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Global Agricultural Development Project Articles

A Quiet Revolution in the Developing World, The Women's Media Center, December 1

The Gates Foundation has found an experienced adviser who knows as much as anyone about the importance of focusing on women to increase agricultural production in those countries where hungry people need it most. And her gender-sensitive policy does not end with the farmers. "A foundation like the Gates offers more flexibility than a government or UN organization," she [Catherine Bertini] said, adding that it leaves room for "a lot of creativity. At the U.S. government or the UN, one can be creative and I think I have been, but the options are more limited." She mentioned a Gates funded project through the Chicago Council on Global Affairs bringing together experts in agricultural development to prepare proposals for the new administration to consider—something neither the UN nor a government agency can do.

<http://www.womensmediacenter.com/ex/120108.html>

Key Articles

Dead Children Linked to Aid Policy in Africa Favoring Americans, Bloomberg, December 8

U.S. farm and shipping lobbyists have stifled efforts to simplify aid deliveries, leaving Africans to starve when they might have been saved. The shortcomings of the half-century-old humanitarian program show how efforts to protect American shareholders can have unintended consequences. One ingredient in this recipe for famine, U.S. food aid, differs from policies of the European Union and Canada, which buy food near where it is to be used.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aU7BLQWMss2k&refer=home>

Number of hungry people rises to 963 million; High food prices to blame – economic crisis could compound woes, FAO, December 9

Another 40 million people have been pushed into hunger this year primarily due to higher food prices, according to preliminary estimates published by FAO today. This brings the overall number of undernourished people in the world to 963 million, compared to 923 million in 2007 and the ongoing financial and economic crisis could tip even more people into hunger and poverty, FAO warned.

<http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/8836/icode/>

Financial Crisis May Worsen Food Crunch: Although Commodity Prices Have Fallen, the Crisis May Make Food Shortages Worse, ABCNews, December 7

Call it crisis eclipse. The global food crisis that dominated headlines earlier this year has been overshadowed by this fall's financial crisis, but it continues to exact a crippling toll on the world's poor. And, although commodity prices for a wide range of crops have fallen by as much as 50 percent from record highs in June, the financial crisis is expected to make it dramatically worse: credit for farmers could dry up, meaning less money to buy fertilizer and seed, leading in turn to greater global shortages

of food. Money for food aid could dry up as well. In June, governments and donors pledged \$12.3 billion for the food crisis. So far, only \$1 billion has actually been disbursed, as lending institutions and governments instead scramble to save ailing banks.

<http://www.abcnews.go.com/Business/ConsumerFinance/story?id=6370751&page=1>

\$19 Million Grant to Improve Quality of Household Data on Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank, December 8

In Sub-Saharan Africa, where agriculture accounts for about one third of GDP growth and is the source of employment for the lion's share of rural individuals, knowledge about the farm sector is limited due to a lack of available, high quality and consistent data on rural households. The World Bank and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have come together to fill this gap, launching the Living Standards Measurement Study – Integrated Survey on Agriculture, or LSMS-ISA, that will set up systems of household panel surveys in six African countries. Using a \$19 million grant from the foundation, the Bank's Research Group will carry out the surveys, collecting comprehensive information about agricultural activities, as well as non-farm incomes, food consumption and nonfood expenditures, labor supply, health and nutrition, and more.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:22003518~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

Africa: Youth Employment – Key to Conflict Prevention, Poverty Reduction, World Bank, December 4

Over 200 millions Africans are now officially designated as youth (i.e. aged 15 to 24 years). Youth make up 40 percent of Africa's working age population, but 60 percent of total unemployed. The share of unemployed youth among the total unemployed can be as high as 83% in Uganda, 68 percent in Zimbabwe, and 56 percent in Burkina Faso. In all, 72 percent of African youth live on less than \$2 a day.

Please see: Fact Sheet – Youth and Employment in Africa: The Potential, the Problem, the Promise

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRICA/Resources/ADI_Youth_Employment_summary.pdf

WFP warns food crisis adds to difficulty in fighting AIDS, Agence France-Presse, December 6

The global food crisis is an added difficulty for the fight against HIV/AIDS as millions of Africans living with the virus can no longer afford basic food stuffs, weakening their defences against the disease, a UN agency official warned Friday.

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5io33Y6YIQ6dE4jGqSpxmagDIWd3w>

Trade Diplomats Reject Summit to Revive Doha, The Wall Street Journal, December 9

Trade diplomats rejected proposals for a summit later this month, saying it was doomed to fail, in a rebuff to calls from world leaders to revive the stalled Doha Round of trade talks.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122878482492690101.html>

Economy Shifts, and the Ethanol Industry Reels, The New York Times, November 5, 2008

As producers of ethanol navigate a triple whammy of falling prices for their product, credit woes and volatile costs for the corn from which ethanol is made, an economic version of "Survivor" is playing out in the industry. Last week, VeraSun, one of the nation's largest ethanol producers, announced that it had filed for bankruptcy protection after its bets on the price of corn turned out to be wrong — and costly.

SOMALIA: “Highest levels of malnutrition in the world”, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, December 5

“Somalia has the highest levels of malnutrition in the world”, with up to 300,000 children acutely malnourished annually, Hilde Frarfjord Johnson, UNICEF’s deputy executive director, said. Anaemic mothers and inadequate nutrition were the main causes of high malnutrition levels in the war-torn country, she said, with most cases in south-central Somalia. Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates of more than 20 percent have been reported, with the figure rising to 28 percent in some areas. GAM rates of 30 percent indicate a famine situation.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=81832>

Raising the World’s I.Q., Nicholas Kristof (The New York Times), December 4, 2008

Travelers to Africa and Asia all have their favorite forms of foreign aid to “make a difference.” One of mine is a miracle substance that is cheap and actually makes people smarter. Unfortunately, it has one appalling side effect. No, it doesn’t make you sterile, but it is just about the least sexy substance in the world. Indeed, because it’s so numbingly boring, few people pay attention to it or invest in it. (Or dare write about it!) It’s iodized salt. Almost one-third of the world’s people don’t get enough iodine from food and water. The result in extreme cases is large goiters that swell their necks, or other obvious impairments such as dwarfism or cretinism. But far more common is mental slowness.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/04/opinion/04kristof.html?_r=1

Fields of Grain and Losses, The New York Times, November 21, 2008

(Domestic focus) When the price of wheat, corn, soybeans and just about every other food grown in the ground began leaping skyward two years ago, farmers were pleased, of course. But generally they refused to believe that the good times would be permanent. They had seen too many booms that were inevitably followed by busts. Now, with the suddenness of a hailstorm flattening a field, hard times are back on the American farmstead. The price paid for crops is dropping much faster than the cost of growing them.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/21/business/21farm.html>

Food Prices Expected to Keep Going Up, The New York Times, November 27

(Domestic focus) For more than a year, food manufacturers have been shaving package sizes and raising prices, declaring that they had little choice because of unprecedented increases in the cost of raw ingredients like corn, soybeans and wheat.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/27/business/27food.html?_r=1

Arcadia Biosciences Receives \$3.6 Million USAID Grant to Develop Improved Crops in India, Marketwatch, December 2

Arcadia Biosciences, Inc., an agricultural technology company focused on developing technologies and products that benefit the environment and human health, today announced that it received a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for the development of Nitrogen Use Efficient (NUE), Salt-Tolerant and Water Use Efficient (WUE) rice and wheat in India.

<http://www.marketwatch.com/news/story/Arcadia-Biosciences-Receives-36-Million/story.aspx?guid=%7B6250093B-E5E4-4031-B689-68F53B38EF58%7D>

AFGHANISTAN: Drought, poverty lead children to abandon school, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, December 2 *(good “humanizing” story)*

Eight-year-old Ahmad Shafi and his younger brother spend many hours a day fetching drinking water for their family in the drought-stricken Chemtal District of Balkh Province, northern Afghanistan. They have been unable to attend school as a result.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=81769>

New Reports/Policy Briefs

Sustaining and Accelerating Africa's Agricultural Growth Recovery in the Context of Changing Global Food Prices, Ousmane Badiane (**Experts Committee Member**), International Food Policy Research Institute, November 2008

Starting in the mid-1990s, Africa embarked upon its longest period of sustained, positive per capita income growth since the 1960s. This growth recovery has made a dent in poverty and holds out hope that a number of African countries may reach the Millennium Development Goal targets for poverty and food security (MDG 1), if not by 2015, then within the following few years. Agricultural growth has been, and will remain, key to reducing poverty and hunger in Africa. To significantly reduce poverty, Africa needs to sustain, broaden, and accelerate its recent growth performance and boost its investments in agriculture. The recent spike in global food prices represents an opportunity that could support further agricultural sector growth in Africa. The unfolding financial crisis, on the other hand, could have the reverse effect, especially if it leads to lower investments in the sector.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/bp/bp009.pdf>

HUNGER 2009 / Global Development: Charting a New Course, Bread for the World Institute, December 2008

The Bread for the World Institute analyzes the inefficiencies in the current structure of U.S. foreign assistance and maps out a series of reforms to elevate development as a foreign policy priority. Executive Summary: <http://www.hungerreport.org/2009/assets/ExecutiveSummary.pdf>

Accelerating Africa's Food Production in Response to Rising Food Prices: Impacts and Requisite Actions, International Food Policy Research Institute, November 2008

In Africa the global food crisis threatens the livelihoods of millions of people who because of high rates of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and food dependency are already exceptionally vulnerable. In better circumstances, Africa's agricultural sector would respond to rising prices by increasing food supply. But such a response is impossible without significant new policy actions on both the production and marketing of African agriculture. This paper assesses the likely impacts of two strategic policy options: doubling African staples production, and improving "market access" through regional integration and lowering transaction costs.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/dp/IFPRIDP00825.pdf>

Food and Financial Crises: Implications for Agriculture and the Poor, Joachim von Braun/International Food Policy Research Institute, December 2008

High food prices from 2007 through mid-2008 had serious implications for food and nutrition security, macroeconomic stability, and political security. The unfolding global financial crisis and economic slowdown have now pushed food prices to lower levels. Yet the financial crunch has also decreased the availability of capital at a time when accelerated investment in agriculture is urgently needed. The food and financial crises have strong and long-lasting effects on emerging economies and poor people. A synchronized response is needed to ease the burden on the poor and allow agriculture to face new challenges and respond to new opportunities. Three sets of complementary policy actions should be

taken: (1) promote pro-poor agricultural growth, (2) reduce market volatility, and (3) expand social protection and child nutrition action. Agriculture requires strategic investment action, and the food-insecure poor need a "bailout" now.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/agm08/jvb/jvbagm2008.pdf>

Commodities Market Speculation: the Risk to Food Security and Agriculture, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, November 2008

Excessive speculation in agriculture commodity markets has played a major role in the rapid rise and fall in global food prices, contributing to a massive increase in undernourished people and commodity market instability, concludes a new report by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

<http://www.iatp.org/iatp/publications.cfm?accountID=451&refID=104414>

Please see: Press Release for IATP's report --

<http://www.iatp.org/iatp/press.cfm?refID=104415>

The Potential Cost of a Failed Doha Round, International Food Policy Research Institute, December 2008

In times of economic turmoil, countries might decide to increase current tariff rates to protect domestic industries or raise revenues in order to finance domestic programs. Using the highest applied or bound rate imposed by countries from 1995 to 2008 as an indicator, this study presents several scenarios regarding the economic costs of a failed Doha Round and a subsequent rush into protectionism.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/ib56.pdf>

Investing in Early Childhood Nutrition, International Food Policy Research Institute, November 2008

It has long been known that good nutrition is essential to children's physical and cognitive development, but recent evidence sheds new light on the optimal timing of interventions to improve child nutrition and the long-term effects of such interventions. Recent studies have shown that undernutrition has a whole range of effects that impede not only children's nutrition and development in the short term, but also their cognitive abilities and productivity in adulthood, with measurable economic impacts. In 2005, an estimated 32 percent of all children in developing countries under age five—178 million children—were stunted, with the prevalence of stunting highest in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/bp/bp008.pdf>

Advancing Agriculture in Developing Countries through Knowledge and Innovation: Synopsis of an International Conference, International Food Policy Research Institute, November 2008

About 75 percent of the world's poor people live in rural areas, and most of them are involved in farming. Agricultural development in these areas is often constrained by issues of access to appropriate technologies; immense "institutional weaknesses"; and deep problems with the organization and management of research, education, and extension systems. Many countries and agricultural systems thus remain mired in underdevelopment and face major barriers to the use of knowledge and innovation for development. Despite this, however, there are examples of organizational, technological, institutional, and policy innovations that are transforming agriculture and leading to growth and development.

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/books/oc59.pdf>

Global Water Outlook to 2025: Averting an Impending Crisis, International Food Policy Research Institute and the International Water Management Institute, October 16, 2002

If current trends in water policy and investment hold or worsen, we will soon face threats to the global food supply, further environmental damage, and ongoing health risks for the hundreds of millions of

people lacking access to clean water. Using sophisticated computer modeling, the report projects that by 2025, water scarcity will cause annual global losses of 350 million metric tons of food production—slightly more than the entire current U.S. grain crop.

Global Water Outlook to 2025: Averting an Impending Crisis (36 pages):

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/fpr/fprwater2025.pdf>

World Water and Food to 2025: Dealing with Scarcity (338

pages): <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/books/water2025/water2025.pdf>

Water and Food to 2025: Policy Responses to the Threat of Scarcity (6 pages):

<http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/ib/ib13.pdf>

Highlights from Alternative Scenarios: http://www.ifpri.org/media/water_summaries.htm

Factsheets on Water: http://www.ifpri.org/media/water_facts.htm#agriculture