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## UN agency chief pledges support for Africa's efforts to boost food security



WFP Executive Director Josette Sheeran

27 July 2010 – The United Nations is committed to helping African nations combat hunger and malnutrition as well as enabling the continent to feed itself, the head of the World Food Programme (WFP) has pledged.

Addressing leaders gathered in Kampala, Uganda, for the African Union summit, [WFP](#) Executive Director Josette Sheeran stressed the many benefits offered by food-based social protection programmes.

“When designed right, social protection programmes such as school meals, food-for-education and food-for-work are foundations for not just beating hunger and malnutrition, but also drivers for agricultural development and faster economic growth,” she stated.

She said food-based social protection programmes can be one of the largest and most reliable purchasers from smallholder farmers.

“They help create community infrastructure such as roads, irrigation, food processing and storage connecting farmers to markets. They help ensure that farmers and others benefit from the food supply chain so food reaches the people who need it most.”

Ms. Sheeran highlighted the Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative by which WFP buys surplus from local farmers' organizations for its aid operations, thereby helping to boost agricultural production and incomes in developing nations.

The programme, which is being implemented in 16 African countries, is "transforming" the lives of smallholder families in villages across Africa, she stated.

"WFP envisions the day when its emergency operations in Africa will be largely supplied by African farmers. We are gearing programmes to empower people to be food self-sufficient and contribute to the food supply chain."

WFP buys \$1 billion of food annually in the developing world, with the largest supplier being Uganda.

The agency is also looking to Africa to supply fortified food products, which will build employment opportunities and help end the scourge of malnutrition in the continent, said Ms. Sheeran.

Uganda is the third leg on the Executive Director's current trip to Africa, which also included stops in Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and will take the WFP chief to Rwanda.

"In all these places, we hear the same voices of people wanting empowerment to build better lives and to end food insecurity. WFP, in support of the leaders of the African Union, is here to help them do just that."

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