

Global food crisis forces the examination of long term solutions to hunger

“The only way out of the crisis is to increase food production, in particular in poor countries” *Jacques Diouf, Director General United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation*

After years of neglect and massive underfunding by governments and donors the role of agriculture in resolving global hunger is finally to be discussed at the highest levels at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation summit in Rome this week.

“Agriculture is the key to reducing this poverty as 80% of Africa’s people depend on the food they grow and the livestock they keep for survival. At a time when access to affordable food is becoming an increasingly pressing global issue it is critical that agriculture in Africa is given the necessary political and financial support to provide a long term solution to hunger.” says Dr Christie Peacock, CEO of the international NGO FARM-Africa.

She continues, “Finding solutions to hunger in rural Africa is an urgent political issue that demands both short and long term solutions and sustained political will. Real agricultural solutions must be sought which include poor farmers as part of a global solution – this summit must not be used as a short term discussion which only offers Africa’s farmers the role of passive recipients of food aid.”

“With some of the world’s most influential leaders meeting in Rome to discuss the global food crisis I urge these individuals to grasp this opportunity to find ways in which governments, the private sector and civil society can work together in partnership to overcome the chronic underinvestment in agriculture in developing countries and to end the shameful hunger affecting one third of sub-Saharan Africa.”

For over twenty years FARM-Africa has been working to help provide African farmers with the technology and practical interventions to help to lift themselves out of poverty while engaging in partnership with the private sector.

FARM-Africa’s approach has been successful – one such initiative is through our Maendeleo Agricultural Technology Fund. FARM-Africa provided farmers in Tanzania with new high-yielding maize varieties and trained them in techniques to increase yields and how to market their produce. The result? Farmers saw immediate increases in yield of over 120% and an increase in their income from less than 50p a day to an average of £2.50.

FARM-Africa works with smallholders and herders to find local solutions to increase the productivity of fragmented and degraded land through technological advances and lesson learning. FARM-Africa has developed models of best practice to share the collective knowledge gained from working with hundreds of thousands of farmers for over two decades to reduce rural poverty and allow communities the dignity to feed themselves.