

## TOWARD A 'GREEN REVOLUTION' IN AFRICA?

### General Overview

***“Toward a ‘Green Revolution’ in Africa?”*** is an Initiative of the Salzburg Global Seminar, the Institute of Development Studies and the Future Agricultures Consortium. The Initiative, through a series of interconnected events, seeks to:

1. Enable proposals for a “green revolution” in sub-Saharan Africa to be tested and refined through deliberations between a wide range of experts, including those concerned by current directions, from different sectors and regions. This approach will help proponents of a “green revolution” to think it through carefully and from multiple perspectives, provide opportunity for constructive dialogue with critics, and ensure that efforts proceed within a broad policy framework, taking into account institutional, political, socio-economic, and technical prerequisites.

2. Better define a holistic development framework within which new investments in African agriculture can be positioned, streamlined with other new and existing development investments, and help stimulate further investments (monetary and other), ultimately reducing poverty and increasing sustainable economic growth and opportunity.

Planned events for the Initiative include:

- Conference (April 30 – May 2, 2008): *“Towards a ‘Green Revolution’ in Africa?”*
- Seminar (May 3 – 7, 2008): *“A ‘Green Revolution’ in Africa: What Framework for Success?”*
- Sub-Regional meetings in Africa (2008 – 2009): *Field-testing the African Paradigm*

The Initiative benefits from the support and leadership of an International Advisory Committee of African agricultural experts, representing a range of professional sectors. Financial support has been provided by: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; The Kilimo Trust; The Rockefeller Foundation; and United Kingdom Department for International Development.

### Rationale

There are good reasons to undertake this Initiative at this time. The launch of several major Africa-wide initiatives, including the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and the Millennium Villages programme, reflects renewed interest and a willingness to invest considerable resources in African agricultural development. Wisely managed, these efforts could lead to a new era of responsible streamlined investment, capacity-building, technical innovation and policy change, which in turn could release many millions of Africans from hunger and poverty, setting in motion a virtuous cycle of economic growth and rural regeneration. Yet large cash injections, development and dissemination of new technologies and calls for improving ‘capacity’ are one thing; seeing these through to sustainable outcomes and broad-based impacts that benefit the majority of poor African producers and consumers is quite another.

There is a clear need for a new vision for agricultural development in Africa that can deal with the complexities of agriculture in diverse settings across Africa and meet the conditions necessary to achieve more equitable benefits for Africa's farmers. But whose vision should this be? How can complexity and diversity be dealt with? What lessons can be extracted from recent successes in African agricultural development and how can recent growth be sustained, expanded, and accelerated? How can new investments and actors in African agriculture support efforts to align policies and political processes to support agricultural as well as broader development goals? How can innovation systems be made robust, relevant and sustainable? How can the hardware of science and technology be linked to the software of institutions, policy and social dynamics? How should agricultural science and technology in Africa be governed?

At the heart of these, and the many additional, critical questions are two overarching ones:

1. How can new interest and investment in African agriculture be used to bring about real and sustainable change; and

2. How can these efforts be aligned strategically with other investments and development activities (be they from private donors, public aid, or private business) and new strategic alliances and partnerships be created to ensure success?

In recent years, African farmers and policy-makers have achieved a series of significant successes in agricultural development, although these successes are still inadequate in number and scale to counter sub-Saharan Africa's considerable economic, social, and political challenges – and to take full advantage of the considerable human capital and resources available. The Initiative will explore common ingredients and processes that have led to the emergence and persistence of successes, as well as ways that policy-makers translate these lessons into improved performance. By examining instances in which important advances have occurred in the past in African agriculture, the Initiative will aim to identify promising avenues for achieving similar success in the future.

### **Conference and Seminar**

The first event of the Initiative is the **Conference, “Towards a ‘Green Revolution’ in Africa?” (April 30 – May 2)**, at which the former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan will deliver a keynote address. The purpose of this event will be to assess the most critical issues and to review, refine and articulate an agenda for a new “green revolution” within a sustainable development agenda for Sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, we will seek to examine the mental frames and underlying assumptions which guide current policy and practice, with a view to enabling the articulation and implementation of an *African paradigm*, growing out of African conditions and solutions.

The second event, which immediately follows, is the **Seminar, “A ‘Green Revolution’ in Africa: What Framework for Success?” (May 3 – 7)**. The Seminar will take up the results and recommendations from the Conference and further refine them, targeting strategic issues and creating action plans to address them. The Seminar will consider critical issues under the same priority themes that will shape the Conference deliberations.

These Initiative events will focus on two overarching goals:

1. Articulating a uniquely African approach to a new “green revolution”; and
2. Building alliances and strategic partnerships to advance an African “green revolution” agenda.

Six priority themes have been identified to help structure and focus the discussions:

- *Institutions & Innovations*
- *Markets, Trade and Investment*
- *Environmental Sustainability*
- *Equity, Rights and Empowerment*
- *Governance and Policy Processes*
- *Responding to New Threats & Opportunities*

The six priority themes will be outlined in short briefing papers to be disseminated in advance of the meetings. There will be short expert presentations at the Conference on each theme followed by Roundtable discussions to further flesh out and frame the most critical issues under each theme and point to key questions. The results of the Roundtable discussions will guide working groups as they address each of the themes, leading to clear recommendations for strategic action.

As the Conference undertakes crucial framing efforts and recommends ways forward, the Seminar will focus at a “working level” on implementation plans. The Seminar will immediately follow the Conference in order to enable many of the same key stakeholders to lead the process the next step forward, building on the momentum of the Conference and creating more concrete action items from the commitments and recommendations achieved at the Conference. The process is being developed to be as seamless as possible, while still allowing for additional voices and insights to inform the action planning. Seminar participants will recommend strategic interventions and actions in the areas of policy, practice, donor activity, capacity-building, and resource allocation, identifying concrete next steps as well as indicating areas where stronger leadership by key actors will be critical to achieving goals.

Following these first two Initiative events in Salzburg, the strategic action recommendations will be shared with a broad cross-section of stakeholder institutions within and outside of Africa and additional feedback and suggestions will be solicited, even as a change agenda, through the adoption

and implementation of specific actions, is advocated. The recommendations will also be shared through a series of sub-regional meetings in Africa to further test, refine and contextualize them, working at increasing levels of detail and enabling the participation of more national and local actors.

### **Participants**

In order to achieve these ambitious goals, it is essential to include diverse stakeholders, from within Africa and beyond, who are: experts (in their given areas), leading thinkers or change-makers, and are, or can influence, senior decision-makers. These individuals – who represent key sectors - will be asked to devise the conceptual framework within which a new agricultural development agenda in Africa can be set and implemented, and to recommend specific actions.

The Conference and Seminar will incorporate insights, ideas, and influences from representatives of national governments and inter-governmental decision-making bodies, agro-allied private sector industries, academic and research institutions, international and national non-governmental organizations, farmer organizations and unions, independent foundations, and donor agencies. In addition to professional diversity, participants will reflect diversity based on geography, gender and perspective.

As noted, the Initiative is guided by the expertise of an International Advisory Committee. Members for the first phase of the work include: Adewale Adekunle, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA); Akin Adesina, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA); Gem Argwings-Kodhek, Agricultural Sector Coordinating Unit, Kenya Ministry of Agriculture; Ousmane Badiane, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Ephraim Chirwa, University of Malawi; Bara Guèye, Innovation Environnement et Développement (IED); Susan Kaaria, Ford Foundation/Nairobi; AmdissaTeshome, Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC) and A-Z Consult; Ann Tutwiler, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; Grace Wasike, East Africa Farmers Federation; Gwen Young, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

### **Location**

The Conference and Seminar will be held at the Salzburg Global Seminar which is housed in the historic Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria. The grounds are on the edge of a small lake with an unforgettable view across to the towering Untersberg, and only a short walk to the historic center of Salzburg. It provides a magnificent yet informal setting. Built in the 1740s by Salzburg's Prince-Archbishop Firmian, it underwent a major restoration in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century when it was purchased by Max Reinhardt, the co-founder of the Salzburg Festival. The Salzburg Global Seminar was founded in the summer of 1947 when it held its first session at Schloss Leopoldskron with the permission of Helene Thimig, the widow of Max Reinhardt who then owned the building. The Salzburg Global Seminar used the facilities thereafter, and purchased the property in 1959.

### **Language**

Interpretation between English and French will be provided at the events in Salzburg. The summary report will be written in English and translated into French and Portuguese for dissemination.

## **Summary of Events and Outputs**

### **The Conference (30 April – 2 May 2008): *Toward a “Green Revolution” in Africa?***

The Conference will lay the groundwork for the broader initiative and goals described above. It is essential to include diverse stakeholders, from within Africa and beyond, who are experts (in their given areas), leading thinkers, change-makers and are, or can influence, senior decision-makers. We anticipate approximately 60 participants from government, business, academia, and non-governmental organisations, who will explore a set of issues of vital concern to the future of agriculture in Africa, and, indeed, to Africa’s development agenda. These individuals will be asked to devise the conceptual framework within which a new agricultural development agenda in Africa can be set and implemented, and to recommend specific actions. Ideas and recommendations for policy adjustments, streamlining practice, and creating strategic alliances will be captured and reviewed to identify points of agreement and priority issues for action. These priority issues will provide the basis for the Conference outcome document. A special issue of the *IDS Bulletin* will be produced based largely on recommendations from the Conference, as refined in the follow-on Seminar (described below).

### **The Seminar (3 - 7 May 2008): *A “Green Revolution” in Africa: What Framework for Success?***

Although the opening Conference will produce important recommendations, it will be necessary afterwards to refine them further and to critically examine their implications as well potential barriers to their implementation, and opportunities that may have been missed. This vital work will be carried out in a follow-on Seminar, which will take the recommendations of the Conference as its starting point. A small number of the experts at the Conference will be asked to stay on and provide leadership at the seminar, as opening speakers and discussion leaders. Other participants in the Seminar will be drawn from the ranks of those likely to be the primary implementers of the recommendations (or ‘doers’), often belonging to organisations also involved in the conference but at a level where they would be called on to present draft policy recommendations, create institutional programmes, implement strategic partnerships, and so forth. The Seminar will thus be an opportunity to test the ideas and recommendations with individuals responsible for carrying them out, and to work out action plans in greater and more concrete detail. It will also bring in additional voices and viewpoints, especially those of African civil society and agricultural, science, education and technology organisations, as well as private sector entrepreneurs. The Seminar will include approximately 60 – 70 participants in total, including the aforementioned speakers and discussion leaders.

### **Sub-Regional Meetings in Africa (2008 – 2009): *Field-testing the “African Paradigm”***

Throughout the process, and in planning the Conference and seminar, we will be working with African institutions with which we will continue to collaborate on the next phase of testing and refining the ideas and recommendations – with diverse African audiences. These institutions would, in partnership with SGS, IDS and FAC, host sub-regional meetings, to be held over the course of 2008-9. The strategies and proposals will be presented for review, revision and refinement in a series of smaller sub-regional meetings in different parts of Africa at which they would be presented to groups of practitioners and experts from different African countries, providing a critical ‘reality check’, and refined in the light of their comments. If possible, the core group of experts should attend all these hearings, to ensure that the discussions are taken fully into account in their concluding review and synthesis. Finally, in 2009 the end product will take the form of a set of short briefing papers aimed at policy-makers, but also provided to all of the key stakeholder organisations, with references enabling those who so wish to find more detailed information elsewhere.

## **Key Organisers**

The **Salzburg Global Seminar** ([www.SalzburgGlobal.org](http://www.SalzburgGlobal.org)) has 60 years of success in convening individuals and institutions from diverse countries, professional sectors, and viewpoints, engaging them in issue-focused dialogue that broadens thinking, provides new insights and understanding, finds common ground and language, and builds strong relationships across often striking differences. The Seminar has a unique global network, which often enables it to identify and convene the leaders of tomorrow as well as those of today. It excels in creating and implementing programmes that bring people together across multiple boundaries, broadening and deepening their knowledge of the issues examined, and helping them to understand the global context in which they operate. Through these programmes, successful practices are disseminated and adapted to new contexts; new policy approaches and practices are conceived; problem-focused endeavours are generated; and progress is achieved in addressing difficult global issues. Surprisingly often, participants say that this experience has transformed their lives, inspiring them to bring about change and enabling them to make a deeper impact through their work. The Salzburg Global Seminar will host the Conference and seminar at its facilities in Salzburg, Austria – Schloss Leopoldskron ([www.schloss-leopoldskron.com](http://www.schloss-leopoldskron.com)).

The **Future Agricultures Consortium** ([www.future-agricultures.org](http://www.future-agricultures.org)) aims to encourage critical debate and policy dialogue on the future of agriculture in Africa. The Consortium is a growing partnership involving research-based organisations in Africa and the UK, with core funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). Through stakeholder-led policy dialogues on future scenarios for agriculture, informed by in-depth field research, the Consortium aims to elaborate the practical and policy challenges of establishing and sustaining pro-poor agricultural growth in Africa. Current work focuses on four core themes: (i) Policy processes; (ii) Growth and social protection; (iii) Agricultural commercialisations; and (iv) Science, technology and innovation. As part of its work, Future Agricultures convenes major events to debate key policy issues at local, regional and international levels. Over the next year, the Consortium intends to work with the Salzburg Global Seminar to organise a set of sub-regional workshops in Africa at which the policy implications and recommendations emerging from this conference will be debated by key local stakeholders.

The **Institute of Development Studies** ([www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)) is a leading global organisation for research, teaching and communications on international development. Founded in 1966, IDS enjoys an international reputation based on the quality of its work and its commitment to applying academic skills to real world challenges. Its purpose is to understand and explain the world, and to try to change it – to influence as well as to inform. IDS hosts five dynamic research teams, eight popular postgraduate courses, and a family of world-class knowledge services. These three spheres are integrated in a unique combination – as a development knowledge hub, IDS is connected into and is a convenor of networks throughout the world. The Institute is home to approximately 100 researchers, 70 information staff, 65 support staff and about 150 students at any one time. But the IDS community extends far beyond, encompassing an extensive network of partners, former staff and students across the development community worldwide.

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