

FANRPAN

PRESS RELEASE:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS ABOUT “FARMING FIRST” - 04 March 2009

There are millions of farmers in Africa today who depend on what they produce day to day to survive. Without access to the right support, they can easily become welfare cases. The support they need is surprisingly practical and straightforward. \$100 dollars buys them a bag of fertilizer and two kilograms of hybrid seed which produces one ton of maize. This will keep them from starvation and free from welfare for one year. Without access to these inputs, they need food aid. Food aid for a year costs \$1,000 per farmer.

Whilst this may seem counter intuitive to the average person in the developed world, whose contact with the realities of farming, let alone subsistence farming in Africa, is tenuous. But the truth is that International food aid to African countries has failed to alleviate impoverished conditions there. Unless you have the right inputs available, food aid is not going to solve the problem.

From the 23rd to the 27th of February 2009, the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development had the chance to put farming back at the centre of global policy making and to reverse the decline in investment in the sector which has characterized the last 30 years.

Speaking at the Seventeenth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, FANRPAN CEO Dr Lindiwe Majele Sibanda pointed out that there was a need to prevent the bottom million farmers crashing into welfare dependency. Dr Sibanda called for a change in the policy framework, she called on governments, NGOs and others to revise the way they think about agriculture and to debate and discuss six new principles called ‘Farming First’ for policy going forward:

1. Safeguard natural resources
2. Share knowledge
3. Build local access
4. Protect harvests
5. Enable access to markets
6. Prioritize research imperatives

For more information on “Farming First Principles” visit:

www.farmingfirst.org

Dr Lindiwe Sibanda of FANRPAN discussing farm support vs. food aid at a conference in New York ahead of the UNCSO-17:

<http://www.farmingfirst.org/2009/03/why-is-100-better-than-1000-farm-support-vs-food-aid/>

Endorsement from Dr Lindiwe Sibanda of the Farming First plan:

www.farmingfirst.org/supporters/