

NOTES FOR A SPEECH

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TO THE CFSRF HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE

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Thank you very much (MC) for that kind introduction. It is a great pleasure to be here in Addis Ababa.

Before going further, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize

- Elected officials/ Ambassador in attendance
- The honorable Monte Solberg, Chairperson of IDRC
- Mr Gordon Houlden, Director of the China Institute and professor of Political Science at the university of Alberta and member of IDRC's Board of Governors
- OTHERS TO BE TBD

Thank you all for joining us today at Canada's High level Dialogue on Food Security. In light of the challenges we are confronting together, it is inspiring to see you all here.

I want to thank the IDRC team in Africa for organizing today's impressive agenda. You have done a terrific Job.

For those of you who are not familiar with Canada's international Development Research center, let me give you a brief overview

IDRC is a Canadian Crown Corporation. We support practical research that improves lives and livelihoods across the developing world. This work addresses pressing development challenges, builds local research skills, and reduces dependence on aid.

IDRAC is part of the government of Canada's foreign affairs family. The research we fund helps to advance Canada's international development priority.

And Key among those priorities is food security and our commitment to supporting research that will usher in a green revolution for Africa.

IDRC is funded by the government of Canada. But our model allows us flexibility.

We can leverage our government funding to receive additional financial support from other partners – philanthropic organizations like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. We also work with national governments – Britain, Australia, and Norway, to name a few.

And of course our major partner is Canada's Department of foreign affairs, trade and development – or, as it is known, DFATD.

Together with DFATD, one of our flagship programs is the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund – or CIFSFR for short.

CIFSFR was launched in 2009 with the initial funding of \$62 million. The program brings teams of Canadian and developing country researchers to test practical means to improve the lives of the small-holder farming families across Africa, Asia and Latin America – with more than \$21.5million allocated to projects in Africa.

In just a few years, CIFSRF researchers have worked directly with 97, 000 famers – while reaching hundreds of thousands more. And those farmers have helped to test more than 140 innovations in the field that has increased productivity and incomes, and improved and diversified diets.

We are also building leaders for today and tomorrow. I know that there are more than 250 graduate students being supported by Canada’s funding – a number of you are here today. You are the next generation of scientists who will continue the fight.

The program is a source of pride for all of us working to improve food security in the developing world – and the government of Canada had recently doubled the funding to \$124 million. That’s a vote of confidence in CIFSRF, for which we are very grateful.

While we are here today primarily because of the CIFSRF program, IDRC has supported agricultural research in Africa over 40 years. From Cassava and Banana research on climate change adaptation and resilience; to playing a lead role in the development of the world Agro-Forestry Centre and the recent reforms at the CGIAR; to supporting the carriers of the young researchers (many of whom have gone on to become national leaders).

At IDRC, it goes without saying that agricultural and nutritional security are the significant focus for us.

Here at the high level dialogue, we are brought together by a common purpose conducting Research to feed Africa.

This is the reason we have gathered here in Addis today. To discuss results, innovations and development outcomes arising from the work that we are all leading. And to engage with people who are in a position to use these results to develop policies which can improve the lives of millions of Africa.

Let me touch on just a few of the themes and the challenges that will be discussed today.

One of the sessions will look at ways “Link high-Tech solutions with small scale farmers”. We often argue about whether basic or applied research is more important. In my opinion, it’s a bit of a moot point.

Canadian and South African researchers are using advance molecular bio-technology to develop a single vaccine to protect livestock from five major diseases that cause devastating losses in Africa. This could increase economic stability of millions of farmers and pastoralists, and save billions of dollars in lost GDP every year.

At other times, building on the experience of local farmers is the right approach to take. We need to recognize that there are untapped opportunities in small scale farming systems where farmers have demonstrated remarkable innovation in farming their lands. Often building on these simple, practical innovations is the best way to go.

In particular, we have seen excellent results when we focus efforts on improving the production of secondary crops-often called under-utilized or orphan crops. These are the crops that complement and

add value to existing farming systems, providing an additional source of income and /or more nutritious food for the family.

These successful farmer-researcher collaborations are showcased in applied projects like the one testing improved pulses in Southern Ethiopia or indigenous vegetables in Nigeria – which we will hear more about in the afternoon.

We need to harness the power of both scientific and farmer-based knowledge to develop the right crops, tools, techniques, and expertise for smallholder farmers and their communities.

And, on this topic, I would like to stress one other point. I think that women are key to all of this. They make up a huge proportion of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, but are often among the most disadvantaged and undernourished in those countries.

They are vital to meeting the challenges of improving food and nutritional security, and enabling poor rural families to overcome poverty. We need to ensure that our project support women farmers and better respond to their needs to earn better living and help feed their families.

Another topic we will hear about today is the challenge of taking research to scale – hot topic these days and not always well understood. But it is a critical challenge and am interested to hear what this afternoon's panel has to say on this topic.

In my opinion, if we are to accelerate impact and achieve scale, we will need to involve the private sector – whether foundations or business or other partners.

The private sector is increasingly recognized as a key partner in the development and innovation playing field. And for good reason. Of the financial flows from developed to developing countries, over 80% are private.

Understanding value chains is major priority for our programming. The key, of course, is to link products and customers. As the world continues to urbanize, the current commercialization of small scale farming will continue – that is the fact. This will require research that is market aware. This is what small scale farmers want, and what urban consumers need.

Partnering with the private sector can help improve these supply chains. To accelerate impact, and to ensure that research breakthroughs benefit as many people as possible we need to find ways to involve the private sector.

Admittedly, for over a decade, IDRC's programming has not focused much on private sector collaboration – but recent trends have shown that we can position ourselves to effectively engage with private sector.

We are now more systematically approaching the topic of private sector collaboration. We are building on a modest base of knowledge, experience and promising new programming. However, we would like to

be seen as a knowledge partner of choice, to accelerate our impact as a research funder, to tackle the most difficult development problems, and to have a greater impact.

A number of our projects are already targeting Small and Medium Enterprises' to collaborate and invest in the scaling up of agricultural innovation. We expect to do more of this in the coming years.

For example, in Kenya, a private company set up after the liberalization of Kenya's seed market in the 1990s is scaling up a new system for distributing its higher-yielding seed to small scale farmers. Although still early days for this public-private partnership, it has already helped freshco increase sales nearly five-fold in seven districts and made improved seeds available to thousands of farmers who might otherwise not have had access to them.

In essence, we are seeking to foster public – private research partnerships that have the ability to transform promising proof-of-concept research into development outcomes at scale.

But over the course of the day, I am also interested in hearing more from the private sector. What concrete and important ideas and actions do you think will contribute most of this development challenge?

So what does this all mean for researchers and policy makers?

In the past 5 to 10 years, governments have increased their investment in agriculture and nutrition research. That is good news.

But with most government budgets, three to five year cycles are the norm – and results are expected in that time frame.

That means we need to be smarter, more systematic, and targeted. We need to plan exceptionally well. And we need to work a bit faster.

In short, we need to be nimble. We have to seize opportunities when research produces promising results. We also need to recognize when expectations are not going to be met and to scale back.

It means that we need to pursue non-traditional research partnership to leverage scarce funds. We need to bring together the best minds in the public and private sectors; develop public-private-partnerships; and link academia with industry.

If we are to succeed, we have to develop projects that deliver both high-quality research results and on-the-ground development outcomes.

We need to show policy makers that we have concrete results that can help answer the big questions facing the world today. We need to show solutions that work, solutions that will meet the growing demand for food and solutions that decision-makers can use.

At IDRC, we will continue to reach out to those who are committed to addressing the world's urgent food security challenges. We all know that this is a huge challenge and that there are no silver bullets.

But there are also huge opportunities – especially here in Africa. Africa has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economic regions in the world. Finding ways to sustain and increase that growth is critical.

And we believe that there is strength in numbers.

Just last year, we were joined with the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research to launch Cultivate Africa's Future, or CultiAF – a four year, \$15 million program to fund applied research in areas vital to achieving long-term food security in 10 Eastern and southern African Countries – focusing on post-harvest systems, linking agriculture and nutrition, and sustainable water use.

I believe that there is tremendous hope for the future, as we join forces on initiatives like CultiAF. And CIFSRF. Increasingly, talented scientists from both the natural and social sciences are working together on research to feed the world. At the end of the day, we need to access the expertise and resources within both the public and private sector if we are to:

- Improve food and nutritional security for small holder farmers;
- Help to develop the rural economy – an economy that can support an expanding agriculture sector;
- Create farm and non-farm jobs for men, women and youth.

That is Research that can make a difference and that is why we are here.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to our important discussions today and in the days ahead.