



Media Advisory

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Editor's Note: Press pre-registration is required to attend the Summit. To obtain press pass and more information on Summit events, visit:

http://www.africafertilizersummit.org/Online_Press_Room/index.html

B-roll is available to support this story.

African and Global Leaders Convene To Revive Africa's Failing Agriculture

Summit 9-13 June 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria To Target Means to Restore African Soils

With new data showing that at least three-quarters of African farmland south of the Sahara is plagued by severe degradation – creating perpetually low farm yields across a continent plagued by hunger – African and global development leaders will gather for a Summit in Abuja, Nigeria on June 9-13. The Summit will devise an action-plan and specific steps to end Africa's soil fertility crisis. The Africa Fertilizer Summit will be convened by the African Union through its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), hosted by the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and chaired by His Excellency, Olusegun Obasanjo, President of Nigeria and Chairman of the African Union's Implementation Committee.

Heads of state from across Africa are expected to attend, along with the heads of major development organizations, business leaders, agriculture experts and African farmers.

Summit organizers and participants view fertilizer use as a vital component for restoring Africa's farmland and increasing farm yield. Today, farmers south of the Sahara apply less than two percent of all fertilizer used worldwide. As a result, average farm yields have stagnated at about one ton per hectare over the past 30 years, while hunger and malnutrition have risen dramatically. At the same time, soil degradation has led to massive erosion and the clearing of wildlife areas for farming – with estimates that 50,000 hectares of forest and 60,000 hectares of Africa's grasslands are lost to agriculture every year.

Major barriers exist to expanding fertilizer use in Africa, including weak manufacturing capacity, poor distribution mechanisms and high cost: for example, a ton of fertilizer that would cost \$150 dollars in the United States can cost as much as \$600 dollars to purchase in landlocked African countries.

Summit leaders will debate and recommend key strategies and actions to turn around African agriculture. Possible initiatives that involve government policy, financial tools and market interventions include:

- Rapidly improving the access of millions of farmers to affordable farm inputs, through building networks of small businesses known as “agrodealers” in rural areas. With today’s limited number of agrodealers, many farmers must walk several miles just to purchase fertilizer or seed.
- Developing innovative pro-poor financing mechanisms, such as credit-guarantee programs, that would allow greater supply and purchasing of fertilizers in rural areas.
- Implementing “smart subsidies,” that would help the poorest farmers afford fertilizers, while also supporting emerging market systems that will pave the way for a more productive and competitive agriculture.
- Developing local fertilizer production and manufacturing, and facilities that would procure and distribute fertilizer regionally. Private sector and public-private initiatives can reduce the costs of fertilizer import and distribution, especially in land-locked countries.
- Creating an Africa-wide financing mechanism that would support development of the fertilizer sector, procurement and distribution systems, local fertilizer manufacturing, improved road and rail infrastructure, and complementary irrigation.

The five-day Summit will begin with an overview of what it will take to achieve a uniquely African “Green Revolution,” and conclude with a special meeting of African heads of state. A complete Summit schedule can be found at:
<http://www.AfricaFertilizerSummit.org>.

Summit Speakers Include (subject to change):

- **His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo**, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- **His Excellency Denis Sassou-Nguesso**, Chairman of the African Union and President of the Republic of Congo
- **His Excellency Joaquim Alberto Chissano**, Former President of the Republic of Mozambique
- **His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konaré**, Chairman, African Union Commission and Former President of the Republic of Mali
- **Lennart Båge**, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development

- **Mallam Adamu Bello**, Minister of Agriculture, Nigeria
- **Norman Borlaug**, Nobel Prize Laureate, President, Sasakawa Africa Association
- **William Dar**, Director General, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
- **Jacques Diouf**, Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- **Peter Hartmann**, Director General, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
- **Abdoulie Janneh**, Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa
- **Donald Kaberuka**, President, African Development Bank
- **Firmino Mucavele**, Chief Executive, NEPAD Secretariat
- **Judith Rodin**, President, The Rockefeller Foundation
- **Amit Roy**, President, IFDC, an International Center for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development
- **Jeffrey Sachs**, Director, The Earth Institute at Columbia University and Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on the Millennium Development Goals
- **Pedro Sanchez**, Director of Tropical Agriculture, The Earth Institute, Columbia University, and World Food Prize Laureate
- **Yohei Sasakawa**, President, the Nippon Foundation

Sponsors of the Summit include: The Federal Republic of Nigeria, Agriterra, the Arab Fertilizer Association (AFA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fertilizer Association (IFA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), The Rockefeller Foundation, Sasakawa Global 2000, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), The World Bank, among others. It will be implemented by IFDC, a nonprofit, public international organization, in collaboration with NEPAD.

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