coincides with ominous signs that global commodities markets could rock Africa with another round of sharp increases in food prices.

The sudden spike in food prices that occurred in 2007 and 2008 spread hunger and hardship to millions of Africans.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) recently warned that prices in some cereals are approaching 2008 levels. The Montpellier Panel is urging European and African leaders to move quickly to build a firewall against another surge.

http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=29721:donors-other-may-increase-agric-aid-to-africa&catid=1:national&Itemid=559

A “ajuda” económica da Europa a África

As ajudas económicas anunciadas pelos países europeus para a agricultura de África não passaram de promessas, o que impediu a realização de projectos que poderiam promover a produção de alimentos no continente.

Isto é o que denuncia o último relatório anual do grupo de especialistas europeus e africanos conhecido como o Painel de Montpellier e elaborado com o apoio da Fundação Bill & Melinda Gates.

Segundo o relatório, o compromisso assumido na cimeira do Grupo dos Oito (G8, os sete países mais industrializados do mundo e a Rússia) no ano passado em L'Aquila (Itália) de lutar contra a desnutrição em África limitou-se a acções que ainda não foram postas em andamento.

Na reunião do G8, os países países do G8 comprometeram em disponibilizar 22,5 mil milhões para garantir a segurança alimentar em todo o mundo.

A maior parte desses fundos seria destinada a projectos agrícolas na

África Subsaariana, uma das regiões do mundo mais castigadas pela fome e pela desnutrição.

“É preciso acabar com o fosso entre prometer e cumprir e garantir a segurança alimentar através do desenvolvimento da agricultura”, declararam os especialistas.

Os membros do Painel de Montpellier expressaram especialmente a sua preocupação pelo facto de os doadores europeus não usarem a sua influência para a criação de uma “rede de segurança”, como por exemplo um sistema de reservas de cereais que poderia evitar uma nova onda de desnutrição por

causa da redução das colheitas, como as de 2007 e 2008.

“Queremos ver como os doadores europeus dão atenção às ameaças imediatas à segurança alimentar e se aumentam o seu apoio aos esforços das autoridades africanas para garantir a prosperidade nesses países”, disse Gordon Conway, presidente do Painel de especialistas.

Conway afirma que as ajudas europeias são especialmente produtivas neste momento, pois são o financiamento de que precisam vários projectos de desenvolvimento iniciados pela primeira vez pelos

próprios africanos.

O relatório adverte que cerca de 337 milhões de africanos consomem menos de 2.100 calorias por dia e cerca de 200 milhões sofrem de desnutrição crónica. Além disso, segundo o documento, 12 africanos morrem por minuto por desnutrição.

No caso da África Subsaariana, metade das crianças está com atrofia e cerca de 50 por cento das grávidas e de 40 por cento das mulheres que amamentam os seus filhos sofrem de anemia.

O ponto positivo é que 22 países do continente assinaram o Programa Compreensivo de Desenvolvimento Agrícola Africano (CAADP), que obriga os signatários a investirem 10 por cento dos seus orçamentos na produção alimentar.

Além disso, países como o Ghana, Etiópia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso e Senegal ultrapassaram essa percentagem de investimentos e o Produto Interno Bruto de 27 das 30 maiores economias do continente cresceu nos últimos anos.

O último relatório anual do Painel de Montpellier denuncia que as ajudas económicas anunciadas pelos países europeus para a agricultura de África foram apenas promessas



(Guyana)

STABROEK NEWS, Wednesday, October 27, 2010

Page 19

World News

African agriculture coming of age-report

LONDON, (Reuters) - A growing African food sector can yield private sector returns on the back of government support, said a report yesterday, which also said that a global grain reserve may be needed to protect consumers from price spikes.

Local initiatives aiming for an African equivalent of the Green Revolution, which swept developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s, needed coordination, the report added.

For example an African Union (AU)

strategy aimed to drive economic development through investment in agriculture at a tenth of national budgets, given new impetus by a 2008 food crisis which prompted \$20 billion aid for agriculture. "It's a focus on the great and proven potential of African agriculture," said Imperial College London's Gordon Conway, chair of a panel of authors of the report titled "Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development".

"We can continue to parachute in

sacks of grain, but it's much better to focus on making sure the seeds and fertilisers are present in the hands of the dealers in the villages."

"We are in a period of optimism about the prospects for Africa and African agriculture," the report concluded.

The Green Revolution in Mexico, India and elsewhere met large increases in yields through steps such as investment in irrigation, fertilisers and high yielding crops.

(Tanzania)

Plans launched for strategic grain reserves to serve EA

Saturday, 27 November 2010 08:50

By ALLAN ODHIAMBO , The Citizen Correspondent

Arusha. Regional farmers hard hit by low return on investment due to price volatility and inefficient market systems are planning for a common strategic grain reserve (SGR) to help curb the situation that threatens to worsen food insecurity in East Africa.

"We are looking up to having a strategic grain reserve for the region so that we can have stable trading platforms that allow for planning and proper price setting based on the fundamentals of demand and supply," East African Farmers Federation (EAFF) president Phillip Kirori said.

"Besides ensuring farmers get adequate compensation for their investment, such a scheme would also boost food security by ensuring we have constant supplies in the stores."

Modalities on the creation of an SGR are still under discussion between the federation and the East African Community (EAC) secretariat even though the proposals are expected to feature at an upcoming regional Heads of State meeting on food security and climate change scheduled for Arusha next month.

Deficit locations

Consumers in East Africa rely on cross-border shipments of key commodities from high supply to deficit locations. Recent studies, however, revealed lethargy among agricultural producers in East Africa thanks to relentless poor earnings despite sharp rallies in the prices of key food items world-wide.

An assessment by the European Union (EU), for instance, revealed that food commodity dealers in East Africa are losing up to 80 per cent of their earnings due to high transaction costs and post-harvest losses.

"Due to low market transparency and inadequate market information systems, the cost of trade currently is estimated to account for as much as 15 per cent of the price of the traded food," the EU's Centre for Technical Cooperation (CTA) which handles development issues with the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) bloc said in a brief.

"Some farmers that are able to sell surplus harvest only receive 10 to 20 per cent of the price of their produce because of excessive transaction costs and post-harvest losses."

This low returns situation leaves most producers disillusioned, thus compromising the region's overall development as well as food security.

International group Montpellier Panel, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, supports the creation of such strategic grain reserves saying the move could help boost growth in food deficit nations in Africa and urged key donors to shift their current strategies on aid provision.

The experts said lack of specific intervention measures on bolstering food reserves exposes millions of people in Africa to suffering despite huge fortunes pledged in aid each year.

“We want to see European donors pay closer attention to immediate threats to food security, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that the governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity,” said Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London, who chaired a Montpellier panel in London last month.

The group pointed out that a system of grain reserves could prevent another round of price shocks to commodities markets from spreading malnutrition to millions more Africans, as they did in 2007 and 2008.

“Today, European aid to Africa can be especially productive because it can support emerging strategies already owned, operated and driven by Africans, which is a relatively novel situation in the history of European-African relations,” Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, CEO and head of diplomatic mission, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) said.

Kenya is among African states that have made major strides towards the creation of SGR to try and stabilise pricing of key products such as maize. The SGR is currently managed by the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCBP).

“Where we are directly supporting smallholder farmers, we are seeing increased yields and profitable farms; we are seeing this success in pockets all across Africa.

What is critical now is for focused investments so we can replicate this success on a large scale and truly revolutionise African agriculture,” said Namanga Ngongi, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (Agra) and a member of the Montpellier Panel.

The concerns over low returns for growers in the region and Africa as a whole came as new forecasts showed that international food import bills could pass the \$1 trillion mark this year with prices in most commodities up sharply from 2009.

In the latest edition of its food outlook report, the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has issued a warning to the international community to prepare for hard times ahead unless production of major food crops increases significantly in 2011.

Food import bills for the world’s poorest countries are predicted to rise 11 per cent in 2010. This means, by passing a \$1 trillion, the global import food bill will likely rise to a level not seen since food prices peaked at record levels in 2008.

“With the pressure on world prices of most commodities not abating, the international community must remain vigilant against further supply shocks in 2011,” the agency said. Contrary to earlier predictions, world cereal production is forecast to contract by two per cent rather than expand by 1.2 per cent as anticipated in June.

Unexpected supply shortfalls due to unfavourable weather conditions are responsible for this change in direction, according to the report.

Global inventories

Global cereal stocks are forecast to decline sharply — putting pressure on farmers to step-up production and replenish inventories. World cereals stocks are anticipated to shrink by seven per cent, according to FAO, with barley plunging 35 per cent, maize 12 per cent and wheat 10 per cent. Only rice reserves are foreseen to increase, by six per cent, according to the report.

“Given the expectation of falling global inventories, the size of next year’s crops will be critical in setting the tone for stability in international markets,” FAO said.

“For major cereals, production must expand substantially to meet utilisation and to reconstitute world reserves, and farmers are likely to respond to the prevailing prices by expanding planting. The agency

said that cereals may not be the only crops farmers will be trying to raise production as rising prices have also made other commodities such as soybeans, sugar and cotton attractive to grow.

“This could limit individual crop production responses to levels that would be insufficient to alleviate market tightness. Against this backdrop, consumers may have little choice but to pay higher prices for their food,” FAO warns.

<http://www.thecitizen.co.tz/business/13-local-business/5896-plans-launched-for-strategic-grain-reserves-to-serve-ea.html>



Europe 'fails to deliver' on African farm pledges

Tuesday November 02 2010

Europe has promised billions of euros to assist African agriculture, but has largely failed to deliver on its pledges, according to a keynote speaker at the Crop World conference held in London.

Dr Namanga Ngongi, president of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (Agra), warned that the continent could see a repeat of the recent Mozambique riots in other countries if the vital issue of food security was not urgently addressed.

(Rest of Article Unavailable)

<http://www.agra-net.com/portal2/home.jsp?template=newsarticle&artid=20017822488&pubid=ag002#>

EAST AFRICAN BUSINESS WEEK

(Uganda)

Brain drain slowing agric development

Bosco Hitimana

KAMPALA, UGANDA - Africa must stem the academic "brain drain" and increase investments in maintaining the continent's human and scientific capacity to achieve agricultural transformation, food security experts have said.

In remarks made at the Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Agriculture in Africa held in Kampala, the conference of ministers of education, agriculture and finance from several African countries last week, Dr Namanga Ngongi of Africa Green Revolution (AGRA) and Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College and former DFID science advisor noted that meeting Africa's food security challenges in the 21st century will require greater investments in its human capital. Both are members of the Montpellier Panel, a group of 10 African and European experts from the fields of agriculture, sustainable development, trade, policy, and global development who addressed the conference.

According to Ngongi, there are only 70 agricultural researchers per million people in Africa, compared to 2,640 in North America and 4,380 in Japan. Only one in four African researchers holds a Ph.D., compared with nearly two thirds in India.

For Conway and Ngongi, Africa would benefit from higher education through faster adoption of new technologies, higher salaries, and a more competitive workforce

According to Conway, making agriculture more attractive to young people and women are critical.

The number of African agricultural researchers has declined by half in over the last 20 years due to limited or non-existent funding of tertiary agricultural education.

Currently, more than half of the agricultural researchers working today are due to retire in the next five years.

For the Montpellier Panel members, this calls for urgent action to redress Africa's shortfall in high-caliber human capacity in agriculture, which hinders growth and undermines the foundation for sustainable development.

Conway called for governments to invest 10 percent of the agricultural budget allocations to higher education.

This increase would make the sector more attractive to donors and could unlock new sources of funds needed to stem the brain drain and build a new cadre of innovators that could lead Africa forward.

Agriculture in some East African countries have been given little attention.

In Uganda, for example, the budget allocation to agriculture is only 3.8%, and yet 78% of the 31 million people are dependent on agriculture. Today many regions are demonstrating that with the right kind of assistance, African farmers can produce far more food and provide the foundation of a more food-secure and prosperous continent.

A new report from a team of African and European development experts says African governments have a historic opportunity to simultaneously secure significant new investments in agriculture and redefine relations with European partners by embracing a clear, African-led commitment to boosting food production. The analysis from the Montpellier Panel reflects concern that Europe risks squandering a rare moment to scale-up activities already underway across Africa that "could achieve food security through agricultural development."

<http://www.busiweek.com/10/page.php?aid=1635>

Farmers Guardian

EU-Africa Partnerships Key to African Agricultural Development

28 October 2010 | By Farming First

Partnerships between Africa and Europe are critical for ensuring agricultural development in Africa and also for stabilising food supplies in Europe, according to a new report launched this week.

The Montpellier Panel Report, a collaborative project hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agriculture and Food Development, provides an overview of the state of European investment in African agriculture and makes recommendations for strengthening EU-Africa partnerships.

The report comes at a time when China, India and Brazil are increasingly tapping into the huge potential of African agriculture. Europe, however, is at risk of being left behind, according to the report. Boosting agricultural production from Africa's farmers is key to ensuring trade opportunities and securing food supplies in Europe, the group said.

"Europe should grasp the opportunity to achieve food and nutritional security through agricultural development in Africa," said Lindiwe Sibanda, CEO of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and Farming First spokesperson.

At the launch, the panellists stressed the critical role of the private sector in helping to provide the finance and tools to improving Africa's agricultural sector.

With the increased threats to agriculture due to the impacts of climate change, the report calls for increased investment into research for radical solutions to both adaptation and mitigation as they relate to agriculture.

"Agriculture is both a victim and a culprit of climate change," said Sir Gordon Conway, Professor of International Development at Imperial College London.

The report, entitled Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development, highlights the significant progress of African-led national and regional efforts, such as the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) which commits signatories to invest 10% of national budgets for improving agricultural productivity. The role for Europe, the panel members say, is to ensure the momentum is sustained through increased commitments and funding, to help scale up effective initiatives.

<http://www.farmersguardian.com/home/world-news/eu-africa-partnerships-key-to-african-agricultural-development/35301.article>



Time right for Europe to consolidate African agriculture investment

By Eleanor Whitehead | Published: 28 October, 2010

The emergence of increasingly defined national and regional African strategies and programmes are providing important opportunities for European agricultural investment, a report produced by the Montpellier Panel has said.

The European Union is now responsible for over 60 percent of the world's official development assistance, including about \$800m a year to agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa. However, strong rhetoric for large scale funding is often countered by an uncoordinated approach which means that new investments are not channelled to promising projects, and end up scattered inefficiently, the report said.



"We are the largest agricultural trade partner that Africa has, but the question is whether we could do more, make more investments and have a greater impact," says Sir Gordon Conway, chair of the panel.

A unique context generated by renewed interest in agricultural investment following the 2009 L'Aquila summit; America's commitment to food security through the Feed the Future programme; and the progress of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme, under which 22 African countries have pledged to commit 10% of their national budgets to agriculture, means that the time is right to galvanise European public and private sector agricultural investment, Mr Conway says.

Europe should not be left lagging developing economies such as China, the report suggests, which have been investing across African agri-business and land. "If Europe is seen to be investing in agriculture, it will benefit from agricultural development," Mr Conway says. "We need the trade... That's what Brazil and China and India perceive, and that's what we need to be perceiving too."

Improved African national and regional strategies – including the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, which is currently under reform and requires increased funding – offer a timely opportunity for partnership and investment. A series of global institutions, such as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme – a new World Bank donor trust fund – also require an integrated European approach in order improve efficiency, Mr Conway believes.

"There are lots of potential partnerships, but I think the really interesting partnerships are going to be between governments; between European governments, and between Europe and the United States," Mr Conway says. "I'd love to see a partnership between the UK and the US in terms of agricultural development, with Feed the Future.

"The issue, of course is that DFID doesn't do project work in the way that Americans do, but that doesn't mean to say you have to do project work; you can do other things that match in with what the Americans do, and that's what I'd like to see." On the ground, partnerships with African universities to ensure adequate staffing are also an opportunity, he believes.

A growing African food sector can also generate private sector returns on the back of government support. The problem of scaling up small- to mid- scale projects can be tackled by public-private-partnerships, he says, citing examples of range of private seed companies created by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, which need capital investment to establish themselves, as well as agro-dealers who require both government and private sector support to establish themselves.

“We need an approach that’s not just focused on the immediate perils of food security but also on the great and proven potential of African agriculture,” he says. “We can continue to parachute in with sacks of grain, but it’s much better to focus on making sure that seeds and fertilisers are present in the hands of the agro-dealers in the villages.”

Europe should also ensure that partnerships generate a safety net to reduce the chances of another food crisis. Since Russia initiated a wheat export ban in August following forest fires and a dramatic fall in production, rising grain prices have had a knock-on effect, driving other food prices higher. Given that price increases have been generated as much by perceived shortage as actual shortfalls, Mr Conway is advocating investment in the creation of regional African reserves as a measure to mute volatility and food insecurity.

“Although there are all these [international] grain reserves...there’s plenty of wheat in the world, at the same time there were all these stories appearing saying, actually we should be worried,” he explains. “That triggers what’s going on. And I think if countries have far more physical reserves that people can see and are there, then the reaction will be dampened.”

Establishing a grain reserve for the World Food Programme could also help prevent shortfalls. “At the time of the Niger crisis this year, they just ran out of food and grain and money,” he says. “If the World Food Programme had a small physical grain reserve, or maybe several physical grain reserves, it could draw on them in those kinds of emergencies.” The measure is being researched by the International Food Policy Research Institute.

<http://web.thisisafricaonline.com/2010/10/28/time-right-for-europe-to-consolidate-african-agriculture-investment/>

(UK)

Europe should increase aid to improve agriculture in Africa

Sir Gordon Conway and Lindiwe Majele Sibanda Tuesday 26 October 2010 12.30 BST

A new EU-Africa partnership report recommends making agriculture a priority to fight malnutrition, hunger and poverty affecting millions of people in sub-Saharan Africa

Here's a quick quiz to test your knowledge of farming and food production in sub-Saharan Africa. Which scenario best reflects the state of farming in Africa today?

- convoys of food trucks besieged by starving masses in Niger
- millions of smallholder farmers struggling to subsist without access to the tools and technologies they need
- fields in Uganda plump with orange fleshed sweet potatoes rich in vitamin A growing so fast farmers can cultivate two plantings a year
- solar powered weather stations in northern Kenya that automatically send insurance payments to farmers over mobile phones when they detect evidence of a drought



The correct answer is all of the above. Each of these situations in their own way reflects the contemporary reality in Africa. In many areas, food production remains incredibly fragile, and the result is visual and heart-wrenching in the malnutrition of millions of children. In other areas, dramatic progress is the overriding feature of the day.

These situations taken together show that African agriculture represents a huge opportunity for wealthy governments in Europe, who last year joined partners in North America at the L'Aquila G8 summit in pledging \$22.5bn to fight hunger around the world. After a generation of neglect of agriculture development, they agreed to do this chiefly through agricultural development and, given the overwhelming need, largely in sub-Saharan Africa.

We recently served on a panel of agriculture development experts from Europe and Africa with decades of experience in this area. All of us are eager to see Europe take more decisive and coordinated action to boost agriculture production in Africa. We emerged from our discussions concerned that a dangerous gap is opening up between the big promise of assistance we heard last year and a new flow of investments targeting specific challenges on the ground in Africa.

We understand the difficulty in crafting a coherent, regional approach to boosting food production, particularly when the needs vary so dramatically.

But Europe can move forward quickly and effectively with a large increase in agriculture development assistance for Africa. European leaders also need to recognise that further delay is risky for Africa - and Europe. Europe risks ceding influence to emerging global powerhouses like China and Brazil, which are rapidly ramping up agriculture investments in the region.

A key problem today in sub-Saharan Africa is that deficiencies in agriculture are directly tied to long-entrenched high rates of malnutrition, especially among mothers, children, and infants. The statistics are staggering: 200 million Africans are chronically malnourished; 5 million die of hunger annually; 126 million children are underweight; and half of all children are stunted.

Think about that: every other child in Africa is stunted.

But the situation is far from hopeless, in large part because of the emergence of new, African-led national and regional efforts offering the potential for a homegrown remedy to these nutrition challenges.

For example, African governments understand well that most of their citizens are dependent on farming for food and income. Thus, the only way to make progress in nutrition improvement and poverty reduction is by making agricultural development a priority. Twenty-two countries have signed on to the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), which commits signatories to investing 10% of national budgets for improving agricultural productivity. Already, countries are moving rapidly toward this goal, including Rwanda, where 7% of its total spending was in agriculture in 2010, up from 3% in 2005.

Also, in only a few years of operation, the new Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has steadily pursued efforts focused on tangible accomplishments, like better access to improved seeds and fertilisers in high potential "breadbasket" regions. Maize productivity in western Kenya alone increased 115% last year. In Tanzania, better access to seeds and fertilizers has allowed farmers to produce a surplus even in the midst of drought.

But threats large and small could ruin the exciting potential of these nascent movements. The status quo is not enough because climate change is threatening yields, soil fertility is decreasing, and many fear another rapid rise in food prices. The sudden spike in commodities prices that roiled world markets in 2007 and 2008 added millions more Africans to the ranks of the chronically hungry. Our report urges European governments to use their influence and deep understanding of agriculture markets to create a system of grain reserves, some of which could be established in African countries, to protect against price volatility. These reserves would not be intended for price stabilization but as an emergency mechanism that could counter a price spike before it quite literally kills people.

We also believe European leaders could scale up effective initiatives, such as those implemented by AGRA, already underway in Africa.

Ultimately, the overall situation today provides considerable reason for optimism. Europe and its G8 partners are offering unprecedented levels of support. African nations are better prepared to make use of agriculture investments than ever before. We need a sense of urgency now to seize the moment before it slips away.

- The Montpellier Panel Report will be launched today at the parliament. It provides an overview of the state of European investment in African agriculture as well as a set of recommendations for improving food security and strengthening EU-Africa partnerships in the sector.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2010/oct/26/europe-increase-africa-agriculture-aid>



Report Notes Potential For African Agriculture, European Partnerships

Wednesday, October 27, 2010

A new report (.pdf) highlights concerns about donors, especially from Europe, following through on funding pledges for the G8's \$22 billion global food security fund, Business Daily reports (Odhiambo, 10/27).

"The analysis from the [African and European development experts on the] Montpellier Panel, convened with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, notes that the commitment at a 2009 G8 summit to dramatically escalate the fight against malnutrition in Africa has yet to bring critically needed support for a 'rich diversity' of activities already underway that 'could achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development,'" according to an Imperial College London press release.

"If we do not bridge the gap there is risk that new investments will dissipate into more small scale activity and we will not see transformational change that is needed," the report cautions. "The panel is particularly concerned that European donors have not used their influence and abilities to create a safety net," the press release notes (10/26). The report also highlighted the opportunity for partnership: "For the first time in two generations, Africa has a real opportunity to achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development." It adds that Europe should "play a unique and significant role, as a partner with African nations, in attaining this goal," according to the report's executive summary (.pdf) (10/26).

"The panel said a system of grain reserves, for example, could prevent another round of price shocks to commodities markets from spreading malnutrition to millions more Africans, as they did in 2007 and 2008," Business Daily writes (10/27). This grain reserve system is an example of the public support that is required to prevent major price rises and address malnutrition in Africa, the report said, according to Reuters (10/26). According to the report, "[s]ome 337 million Africans consume less than 2,100 calories a day, and 200 million are chronically malnourished. An astounding 50 percent of children are stunted and in Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half of all pregnant women in the region and 40 percent of women of child-bearing age suffer from anemia," the press release notes (10/26).

The panel also "lauded action by the 22 African governments including Kenya that have signed the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme, or CAADP, which commits signatories to investing 10 percent of national budgets toward improved food production," Business Daily writes (10/27). The release points out that GDP is "rising in 27 of Africa's 30 largest countries" and notes that already Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Malawi and Senegal have reached or passed the 10 percent threshold for agricultural investment (10/26).

"Today, European aid to Africa can be especially productive because it can support emerging strategies already owned, operated and driven by Africans, which is a relatively novel situation in the history of European-African relations," Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, head of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, said, according to Business Daily (10/27).

<http://globalhealth.kff.org/Daily-Reports/2010/October/27/GH-102710-Food-Security.aspx>

Online Pick-up:

Medical News

<http://www.news-medical.net/news/20101028/Report-notes-potential-for-African-agriculture-European-partnerships.aspx?page=2>

(UK)

Where are promised EU funds for food security?

October 27, 2010

Europe needs to make good on its pledge to donate \$3.8 billion to increase food security in the developing world, says a new report published yesterday.

Eight of the world's richest nations pledged \$22.5bn to help combat hunger at a summit in L'Aquila, Italy, last year. But some nations, including those in Europe, have been slow to put their money where their mouth is.

"To date not all of the pledges have been realised," says the report, launched at a meeting in the House of Commons.

The Montpellier Panel Report was chaired by Gordon Conway, professor of international development at Imperial College London, and former chief scientist at the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

Some of the pledged funds have been received, including a total of \$900 million from the US, Canada, Spain, Ireland, the Republic of Korea and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

But Conway told the meeting, "It's not clear where the money is from the EU nations".

The report urges European donors to up their game, in particular to "commit more resources, and work more closely together to align and coordinate their actions".

It calls on Europe to follow the US approach and invest in priorities identified by African governments, including regional research programmes, rather than focusing on EU priorities.

African countries have made good progress in developing national agricultural strategies and investing in infrastructure, including research, to secure their future food production, the report adds.

"Africa is organised and ready for business," says Lindiwe Sibanda, chief executive of the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and one of the report's authors.

Responding to the findings, a representative from DFID to the meeting that the department plans to allocate £1.1bn over the next three years to the cause, and by March next year will know which initiatives it will invest the money in.

Posted by Natasha Gilbert on October 27, 2010

http://blogs.nature.com/news/thegreatbeyond/2010/10/where_are_promised_eu_funds_for.html



Africa: EU Investments in African Agriculture Critical to Global Security and Stability

Nairobi, Kenya | Wednesday 27 October 2010

The panel is particularly concerned that European donors have not used their influence and abilities to create a safety net.

By Shadrack Kavilu

Nairobi, Kenya-A dangerous gap between Europe's bold rhetoric pledging billions to aid African agriculture, and a reality that has failed to channel new investments to promising projects, risks squandering a rare opportunity to transform food production across the continent, according to a new report released by a panel of European and African development experts.

The analysis from the Montpellier Panel, convened with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, notes that the commitment at a 2009 G8 summit to dramatically escalate the fight against malnutrition in Africa has yet to bring critically needed support for a "rich diversity" of activities already underway that "could achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development."

"If we do not bridge the gap there is risk that new investments will dissipate into more small scale activity and we will not see transformational change that is needed," the report concludes.

The panel is particularly concerned that European donors have not used their influence and abilities to create a safety net. A system of grain reserves, for example, could prevent another round of price shocks to commodities markets from spreading malnutrition to millions more Africans, as they did in 2007 and 2008.

"We want to see European donors paying closer attention to immediate threats to food security, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that African governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity," said Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London, who chaired the panel.

"Today, European aid to Africa can be especially productive because it can support emerging strategies already owned, operated and driven by Africans, which is a relatively novel situation in the history of European-African relations," said Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chief Executive and Head of Diplomatic Mission, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN).

The report titled, Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development, The Montpellier Panel, is focused on the follow-through, and lack thereof, from the 2009 L'Aquila G8 summit in which wealthy governments in Europe and the United States pledged US\$22.5 billion to seek food security worldwide, with much of the funds to be spent on agriculture development in sub-Saharan Africa.

The analysis presents a situation in Africa in which investments are needed to address the extreme perils and exploit the extraordinary opportunities that today exist side by side.

On one hand, the nutrition challenges are profound. Some 337 million Africans consume less than 2100 calories a day, and 200 million are chronically malnourished.

An astounding 50 percent of children are stunted and in Sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half of all pregnant women in the region and 40 percent of women of child-bearing age suffer from anaemia. Every minute, 12 Africans die from poor nutrition.

On the other hand, 22 African governments have signed on to the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme, or CAADP, which commits signatories to investing 10 percent of national budgets toward improved food production.

And they increasingly have the means to do so. GDP is now rising in 27 of Africa's 30 largest countries. Ghana, Ethiopia, Mali, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and Senegal are among the countries where agriculture spending already has reached or exceeded the 10 percent threshold.

Meanwhile, on the ground, an array of new national and regional initiatives many of them innovative public-private partnerships are successfully boosting food production and building a self-sustaining agriculture infrastructure.

Nigeria has surpassed Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava, which is now Africa's second most important source of calories. The introduction of new rice varieties for Africa (NERICAs) is boosting harvests and nutrition for 20 million rice farmers, most of whom are women and the families and communities they serve.

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has funded 60 crops breeding programmes, introduced 125 new crop varieties into the field, and provided start-up capital for 35 African seed enterprises that are producing 15,000 metric tons of certified seed.

AGRA also has enlisted 9200 agro-dealers who have provided smallholder farmers with US\$45 million worth of seed and farm inputs.

"While Europe has always been a strong supporter of African agriculture, its investments today are not coordinated or aligned fully with the opportunities available," said Namanga Ngongi, AGRA's president and a member of the Montpellier Panel.

"Where we are directly supporting the smallholder farmers, we are seeing increased yields and profitable farms; we are seeing this success in pockets all across Africa. What is critical now is for focused investments so we can replicate this success on a large scale and truly revolutionize African agriculture," he said.

For example, the report points to estimates that Africa has the potential to increase the value of its annual agribusiness output from US\$280 billion today to around US\$800 billion by 2030. And the benefits could be broadly distributed.

The experience with agricultural development in Asia shows that for each 1 percent acceleration in agricultural growth there is about 1.5 percent acceleration in non-agricultural growth.

The report observes that outside of Europe, a growing number of emerging economic powerhouses are waking up to the potential for food production in Africa to soar. In particular, the so-called BRIC nations—Brazil, Russia, India, and China are increasingly visible in Africa's agriculture sector.

But the Montpellier Panel believes Europe is especially well-positioned to be Africa's most important partner in developing its agricultural bread-baskets.

European Union (EU) countries already are collectively the largest agriculture development donor in Africa. They have been early supporters of the CAADP process and the largest donor to the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), whose crop improvement work in Africa is essential to improving nutrition on the continent.

The panel calls for deepening Europe's commitment to Africa's agriculture development efforts through increased support that brings more focus and coordination to the activities already underway and shifts attention from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term capacity building.

In addition, the panel seeks immediate action from Europe to counter the danger that another spike in commodities prices along the lines of what occurred in 2007 and 2008 could reverse hard-fought progress to address nutrition problems through agriculture development.

The report proposes establishing regulatory processes, along with global and national grain reserves, that could be employed to reduce extreme price volatility in global markets for cereals and staple crops, which have their greatest impact on poor countries.

"Intensifying its engagement with Africa is in Europe's interest because if we don't seize on this opportunity, the costs will be felt both at home and abroad," said Lord Cameron of Dillington, who hosted the report's release as co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Agriculture and Food for Development.

He warned that failure to increase agricultural investment in Africa could see greater poverty, an increase in social unrest, a deterioration of diplomatic and economic relations and the diversion of investments in long-term programmes to pay for repetitive emergency humanitarian aid.

http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/articles/art_12066.html



What We're Reading

[.....]

A focus on food reserves: The creation of strategic grain reserves could help boost growth in food deficit nations in Africa, according to nonprofit, the Montpellier Panel, which urged key donors to shift their current strategies on aid provision. Lack of specific intervention measures on bolstering food reserves continues to expose millions to suffering despite huge fortunes pledged in aid each year, said the Panel.

<http://www.one.org/blog/2010/10/27/what-were-reading-the-latest-on-the-aids-gel/>



Challenge to Europe to accelerate agriculture investment in Africa

For the first time in two generations, Africa has a real opportunity to achieve food and nutrition security through agricultural development - and Europe must help drive forward this change.

This is the recommendation of a panel of European and African development experts who launched their report *Africa and Europe: Partnerships for Agricultural Development*, The Montpellier Panel in London on 26 October 2010.

Brazil, China and India are scaling up their investments and partnerships in various sectors across Africa, and Europe risks being left behind as a key partner to tap the huge potential of the farm sector in Africa - which could rise by \$235 billion over the next two decades - the report says.

The panel calls for deepening Europe's commitment to Africa's agriculture development efforts through increased support that brings more focus and coordination to the activities already underway and shifts attention from short-term humanitarian aid to long-term capacity building.



"We want to see European donors paying closer attention to immediate threats to food security, while simultaneously increasing support for African-led efforts that for the first time in generations show that African governments are determined to literally grow their way towards health and prosperity," said Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London, who chaired the panel.

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"Intensifying its engagement with Africa is in Europe's interest because if we don't seize on this opportunity, the costs will be felt both at home and abroad," said Lord Cameron of Dillington, who hosted the report's release as co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Agriculture and Food for Development. "We could see greater poverty, an increase in social unrest and security threats, a deterioration of diplomatic and economic relations and the diversion of investments in long-term programs to pay for emergency humanitarian aid."

http://www.ukcds.org.uk/news-Challenge_to_Europe_to_accelerate_agriculture_investment_in_Africa-506.html



New Drive for European Investment in African Agriculture

Selah Hennessy | London 27 October 2010



A British report says Europe needs to do more to invest in African agriculture. It says a gap exists between bold rhetoric that pledges billions to aid African agriculture and a reality in which money has not materialized.

The panel of experts from Africa and Europe said European donors need to pay more attention to immediate threats of food insecurity in Africa and also to support African-led initiatives to improve agricultural productivity on the continent.

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa President Namanga Ngong'i was on the panel of experts and says agriculture in Africa is improving. "I have seen for myself. You go into the field seeing farms where people were producing one ton per hectare before, they are now producing three, four, five tons per hectare - in some cases 6-metric tons per hectare. So now they have these possible surpluses that

need to be market," Ngong' said.

He says regional bodies in Africa are increasingly making agriculture a major focus, introducing new crop breeding programs and providing start up capital for new enterprises.

And he says governments are spending more of their national budget on agricultural development.

Those efforts, he says, are paying off. For example, Nigeria has surpassed Brazil as the world's largest producer of cassava, which is a major source of calories in Africa.

Panel chairman Gordon Conway says the improvements within the agricultural sector in Africa are making it a better environment for European investment. "There is a great opportunity for the private sector to work in Africa to help increase production, both of staple crops and of crops for export. So I think it is looking optimistic," he said.

In 2009 wealthy governments in Europe and the United States pledged \$22.5 billion to improve food security worldwide. Agricultural development in Africa was set to be a focus. But the panel says it is important that cash is channeled in the right way.

Child malnutrition, it says, has to be a major focus. It also says global and national food reserves need to be created to counter major volatility in global markets for staple crops.

Conway says food security in Africa is crucial for global security. "Global security is important for all of us," he says, "Every single family in Europe depends on global security. And that global security consists of a number of components, one of which is food security, another one is protection from climate change. If you do not have those two you will get political, economic instability and unrest and that is a real threat to Europe."

The report was produced by the Montpellier Panel, which was made up of 10 experts from across the agriculture, development, trade, and policy sectors.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/news/New-Drive-for-European-Investment-in-African-Agriculture--105881003.html>