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KEY ARTICLES

Ban urges steps to revitalize agriculture, ensure food security for all, *UN News Centre, May 13*

Warning that the global food crisis is far from over, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today urged Member States to agree on a set of decisions that will revitalize agriculture, support small farmers and promote food security for all. Mr. Ban said that high food prices mean 100 million people in low-income countries are at risk of joining the ranks of the malnourished. At the same time, he noted that there is broad-based international support for addressing this issue. In particular, he was pleased with the Commission's initiative to convene a ministerial roundtable on a sustainable green revolution for Africa.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=30782&Cr=Food+crisis&Cr1>

See Also: Statement to the 17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, May 13

http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/speeches/statments_full.asp?statID=486

Vilsack Welcomes More Hill, USDA Veterans To The Fold, *Congress Daily, May 15*

Agriculture Secretary Vilsack continued to fill out his senior staff this week, appointing Julie Paradis, a former House Agriculture Committee counsel, to be administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service, and welcoming several political appointees confirmed by the Senate.

http://www.nationaljournal.com/congressdaily/cda_20090515_8380.php

International trade helps solve food crisis: WTO, *Reuters, May 10*

International trade is part of the solution to the global food crisis and not one of its causes, the head of the World Trade Organisation said. Global integration represented by trade enabled food to be transported from where it could be produced efficiently to where there was demand, said WTO Director-General Pascal Lamy.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKTRE5491W020090510?sp=true>

See Also: US backs new approach to Doha negotiations, Financial Times, May 13

Ron Kirk, the new US trade representative, reaffirmed Washington's commitment to a successful and speedy conclusion to the Doha global trade talks, but said this might require a change in the negotiating approach.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/c8916980-3fce-11de-9ced-00144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1

The Right to Food and a Sustainable Global Food System, *Olivier De Schutter, Submission to the Commission on Sustainable Development, May 2009*

The 2008 food prices crisis has put agriculture back on the agenda. The financial and economic crises have in the meantime overshadowed the food crisis, yet important reorientations are currently being discussed. However, there is a risk that, in the name of raising production, the need for both socially and environmentally solutions will be underestimated.

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/csd-17/submission_of_the_Special_Rapporteur.pdf

Different Shades of Green in Africa, *TIME, May 6*

Funded by the Rockefeller and Bill & Melinda Gates foundations and chaired by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, AGRA takes its name from earlier green revolutions in Latin America and Asia, where the introduction of hybrid seeds and chemical fertilizers is credited with rescuing hundreds of millions from starvation. In Africa, AGRA is funding scientists working on new seed strains, bankrolling the breeders who produce them, and helping wholesalers expand their inventory.

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1896427,00.html>

Hunger Is A Winnable Battle, *Josette Sheeran, Huffington Post, May 6*

More than 25,000 men, women and children die each day from hunger and related causes. And it especially hits the young - one child every six seconds is lost from hunger - that's 14,000 children a day. In the last two years, rising food and fuel prices added 115 million to the ranks of the hungry - leaving nearly 1 in 6 people on earth without sufficient food. Now the global economic slowdown is rippling through the developing world, where most people have neither the resiliency nor the government safety nets to ride out this next storm.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/josette-sheeran/hunger-is-a-winnable-batt_b_197824.html

U.S. to help Afghanistan, Pakistan farmers, *United Press International, May 6*

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the United States is committing to establish an agriculture training program in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Clinton said the Borlaug Fellows Training Program, named for Norm Borlaug who was instrumental in worldwide agricultural advances referred to as the Green Revolution, will provide intensive training for Pakistani and Afghan agricultural experts and researchers and policymakers.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/2009/05/07/US-to-help-Afghanistan-Pakistan-farmers/UPI-52991241668970/

See Also: Agriculture Secretary Vilsack Announces \$27.5 Million for Pakistan And Afghanistan Through Food for Progress Program, USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service, May 7

http://www.fas.usda.gov/scripts/sw/PressRelease/pressrel_dout.asp?Entry=valid&PrNum=0073-09

Massive EU support for global food security, *FAO, May 15*

Europe remains firmly committed to help poor countries boost agricultural production, the FAO said, welcoming a historic €106 million (\$144 million) donation from the European Union in support of farmers hardest hit by the global food crisis. The signing today in Brussels of an assistance package to ten countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean who suffered most from the 2007-2008 food price crisis is a major boost to efforts to turn the tide of worsening food security, expected to deteriorate even further this year as the financial and economic crisis deepens in developing countries.

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/19701/icode/>

Wanted: A New Home for My Country, *The New York Times, May 10*

One recent evening at the presidential palace in Malé, the capital of the Maldives, around 100 people showed up to watch a movie. Rows of overstuffed chairs in a gaudy combination of stripes and paisleys faced a projection screen hanging on the front wall of what seemed like a grand ballroom. At the back of the hall,

journalists erected camera and microphone rigs: Mohamed Nasheed, the Maldives' 41-year-old president, was expected to make a major announcement after the film.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/magazine/10MALDIVES-t.html?scp=2&sq=maldives&st=cse>

Farm Futures: Bringing Agriculture Back to U.S. Policy, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2009

By Dan Glickman and Catherine Bertini

It is not easy for Americans to understand the starvation that afflicts much of the developing world. Families in the poorest parts of Africa and Asia spend up to 80 percent of their incomes on food; for the average U.S. household, that would mean an annual grocery bill of \$40,000. Yes, there are hungry Americans in the millions, and the U.S. food-stamp program is operating at record levels. But hunger in the United States does not put tens of thousands of infants into hospitals and require them to be hooked up to feeding tubes. Nor does it lead to stunting, wasting, and debilitating forms of malnutrition, such as kwashiorkor and marasmus. Yet even if Americans strain to comprehend the depth of hunger that plagues much of Africa and Asia, they do care about it. They know that chronic hunger among Afghans, Congolese, or North Koreans can pose a threat to their national security. Surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center have consistently revealed that Americans want to make ending hunger and poverty a priority for U.S. foreign policy. A recent survey conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs showed that the American public feels aid to poor farmers overseas should play a more prominent role than any other form of U.S. development assistance.

<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/FA.pdf>

NEW REPORTS/POLICY BRIEFS

The Global Monitoring Report 2009: A Development Emergency, *World Bank*, May 2009

The global financial crisis is imperiling attainment of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and creating an emergency for development. The Global Monitoring Report 2009 (GMR) warns that, although the first goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015 from its 1990 level is still reachable based on current projections, risks abound.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGLOMONREP2009/Resources/5924349-1239742507025/GMR09_book.pdf

See Also: **AFRICA: "Crisis upon crisis" for poor countries**, *IRIN*, May 7

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=84266>

African Development Report 2008/2009, *African Development Bank*, May 2009

Rural economies tend to retreat into subsistence during prolonged civil wars. The integration of smallholder agriculture into the market is thus a potential opportunity. Agricultural markets depend on transport and information. Since both of these are jeopardized by violent conflict, one of the legacies of war is that markets do not work well.

http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/African%20Development%20Report%202008.2009_00_Full_Report.pdf

Factors Behind the Rise in Global Rice Prices in 2008, *USDA/Economic Research Service*, May 2009

Global rice prices rose to record highs in the spring of 2008, with trading prices tripling from November 2007 to late April 2008. The price increase was due trade restrictions by major suppliers, panic buying by several large importers, a weak dollar, and record oil prices were the immediate cause of the rise in rice prices.

Because rice is critical to the diet of about half the world's population, the rapid increase in global rice prices in late 2007 and early 2008 had a detrimental impact on those rice consumers' well-being.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/RCS/May09/RCS09D01/RCS09D01.pdf>

Innovation for Sustainable Development: Local Case Studies from Africa, *United Nations*, May 2009

This volume aims to highlight many exciting innovations for sustainable development in Africa at the local level. It also begins to assess the scope for scaling up these innovations to make an impact on a larger scale. The case studies here are only a sample. Many more could have been included but for space constraints. An effort has been made to identify some of the most interesting and promising innovations for this volume.

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/africa_casestudies/publication.pdf

African Economic Outlook 2009, *African Development Bank, the OECD Development Centre, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, May 2009*

The international environment facing Africa has turned decisively negative. GDP in the OECD countries is expected to contract by 4.3 per cent in 2009 and to be virtually flat in 2010. Growth in emerging economies is also expected to slow dramatically. Not surprisingly, the outlook for Africa has been adversely affected by the global recession. Economic growth in Africa is expected to be only 2.8 per cent in 2009, less than half of the 5.7 per cent estimated for 2008.

<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/home/>

Outlook in Brief: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/28/55/42712029.pdf>

OECD Policy Brief: Measuring the Pulse of Africa in Times of Crisis:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/20/50/42656057.pdf>

How the Economic Crisis Is Hurting Africa--And What to Do About It, *Todd Moss, Center for Global Development, May 2009*

Africa escaped the initial effects of the financial crisis but is now feeling the dire aftershocks from the global downturn. The ultimate effects on individual countries are far from clear or consistent. The medium-term reactions of China, donor countries, and private investors are also still unknown. The international community can take specific actions to address the fiscal and balance-of-payments shocks, as well as the sudden gaps in private capital. Regardless of steps taken externally, African leaders should seize the opportunity of the crisis to push through reforms that will position their economies to come out of the recession poised for renewed growth.

http://www.cgdev.org/files/1422072_file_Impact_of_the_economic_crisis_on_Africa_FINAL.pdf

The Agriculture Unit and the Food Security Declarations of the African Union: A progress report on key crops and initiatives, *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, February 2009*

This brief is prepared as a 'Report' that highlights that progress that has been made by the Agriculture Unit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in terms of implementing some of the main agricultural and food security decisions of the African Union (AU). The Report is structured and written in such a way that prioritizes the Comprehensive Africa

Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as the entry point for assessing the AU approach to agriculture in Africa. This is based on the consideration that CAADP's 4 Pillars are inextricably linked to the key declarations of the AU on agriculture in Africa.

http://www.caadp.net/pdf/Agric_Unit_Progress_Report_2009.pdf

Higher Education: Approaches to Attract and Fund International Students in the United States and Abroad, *Government Accountability Office, April 2009*

The U.S. Collaborative Research Support Program also has some regional concentration, awarding nearly two-thirds of its scholarships to students from Africa and Latin America. In 2007, according to data provided by education officials, we estimate that China awarded roughly 20 percent of its scholarships to students from Africa.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d09379.pdf>

Transgenic crops: Current challenges and future perspectives, *African Journal of Biotechnology Vol. 7 (25), December 2008*

The history of transgenic crops at present can be divided in two parts. The first era deals with the development of Genetically Modified (GM) crops. As the time went on, various social, political, environmental and technical issues related to transgenic crops took their birth. The development of transgenic crops has raised some issues more especially the problem of food and environmental safety, some technical impacts like effect on non target organisms, development of cross pest resistance, use of selectable marker genes, etc.

<http://www.academicjournals.org/AJB/PDF/pdf2008/29Dec/Ali%20et%20al.pdf>

EPA Proposes New Regulations for the National Renewable Fuel Standard Program for 2010 and Beyond, *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, May 2009*

The revised statutory requirements establish new specific volume standards for cellulosic biofuel, biomass-based diesel, advanced biofuel, and total renewable fuel that must be used in transportation fuel each year. The revised statutory requirements also include new definitions and criteria for both renewable fuels and the feedstocks used to produce them, including new greenhouse gas emission (GHG) thresholds for renewable fuels. The regulatory requirements for RFS will apply to domestic and foreign producers and importers of renewable fuel.

<http://www.epa.gov/otaq/renewablefuels/420f09023.pdf>

The Coral Triangle and Climate Change: Ecosystems, People and Societies at Risk, *World Wildlife Fund, May 2009*

If the world does not take effective action on climate change, coral reefs will disappear from the Coral Triangle by the end of the century, a WWF study released at the conference said. The Coral Triangle is the world's richest marine environment and encompasses the coasts, reefs and seas of the six countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste. The study finds that without climate change action, the ability of the region's coastal environments to feed people will decline by 80 percent, and the livelihoods of around 100 million people will have been lost or severely impacted.

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/climate/woc.html?intcmp=151>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Delivering Agricultural Biotechnology to African Farmers, *IFPRI*

Date: May 19-21, 2009

Location: Entebbe, Uganda

This conference provides a unique opportunity for a cross section of stakeholders to discuss the economic impact and potential of genetically modified (GM) crops in Africa, the current challenges facing biotechnology, and the way forward for policymakers at all levels. The conference (1) examines existing case studies and other research-based socioeconomic and policy analysis experiences focused on the assessment of GM crops, to draw lessons for the continued and/or potential deployment and use of appropriate GM crops in Africa; and (2) provides a knowledge platform to strengthen the link between research-based socioeconomic and policy analysis, and decision making on biotechnology in Africa. Participants include policymakers, public research center scientists, industry representatives, academics, and international organizations.

<http://www.ifpri.org/events/conferences/2009/20090519biotech.asp>

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing – “Foreign Policy Priorities in the President’s FY10 International Affairs Budget”

Date: May 21, 2009

Location: 216 Hart

Witnesses: Secretary Hillary Clinton

“The Future of Kenya and Africa,” The Honorable Raila Amolo Odinga, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya

Date: May 21, 2009

Location: Intercontinental Hotel, Chicago, IL

Kenya, which is expected to achieve economic growth rates of at least 3% in 2009 even amid the global economic challenges, is considered the leading economy in East Africa and has much to attract foreign investment. Yet not all Kenyans or Africans in the region are enjoying the benefits of economic growth, and concerted domestic and international effort is needed to overcome levels of extreme poverty. The Honorable Raila Amolo Odinga, prime minister of the Republic of Kenya, will share his thoughts on the future of his country, and how international investment and partnerships can be most effective for reducing poverty and increasing economic growth.

To register, please visit

http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/chicago_council_event_corporate_detail.php?eventid=2079

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>

*****SAVE THE DATE*** ENOUGH: Why the World's Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty Book Release, by SCOTT KILMAN and ROGER THUROW**

Date: June 17, 2009

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Blackstone Hotel, Chicago, IL

For more than 40 years, humankind has had the knowledge, tools, and resources to end chronic hunger worldwide. Yet at the start of the twenty-first century, 25,000 people a day – and nearly six million children a year – die of hunger, malnutrition, and related diseases. Malnutrition kills more Africans than AIDS and malaria combined. In this compelling investigative narrative, Roger Thurow and Scott Kilman, award-winning writers on Africa, development, and agriculture, explain through vivid human stories how the agricultural revolutions that transformed South America and Asia stopped short in Africa. They argue passionately and convincingly that this generation is the one that could finally end the scourge that has haunted the human race since its beginning.

Joint International Agricultural Conference

Date: July 6-8, 2009

Location: Droevendaalsesteeg 2, 6708 PB Wageningen, Netherlands

The main objective of the joint conference will be to form a platform for cooperation between different fields of research and to provide an opportunity to join forces with representatives from the agricultural industry and policy makers. A second objective will be to exchange research efforts focusing on precision agriculture, precision livestock farming and information technology in agriculture, food and the environment.

<http://www.jiac2009.nl/Home/tabid/362/Default.aspx>

International ISHS/ProMusa Symposium Global Perspectives on Asian Challenges

Date: September 14-18, 2009

Location: Guang Dong, China,

ProMusa, in collaboration with the Guang Dong Academy for Agricultural Sciences (GDAAS), the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) and Bioversity's Banana and Plantain Regional Network for Asia and the Pacific (BAPNET), has announced the "International Banana Symposium: Global Perspectives on Asian Challenges."

http://www.promusa.org/symposium_2009/home.html

http://www.farmpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/fischerboel-hill-event_may-06-09-invite-final-3.pdf

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Edible Fungus Could Help Address Vitamin A Deficiency, USDA/Agricultural Research Service, May/June 2009

According to the World Health Organization, vitamin A deficiency is a major public health concern in more than half of all countries, but especially those in Africa and Southeast Asia. In children, vitamin A deficiency is

a leading cause of preventable blindness and increases the risk of illness and death resulting from severe infections such as diarrheal disease.

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/AR/archive/may09/fungus0509.pdf>

Environment-led Green Revolution Key to Future Food Security in Africa, *Media Newswire*, May 14

Delivering food security to an additional 1 billion people in Africa will become ever more challenging over the next four decades unless more intelligent management of natural resources and emerging opportunities are brought to bear. Invasive pests, land degradation, erosion, drought and climate change have already caused agricultural yields to fall in some cases by up to 50 per cent, according to a new report by the UN Environment Programme

http://media-newswire.com/release_1091469.html

IFAD provides Burundi with US\$13.57 million for agricultural recovery, *IFAD*, May 14

The lives and livelihoods of poor rural people in Burundi are set to change for the better thanks to a US\$13.57 million grant from IFAD to the Republic of Burundi for the Agricultural Intensification and Value-enhancing Support Project. The grant agreement was signed today in Rome by Léopold Ndayisaba, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Burundi to IFAD, and the Assistant President, Finance and Administration Department of IFAD, Jessie Rose Mabutwas.

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EGUA-7S3Q63?OpenDocument>

As Nepal Crisis Deepens, Food Delivery at Risk, *VOA News*, May 13

The ongoing political instability is hard felt in a food-deficit country that is already vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition. Nepal's history of political instability - amplified by last week's resignation of the country's Maoist Prime Minister - means continued food shortages for Nepal's rural poor.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-05-13-voa49.cfm>

Genetic foods fears overblown, say scientists, *Daily Nation (Kenya)*, May 12

Fears by many African countries over the application of biotechnology to stem food crisis may have been overblown, scientific experts have said. Although considered to pose some risks to human health and environment, food produced through genetically modified organisms (GMOs) can save millions of lives on the continent.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/597646/-/u6950b/-/>

N200 billion agricultural development fund: New ingredient for the economy, *Business Day*, May 12

Putting some things right, the Nigerian economy can begin to exhibit some form of green shoots. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources recently confirmed that the Federal Government has released N100 billion of the N200 billion agricultural development fund.

http://www.businessdayonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2692:n200-billion-agricultural-development-fund-new-ingredient-for-the-economy&catid=117:news&Itemid=349

Nigeria: Country Receives 400 Million Dollars Grant for Rural Devt, *AllAfrica.com*, May 12

The World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have provided a grant of 400 million dollars (N58 billion) for the upgrading of rural feeder roads across Nigeria.

President Umaru Yar'adua disclosed this yesterday in Abuja at the opening of the 1st All-Nigeria Rural Development Summit.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200905120274.html>

Gates Foundation funds African think tanks, *Seattle Times*, May 11

The Gates Foundation has pledged \$40 million to independent think tanks in developing countries, starting with a 24 institutions in Africa. The aim of the initiative is to provide long-term funding to organizations so they can produce sound research that influences national policy debate and decision making, said Mark Suzman, director of policy and advocacy for the Gates Foundation's global development program.

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/thebusinessofgiving/2009205984_gates_foundation_funds_african.html

More Investment in Production Won't Cure African Food Crisis, Inter Press Service News Agency, May 11

The food crisis in African states will not be solved by investment to spur agricultural production because the problem is not food output but poverty that is making food unaffordable for urban Africans, says Gilles Saint-Martin, the head of international relations for the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=46793>

AFRICA: Tractored out by "land grabs"?, IRIN, May 11

Rich countries and firms are leasing or buying massive tracts of land in developing nations for the production of food or biofuel. On the plus side, agro-industrial production could develop underused land, and broaden the world's food production base while providing much needed resources for poor countries. But is the land really idle and currently unused? Are small-scale farmers going to be "tractored out" in a murky neo-colonial "land grab"?

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=84320>

Food crisis hits 2 million in Ghana, Daily Nation (Ghana), May 11

Ghana is on the verge of a food crisis, the World Food Programme (WFP) has warned. Throughout the country, about 2 million people were at risk of becoming food insecure during the lean season, or at the onset of a shock, natural or man-made disaster. The most food-insecure were the small holder farmers who represent a quarter of the population, and have an average daily income per capita of below \$1.84. The main causes of food insecurity in the country include poverty, reliance on traditional and often inefficient agricultural practices and limited markets for farm produce.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/597016/-/13nho02z/-/>

Bill Gates visits IFAD Headquarters for talks with Kanayo F. Nwanze, International Fund for Agricultural Development, May 11

Poverty reduction in rural areas of developing countries – where most of the world's poorest people live – and investment in agriculture as a key engine of economic growth are top priorities for both institutions. Along with other donors and partners, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation supports AGRA (the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa), an Africa-based and African-led partnership to help millions of small farmers and their families lift themselves out of poverty and hunger.

http://www.ifad.org/media/press/2009/nwanze_gates.htm

Prosperous farmers hold key to India's election, Reuters, May 10

Five years ago, India's rural poor threw out the incumbent Hindu nationalist-led government because the slogan of "India Shining" was seen to work only for the urban middle class. Good rains, government financial assistance and a rural economic boom have put more money in the pockets of millions of farmers over the past five years, spurring sales of motorbikes and mobile phones in a sector accounting for almost two thirds of India's population of more than a billion.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/10/AR2009051000247.html>

Black Sea wheat a growing force in Mideast market, The Guardian (U.K.), May 10

Black Sea wheat exports to the Middle East are growing, helped by cheap freight rates and a strong dollar despite some concerns about quality, industry experts and traders said. The Middle East has in the past tended to turn to big exporters in the Americas, Europe and Australia but those suppliers are facing competition from Russia and Ukraine which are closer to the area.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/feedarticle/8499591>

Science innovations helps dryland farmers deal with food, financial crisis, Xinhua (China), May 9

The global food crisis, marked by soaring food prices last year, and the current economic meltdown, has inflicted hardships to poor farmers of the semi-arid tropics of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, including India. In such a scenario, only crop research and innovation can empower these farmers to cope with the crisis, leading researchers feel.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/09/content_11344061.htm

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

The U.S. Should Lead On Congo, *Wall Street Journal*, May 14

America is being tested this year in ways we could not have imagined a year ago. Now I bring you another challenge: to continue our national tradition of aiding the world's poor by helping the people of eastern Congo. A few weeks ago, I visited the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to see how the United Nations World Food Programme was faring in its attempt to feed more than a million people.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124227080399118361.html>

Let Africans say when they've had enough aid, *Financial Times*, May 13

Rwanda is an example of a country where focused government leadership has delivered striking successes against poverty, disease and illiteracy ("Africa has to find its own way to prosperity", Paul Kagame, May 8). But this leadership has been backed by sizeable injections of donor cash.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4d5ea2d4-3f59-11de-ae4f-00144feabdc0.html>

Pakistan aid director: Generosity will dry up, *MSNBC*, May 13

An estimated one million people have been displaced by the fighting between government troops and Taliban militants in Pakistan's Swat Valley, creating a major humanitarian disaster.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30728296/>

Richard Holbrooke Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee – Pakistan Plan, *Boston Globe*, May 12

Richard Holbrooke, the special US envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, is testifying today before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as it considers President Obama's new strategy for the intertwined nations. Obama is sending 21,000 more troops to Afghanistan, agreed to the replacement of the top US general in Afghanistan, announced Monday, and supports a bill being pushed by Senator John F. Kerry to increase aid to Pakistan's government to \$1.5 billion a year.

http://www.boston.com/news/politics/politicalintelligence/2009/05/kerryled_panel.html

Information war key to U.S. Pakistan strategy: envoy, *Reuters*, May 12

Policies to counter Taliban broadcasting will be a key part of Obama administration aid efforts for beleaguered ally Pakistan, the U.S. envoy for the Afghan-Pakistan conflict said on Tuesday. The envoy outlined for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee administration plans for implementing a new aid plan that calls for \$7.5 billion in development aid for restive border regions over five years. Washington would use funds to build roads and schools, enhance law enforcement and extend small-scale loans to support health, education, livelihoods and agriculture, said Holbrooke.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/12/AR2009051202249.html>

Africa aid shipped in planes 'used for weapons', *Agence France-Presse*, May 12

Air cargo carriers used to smuggle weapons to war-torn parts of Africa have also been hired to deliver humanitarian aid and support peacekeeping operations, a leading peace think tank said.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in a report that 90 percent of air cargo companies identified in arms trafficking-related reports had been used by UN agencies, European Union and NATO members as well as leading non-governmental organisations to deliver aid.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5gfak07cKoJn2ErozPO3rX5GNTQvw>

See Also: Air Transport and Destabilizing Commodity Flows, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, May 2009

<http://books.sipri.org/files/PP/SIPRIPP24.pdf>

African Development Bank tries to triple capital base, *Financial Times*, May 11

The African Development Bank is seeking to triple its capital base to accommodate surging demand for emergency loans from African states and businesses hit by falling export income and sharp declines in foreign investment and remittances.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/f42388b8-3e8d-11de-9a6c-00144feabdc0.html>

World Bank May Lend Tanzania \$300 Million to Boost Economy, *Bloomberg*, May 7

The World Bank may lend Tanzania as much as \$300 million to help fund an economic stimulus package being prepared by the East African nation's central bank, country director John McIntire said. The economy of Tanzania, a country of 41 million people, is expected to grow about 5 percent this year, compared with 7.5 percent last year. The nation is Africa's third-largest gold producer, after South Africa and Ghana, and derives about 40 percent of its gross domestic product from agriculture.

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

ENVIRONMENT (WATER/CLIMATE)

Climate change threatens millions who live off sea, *Associated Press*, May 13

Around 100 million people risk losing their homes and livelihoods unless drastic steps are taken to protect Southeast Asia's coral reefs, which could be wiped out in coming decades because of climate change, a report said. The Coral Triangle — which spans Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and East Timor — accounts for a third of the world's coral reefs and 35 percent of coral reef fish species.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jGPz4tCECFYX-zCj52qE49DH2KIQD985CC380>

In need of climate change cash, *Politico*, May 13

A loose coalition of international aid organizations, religious groups, environmental advocates and some businesses are lobbying Congress to include billions for international aid in the forthcoming climate change bill. The groups argue that helping developing countries cut greenhouse gases and protect against the effects of global warming is a key to success at the international climate talks scheduled for December in Copenhagen.

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0509/22435.html>

UN chief calls for "necessary political impetus" to seal deal on climate change, *Xinhua (China)*, May 13

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for "the necessary political impetus to seal a deal" in the UN Conference on Climate Change, scheduled for December in Copenhagen, a deal that "will enable us to pursue climate action on all fronts."

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/13/content_11369589.htm

Worst drought in decade deepens Somalia crisis: U.N., *Reuters*, May 12

Somalia's worst drought in a decade is pushing growing numbers of children into near-famine conditions and deepening the humanitarian crisis caused by political violence, the United Nations warned. Some 3.2 million Somalis are among an estimated 19 million people in the Horn of Africa in urgent need of life-saving food assistance.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE54B6GF20090512>

Current climate changes a spur for some to adapt, *Financial Times*, May 10

Dealing with climate change is mostly couched in terms of the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions, with targets often set far in the future. But focusing on these mitigation strategies has distracted attention from the need to adapt to changes happening now, according to experts.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/04e3542c-3cc1-11de-8b71-00144feabdc0.html>

NEPAL: Experts call for climate change adaptation plans, *IRIN*, May 8

Nepal is one of a number of South Asian countries directly affected by global warming, especially in mountainous regions which have seen rapid glacier melt: Local experts warn that climate change adaptation plans urgently need to be put in place. Some organisations have been involved in small-scale community activities designed to promote sustainable agriculture, alternative energy and biodiversity conservation, but these are insufficient, they say.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=84292>

Transforming the African Brand Through Sustainability, *Huffington Post*, May 7

There was no disagreement among attendees that Africa needs, even requires a sustainable future. The issue of Blood Diamonds was brought to the world's attention, but oil, mineral and timber extraction continues to fuel tribal conflicts that lead to the unraveling of communities and environmental destruction on a massive scale. Africa also needs better infrastructure, affordable sources of power and confident trading partners. Africa needs sustainable economic growth, but there is much disagreement on how sustainability should be achieved.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/richard-seireeni/transforming-the-african_b_199242.html

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

A De-Globalized World? *Dani Rodrik, Op-Ed, Business Standard (India), May 13*

Even with the worst of the crisis over, we are likely to find ourselves in a somewhat de-globalized world, one in which international trade grows at a slower pace, there is less external finance, and rich countries' appetite for running large current-account deficits is significantly diminished. Will this spell doom for developing countries? Not necessarily.

<http://www.business-standard.com/india/news/dani-rodrikde-globalised-world/357808/>

Africa Development Bank Needs Threefold Capital Boost, *Bloomberg*, May 12

The African Development Bank will need a threefold increase in capital to prevent it breaching lending limits as it faces growing demand for loans from African countries trying to cushion the impact of the global crisis.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601116&sid=a4EKX5UHjar8&refer=africa>

Signs of recovery lift oil and commodity prices, *Financial Times*, May 12

The surge in oil prices, which have jumped 85 percent from a five-year low of \$32 a barrel in February, led a broader rise in a range of raw materials prices. Sugar rose to a three-year high, while wheat reached its highest price since January.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e31cb314-3f28-11de-ae4f-00144feabdc0.html>

African growth seen halved by crisis - OECD/AfDB, *Reuters*, May 10

Africa's economic growth will fall to 2.8 percent this year, less than half the rate forecast before the onset of the global slowdown, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development forecast in their annual report.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/marketsNews/idUSLA7834320090510>

Cambodia: Food security threat as economic crisis takes hold, *IRIN*, May 7

Coming only months after Asia's food crisis, the economic crisis has renewed food insecurity among women and children as incomes dip, even though prices have fallen, with the World Bank predicting that Cambodia will be hardest hit among Southeast Asian countries.

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=84263>

India, Suddenly Starved for Investment, *The New York Times*, May 4

While consumer demand, particularly in the countryside, has kept the economy growing, the sudden slowing in the flow of foreign funds will make it harder for the country to grow fast enough to pull hundreds of millions of people out of stifling poverty. To help fill the gap left by foreign investment, the government is spending more on infrastructure and social programs.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/05/business/global/05rupee.html?th&emc=th>

BIOFUELS

Europe's Overseas Push into Biofuels, *BusinessWeek*, May 13

Massive tracts of land in Africa, Russia and Ukraine are being bought up or leased by richer countries to ensure access to food and for production of biofuels—a development that could result in unrest as locals

begin to lose access over their territory. This phenomenon, a product of the twin food and fuel crises of last year, is threatening local communities whose traditional use of such lands is being undermined by the food and energy security needs of others.

http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/may2009/gb20090513_196796.htm?chan=globalbiz_europe+index+page_top+stories

Do emerging biofuel technologies offer a way around food-vs-fuel dilemma? *Engineering News Online, May 8*

The development of first-generation biofuels from food sources, such as maize and sunflower oil, was initially hailed as a lower-carbon, renewable fuel source but not long afterwards caused something of a worldwide backlash as the food- versus-fuel debate emerged. Now there is a veritable rush towards second-generation biofuel processes, which employ biomass arising from the nonfood parts of crops, such as stems, leaves and husks, or even nonfood crops, such as switch grass and jatropha.

<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/do-emerging-biofuel-technologies-offer-a-way-around-food-vs-fuel-dilemma-2009-05-08>

Bioelectricity Promises More 'Miles Per Acre' Than Ethanol, *Carnegie Institution of Washington, May 7*

Biofuels such as ethanol offer an alternative to petroleum for powering our cars, but growing energy crops to produce them can compete with food crops for farmland, and clearing forests to expand farmland will aggravate the climate change problem. Researchers say the best bet is to convert the biomass to electricity, rather than ethanol. They calculate that, compared to ethanol used for internal combustion engines, bioelectricity used for battery-powered vehicles would deliver an average of 80% more miles of transportation per acre of crops, while also providing double the greenhouse gas offsets to mitigate climate change.

http://www.ciw.edu/news/bioelectricity_promises_more_miles_acre_ethanol

See Also: Greater Transportation Energy and GHG Offsets from Bioelectricity Than Ethanol, Science, April 2009

Abstract: <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/1168885>

Biofuels firms brace for impact of new EPA rules, *CNN Money, May 5*

Start-up biofuels companies say new regulations from Washington could have a big impact on which technologies prosper in a U.S. push for cleaner energy, and they are preparing to make their voices heard. The Environmental Protection Agency unveiled a new draft Renewable Fuels Standard that accounts for overall carbon dioxide emissions, kicking off a long-awaited process that will let everyone involved have a say.

http://money.cnn.com/news/newsfeeds/articles/reuters/MTFH33891_2009-05-05_21-07-25_N05504985.htm

WOMEN

A Dose of Care, *The New York Times, May 9*

Even as the United States Agency for International Development sends hundreds of millions of dollars worth of food to developing countries, a strange but important nutritional problem is being overlooked: The children of women who suffer from severe stress and poverty sometimes seem to give up and refuse to eat. Studies suggest that this stems from maternal detachment — the breakdown of emotional connection between traumatized mothers and their children.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/opinion/10epstein.html>

An Education, *The New York Times, May 9*

For millions of girls around the world, motherhood comes too early. Those who bear children as adolescents suffer higher maternal mortality and morbidity rates, and their children are more likely to die in infancy. One reliable way to solve this problem is through education. The more affordable it is, the longer girls will stay in school and delay pregnancy.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/10/opinion/10duflo.html>

MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE ISSUES

High Crop Prices Seen, *Wall Street Journal*, May 13

The government's first forecast of U.S. farm prospects suggests food makers will struggle with relatively high crop prices at least into next year. The Agriculture Department said Tuesday in its first official projections of this year's crops -- many of which have yet to be planted -- that it expects a season-average price of corn to be harvested in the fall of \$4.10 a bushel, give or take 40 cents a bushel. While that price is far less than the \$7.50 that corn briefly neared last June, it is just a dime less than the record season-average price for the 2007 crop.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124215882638011971.html>

Food prices on the rise as corn and soy stocks fall, *The Financial Times*, May 13

The world faces higher agricultural commodity prices after the US Department of Agriculture highlighted smaller-than-expected stocks of corn, wheat and soybeans in its latest market update.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0433f1ae-3f59-11de-ae4f-00144feabdc0.html>

Trade conditions slump to lowest level ever, *Business Day (South Africa)*, May 13

Trade conditions slumped in April to their lowest level ever, according to the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry's monthly Trade Conditions Survey released today. The Trade Activity Index (TAI), which measures current trade conditions, fell to 32 in April from a low of 38 in March.

<http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/topstories.aspx?ID=BD4A998775>

West African Chambers of Commerce Discuss Export Promotion, *VOA News*, May 9

With the guidance of the Geneva-based International Trade Center, business leaders from a number of West African countries are planning future steps to further improve the panorama for businesses wishing to export goods from and among African countries.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-05-09-voa27.cfm>

Free Trade, Green Trade, *Daniel Price, Op-Ed, The New York Times*, May 6

President Obama and the other leaders at the Group of 20 can fight protectionism and climate change at the same time by unilaterally eliminating tariffs on clean technology products. Tariff reduction would have clear trade and climate benefits. Getting all major developed and developing economies back in the habit of reducing barriers is good practice if we want to have any hope of concluding the current world trade negotiations, known as the Doha Round.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/06/opinion/06price.html?th&emc=th>

AGRIBUSINESS

Nestlé opens R&D Center in West Africa to improve local agricultural crops, *Zawya*, May 7

Nestlé recently inaugurated a new R&D centre in Abidjan in the presence of Ivorian government representatives including Amadou Gon Coulibaly, Agriculture Minister, Ibrahima Baongo Cissé, Scientific Research Minister, Gabriel Lohoury-Guigui, Special Advisor for Scientific Research to the Head of State, and Nestlé CEO Paul Bulcke. The new R&D centre will focus on improving the quality of locally-sourced raw materials, including cocoa, coffee and cassava, and on adapting products to the nutritional needs and tastes of West African consumers.

<http://www.zawya.com/story.cfm/sidZAWYA20090507130025>

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