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## UN official underlines link between food security and climate change



Playing a ball game at the IFAD booth at the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa

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Ensuring global food security while striving to save the Planet from damage are the greatest challenges of this century, a senior United Nations official said today, stressing the need to enable smallholder farmers to become more resilient to climate change and to produce more food in ways that are environmentally sustainable.

“There is no trade-off between feeding people and saving our Planet,” [said](#) Kanayo F. Nwanze, the President of the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), who is attending the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa.

“It is clear that food security and climate change, humanity’s two greatest challenges in the 21st century, are inextricably linked.”

According to IFAD, the world’s 500 million smallholder farms will have to significantly increase production over the next four decades to keep pace with a growing global population. They are required to do that in the face of more frequent extreme weather events and shifting weather conditions caused by climate change.

Prior to his departure for Durban, Mr. Nwanze stressed that despite the slow pace of climate negotiations, IFAD is observing “significant, tangible changes” in developing countries towards sustainable agriculture.

“Out in their fields, farmers are already adapting to the changing climate and realizing that they must respect and preserve the environment if they are to feed their families and produce a surplus for markets,” he said. “And policymakers at the country level are citing the impact of extreme weather on their crop production and asking for climate change to be addressed in rural development projects.”

Mr. Nwanze noted that global investment in agriculture had dropped by half over the past 30 years, and called for greater efforts towards expanding public investment in research to build farmers’ resilience to climate change and to support their adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

IFAD-supported initiatives in Burkina Faso, China, Ethiopia, Peru and elsewhere are showing success in helping poor farmers increase their productivity and incomes. The farmers make maximum use of natural processes, thus reducing the need for environmentally harmful external inputs.

“There is already a scaling up of sustainable agricultural practices in many parts of the world,” said Mr. Nwanze. “What we need now is a rapid acceleration of these changes so that smallholder farmers can successfully feed their families, connect to markets and contribute more to global food production,” he added.

Meanwhile, IFAD, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) and UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) have assisted over 22 million people hardest hit by the global food price crisis thanks to generous funding from the European Union’s Food Facility (EUFF), demonstrating that investing in agriculture and nutrition improves global food security.

The combined effects of high food prices in 2007-2008 and the global financial and economic downturn pushed millions of people into poverty and hunger. By the end of 2008, when the number of undernourished people neared one billion, the EU launched the €1 billion facility.

Set up in close collaboration with the UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, EUFF channelled some €367 million through FAO, IFAD and WFP to bridge the gap between short-term emergency needs and longer-term development by boosting agricultural production and productivity in countries hardest hit by the crises, the three agencies said in a joint statement.

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