



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



United Kingdom to give \$25 million to UN-led programme to help empower farmers



FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva. Photo: FAO/Alessia Pierdomenico

4 April 2012 –

The United Kingdom today signed an agreement with the United Nations food agency to donate \$25 million to support a partnership programme that will improve agricultural data available to governments and farmers in developing countries.

“The programme provides an excellent example of how FAO works with partners to translate global information into concrete results at household, community and country levels,” said the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) Director-General, José Graziano da Silva, in a [news release](#). “The UK Government’s generous support will help deliver enormous benefits to governments around the world and the people they serve.”

The FAO-led programme, known as the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, will focus on improving governments' agricultural statistical systems and will seek to identify innovative approaches to collect, analyze and disseminate data. This will include the use of digital devices with geo-referencing capabilities such as smartphones, global positioning systems and satellites.

Improved information and statistics enables farmers and governments to develop better agricultural policies for eradicating hunger and poverty, and makes it easier to monitor changes taking place, according to FAO.

“Empowering farmers can change their lives. By improving statistics, this programme will contribute to this goal,” Mr. Graziano da Silva noted.

FAO cited Ethiopia as an example of how an upgraded statistical system can bring about change.

Previously, the national crop production estimates of its Ministry of Agriculture and the central statistical agency often differed greatly, making it difficult for policymakers to develop sound agricultural policies or to plan food aid allocation and distribution. The use of new technologies allowed both departments to improve harvest area measurements, yield estimates and market price monitoring.

The UK's financial contribution, which will be donated by its Department for International Development, will cover the programme's first phase from 2012 to 2016, and will support mainly African and Asian countries.

The programme was developed by FAO and the World Bank, in consultation with national statistics organizations, ministries of agriculture and international agencies, and unanimously endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission. It will eventually operate in 90 developing countries in the first five years phase with a total budget of \$82 million.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Investing in agriculture most effective way to eradicate poverty in Africa – UN](#)