

At lunchtime on Tuesday 3 June, Kofi Annan chaired the Private Sector Forum, which focused on fertilizer, feed and seeds. He was assisted by Deputy Director General Jim Butler.

The 1.5 hour meeting heard reports from the above-mentioned sectors as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The aim of all presenters was to briefly introduce their organizations and outline what they saw as constraints or factors leading to the current food price crisis and to outline suggestions on how the private sector might help mitigate prices in the short term and provide solutions to providing sufficient and affordable high-quality food over the medium to long terms.

The common threads from all three sectors plus the Gates Foundation included:

Encourage **public-private partnerships** that reduce food costs, as suggested by Kofi Annan and Jim Butler and supported by practical approaches from the three sectors.

- Innovative financing, credit facilities and insurance
- Smart subsidies such as vouchers for seeds, feed, fertilizers and other inputs
- Reducing fertilizer distribution costs through combined country purchasing and agricultural development corridors that focus on reducing inefficiencies throughout the distribution chain and tying farmers to output markets
- Higher prioritization of agricultural development and resource allocation by governments to fulfill their commitments on agricultural investment and to provide the conditions for private sector investment
- Improved infrastructure, with attention to appropriate storage facilities adapted to the particularities of seeds, feed and fertilizers
- Support the development of local industry associations and encourage their membership in global umbrella organizations
- **Reduce barriers to trade** – eliminate taxes on feed ingredients, fertilizers and foodstuffs and reduce administrative burdens
- **Education and capacity-building** – encourage students to pursue careers in agricultural sciences, and provide the resources to ensure their training and subsequent employment; provide training and capacity building to enable the adoption and implementation of global standards
- **Technology** – Provide adequate investment in research and the appropriate regulatory framework for agricultural technological developments, not excluding genetically modified organisms

The private sector appreciates the opportunity of participating in this high-level debate with government and other key stakeholders on this pressing issue of food security. We

**Marcel Bruins, International Seed Federation**

Speaking on behalf of the participants in the  
Private Sector Forum "Fertilizer, Feed and Seeds in World Food Security"

look forward to continuing the debate and, more importantly, putting in place concrete measures as outlined above.