



## Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

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Some speakers are available for individual interviews upon request  
Online press room: <http://www.cgiar.org/news/africafoodcrisis.html>

### **\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\***

## **Audio Conference Press Briefing: Africa's Food Crisis**

**On Thursday, 8 May 2008, 10:30 AM Nairobi/9:30 AM Johannesburg**

### **Leading Experts on African Agriculture to Address Key Issues Underlying Food Crisis – and Show a Way Ahead**

Three prominent experts on food and agriculture in Africa will **host a telebriefing for media on Thursday, 8 May at 10:30 am**. The panelists will discuss the many factors behind the rapid increase in the price of African food staples like maize and rice and give their ideas on how to address the issues in a comprehensive fashion. The scientists, who represent a variety of backgrounds related to food production in Africa, will clearly lay out steps that policymakers need to take in the months and years ahead. Among the topics that will be discussed:

- Is the world food crisis a temporary shock or a long-term trend?
- What are the current and future price trends for African staple crops?
- What can be done now to stave off riots and hunger?
- Are current food aid interventions efficient and effective? What is the long-term impact of food aid?
- How will the high cost of fertilizers and Africa's soil fertility crisis hamper efforts to boost agricultural production?
- Are government subsidies for seed and fertilizer the way to go?
- What are potential negative impacts of additional land-clearing to produce more food for Africa?
- Will banning food exports lower food prices, or is it denying farmers a lucrative chance to cash in on their years of hard effort?
- What alternatives do the poor have if the prices of rice, wheat, and maize continue to skyrocket?
- What solutions for optimizing crop productivity are available that have not been brought to scale?
- Have years of inadequate investment in agricultural research led to this crisis?

The scientists represent three of the 15 centers that are supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the largest alliance of international agricultural research centers. The centers include 8,000 scientists working in more than 100 countries throughout the world. These scientists are on the cutting edge of agricultural research that is producing hardier, higher yielding crop varieties as well as more resilient crop and livestock systems; evaluating the impact of climate change on agriculture; and offering policy advice to governments around the world on how they can respond more effectively to major challenges, like rising food prices, that have harsh consequences for the poor.

**WHO:** *Speakers:*

**Dr. Dennis Garrity**, Director General, World Agroforestry Center (Nairobi, Kenya)  
**Dr. Papa Abdoulaye Seck**, Director General, Africa Rice Center (Cotonou, Benin)  
**Dr. Marianne Banziger**, Director, Global Maize Program, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) (Nairobi, Kenya)

**WHEN:** **10:30 am Nairobi**  
**Thursday, 8 May, 2008**

**DETAILS:** **To access the telephone briefing, reporters should dial:**  
**U.S. Toll-free:** +1 800 862-9098  
**South Africa Toll-free:** +27 (0) 80-098-1020  
**From other locations:** +1 785 424 1051  
**Conference ID:** 7CGIAR  
**Program Title:** Africa's Food Crisis

**If you require assistance to access the call, contact [jhaskins@burnesscommunications.com](mailto:jhaskins@burnesscommunications.com) by Wednesday May 7 to arrange to have an operator call you and enter you into the telebriefing.**

A playback recording of the briefing will be available via telephone for 24 hours. To access the recording, reporters should email [jhaskins@burnesscommunications.com](mailto:jhaskins@burnesscommunications.com) for access instructions.

### **About the CGIAR**

The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), established in 1971, is a strategic partnership of countries, international and regional organizations and private foundations supporting the work of 15 international agricultural research Centers. In collaboration with national agricultural research systems, civil society and the private sector, the CGIAR fosters sustainable agricultural growth through high-quality science aimed at benefiting the poor through stronger food security, better human nutrition and health, higher incomes and improved management of natural resources. See: [www.cgiar.org](http://www.cgiar.org).