Leading Agricultural Experts Release Report to DFID Officials on African Agriculture
Montpellier Panel Outlines Actions Needed to Build “Growth with Resilience”

In the lead up to the Rio+20, G8 and G20 Summits, where global leaders will discuss how to build a more sustainable global economy, the Montpellier Panel, a group of ten of the world’s leading experts in their fields, launches a report today in a meeting with UK policymakers held at the Department for International Development (DFID).

The report provides opportunities and recommendations for resilient African agriculture in 2012. They call this “Growth with Resilience”. It outlines the synergies and trade-offs in three key areas on how to develop this agenda further: resilient markets (the rural economy), resilient agriculture (food production) and resilient people (social development). The report can be downloaded at: https://workspace.imperial.ac.uk/africanagriculturaldevelopment/Public/Montpellier%20Panel%20Report%202012.pdf

Professor Sir Gordon Conway, Chair of the Montpellier Panel and Professor of International Development at Imperial College London, says, “The report demonstrates how investment in resilient agricultural growth in sub-Saharan Africa can help achieve more sustainable food and nutrition security for the continent and significantly contribute to the global economy.”

Tom Arnold, CEO of Concern Worldwide, says, “Agricultural growth has to be not only inclusive of those most vulnerable in the rural economy but also stable and resilient, hence able to withstand the increasing multiple stresses and shocks that it experiences, such as the impacts of climate change and the fluctuation of food and input prices.”

Resilient Markets
The panels’ recommendations for investment in resilient agricultural growth in sub-Saharan Africa is particularly interesting in light the Rio+20 summit placing a large focus on discussing a more sustainable global economy. The report recommends how to achieve resilient markets that enable farmers to increase production, manage risks and generate income through innovation while ensuring food is affordable. The panel recommends that governments work with the private sector to:

1) reduce food price volatility
2) facilitate private investments
3) build better enabling environments using agricultural corridor projects and boosting the agricultural productivity of smallholder farmers

Resilient Agriculture
The panel recommends that governments partner with the private sector and NGOs to help:

1) enable resilient and sustainable intensification of crop yields
2) combat land and water degradation
3) build climate-smart agriculture

Resilient People
Finally the report discusses resilient people, who are able to provide stable incomes, adequate nutrition and good health in the face of recurrent stresses and shocks. The panel recommends that governments, in partnership with the private sector, civil society and NGOs, seek and build further methods to:

1) scale up nutrition
2) focus on rural women and youth
3) build diverse livelihoods
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Sir Gordon Conway continued, “The Montpellier Panel urges decision-makers and practitioners to consider these recommendations so that policy decisions and investments can be made on a larger scale and more cost-effectively while ensuring long-term sustainability and uptake by farmers.”

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About the Montpellier Panel

The Montpellier Panel is a panel of ten of the world’s leading experts from the fields of agriculture, sustainable development, trade, policy, and global development chaired by Sir Gordon Conway of Imperial College London. The Panel is working together to make recommendations to enable better European government support of national and regional agricultural development and food security priorities in sub-Saharan Africa. The Panel first met in Montpellier, France in March 2010.

Read about the Montpellier Panel:
http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/africanagriculturaldevelopment/themontpellierpanel