

African Green Revolution Forum commences in Arusha

African heads of state, ministers, private sector representatives, the international community and farmers recently gathered at the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) in Arusha, Tanzania to identify concrete actions for transforming Africa's agricultural sector.



AGRF 2012 is the global platform for the promotion of the significant private sector investment and policy support needed to increase agricultural productivity and income growth for the African agricultural sector.

As host of the forum, H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, president of the United Republic of Tanzania, said to forum attendees on Africa's promising future.

"We are poised to succeed in our quest for eradicating hunger and poverty in Africa through transforming agriculture," said president Kikwete. "With the right policy mix, appropriate interventions being taken by African Governments, the continued support of donors, and robust participation of private sector both local and foreign, transformation of agriculture in Africa is an achievable undertaking."

Opening the forum, Kofi Annan, chairman of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) underscored the progress that has been achieved since the inaugural AGRF in 2010. Annan also stressed the importance of empowering smallholder farmers to help them advance towards business-oriented agriculture.

"Our focus on improving the productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers - most of whom are women - cannot waver. They are the ones who put food on our tables. They are the ones who care for our land and water resources," said Annan. "In the end, they will be the ones to propel the economic growth and development of Africa in the 21st century."

Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who was in Arusha to address forum attendees, noted the significant progress that has been made in African agriculture over the past decade, and appealed for continued support from African leaders.

"I urge Africa's leaders to re-commit to your pledge to help farm families increase their productivity. I urge you to set an agenda for the next decade that is even more ambitious," said Gates. "I hope you take great care that your pledges and

plans are geared to help farm families achieve their goals."

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