

GLOBAL FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE WEEKLY NEWS BRIEF OF THE GLOBAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



March 19th – March 25th, 2009

For more information on the Global Agricultural Development Project and previous editions of *Global Food for Thought*, please visit www.thechicagocouncil.org/globalagdevelopment.

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“Alleviating Global Hunger: Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Leadership,” *Hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, March 24*

Opening Statement from Senator John Kerry:

<http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/KerryStatement090324a.pdf>

Opening Statement from Senator Richard Lugar:

<http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/LugarStatement090324a.pdf>

Panel 1

The Honorable Daniel R. Glickman and The Honorable Catherine A. Bertini:

<http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/BertiniTestimony090324a.pdf>

Dr. David Beckmann: <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/BeckmannTestimony090324a.pdf>

Dr. Robert Paarlberg: <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/PaarlbergTestimony090324a.pdf>

Panel 2

Dr. Edwin C. Price: <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/PriceTestimony090324a.pdf>

Dr. Gebisa Ejeta: <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2009/EjetaTestimony090324a.pdf>

US Lawmakers Consider Steps to Ease World Hunger, *VOA News, March 24*

U.S. lawmakers are considering legislation to ease global hunger, a problem that experts say has national security implications for the United States. The issue was the focus of a hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week. The hearing comes as the Obama administration reviews U.S. development aid. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton submitted a letter to the Foreign Relations Committee, saying she hopes to make food security a priority for U.S. development programs.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-03-24-voa69.cfm>

One in seven people goes hungry each day, *Talk Radio News Service, March 24*

At a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on “Alleviating Global Hunger: Challenges and Opportunities for U.S. Leadership, Chairman John Kerry (D-Mass.) said, “It’s quite astounding that in 2009, there are over 850 million hungry people in the world. One in seven people on earth goes hungry every day, and when we talk about going hungry every day, we are talking about real pain and anguish and suffering that goes with that hunger.” Kerry went on to explain that “While other threats force themselves into the front burner and command our attention, hunger and malnutrition remain the number one risk to health world wide.”

<http://talkradionews.com/2009/03/one-in-seven-people-go-hungry-each-day/>

Kerry Focuses Committee on Global Food Crisis, *The Boston Globe, March 24*

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, under the gavel of chairman John F. Kerry, is holding a hearing today on what the United States can do to help alleviate the global food crisis.

“We’re faced with two disasters—soaring food prices leaving millions hungry every year and an ailing economy. The challenges are overwhelming, but we have to do much more than send emergency food aid to countries facing scarcity,” Kerry said in a statement.

http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2009/03/kerry_focuses_c.html

KEY ARTICLES

U.S. Can Lead Effort to End World Hunger, *Op-Ed, George McGovern and Tony Hall, Des Moines Register, March 25*

Thanks in no small part to U.S. foreign assistance and the generosity of American citizens, the percentage of chronically hungry people declined from 37 percent of the world’s population in the 1960s to about 13 percent today. Tragically, the twin catastrophes of the global food and financial crises are eroding this progress. Upward of 115 million more people in the past year have been pushed into a life of desperate, chronic hunger.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20090325/OPINION01/903250342/-1/ENT06>

A time for global action, *Op-Ed, President Barack Obama, Tribune Media Services, March 23*

The G-20 should quickly deploy resources to stabilize emerging markets, substantially boost the emergency capacity of the International Monetary Fund and help regional development banks accelerate lending. Meanwhile, America will support new and meaningful investments in food security that can help the poorest weather the difficult days that will come.

<http://www.ih.com/articles/2009/03/23/opinion/edobama.php?page=1>

Economy forces Obama to rein in foreign-aid goals, *Howard LaFranchi, The Christian Science Monitor, March 23*

The Obama administration is hinting that the economic downturn means the president is unlikely to reach his goal of doubling foreign aid by the end of his four-year term. The retreat from the ambitious pledge is raising concerns both about the perception of the United States abroad as well as the potential adverse effect on development and global health.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0323/p03s07-usfp.html>

Poor still hit by high food prices, says UN, *Javier Blas, Financial Times, March 19*

Local food prices in most developing countries have not fallen and, in some cases, continue to increase, despite the drop in global agricultural commodities prices, according to new data from the United Nations. Although the price of corn, wheat, rice and other food staples in international markets has tumbled between 60 and 40 percent from the all-time highs of last year, local food prices in most sub-Saharan African countries are today higher than a year ago.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a7d696d0-1412-11de-9e32-0000779fd2ac.html>

Trade Barriers Rise as Slump Tightens Grip, *The New York Times, March 22*

After repeated pledges by world leaders to avoid erecting trade barriers, protectionism is on the march, provoking nasty trade disputes and undermining efforts to plot a coordinated response to the deepest global economic downturn since World War II.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/23/world/23trade.html>

See Also: **WTO sees 9% global trade decline in 2009 as recession strikes**, *World Trade Organization, March 23*

http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres09_e/pr554_e.htm

A global 'national security' issue lurks at Bangladesh's border, *The New York Times, March 23*

Rising sea levels caused by climate change are beginning to inundate low-lying Bangladesh. Scientists estimate that by midcentury as many as 15 million people could be displaced. India isn't taking any chances. Already alarmed about illegal immigration, it is nearing completion of about 2,100 miles worth of high-tech fencing along its long and porous border with Bangladesh.

<http://www.nytimes.com/cwire/2009/03/23/23climatewire-a-global-national-security-issue-lurks-at-ba-10247.html>

Vast Rural India Sparkles As an Expanding Market, *Rama Lakshmi, Washington Post, March 20*

The global economic crisis that has slowed the growth of urban middle-class consumption in India is highlighting a new opportunity for businesses -- the vast, untapped and expanding rural market. Some analysts call it a mere "re-balancing" of market focus away from the big cities; others see it as the fortune at the bottom of the Indian economic pyramid.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/19/AR2009031903621.html>

Open Letter to the President and Congress on Global Development and Foreign Assistance Reform, *Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, March 23*

As the 111th Congress and a new Presidential Administration begin, we are writing to urge you to make modernization of our foreign assistance programs a priority, and pledge our cooperation with and support for efforts to make global development a co-equal pillar of U.S. foreign policy alongside defense and diplomacy.

http://www.modernizingforeignassistance.net/documents/MFAN_Open_Letter.pdf

Agency Expanding Response Through New Civilian Corps, USAID, *FrontLines*. March 2009
USAID plans to hire 41 new officers between March and May as part of a new U.S. interagency Civilian Response Corps dedicated to rebuilding and stabilizing regions entering, in, or emerging from crisis or conflict. Currently, U.S. and other aid agencies deliver emergency food and medicine after natural disasters or development aid to boost economic growth.
http://www.usaid.gov/press/frontlines/fl_mar09/p1_response.html

NEW REPORTS/POLICY BRIEFS

3rd UN World Water Development Report: Water in a Changing World, *World Water Assessment Programme, UNESCO - Division of Water Sciences, March 2009*

See Also: U.N. report predicts worsening freshwater supplies, The New York Times, March 11

Population growth, climate change and demand for greater food and energy supplies are squeezing global water supplies, according to a new U.N. report. Water problems are often worst in developing countries, where water availability and prosperity are closely linked, says the report produced by 24 U.N. agencies.

<http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2009/03/11/11greenwire-un-report-predicts-worsening-supply-woes-10086.html>

Full Report (PDF 30 MB):

http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/wwdr3/pdf/WWDR3_Water_in_a_Changing_World.pdf

Overview of Key Messages:

http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/wwdr3/pdf/08_WWDR3_overview_of_key_msgs.pdf

Facts and Figures:

http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/wwdr3/pdf/WWDR3_Facts_and_Figures.pdf

“Case Study Volume: Facing the Challenges”:

http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/wwdr3/case_studies/pdf/WWDR3_Case_Study_Volume.pdf

Case Studies for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia include: Cameroon; Sudan; Swaziland; Tunisia; The Zambezi and Congo River basins: Zambia; The confluence of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers: Bangladesh; The Cholistan desert: Pakistan; The Walawe River basin: Sri Lanka.

A Development Charter for the G20, *Overseas Development Institute, March 2009*

The global financial crisis started in developed countries, but the global recession which has followed is having a wide-spread impact on developing countries. The consequence is likely to be rising unemployment, poverty and hunger: an extra 50 million people trapped in absolute poverty, with the number expected to rise to 90 million; and the total number suffering from hunger already up by 75 million to nearly a billion people, rising for the first time in nearly two decades.

<http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/projects/background-papers/2009/03/g20-development-charter-global-recession.pdf>

See Also: G20 Given Outline to Help the Poor During Global Recession, VOA News, March 24

<http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2009-03-24-voa33.cfm>

Knowledge and Innovation for Agricultural Development, *Kwadwo Asenso-Okyere and Kristin Davis, International Food Policy Research Institute, March 2009*

Every day, millions of rural people who depend on agriculture confront obstacles to improving their livelihoods. To cope with these obstacles, the rural poor draw on indigenous knowledge and innovate through local experimentation and adaptation. Indigenous knowledge alone is not enough to deal with the complex problems facing the agricultural sector. Emerging issues such as high food prices, climate change, and demands for biofuels require complementary knowledge from formal agricultural research and development and support from policies and other institutions.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/bp/bp011.pdf>

Coping with Rising Food Prices: Policy Dilemmas in the Developing World - Working Paper 164, *Nora Lustig, March 19*

Rising food prices cause considerable policy dilemmas for developing country governments. The recent episode shows that many countries chose to shift the burden of adjustment back to international markets. The use of corn and oilseed for the production of biofuel will result in a recurrence of such episodes in the foreseeable future.

http://www.cgdev.org/files/1421334_file_LUSTIG_FOOD_PRICES_final.pdf

Climate change, water, and food security, *Eva Ludi, Overseas Development Institute, March 2009*

The food price crisis of 2008 has led to the re-emergence of debates about global food security and its impact on prospects for achieving the first Millennium Development Goal: to end poverty and hunger. On top of a number of shorter-term triggers leading to volatile food prices, the longer-term negative impacts of climate change need to be taken very seriously. This paper reviews current knowledge about the relationships between climate change, water and food security.

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/SNAA-7QA9A4-full_report.pdf/\\$File/full_report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/SNAA-7QA9A4-full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf)

Impact of the Crisis on African Economies: Sustaining Growth and Poverty Reduction (African Perspectives and Recommendations to the G20), *African Development Bank, March 2009*

Although most African countries are not on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals, Africa had made steady progress over the last decade, building the foundations for higher growth and poverty reduction. This more optimistic picture is now being undermined by factors outside its control. While the initial effects of the financial crisis were slow to materialize in Africa, the impact is now becoming clear.

<http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/impact%20of%20the%20crisis%20and%20recommendations%20to%20the%20G20%20-%20March%202021.pdf>

Sustaining African Agriculture, *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, February 2009*

Agriculture has returned to the centre of international policy debates. Years of declining investment, inadequate extension services and the availability of subsidized food exports from the developed world have undermined agricultural production in many developing countries, particularly in Africa. This Policy Brief examines the potential contribution of organic agriculture.

http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/presspb20086_en.pdf

Bridging Divides In Africa's Water Security: An Agenda to Implement Existing Political Commitments, *Africa Regional Paper, Presented at the 5th World Water Forum, African Development Bank, March 2009*

The most significant divide to bridge is that between commitments already made and delivery of benefits to Africa's citizens - delivery of an acceleration of progress to attain the Millennium Development Goals and delivery of an expansion of Africa's water infrastructure to boost economic growth towards the double-digit rates needed to reduce poverty. Finance requirements are estimated at US\$50 billion per year over the next twenty years, more than double previous estimates due to the inclusion of water resource infrastructure.

http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/Regional_Position_Paper_.pdf

Global Distortions to Agricultural Markets: New Indicators of Trade and Welfare Impacts, 1955 to 2007, Peter J. Lloyd, Johanna L. Croser, Kym Anderson, *The World Bank*, March 2009

Despite recent reforms, world agricultural markets remain highly distorted by government policies. Traditional indicators of those price distortions can be poor guides to the policies' economic effects. Recent theoretical literature provides indicators of trade and welfare-reducing effects of price and trade policies which this paper builds on to develop more-satisfactory indexes. The authors exploit a new Agricultural Distortion database to generate estimates of them for developing and high-income countries over the past half century.

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/03/17/000158349_20090317084405/Rendered/PDF/WPS4865.pdf

Do nations go to war over water?, Wendy Barnaby, *Nature*, March 19

The United Nations warned as recently as last week that climate change harbours the potential for serious conflicts over water. In its World Water Development Report of March 2009, it quotes UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon noting the risk of water scarcity "transforming peaceful competition into violence". It is time we dispelled this myth. Countries do not go to war over water; they solve their water shortages through trade and international agreements.

<http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v458/n7236/pdf/458282a.pdf>

Niger: Food Security and Safety Nets, *Africa Region*, World Bank, February 2009

Niger is a very poor country that faces serious problems of poverty and household food insecurity. With a per capita gross national income (GNI) of US\$240 and an estimated 62 percent of the population living below the poverty line. In this context, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing strategy and assist the Niger Government in developing a holistic, multi-sectoral, and institutional approach to reducing the population's vulnerability to food insecurity.

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/03/19/000334955_20090319044429/Rendered/PDF/440720ESWONE0B10Disclosed0031171091.pdf

Africa's Private Sector: What's Wrong with the Business Environment and What to Do About It, Vijaya Ramachandran, Alan Gelb, and Manju Kedia Shah, *Center for Global Development*, March 2009

The low-income economies of sub-Saharan Africa have far fewer miles of paved roads and fewer modern freight- and passenger-transport systems than any other region. Inadequate infrastructure restricts businesses to fragmented regional markets or to opportunities with profits large enough to cover high transportation costs. This brief shows how investing in infrastructure and improving access to education can help bring about a broad-based business class in Africa.

http://www.cgdev.org/files/1421337_file_Brief_Africa_Private_Sector_web.pdf

The Global Economy 2009: Forecast Still Falling, *Vanessa Rossi, Chatham House, February 2009*
Hopes are now pinned on the US and Europe doing enough to stabilize their economies over the next six months. If this happens, then other countries stand some chance of tackling adjustment problems and resolving issues such as balance of payments crises and emergency funding. If efforts fail, then not only the forecast numbers but the structure of the world economic order could change radically, for the worse, prolonging the impact of this recession for many years to come.

http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/13524_bn0209forecast.pdf

The Global Economic Crisis: Systemic Failures and Multilateral Remedies, *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, March 19*

UNCTAD's longstanding call for stronger international monetary and financial governance rings true in today's crisis, which is global and systemic in nature. The crisis dynamics reflect failures in national and international financial deregulation, persistent global imbalances, absence of an international monetary system and deep inconsistencies among monetary policies.

http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/gds20091_en.pdf

Farm Commodity Proposals in the President's FY2010 Budget, *Congressional Research Service, March 2009*

President Obama's budget outline for FY2010—in the context of fiscal discipline—includes several proposals to reduce federal spending by \$16 billion over 10 years on the farm commodity and crop insurance programs. Reaction to the proposal has been generally negative from groups that are affiliated with or supportive of agriculture. The most vehement reaction has been to a proposal to eliminate direct payments to farms with more than \$500,000 of sales.

<http://www.farmpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/crs-report-farm-commodity-proposals-in-the-presidents-fy2010-budget.pdf>

Graphics: <http://farmpolicy.typepad.com/files/crsbudget.jpg>

Market Integration and Structural Transformation in a Poor Rural Economy, *Måns Söderbom and Bob Rijkers, Policy Research Working Paper, The World Bank, March 2009*

This paper demonstrates that trade can induce asymmetric growth. Under certain, plausible, assumptions, the non-farm sector will grow much faster than the agricultural sector when markets become integrated. Promoting market integration may thus be an effective way of encouraging diversification beyond agriculture and catalysing structural change in poor rural economies.

http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/03/09/000158349_20090309075416/Rendered/PDF/WPS4856.pdf

The 2008/'09 Short-Rains Season Assessment Report, *Kenya Food Security Steering Group, March 19*

The deterioration in food security has resulted from subjection of fragile livelihoods to a multiplicity of shocks over a short period of time. The 2009 short rains assessment report, covering crop and livestock production; markets and prices; food security; impacts of rainfall; disease and conflict; and the evolution of coping strategies provides recommendations that are intended to forestall the proportion of the Kenyan population that is unable to meet basic food needs.

http://www.kenyafoodsecurity.org/shortrain09/SRA_09_Report.pdf

NEW BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS

Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Africa, *Kym Anderson and William Masters, eds., World Bank, March 13*

This book provides an overview of the evolution of distortions to agricultural incentives caused by price and trade policies in 20 countries that account for about 90% of Sub-Saharan Africa's population, farm households, agricultural output, and overall GDP. The new empirical indicators in these country studies provide a strong evidence-based foundation for assessing the successes and failures of the past and for evaluating policy options for the years ahead.

Book Overview:

<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTPROGRAMS/EXTTRADERESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:21012395~pagePK:64168182~piPK:64168060~theSitePK:544849,00.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Energy Week 2009: Energy, Development and Climate Change (hosted by the World Bank)

Date: March 31-April 2, 2009

Location: 1818 H St., NW, Washington, DC 20433

Opening Speakers: Kathy Sierra (Vice President of the Sustainable Development Network, World Bank); Yvo de Boer (Executive Secretary of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)

The World Bank Group's Energy Week 2009 is the preeminent gathering of policy-makers and practitioners engaged in the issues of energy and development. Energy Week 2009 will comprise a three-day executive conference at which senior-level energy and finance industry executives, senior donor and developing country government officials, stakeholders and leading-edge thinkers of the energy sector will offer new ideas on the potential solutions to global energy challenges.

Program: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTENERGY/Resources/335544-1232567547944/Energy Week 2009 Program.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTENERGY/Resources/335544-1232567547944/Energy_Week_2009_Program.pdf)

Promoting and retaining investment in times of economic crisis (hosted by UNCTAD)

Date: April 1-3, 2009

Location: Hotel Kunduchi, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania

The workshop will focus on how investment promotion agencies (IPAs) in Africa should adjust their operations to the new economic environment with sessions on investment promotion strategies, investor aftercare and the IPA's role as policy advocate.

Program: http://unctad.org/sections/wcmu/docs/dite_iif_001_en.pdf

Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is Another Way for Africa (hosted by the CATO Institute)

Date: April 3, 2009

Location: The Cato Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC

Moderator: Ian Vasquez (Director of Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity)

Speakers: Dambisa Moyo (author); Todd Moss (Center for Global Development)

One of the greatest myths of our time is that foreign aid can help Africa fight poverty and increase growth. So says Zambian author Dambisa Moyo, who calls aid an "unmitigated economic, political, and humanitarian disaster" that has made Africans poorer. She will explain why aid fails and

propose an "aid-free solution" to development based on the experience of successful African countries

<http://www.cato.org/event.php?eventid=5917>

Global Agricultural Development Symposium (sponsored by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs)

Date: April 7, 2009

Location: Intercontinental Hotel, 505 N Michigan Ave, Chicago, IL 60611, Chicago, IL

Time: 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Global Agricultural Development Project cochairs Catherine Bertini, former executive director of the UN World Food Program, and Dan Glickman, former U.S. secretary of agriculture, and other foreign policy and development leaders will discuss recommendations during this half-day symposium in Chicago. The World Food Prize Foundation and CME Group are cosponsors of this symposium.

http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/chicago_council_event_corporate_detail.php?eventid=2054

Population, Poverty and Economic Development (hosted by the Center for Global Development)

Date: April 7, 2009

Location: Center for Global Development, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Third Floor, Washington, DC

Moderator: Rachel Nugent (Deputy Director of the Global Health Program at the Center for Global Development)

Speaker: Steven W. Sinding (Senior Fellow at the Guttmacher Institute)

General agreement has emerged that improving economic conditions for individuals generally lead to lower birth rates. But there is much less agreement about the proposition that lower birth rates contribute to economic development and help individuals and families to escape from poverty. The paper examines on this aspect of the debate and argues that the countries in sub-Saharan Africa would be well advised to incorporate policies to reduce fertility in their development strategies.

<http://www.cgdev.org/content/calendar/detail/1421383/>

New Ideas in Development After the Financial Crisis (hosted by Bernard L. Schwartz Forum on Constructive Capitalism and the Center for Global Development)

Date: April 22-23, 2009

Location: Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Kenney Auditorium, Nitze Building, 1740 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC

Opening Speakers: Nancy Birdsall (President of the Center for Global Development); Francis Fukuyama (Director of International Development at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University)

The New Ideas in Development After the Financial Crisis Conference will examine the implications of the global financial crisis on existing development strategies. Panels of distinguished academics and policy practitioners will explore how different regions of the developing world are interpreting this crisis and how they are likely to respond on a national and international level.

<http://www.cgdev.org/content/calendar/detail/1421273/>

Ready or Not? A Conference on Issues and Solutions for Adapting to Climate Change (hosted, among others, by Center for American Progress, CARE, ActionAid, Oxfam, and InterAction)

Date: April 30-May 1, 2009

Location: True Reformer Building, 1200 U Street, NW, Washington, DC

Global warming is already threatening developing countries with increasingly severe weather events, droughts, and negative impacts on health. The poorest communities suffer unduly from the impacts of climate change. Recognizing the need for increased collaboration with the environment, development, and foreign policy communities, this conference is an important opportunity to advance adaptation policies that effectively address the impacts of climate change on poverty.

Program: <http://www.boell.org/events/documents/ReadyorNot-savedate-final.pdf>

45th Annual Conference and 2009 Future Leaders Forum: "The Global Food Crisis" (hosted by the Association of International Agriculture and Rural Development)

Date: May 31-June 3, 2009

Location: 550 C Street SW, Washington, D.C.

Our 45th Annual Conference will attract a wide array of leaders, field-based experts, students, scholars, and many others from government, academia, business, foundations and elsewhere. The program will consist of presentations by speakers who have been front and center in implementing strategies to alleviate the current crisis as well as long term planners who will think ahead to ways to prevent such a crisis.

<http://aiard.org/meetings/2009annual/invitation.htm>

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Africa dreams of feeding the world, *Nicholas Norbrook, The Africa Report, February-March 2009*
Voices from within the agricultural science establishment do not believe it is unnatural to imagine African farmers growing food to be sold worldwide. "We're convinced that the future for rice farming lies in Africa," says Papa Seck, director of the Africa Rice Centre. "This continent has more potential than any other area of the world because of its land and water resources. Local rice production, under irrigated conditions, can be as competitive as in Asia and cheaper than in the US."
http://www.theafricareport.com/images/pdf/15/TAR15_5.pdf

Balancing the global need for meat, *Carlos Sere (Executive Director, International Livestock Research Institute), BBC News, March 24*

According to a recent report from the FAO, livestock production, dominated in the West by large-scale factory farming, is responsible for 18% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions; a bigger share than all of the world's transport.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7961240.stm>

Niger Project to Improve Cowpea Production, *VOA News, March 23*

A project is underway in Niger to increase cowpea production by improving farming techniques. Cowpea farming in Niger is being hindered by a lack of arable land, poor crop varieties and outdated farming methods. About 80 percent of Niger's people are subsistence farmers and herders who use fallow farming techniques to grow cowpea. Among the implementers of the project is Niger's National Institute of Agronomic Research, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, and the US Peace Corps.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2009-03-23-voa25.cfm>

Future of water is in agriculture says Diouf, *Food and Agriculture Organization, March 20*

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf has called for more attention to be paid to water management in agriculture and for increased support for farmers in developing countries to tackle water scarcity. "The future of water is in a more efficient agriculture," Diouf said at the 5th World Water

Forum. "The millions of farmers around the world who provide us with food must be at the centre of any process of change. They need to be encouraged and guided to produce more with less water." <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/10735/icode/>

'Miracle rice' gives Uganda hope of its own green revolution, *Independent (U.K.), March 20*

In the fertile fields of Uganda there are the first green shoots of a possible answer to the food crisis. The green revolution of the 1960s, which saw food production catch and outstrip population growth for the first time, left Africa behind. Uganda's attempt to copy Norman Borlaug's revolution is built on a new breed of rice that can grow in the drier uplands instead of the traditional wetland paddy fields and has doubled the country's production in only four years.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/miracle-rice-gives-uganda-hope-of-its-own-green-revolution-1649557.html>

Daewoo finds African land is a risky business, *Reuters, March 20*

A move by Madagascar's army-backed leader to nix a huge South Korean farming deal has exposed the risks of such ventures in Africa, where land remains an emotive issue prone to populist or nationalist opposition. Land use, particularly South Korean firm Daewoo Logistics' plans in Madagascar to lease a million hectares -- equivalent to an area the size of Qatar -- to grow food, played a big part in the turmoil that led to the removal of President Marc Ravalomanana.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idUSLJ18138720090320>

See Also: FACTBOX-Foreign forays into African farming, *Reuters, March 20*

Compilation of agricultural deals involving foreign companies or governments in Africa.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idUSLK10422520090320>

'Stem rust' fungus threatens global wheat harvest, *Guardian (U.K.), March 19*

The world's leading crop scientists issued a stark warning that a deadly airborne fungus could devastate wheat harvests in poor countries and lead to famines and civil unrest over significant regions of central Asia and Africa. Ug99 is a new variety of an old crop disease called "stem rust", which has already spread on the wind from Africa to Iran. It is particularly alarming because it can infect crops in just a few hours and vast clouds of invisible spores can be carried by the wind for hundreds of miles.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/mar/19/rust-fungus-global-wheat-crops>

ENVIRONMENT (WATER/CLIMATE)

Corruption Found to Impede Access to Water in Zambia, *Danstan Kaunda, VOA News, March 24*

Transparency International says corruption has made the cost of water more expensive in most developing countries, threatening billions of lives. The situation in Zambia shows that corruption emerges at every point along the water delivery chain. It can be seen in the drilling of community boreholes, the construction of water kiosks and the rehabilitation of water infrastructures.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2009-03-24-voa23.cfm>

Zambian Farmers Test New Ways to Collect, Preserve Water, *Sanday Chongo, VOA News, March 24*

Loss of rainfall attributed to climate change has stimulated new innovations of accessing water in dry seasons. Development experts are assisting smallholder farmers and rural communities' in

accessing clean water while responding to global warming. A team of experts is encouraging smallholder farmers and rural communities in Zambia to set up rain water harvesting structures. <http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2009-03-24-voa31.cfm>

Red Cross, Meteorologists to Improve Africa Disaster Response, *Brent Latham, VOA News, March 23*

The international Red Cross has signed an agreement with an African meteorology organization, hoping to better predict and respond to disasters caused by climate change. Meteorologist Diallo says climate change will continue, and likely will happen faster in coming years. He says Africa is sure to be further effected and Africans can expect more frequent droughts and floods.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-03-23-voa36.cfm>

Wisdom of the small: A tiny country is planning to go carbon-neutral, *The Economist, March 23*

The president of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed, recently announced that his country would try to stop using fossil fuels—and thus eliminate most of its greenhouse-gas emissions—by 2020. The Maldives is not wealthy but it leads richer nations in tackling climate change. The Maldives, a collection of atolls in the middle of the Indian Ocean, stands less than two meters above sea level. That means it will probably be the first country to disappear as sea levels continue to rise.

http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=348924&story_id=13354355

See Also: Why we are opting out of this pact with the devil, Op-Ed, Mohamed Nasheed (President, Maldives), Guardian (U.K.), March 15

Barely a day goes by without scientists warning us of the looming climate change catastrophe. For the Maldives, a nation of tropical coral islands just 1.5 metres above the sea, these warnings come with added bite. Climate change isn't a vague and abstract danger but a real threat to our survival.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/mar/15/carbon-emissions-climate-change>

Sin aqua non: Dams Are Making a Comeback, *The Economist, March 21*

While previously denigrated because of their adverse environmental impacts, they are starting to come back into vogue on account of (1) global climate change and the need for renewable to clean energy, i.e., hydropower, and (2) the economic meltdown hitting poor countries. For these developing countries, dams can not only provide needed sources of hydropower, but increased access to irrigation for agriculture.

http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=348924&story_id=13349220

Water Fights Present Dangerous Challenges in Coming Decades, *PBS Newshour, March 20*

By the year 2030, about half the world's population -- 3.9 billion people -- could be living in water-stressed areas where health and sanitation are at risk.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june09/water_03-20.html

Trees: More than just carbon sinks, *BBC News, March 19*

"In the absence of trees, our communities would simply collapse," states Andrew Dokurugu, a project officer for Tree Aid. "People rely on trees to recycle nutrients, prevent erosion and maintain moderate water flows. Without trees in the landscape, you cannot have a sustainable farming system. Without farming, you do not have any life in these communities."

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7949053.stm>

Millions wasted in poor water aid projects, *Fiona Harvey, Financial Times, March 19*

Hundreds of millions of dollars on aid projects to provide water and sanitation in Africa have been wasted, as the projects have failed, according to a new report. The problem is that aid organizations and governments are keen to provide the initial infrastructure, such as boreholes, pumps, wells and sanitary facilities, but without money to maintain them these can quickly fall into disrepair, so that local people return to their prior, often unsafe, sources of drinking water.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/7baa52f0-14a7-11de-8cd1-0000779fd2ac.html?nclick_check=1

UN report says Kenyan drought to last into 2010, *International Herald Tribune, March 19*

Kenya's drought and food shortages are expected to last until March 2010, seven months longer than previously projected, said a joint Kenya-United Nations report. As many as 2.5 million people face acute food shortages for the next year because they live in areas hardest hit by the drought. "The failure of the 2008 short rains ... has precipitated a food security crisis in those areas," the report said. "Apart from crop failure, the poor rains caused severe water shortages."

<http://www.ihrt.com/articles/ap/2009/03/19/africa/AF-Kenya-Food-Shortages.php>

WOMEN

Burkinabe cotton farmers expanding GM, organic cultivation, *Reuters, March 25*

Burkina Faso is fighting the effects of falling prices by championing organic and genetically modified cotton. "With organic cotton even a pregnant woman can go into the farms, and the women don't have to take on debt because they make all the inputs themselves." Dabire, who usually farms maize and millet, makes her fertilizer from dung mixed with cotton stems and water. "I can pay school fees and I even bought bicycles for my two older sons thanks to organic cotton."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/feedarticle/8421604>

Lesotho: Women farmers get mobile phone know-how, *Reuters, March 19*

Access to mobiles phones has transformed the lives of rural women farmers boosting income and expanding knowledge, a pilot study in Lesotho has found. "The phone has transformed the women farmers' lives completely - they are able to market their produce, access information on prices, and it has made them so confident," said Gladys Faku, national chairman of the Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM).

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/1027939a5081b5cf589d12804556af81.htm>

THE EFFECTS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

UN panel: Poor must be part of financial overhaul, *International Herald Tribune, March 25*

To prevent another global financial crisis, a panel of U.N.-appointed economic experts, led by Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz of the United States, is calling for a major overhaul of the international trade and financial system that includes representatives from all 192 U.N. member states — not just the 8 major industrialized powers or 20 leading developed and emerging economies that have been calling the shots.

<http://www.ihrt.com/articles/ap/2009/03/25/news/UN-UN-Financial-Crisis.php>

Emerging private equity surviving crisis, Reuters, March 25

Private equity continues to show signs of life in emerging markets despite drying up in the west, the manager of an emerging fund of funds said, but even in frontier African markets firms and funds are feeling the pinch.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/euHedgeFundsNews/idUSLNE52001X20090325>

Japan warns Africa against economic crisis, The Guardian (U.K), March 23

Japanese Foreign Minister, Hirofumi Nakasone, warned that the global economic crisis would affect Africa for at least two years at a development conference in Botswana. Nakasone said, "What is now of the greatest concern is that there is a possibility that Africa will be profoundly affected by this crisis, with a slowdown in the continent's economic growth and delays in achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals to fight poverty and improve quality of life for the world's poor."

<http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/africa/article07/indexn2.html?pdate=230309&ptitle=Japan%20warns%20Africa%20against%20economic%20crisis>

See Also: **Japan offers \$500mln in new aid, mainly for Africa, Agence France-Presse, March 21**

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iETmJJAchP_kOj1WsqcWZWv5IYYQ

3 billion poor people need world's help, Jeffrey Sachs, CNN, March 20

The world's 3 billion poor, especially the 1 billion poorest of the poor, are suffering powerful and destabilizing blows from the crisis, and these will get worse and threaten global security unless there is specific attention and action. G-20 actions for the poor should include the establishment of an urgent special food security program, which would make grants to low-income, food-deficit countries to ensure that impoverished farmers can get the basic inputs they need to grow more food.

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/03/20/sachs.global.poverty/index.html>

International Community Not Living Up To Aid Commitments To Africa, VOA News, March 20

The president of the African Development Bank urges the International Community to live up to the commitments it made to double aid to Africa. He warns Africa will not be able to weather the global financial crisis without increased aid from wealthy nations. He warns that the decline in economic growth will result in a massive increase in poverty and the many achievements made in Africa over the last decade will be wiped away.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-03-20-voa36.cfm>

See Also: **African Development Bank calls on G20 for help, International Herald Tribune, March 20**

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2009/03/20/business/EU-Financial-Crisis-Africa.php>

Africa must stop relying on aid: Rwandan president, Agence France-Presse, March 20

Rwandan President Paul Kagame urged African nations to stop relying on foreign aid and work on creating sustainable wealth based on the continent's rich resources. "It is about time we de-link our continent's survival and foreign aid. Aid must only be used to mitigate emergency situations," Kagame said in a lecture at the Nelson Mandela Foundation Centre for Memory and Dialogue.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hXs7aFOzcFAqmeJelyfF6_FdBoSA

US suspends aid to Madagascar, Associated Press, March 20

The United States suspended millions of dollars in aid to the Indian Ocean island nation of Madagascar, saying the change of government there this week was unconstitutional. One of the agencies from which Madagascar receives significant development assistance, the Millennium

Challenge Corporation, said it was putting a hold on five-year, \$110 million poverty reduction grant program with Madagascar.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5iD7e7WJBnoz53wllfjFYGxSTgp0QD97214Q82>

Mugabe calls for foreign aid, end to sanctions, *Agence France-Presse, March 19*

Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe called for foreign aid to revive his nation's shattered economy and urged Washington and Brussels to end "cruel" sanctions on his inner circle. Mugabe did not say how much aid Zimbabwe wanted. The wide-ranging scheme calls for reviving agriculture, which has been devastated following Mugabe's chaotic land reform programme.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jvtdpFjAfjCV8nFwyCOKnMFsGzfQ>

See Also: **Mugabe appeals for Zimbabwe aid**, *BBC News, March 19*

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7953510.stm>

IMF Slashes Global Economic Forecast, *VOA News, March 19*

The IMF has sharply lowered its economic forecast and now says the world economy will shrink for the first time in 60 years during 2009. The IMF cut growth projections for emerging and developing countries in half, saying they will expand 2.5% or less this year.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-03-19-voa27.cfm>

UN spotlights five key areas to spur sustainable economic recovery, *UN News Service, March 19*

Investment into five key sectors could help revive the global economy and boost employment while accelerating the fight against climate change, environmental degradation and poverty. These areas include: (1) raising the energy efficiency of buildings, (2) developing renewable energies, (3) producing more hybrid vehicles and bus rapid transit systems, (4) preserving the planet's ecological infrastructure, and (4) investing in sustainable agriculture including organic production.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30232&Cr=Green&Cr1=>

The Second Shockwave, *Michael Klare, Foreign Policy in Focus, March 18*

While the economic contraction is apparently slowing in the advanced industrial countries and may reach bottom in the not-too-distant future, it's only beginning to gain momentum in the developing world, which was spared the earliest effects of the global meltdown. The likely result: A looming food crisis in many areas hit hardest by the global economic meltdown.

<http://www.fpif.org/fpifxt/5968>

The impact of global crises on health: money, weather and microbes, *Margaret Chan, World Health Organization, March 18*

In an address at the 23rd Forum on Global Issues, Dr. Chan claimed the mistakes of developed countries placed developing countries in danger: "The contagion of our mistakes shows no mercy and makes no exceptions on the basis of fair play. Even countries that managed their economies well and did not take excessive risks will suffer the consequences. Likewise, the countries that have contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions will be the first and hardest hit by climate change."

http://www.who.int/dg/speeches/2009/financial_crisis_20090318/en/

The Global Recession and African Migration, *Arno Tanner, Harvard International Review, Winter 2009*

Interrelated to global economic activity, international migration will be affected by the global financial downturn. As has often been the case, the poorest of continents, Africa, will be the site of the most damage. The world financial crisis will weaken African economic growth and food

provision. A mixture of rising food prices, difficulty to secure international loans, deteriorating export avenues, and shrinking labor markets will cause brain drain, societal unrest, and conflict. <http://hir.harvard.edu/index.php?page=article&id=1831>

FOOD CRISIS

UN: 1 million in Sudan won't get food aid from May, *John Heilprin, Associated Press, March 24*

More than one million people in Darfur will not get their food rations starting in May if Sudan and the United Nations can't fill gaps left by the expulsion of more than a dozen foreign aid groups, a joint U.N.-Sudanese assessment team said Tuesday. About 1.1 million people now dependent on food aid will not receive their rations starting in May if the aid gaps aren't filled, said the U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Sudan.

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/U/UN_UN_DARFUR?SITE=NYONI&SECTION=HOME&TEMP_LATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2009-03-24-17-58-23

See Also: Aid Groups' Expulsion, Fears of More Misery, Lynsey Addario and Lydia Polgreen, New York Times, March 22

The expulsion of organizations that provided clean water, medical treatment, food and shelter for millions of Sudanese in the war-racked region of Darfur has thrown the world's largest aid operation into disarray, putting the lives of millions of displaced people at risk.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/23/world/africa/23darfur.html?ref=africa>

UN-backed 2009 summit on world food crisis gains support, *UN News Centre, March 23*

A proposed 2009 world summit on the food crisis, which continues in poor countries despite falling commodity prices, is rapidly gaining backing and growing in relevance. The proposal, FAO said, had already received support from the heads of State of the League of Arab States. It was also backed by the African Union, as well as by the heads of state and governments of several other States.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30256&Cr=Food+crisis&Cr1=>

Food price crisis not over: World Bank, *Reuters, March 19*

The World Bank has warned that the combined effects of the food price crisis and the financial crisis will exact a heavy toll on the poor and increase the number of hungry and malnourished in the developing world.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/FoodandAgriculture09/idUSTRE52I62N20090319>

See Also: Food inflation fears premature: World Bank, Reuters, March 19

Fears that a move by the U.S. Federal Reserve to pump another \$1 trillion into the ailing economy will trigger inflationary moves in grains and other commodities are premature, a World Bank official said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/FoodandAgriculture09/idUSTRE52I5JD20090319>

New FAO food price database launched, *FAO, March 19*

As part of its response to high food prices, FAO has developed an interactive database of staple food prices on national markets in 55 developing countries. The "National Basic Food Prices Data and Analysis Tool" shows the prices of different food commodities in local currencies or dollars. It allows for price comparisons between domestic and international markets, between different markets in the same country, as well as between countries.

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/10693/icode/>

See Also: New UN online tool shows food prices in poor countries have yet to fall, UN News Centre, March 19

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30231&Cr=food+prices&Cr1=>

WFP scales up feeding in Kenya in new response to food crisis, *World Food Programme, March 18*

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is scaling up food assistance in Kenya to feed 3.5 million Kenyans hit by drought, and appealing to donors for a total of US\$244 million dollars. The new WFP will: (1) Increase the numbers of people in Kenya receiving general food distributions from 1.2 million people to 2.5 million; (2) Assist 340,000 people including children, pregnant and nursing mothers and orphans; and (3) Provide 655,000 children with a meal at school.

<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-scales-feeding-kenya-new-response-food-crisis>

BIOFUELS

Cellulosic ethanol suffers in down economy, *Des Moines Register, March 25*

The economic downturn that has slowed the ethanol industry also is putting the brakes on the next generation of biofuels. Making ethanol from plant cellulose - such as crop residue and wood chips - could help reduce the nation's use of gasoline. Refiners are required by law next year to start using at least 100 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol. But industry officials acknowledge they will not come close to providing enough of the fuel to meet that target or the targets for subsequent years.

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20090325/BUSINESS01/903250355/-1/ENT06>

Senators Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Boost Cellulosic Ethanol Production, *United States Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, March 19*

Senators Thune, Tester, and Chambliss reintroduced legislation that would change the definition of renewable biomass in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. The definition of "Renewable Biomass" in the 2007 Energy Bill excludes any material removed from any national or private forests. Therefore, cellulosic ethanol derived from this feedstock does not count toward the expanded Renewable Fuels Standard, resulting in blenders and refiners having no incentive or requirement to purchase biofuels produced from these sources.

http://216.40.253.202/~usscanf/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1860&Itemid=71

S.Africa to export biodiesel to Germany: report, *Reuters, March 19*

South Africa has secured a long term contract to export between 70-90 percent of the output from a planned 400,000 ton a year biodiesel plant to Germany, according to the Business Day newspaper. An environmental impact assessment for the project was underway, and production would start in 2010, the paper said citing an official for the East London Industrial Development Zone.

<http://af.reuters.com/article/investingNews/idAFJIOE52109320090319>

MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE ISSUES

Ethiopia revokes coffee licences, *BBC, March 25*

The Ethiopian government has revoked the licences of six of the country's main coffee exporters, accusing them of hoarding supplies. It also confiscated 17,000 tons of stock of around 80 other

traders, saying it would auction the coffee. The government has been concerned about low foreign sales of coffee, which is Ethiopia's most valuable export crop.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7964146.stm>

IMF Revamps Programs to Ease the Flow of Credit, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 24

The IMF approved the creation of a new credit line aimed at big developing countries whose economies are tottering toward recession. The IMF's new "flexible credit line" is meant as backup credit for countries whose policies the IMF judges to be fundamentally sound, but which are being battered by the slowdown in international trade and private-sector lending.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123794384686633145.html>

India calls to boost trade with Africa to \$70 billion, *The Financial Express (India)*, March 23

India has called for doubling the India-Africa bilateral trade to the level of \$70 billion over the next five years, continuing the growth trajectory that began in 2000-01 when trade was a mere \$3 billion and shot up to \$36 billion in 2007-08.

<http://www.financialexpress.com/news/india-calls-to-boost-trade-with-africa-to-70-bn/437998/>

Ghana Plans Commodity Exchange to Steady Food Prices, Incomes, *Bloomberg*, March 23

Ghana, the world's second-biggest cocoa producer, will set up a commodity exchange to stabilize prices for farmers and steady food supplies in the West African nation, the Securities and Exchange Commission said.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601116&sid=ahpA8X82rjJM&refer=africa>

NGOs and Business Groups Urge U.S. Action on Trade and Development, *Center for Global Development*, March 20

Fifteen leaders of the business, development, and faith-based communities wrote President Obama and Congress last week to oppose U.S. protectionism in response to the global economic crisis. Their joint letter, initiated by CGD, argues that protectionist policies will both worsen the effect of the financial crisis on poor people in developing countries and compromise U.S. economic and security interests.

<http://www.cgdev.org/doc/2009/Trade%20and%20Development%20Letter.pdf>

Key issues for Africa's trade agenda in the current global economic crisis, *Speech, Pascal Lamy, Director General, World Trade Organization*, March 20

The WTO agenda in light of the economic crisis that started in the United States and that has now spread throughout the world can be summed up in six words: keep trade open, keep opening trade.

http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/sppl_e/sppl121_e.htm

Africa back to the old ways?, *Alistair Thomson, Reuters*, March 19

Three years without coups between 2005 and last year had appeared to some, including foreign investors, to have indicated a fundamental change from the first turbulent decades after independence. This spate of violent overthrows could now be another reason for investors to tread more warily again, particularly as Africa feels the impact of the global financial crisis.

<http://blogs.reuters.com/africanews/2009/03/18/africa-back-to-the-old-ways/>

Green shoots, *The Economist*, March 19

At a time when much of the global economy is falling apart and demand both for consumer goods and the firms that make and finance them is collapsing, the notoriously cyclical world of agriculture is holding up remarkably well. Prices for grains and meat are down from the peaks of mid-2008, but

are 30-50% above their averages over the past decade. There is reason to believe that this strength is more than just another of the many bubbles that have recently inflated, only to pop.
http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=478044&story_id=13331189

Proposed Kenya-Qatar Land Deal Stirs Controversy, *Cathy Majtenyi, VOA News, March 19*

The Kenyan government is considering leasing a large tract of land in the Tana River Delta in eastern Kenya to Qatar's government. In return, Qatar would build a port in the seaside town of Lamu that supporters of the deal say would provide thousands of jobs and boost tourism. But the proposed deal comes at a time when Kenya is grappling with famine, and critics say Kenya would be better off keeping the land in the hands of small farmers.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-03-18-voa27.cfm>

Funding hits emerging market exporters, *Frances William, Financial Times, March 18*

The global shortfall in trade finance – the lifeblood of the international trading system – has soared to about \$100bn and for many traders in emerging economies the cost of the finance available is now prohibitive. At a meeting convened by the World Trade Organisation on bankers, export credit agencies and international development banks said the gap between demand and supply for trade credit had widened from an estimated \$25bn last November, despite plunging trade volumes.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f1d571e4-13da-11de-9e32-0000779fd2ac.html>

AGRIBUSINESS

Monsanto Company Commits \$10 Million to Rice and Wheat Research Program, *Fox Business, March 25*

Monsanto Company announced a \$10 million grant to establish Monsanto's Beachell-Borlaug International Scholars Program, which will help identify and support young scientists interested in improving research and production in rice and wheat, two of the world's most important staple crops, through plant breeding techniques.

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/story/markets/industries/industrials/monsanto-company-commits-million-rice-wheat-research-program/>

In the interest of Nigeria's agriculture, *Femi Odulana, The Guardian, March 24*

Nigeria dropped the ball by not investing in full-blown agribusiness with huge benefits that would have propelled its economy forward. Full-blown agribusiness includes crop cultivation; poultry and livestock; fishing and aquaculture; flowers and gardens; inputs; equipment; storage facility; credit facility; and crop, flood and price-drop insurance protection.

http://www.nguardiannews.com/editorial_opinion/article04/indexn2.html?pdate=240309&ptitle=In%20the%20interest%20of%20Nigeria's%20agriculture

Green shoots: No matter how bad things get, people still need to eat, *The Economist, March 20*

At a time when much of the global economy is falling apart and demand both for consumer goods and the firms that make and finance them is collapsing, the notoriously cyclical world of agriculture is holding up remarkably well. Prices for grains and meat are down from the peaks of mid-2008, but are 30-50% above their averages over the past decade. There is reason to believe that this strength is more than just another of the many bubbles that have recently inflated, only to pop.

http://www.economist.com/business/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13331189

Monsanto gives \$1M to SD university for program, Associated Press, March 20

The world's largest seed company has pledged \$1 million over five years to South Dakota State University to create a new Ph.D. fellowship program focused on plant breeding. The company set a goal last year to double yields in corn, cotton and soybeans by 2030 from what they were in 2000, while reducing by one-third the water and energy requirements.

<http://www.forbes.com/feeds/ap/2009/03/20/ap6193783.html>

Agri investments must help, not hurt: World Bank, Reuters, March 19

Growing interest from Asia and Middle East countries to lease agricultural land in Africa "is not a bad thing" but must be handled properly and in a transparent way, a top World Bank official said. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, managing director at the World Bank, said such large commercial farming investments by foreigners could benefit local farmers by giving them access to new technology, irrigation and marketing.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/FoodandAgriculture09/idUSTRE52I82K20090319>

Monsanto sees robust demand despite recession, Reuters, March 18

U.S. recession is doing little to slow down Monsanto Co as farmers show willingness to pay a premium for high-tech seeds. Despite concerns about a slowing rural economy and a downturn in major markets around the globe, the world's largest seed company is not pulling back on growth targets, said Brett Begemann, executive vice president of Monsanto's global commercial business.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/FoodandAgriculture09/idUSTRE52H7MZ20090318>

Banner Photograph: © Ray Witlin / World Bank