

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed: 6am, 12 August 2024

GENUINE PARTNERSHIPS TO ACHIEVE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

It's time for a next-generation approach of genuine partnership to develop agricultural solutions to the interconnected climate, biodiversity loss, and health crises - not the traditional, unidirectional transfer of knowledge and skills. This will be the central message of the keynote presentation at the Crawford Fund's annual conference - Australia's key food security event.

Food and Nutrition Security: Transformative Partnerships, Local Leadership and Co-Design is to be held in the Great Hall, Parliament House, Canberra on 12-13 August, with over 300 experts, policymakers, researchers, students and leaders to hear from specialists from Asia, the Pacific, Africa and Australia.

"We gather at a critical juncture in our collective efforts to address the profound challenges that define our era: climate change, biodiversity loss and threats to human health," said **Dr Ismahane Elouafi**, Executive Managing Director of **CGIAR**, a global research partnership of 15 agricultural research centers working towards a climate-resilient world free from hunger and malnutrition.

In 2023, more than 1 in 4 people worldwide – 2.33 billion people – did not have regular access to adequate food, according to the FAO's 2024 State of Food and Nutrition Report. Conflict, climate change and economic instability are perpetuating the high levels of hunger and food insecurity created during the pandemic, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

"Historically, many efforts to bolster our overstretched global food system focused on a single aspect, but new crop varieties, technologies or incentives to increase yields are meaningless if there is no water to irrigate the soil, or if the infrastructure is not there to get the harvest to market."

"We recognize the need to shift away from a focus on single solutions developed by a single entity, which have increased productivity at the expense of other elements of food systems, ecosystems, and equity and climate goals."

"We should no longer employ the traditional, unidirectional transfer of knowledge and skills. It's time for a next-generation approach: mutual learning, co-creation, and sharing evidence, innovations, and technologies amongst partners."

"Collaboration can meet complex, intertwined challenges. The interdependent nature of these challenges necessitates comprehensive approaches – ones that cross partnerships and sectors.

CGIAR works with 3000 global partners to develop and deploy innovative strategies to adapt to and mitigate these challenges. We work in over 80 countries, with a staff of nearly 10,000 people across 15 research centers."

"Partnerships are pioneering the development of nutritious crop varieties with higher tolerance to climate variability. For example, our drought-resistant super beans are maturing 33% faster. And flood-tolerant rice has brought yield increases up to 1.2 tons per hectare. And we have distributed 200+ varieties of climate-smart maize across sub-Saharan Africa – with around 40% greater yields. Our work on livestock production shows that adopting improved farming practices and selecting breeds for lower emissions can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30%."

"Throughout my career, I've watched investment in agriculture in low-income countries decline. According to the Ceres 2030 report we need to double investment in agricultural research and innovation to end global hunger and malnutrition. This significant increase in funding is required to strengthen productivity, sustainability and resilience of global food systems, particularly for the Global South."

"So, as we navigate the complex landscape of agricultural research and innovation and the challenges it needs to meet, I call on all of us to invest, innovate and collaborate. Our collective success hinges on our ability to align our work – researchers, funding agencies, partner governments, and local communities. Together, we can ensure food, nutrition, and environmental security for generations to come," she concluded.

