



New agreements will deliver funds, expertise to help UN combat hunger



15 November 2009 – United Nations efforts to strengthen agriculture and enhance food security received a boost today, ahead of a major summit set to begin on Monday, thanks to new initiatives with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and a leading Brazilian university.

The \$1 billion **agreement** signed in Rome by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) and IDB will fund agricultural development in 26 least developed countries that are members of both the Bank and FAO.

The agreement aims to help leverage additional resources and bring total investment in the IDB-FAO programme to \$5 billion by 2012.

“This agreement comes at a critical moment, when the international community recognizes it has neglected agriculture for many years,” FAO stated in a news release. “Today, sustained investment in agriculture – especially smallholder agriculture – is acknowledged as the key to food security.”

The agency added that both FAO and IDB share the same vision and strategy, and will continue working together in improving rural infrastructure, promoting local economic development and enhancing food security while strengthening and revitalizing their cooperation.

Meanwhile, scientists from the Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV), one of Brazil's leading academic institutions specialized in food and agriculture, are set to provide their expertise to FAO for its agricultural development programmes in Latin America and Africa under another **agreement** signed today.

The university will also facilitate access by students from developing countries supported by FAO to its capacity-building and human resources development programmes.

More than 60 heads of State and government are scheduled to meet at the World Summit on Food Security to focus on boosting agricultural production and eradicating hunger, a scourge affecting 1 billion people worldwide.

Ahead of the gathering, the three Rome-based UN agencies dealing with the issue today launched strategy to enhance collaboration between them.

According to a joint statement issued by the FAO, the World Food Programme (**WFP**) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (**IFAD**), the decision culminates a two-year effort to advance joint action to help developing nations address food insecurity by investing in agriculture and safety nets, and to address hunger exacerbated by the food and financial crises and climate change.

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