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Supported by the CGIAR

OCTOBER 2008

Tapping the DRC's Immense Agricultural Potential

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has long been recognized for its abundance of natural resources, especially its mineral riches. Until recently, however, little attention has been given to the country's vast agricultural potential; if unleashed, this potential could significantly reduce poverty, hunger, and malnutrition, which affect more than 70 percent of the population.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is currently crafting an agricultural development strategy to address these issues. It invited IFPRI to co-host a workshop on September 17-18 in Kinshasa on "Achieving Food and Nutrition Security in the DRC: Immediate Actions and Long-Term Investments in Agriculture" in order to bring together international researchers and Congolese experts and policymakers.

"If the DRC's immense potential is tapped, the country could win the fight against poverty and hunger at home, and supply food to much of Africa," said IFPRI Director General Joachim von Braun, while speaking at the workshop. "But agricultural growth and development

(continued on page 3)

ifpri FORUM

ISSN 1933-8910 (PRINT) • ISSN 1933-8813 (ONLINE)

Interview with
Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy
Secretary-General of the United Nations



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The 10 Percent that Could Change Africa

Five years ago, before the emergence of a global food-price crisis, African leaders pledged to increase support for agriculture. Recognizing the importance of a strong agricultural sector for economic growth and poverty reduction, they made a commitment to invest 10 percent of their national budgets in agriculture by 2008. As 2008 comes to an end, where do things stand?

Although the recent global food-price crisis has put a renewed spotlight on agriculture, African heads of state placed it on their agendas several years ago. Spurred on by a drought emergency in the early part of

the decade, they met in Maputo, Mozambique in 2003 and pledged to allocate 10 percent of their budgets to agriculture by 2008. That 10-percent commitment was designed to put African countries on track to reach the

(continued on page 9)

Inside IFPRI FORUM

Empowering Women Farmers in South Asia	2	Agriculture and Health: What Is at Stake?	7
Best-Bet Investments in Agricultural Research	3	Three Views on the Global Food Crisis	8
Interview with Asha-Rose Migiro	4	Decisionmaking in a Global Food Crisis	8
		2008 Global Hunger Index Now Available	8