



Afrika trenger en grønn revolusjon

Taler
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1 Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Norway has made the Millennium Development Goals the centrepiece of its work in fighting poverty. These goals cannot be achieved without an increased effort from the international community, governments, and civil society working together.

One crucial Millennium Development Goals is the commitment of the international community to reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by the year 2015. The question is whether we are on the right path to achieve this? And particularly; Is Africa on the right path?

Between 1980 and 1995 per capita food production in Asia increased by 27 percent. Latin America increased its production by 12 percent.

In the same period, African production declined by 8 percent. Africa is the only region in the world where per capita food production has been falling consistently for the past 40 years.

By 2015, it is estimated that Africa will be able to feed less than half its population. Africa currently imports 25 percent of its food. Africa will have to increase its agricultural production substantially to meet its needs in 2015 even to maintain the levels of 1995. In other words, Africa is in urgent need of a Green Revolution!

The recurrent food crisis in Africa has multiple causes, but the main issue is not lack of food, it is lack of access to food. Technically, doubling or trebling the

30 food production in Africa can be done easily. But the import of cheap heavily
subsidised food from rich countries make many African farmers uncompetitive
even in their own home markets.

35 So a key issue is the policies of leaders in the rich countries. Subsidised exports
of surplus agriculture products from heavily subsidised production in rich
countries are destroying markets in poor countries.

A successful outcome of the long-lasting multilateral trade negotiations in the
Doha round will hopefully imply changes in these policies.

40 From January 2005 onwards national crop production in Malawi fell to its
lowest levels since 1993/94. Action was taken. The Government and
development partners implemented a coordinated emergency food aid response
across the country from June 2005 onwards. Approximately 4.9 million people
received food in March 2006 which was the total number of people in need.

45 This accounted for over 40 percent of the population. The relative success of
the humanitarian response is notable. There were no hunger related deaths and
for the most part food was transferred on time. The Government took a very
strong leadership role in addition to being the largest contributor. Donor
50 support was quickly available and substantial. A humanitarian disaster was
indeed avoided in Malawi.

55 Malawi is in the middle of 2007 a country with an abundance of food,
widespread household self sufficiency in maize and grain prices so low that they
are out of the reach of only the most destitute.

Malawi has been transformed from a food deficit country to one which is able
to export hundreds of thousands of tons of truly surplus food to its neighbours.

60 All of this because of the courage of the Government of Malawi to give access to
the majority of its farmers to adequate quantities of the two factors which have
transformed agriculture across the rest of the world, namely fertiliser and
improved seeds.

65 We are honoured to have the Nobel Peace Laureate Norman Borlaug with us at

this conference. He is a living proof that it is possible to make a Green revolution and to feed millions through improved agricultural methods.

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But neither technology nor fertilizer alone can solve Africa's food insecurity. Africa's "green revolution", must be based on an ecological approach and extensive support to local farmers supplying their own families and local markets.

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There is an urgent need for new policies both in developed countries and in African countries, but it has to be comprehensive policies that take everything from production to consumption into consideration.

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Agriculture has a crucial role to play in producing food, in generating jobs and contributing to livelihoods and economic development. A revitalisation of agriculture is necessary if we are to succeed in reducing poverty and hunger.

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Norway is not an important agricultural producer. We do not export agricultural products and our markets have for long been open to imports of agricultural products from the Least Developed Countries in Africa through a generous System of Preferences. The problem has however been that African countries have not been able to produce enough, neither for domestic consumption nor for exports.

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We do not have ambitions in terms of trying to export agricultural expertise, but we do know something about the importance of food security for the development in a country. I am also very glad that we have some Norwegian enterprises that show interest in investing in developing countries and particularly in the agricultural sector. I would like to commend the Norwegian fertilizer producer Yara, formerly Norsk Hydro, an enterprise that has been instrumental for agricultural production in very many countries, including in Norway.

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I am therefore glad that Yara is cooperating with Gates and Rockefeller Foundation in the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa - now under the leadership of former Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan - to provide a holistic approach to increased food production and availability in Africa. Norway may, through NORAD and Norfund, become a part of this strategic alliance in one or two African countries. I hope their cooperation with civil society can

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contribute to making these efforts target the real issues. I urge civil society to engage in this.

110 The fight against poverty cannot be won by the efforts of the public sector alone. In the future the combined efforts of the private and public sector will be increasingly important in lifting people out of poverty, be this within the agricultural sector or other sectors.

115 Norway wishes to pursue the opportunities that partnering with relevant private sector actors in Norway may hold, yet as a small country we can clearly only play a small role in the face of the huge efforts required to meet the tremendous needs that exist in Africa, and we therefore encourage other donor-countries to explore the possibilities of similar partnerships in dialogue with the
120 private sector in their own countries.

The overarching goal of the Millennium Development Goals is poverty reduction. This goal can only be achieved if we strengthen the participation of women in economic development. Women represents the majority of the poor,
125 whilst at the same time carrying a heavier work-burden than men, not least in unpaid labour in the home or the local community and in subsistence food production and the informal sector. This clearly contributes to welfare and economic development but is rarely quantified or part of national statistics. And women furthermore often do not have control over pay from their own
130 labours. The greatest gains countries can achieve, economically as well as politically, come with empowering women, ensuring equal opportunity, health care, and increasing the ratio of women's active participation in working life.

Women's economic productivity in Africa has traditionally been limited by a
135 lack of access to resources, in the form of tools and new technology, credit, education and vocational training and markets. Violence against women is also very damaging to their full economic participation and furthermore a good indicator as to the social status of women in society. Lack of respect and recognition of women's role and potential as economic actors represents a
140 hindrance to economic development on all levels in all countries. And from a poverty perspective, particularly developing countries has much to lose if they do not fully integrate this often untapped potential into their labour force on an equal standing with men, because the subsistence margins in these countries are at a minimum for the majority of the population. And furthermore,

employment and economic development are important elements in creating peace and combating violence. In the words of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia': "For us, employment is synonymous with peace."

150 Finally, in this context I would like to raise another great concern of mine, which is climate change. The world has finally realised that the climate change represents a serious threat to our survival. The paradox of global warming is that it is mainly a bi-product of the developed world's wealth, but it hits the poorest countries hardest - those that have done the least to cause it. The
155 poorest countries' contribution to global warming is marginal, but the very fact that they are poor means that they are the least equipped to deal with the consequences.

Climate change has dramatic impacts on agricultural land not least in
160 developing countries. Many will have to adapt to farming in dryer climate, others to wetter conditions. For some it will be the challenge of improved preparedness for natural disasters in the form of more frequent floods or hurricanes.

165 Assisting developing countries in adapting to climatic changes should be among our top priorities. There is both a need for investments and transfer of technology

I recently visited Zambia. The Zambian Minister of agriculture told me:
170 Climate change is already here - we have to adapt in order to secure long term sustainable agricultural production".

Zambia like many other developing countries in Africa is constantly challenged with the issue of food insecurity. There is therefore a strong argument for
175 investing resources in sound diversified farming systems that minimise the effects of drought, arrest environmental degradation and enhance food security.

Conservation farming is increasingly recognized as one such farming system
180 that addresses the challenges of climatic change. The promotion of conservation farming is duly recognized by the Government of the Republic of Zambia as an important vehicle to address environmental degradation, food insecurity and economic growth. This is reflected in Zambia's new Development Plan. The

185 major output from this on a large scale demonstrates that rural families in
Zambia can feed themselves and improve their livelihoods through involvement
in economic activities that also enhance the resilience of the environment in
which they live to climatic change.

190 To this effect, Norway is supporting a 5 year Conservation Farming
programme in Zambia with the Conservation Farming Unit under the Zambia
National Farmer's Union. The programme targeting a total of 120,000 small
holder farmers is an integrated approach to addressing the issue of reducing
poverty by promoting environmental friendly farming practices in a food
195 security programme.

I hope that this conference might be conducive not only to enhance public-
private cooperation in the field of agriculture but also to improve the
understanding of the problems and challenges that are facing this sector in
200 African countries. I wish you all the best in your deliberations.

Thank you.

Kilde
205 http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/ud/dep/Utviklingsminister_Erik_Solheim_SV/taler_artikler/2007/green.html?id=479563

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