



# UN and African officials discuss role of agriculture in rural development



IFAD President Kanayo F. Nwanze delivers keynote remarks at launch of the Rural Poverty Report 2011

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African ministers and experts gathered in South Africa today for a United Nations-backed discussion on agriculture's potential to boost rural economies in Africa, a day ahead of the opening of the African chapter of the World Economic Forum.

At the panel discussion in Cape Town, organized by the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA), Kanayo F. Nwanze, the fund's president, delivered a **keynote speech** on the new challenges and opportunities for African agriculture.

He outlined IFAD's **Rural Poverty Report 2011**, which was initially unveiled in December, and discussed calls for policy innovations and increased investments to improve opportunities for agriculture and rural businesses.

IFAD's Rural Poverty Report highlights positive developments in African agriculture, including efforts by a number of governments to meet the African Union's goal of spending at least 10 per cent of their annual national budgets on improving agriculture.

It also points out that rural poverty is particularly acute in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to nearly a third of the world's extremely poor rural people, whose numbers swelled from 268 million to 306 million over the past decade.

It emphasizes that changes in agricultural markets are giving rise to new and promising opportunities for the developing world's smallholder farmers to significantly boost their productivity, which will be necessary to ensure enough food for an increasingly urbanized global population estimated to reach at least 9 billion by 2050.

This year's three-day World Economic Forum on Africa opens in Cape Town tomorrow, with the theme being "From Vision to Action, Africa's Next Chapter."

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