

September 11, 2009

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On July 10, 2009 at the Italy G8 summit, the leaders of the richest eight countries in the world issued a joint statement pledging to contribute \$20 billion towards agricultural development and food security in the developing world over the next three years.<sup>1</sup> The United States championed what is now known as the “L’Aquila Food Security Initiative,” pledging \$3.5 billion, more than any other country. Japan and the European Union are each expected to contribute \$3 billion.<sup>2</sup> However, additional details about how and when the money will be allocated and spent are elusive.

Since the initial wave of news coverage declaring the pledge, little else has been announced. An interview with a senior fellow from the Council on Foreign Relations on August 12<sup>th</sup> highlighted the United States government’s lack of progress in fulfilling the pledge, saying, “it’s not clear if or when Congress will appropriate funding for the initiative, given all its other legislative priorities.”<sup>3</sup>

The only information on how the \$20 billion will be spent and whether any money will be allocated to agricultural research must then be inferred from the text of the statement itself, known as the L’Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security. Research is only mentioned twice in the document. It is initially mentioned in point eight, which asserts the importance of strengthening global and local governance for food security and confirms support of the “fundamental reform process currently underway in the FAO, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the global agricultural research system through the Global Forum on Agricultural Research.”<sup>4</sup>

The second time research is mentioned is in point ten. This section claims support for establishing country and regional agricultural strategies, especially those that focus on smallholder and female farmers. The section also emphasizes the importance of increased investment in and access to education, research, science and technologies in creating these strategies.<sup>5</sup> The remainder of the document discusses the importance of sustainable agriculture, food security, nutrition, and biodiversity, but does not cite specific agricultural research needed to achieve these goals. Therefore, little can be inferred on where potential research dollars would be invested.

Although there have been few developments since July, future progress may occur at the World Summit on Food Security, taking place in Rome, November 16-18, 2009. To start the discussions, Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the FAO, has sent a draft document to all FAO member countries’ governments with objectives and possible decisions to be made at the summit.<sup>6</sup> The

document picks up where the L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security left off, reemphasizing similar foci, but with key additions. The document encourages investment in biofuel research to avoid the food vs. fuel controversy in the future and sets more concrete hunger reduction and agricultural development goals.<sup>7</sup>

In conclusion, no declarations have been made to date on how much of the \$20 billion L'Aquila Food Security Initiative will go towards agricultural research and which types of research will be funded. Progress will likely come before and during the November World Summit on Food Security.

### **Searches Completed During Research**

- News.google.com: "Food Security Initiative," results since July 2009
- Google.com: "G8 Food Security Initiative" and "L'Aquila Food Security Initiative"
- Whitehouse.gov: "Food Security Initiative"
- FAO.org: "Food Security Initiative"

### **Endnotes**

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<sup>1</sup> Reuters. (2009, July 10). G8 summit pledges \$20 billion to boost food output. Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/pressReleasesMolt/idUSTRE56935X20090710>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Hanson, S. (2009, August 12). Obama's food security initiative in Africa. Interview with Laurie A. Garrett. Council on Foreign Relations Press. Available at [http://www.cfr.org/publication/20020/obamas\\_food\\_security\\_initiative.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/20020/obamas_food_security_initiative.html)

<sup>4</sup> G8 Heads of State. (2009, July 10). L'Aquila" joint statement on global food security: L'Aquila food security initiative (AFSI). Available at Official G8 Italian Website:

[http://www.g8italia2009.it/static/G8\\_Allegato/LAquila\\_Joint\\_Statement\\_on\\_Global\\_Food\\_Security%5B1%5D,0.pdf](http://www.g8italia2009.it/static/G8_Allegato/LAquila_Joint_Statement_on_Global_Food_Security%5B1%5D,0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> FAO. (2009, July 31). FAO initiates debate on declaration for World Summit on Food Security. Press Release. Available at <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/29219/icode/>

<sup>7</sup> FAO Secretariat. (2009, July 31). Secretariat contribution to defining the objectives and possible decisions of the World Summit on Food Security on 16, 17 and 18 November 2009. Available at

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/newsroom/docs/Secretariat\\_Contribution\\_for\\_Summit%20.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/Secretariat_Contribution_for_Summit%20.pdf)