



MEDIA ALERT

26 October 2009

WORLD FOOD SECURITY:

CAN PRIVATE SECTOR R&D FEED THE POOR?

27 and 28 October, Parliament House Canberra

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PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT FOR THE POOR - MORE THAN MOBILE PHONES?

Why is it that some technologies, such as the mobile phone, have flourished in the developing world but desperately know-how to alleviate hunger and poverty don't find their way to the countries that need them?

Considerable controversy arises around questions such as intellectual property rights, multinational profits, the development of GMOs and biopiracy but the private sector can provide much-needed R&D.

The following leading agriculture and development specialists will tackle this longstanding failure of the private sector at the Crawford Fund's 2009 conference *World Food Security: Can Private Sector R&D Feed the Poor?* on 27 and 28 October:

- *Dr Namanga Ngongi from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa* (chaired by Kofi Annan) believes Africa needs the public and private R&D sectors to partner with radical programs and policies for poor farmers, mainly women. He has a serious warning about climate change for Africa, which contributes less than 3% of global emissions but, like Australia, bears its brunt.
- *Dr Prahbu Pingali from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation* can explain their agricultural activities, particularly in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- *Professor Philip Pardey, renowned Australian agricultural economist at the University of Minnesota* has just completed a study on agricultural R&D spending and believes optimism about science magically solving world food security is not enough, and we may be in for a longer-term more enduring food price crisis without growth in spending on R&D.
- *Dr Marco Ferroni from Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture* reports on what's needed to encourage increased private sector R&D spending such as market-friendly policies, infrastructure improvements and restructured governmental functions that crowd out the private sector.
- *William S. Niebur, DuPont* believes public-private partnerships are the most effective way to solve global food security, increasingly seen as a key to national security. DuPont invests \$700m pa in R&D on food production and filed more than 200 germplasm patent applications to July 2009.
- *Dr Dyno Keatinge of the World Vegetable Center* believes Australian vegetable crops face unnecessary threats from exotic pests and diseases because of a lack of support for public plant breeding programs and a wishful reliance on multinational seed companies.
- *Dr Thomas Lumpkin, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) and Ms Janice Armstrong from Monsanto* can discuss the challenges and lessons from their partnerships in Africa using conventional breeding and biotechnology to develop drought-tolerant maize.
- *Dr Amit Roy of the International Fertilizer Development Center* will announce a bold new research initiative aimed at creating the much-needed next generation of fertilizers.
- *Drs Doug Gray and Peter Horne from the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research* can respectively explain how livestock producers are coming under increased scrutiny with the emergence of new animal diseases that can infect people; and how increasing urbanisation and the globalisation of food production are creating new opportunities for poor farmers in Asia.

Further info and press releases are available and pre-event interviews can be arranged.