

**ASSURING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN AFRICA BY 2020:  
Prioritizing Action, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships**  
April 1–3, 2004, Kampala, Uganda

**SUMMARY NOTE**

**Parallel Session:**     **Implementing Action in Key Areas: Raising Agricultural Productivity**

**Panelist:**            *Eugene Terry*, Implementing Director, African agricultural Technology Foundation, Kenya

**Date:**                 April 2, 2004

**Outline of Remarks**

Dr. Terry’s remarks cover three main areas: (1) a discussion of the nature of the problems we face; (2) an explanation of the new African Agricultural Technology Foundation (“AATF”) which Dr. Terry leads; and (3) a description of what all stakeholders must do if Africa’s situation is to be improved.

**The Nature of the Problem and the Value of Partnerships**

- The most accurate number we know is that about 194 million Africans – human beings – are today malnourished. Anywhere else this would be unimaginable and unforgettable. Imagine if half of all American were malnourished. Imagine if all of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and tens of millions more were malnourished?
- One obvious place to look for answers is our agricultural sector. In sub-Saharan Africa, about 90% of the total labor force is somehow involved in farming. It contributes about 40% of the net export earnings for the continent.
- A cold look at the data shows that between 1980 and 1995 sub Saharan Africa was the only region in the world to experience a decline in crop production. Crop yields increased by 27% in Asia, increased by 12% in Latin America, but fell by 8% in Africa.
- Partnerships are a key part of the answer. Partnerships are indispensable in the world of science and development. Partnership is the need to draw upon the best of academic and scientific knowledge, with the know how and understanding of the African farmer.
- Dr. Terry suggests that Africa has the scientific human capital to tackle significant agricultural research issues. Further, he argues that corruption is an obstacle that can be overcome in Africa by creating more transparent and accountable institutions. Finally, Dr. Terry posits that improved research can solve one part of the multiple parts of the agricultural problem – infrastructure, markets, capacity – that do not function as we would wish.

**Description of AATF**

- Improved agricultural technology is currently being used all over the world. The problem we face is not that the science required for improving agricultural productivity is not available. It has been done all over the world.
- Africans need access to what non-African researchers have created, but we need Africans to study it and apply it to our circumstances. AATF is owned and led by Africans, and focuses on African priorities. At AATF we have ranked agricultural problems in order of best return for the

most good. We have committed ourselves to pursuing technology that is accessible, transferable and adaptable. We pay particular attention to genomic and life science discoveries.

- AATF’s goal is to link the resource poor farmers of Sub Saharan Africa with the potential technological solutions offered by biology and improved mechanical processes. As AATF works through the problems, we identify royalty free transfers that would be helpful, and then we enter into negotiations for them. We then enter into contractual agreements that will facilitate deployment of the innovations.
- Based in Nairobi Kenya, in our first year we have gained corporate, non-profit organizations, and national government support. We have an agreed upon 10 year business plan, and have hired excellent senior staff.
- Already AATF is in partnership with local non governmental organizations, and also with the international CIGARs, the Rockefeller Foundation, African leadership groups including NEPAD, and private sector entities such as Monsanto, Dow, Pioneer/DuPont, BASF, and Syngenta.
- AATF has created a list of key issues that we are working on: Striga control in cereals, insect resistance in maize, nutritional quality improvement in maize and rice, increased productivity for banana growers, drought tolerance in cereals – and there is more.
- Dr. Terry suggests that in the next several years we will start to see scientific returns on investments in these areas. Scientific research takes time, but there is simply so much here – too many minds, too much existing knowledge that this partnership has to draw upon.

### **Right to Choose**

- Dr. Terry argues that those who oppose new technologies for African agricultural should let Africans choose. He states “...let us see what can help, and let us decide at the national governmental and local level what *we* want to do. Our problems are different. Even within Africa, we must decide for ourselves.”
- Dr. Terry concludes by citing NEPAD and suggesting that at this moment in time, conscience is not enough. In an age of global markets, economic competition, and the opportunities of the information revolution: we need pragmatism now. We need to engage everyone – small farmers and governments, universities, non profits and corporations. For sustained success, Dr. Terry calls for systems based on self-interest as well as altruism.

*Note: This note has not been edited. The views expressed in this summary note are those of the author and are not necessarily endorsed by or representative of IFPRI or of the cosponsoring or supporting organizations.*