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## ***AGRA and NEPAD Form Historic Partnership To Rapidly Increase Food Production and Achieve Food Security in Africa***

*Africa's Two Leading Farmer-Focused Initiatives Join Forces to Unlock Potential of African Agriculture As Engine of Economic Growth*

ABUJA, NIGERIA (9 November 2009)--The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) today announced a groundbreaking partnership that will link African government commitments to agricultural development with concrete programs in seeds, soil health, policy, and markets.

“This partnership will enable African countries to close the gap between intention and action on behalf of smallholder farmers,” said Mr Kofi A Annan, Chairman of AGRA and former Secretary-General of the United Nations. “NEPAD has mobilized public support among African governments to prioritize and invest in agriculture. AGRA develops and disseminates the technologies farmers need; bolsters policy reform; builds markets and involves the private sector. Our combined efforts will be a strong force for change across Africa.”

Based on the Memorandum of Understanding, the two organizations will join forces to work directly with national governments and partners across the agricultural value chain in a

comprehensive effort to increase the productivity of smallholder farmers growing Africa's staple food crops. They will focus particularly on plans to develop high potential breadbasket areas of African countries.

"An African strategy that increases the productivity of smallholder farmers is crucial to reaching our goal of 6 percent annual agricultural growth," said Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD, who signed the Memorandum with AGRA.

NEPAD works closely with African governments to implement the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), a framework to accelerate economic growth and boost food security through greater investments in agriculture. Endorsed by African leaders, CAADP calls on African governments to allocate 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture, in order to achieve 6 percent annual agricultural growth.

AGRA is a partnership-based organization whose integrated programs in seeds, soil health, market access and policy work to increase the productivity of smallholder farmers and transform African agriculture into a highly productive, efficient, and sustainable system.

"African leaders have unified behind the CAADP vision and have taken bold steps to put agriculture at the center of the development agenda," said Dr Namanga Ngongi, President of AGRA. "This vision has galvanized partners around the world to support agriculture. Our partnership will accelerate CAADP's implementation at the country level."

The new partners will work together through CAADP's national Roundtable processes, which will direct investments toward implementing policies and programs that strengthen smallholder farmers' access better soil management techniques and improved seeds and fertilizers, increase their access to markets, and build the capacity of African institutions to advance agricultural research and to develop home-grown, evidence-based agricultural policies.

### **Building on Progress**

"We see CAADP as a historic development in charting new agricultural pathways for Africa", said Prof. Richard Mkandawire, Agriculture Adviser at NEPAD and Head of CAADP. "We are therefore delighted that AGRA is joining forces with NEPAD to work hand-in-hand in enhancing agricultural productivity and food security at the country-level".

Since CAADP's establishment in 2003, some African countries have moved to honor their CAADP commitments by providing at least 10 percent of their budgetary allocations towards agriculture. These countries include Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda, Mali, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria.

"The Nigerian government has allocated more than 10 percent of our national budget to agriculture," said Dr Sayyad Ruma, Nigeria's Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. "We are eager to get to work with AGRA and NEPAD, to develop plans that effectively target these moneys to increase the productivity of smallholder farmers."

"It is no surprise that countries that have met their CAADP commitments are also showing signs of greater food security and stronger economic growth," said Dr Akinwumi Adesina, Vice President of Policy and Partnerships at AGRA.

For example, government policies, including seed and fertilizer vouchers for poor farmers, have helped transform Malawi from a net importer to a net exporter of maize over the last four years, and fueled a national economic growth rate of seven percent. In Rwanda, food production grew by 15% in 2007 and 16% in 2008, as the country embarked on an ambitious green revolution program that has increased farmers' access to quality seed and fertilizers.

"Africa must lead its own development through home-grown policies that correspond to its priorities. Such policies will help to achieve economic growth needed to lift millions out of poverty," said Adesina. "This new partnership will build on successes and support new efforts in other breadbasket regions of Africa. Now it is time for our words to match up with our deeds."

Since 2006, AGRA's work in 14 African countries has already benefited hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers, who now have better access to improved seeds of staple crops, to fertilizers, to markets, to finance, and to improved soil and water management. In Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, for example, 295,000 farmers are being trained in fertilizer micro-dosing, an efficient and sustainable way to improve the soil and the yield of food staples such as sorghum. At the same time, AGRA efforts have led to the release of three high-yielding sorghum varieties in Mali, and networks of village-based agro-dealers are reaching farmers throughout the area.

To evaluate such efforts and scale up an ever-growing number of successes, AGRA and NEPAD announced that they will co-convene a forum in 2010. It will bring together all partners to assess progress and determine the investments needed to strengthen the value chain and support smallholder farmers.

"As a supporter of AGRA and NEPAD, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development wholeheartedly endorses this partnership," said Douglas Alexander of DFID. "This type of collaboration should infuse development efforts. It is destined to greatly accelerate the achievement of Africa's Green Revolution, food security and prosperity for Africa."

### **About NEPAD-CAADP**

The African Union through its programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) works to raise the amount and quality of food that Africa produces, in order to make families more food-secure and exports more profitable. To do this, NEPAD brings together all the organisations involved in Africa's agriculture – and helps them voice their needs and co-ordinate their work. The framework guiding this work is CAADP, developed and led by African nations. Established as part of NEPAD, CAADP was endorsed by the African Union Assembly in July 2003. CAADP is led Prof. Richard Mkandawire, former Regional Director of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, Africa Centre (CYPAC) and a re-known development practitioner.

NEPAD works closely with the African Union Commission (AUC), regional economic communities, national governments, research institutions, farmers' associations to make sure that the pivotal role of agriculture in development is prioritised. In addition, many global

development partners who were looking for a champion for agricultural development have rallied around CAADP. For more information, go to: <http://www.nepad-caadp.net>

**About the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)**

*AGRA is a dynamic partnership working across the African continent to help millions of small-scale farmers and their families lift themselves out of poverty and hunger. AGRA programs develop practical solutions to significantly boost farm productivity and incomes for the poor while safeguarding the environment. AGRA advocates for policies that support its work across all key aspects of the African agricultural value chain from seeds, soil health and water to markets and agricultural education.*

*AGRA's Board of Directors is chaired by Kofi A Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Dr Namanga Ngongi, former Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme, is AGRA's president. With support from The Rockefeller Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK's Department for International Development and other donors, AGRA works across sub-Saharan Africa and maintains offices in Nairobi, Kenya, and Accra, Ghana. For more information, please visit: [www.agra-alliance.org](http://www.agra-alliance.org)*