



**THE CRAWFORD FUND**  
*For a Food Secure World*

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **PUSHING AGRICULTURE INTO THE STRATOSPHERE OF INNOVATION**

We can achieve a world without hunger and malnutrition if we take on lessons from past successes which highlight the need for greater partnership, a need to acknowledge shared responsibility, and a willingness to tackle adversity. Actions taken or not taken in this sector will make or break how successful we are at sustaining ourselves into the decades to come. It will take ambitious game changing action by all of us.

This will be the key message of Her Excellency Gerda Verburg, Chair of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and of the World Economic Forum Council on Food Security and Nutrition in her keynote address to the Crawford Fund's annual food security conference. Titled *The Business of Food Security: Profitability, Sustainability and Risk*, which is being held in Parliament House, Canberra 10-12 August and will focus on the importance of collaboration and partnership between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to achieve sustainable intensification and improved food security.

"The opportunities available for achieving agricultural growth are exponential if we are willing to invest in time, resources and collaboration. The best solutions are found when we combine and build on ideas and options from across the spectrum," said H.E. Verburg, who is the former Chair of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. The institutions she now chairs bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, research organisations, financing institutions and others to contribute to solutions.

"Now more than ever, as we are set to agree on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), exploring how we can *intensify* our existing collaboration and *expand* the opportunities to build on each other's strengths is necessary to be successful at bridging the projected annual investment deficit of \$2.5 trillion needed to achieve the upcoming SDGs.

"The only way to build consensus and create food systems where sustainability and profitability are inextricably linked is to not shy away from addressing contentious issues like the role of genetic engineering, the role for smallholders in intensification, how to optimize land use, or how we can combine traditional knowledge with innovation and technology.

"While growth in agriculture is up to four times more effective at reducing poverty than growth in other sectors, it is consistently on the low end of the spectrum in terms of investment in R&D. Approximately one tenth of what is spent on R&D on pharmaceuticals is spent on R&D for food systems.

"Smallholders and family farmers account for more than 95% of agricultural holdings and feed up to 80% of the population, which means they have to be part of any solution aimed at achieving food security and nutrition. Great ideas that are either too complicated or too costly won't reach them.

"Let us all become game changers by exposing ourselves to more multi-stakeholder debate and collaboration and finally disrupt the trend of hunger and malnutrition forever," she concluded.

Other speakers will include:

- Mr Anthony Pratt, Executive Chairman, Visy Industries
- Dr Martin Kropff, Director General, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre
- Dr Cary Fowler, biodiversity conservation advocate

The Crawford Fund wishes to thank the supporters of this event including:

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