



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AfricaFertilizer.org to increase agricultural productivity and knowledge across the African continent

March 3, 2010 – MUSCLE SHOALS, Ala., United States, and ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia – AfricaFertilizer.org, a global forum to disseminate and exchange information on fertilizers, soil fertility and the critical agricultural issues that face Africa, has been developed and launched by IFDC. IFDC is a public international organization addressing such critical issues as global food security, the alleviation of hunger and poverty, environmental protection and the promotion of economic development and self-sufficiency.

African Union (AU) Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Her Excellency Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, stated, “As an IFDC board member, I am pleased that the organization is providing much-needed agricultural information to the citizens of Africa and the world. As an AU commissioner, I believe that the use of AfricaFertilizer.org can help pull smallholder farmers out of poverty. The African Union’s objectives include eradicating poverty and placing Africa on a path to sustainable growth and development. Food security cannot be achieved without a collective effort to increase the agricultural productivity and technological knowledge of smallholder farmers.”

AfricaFertilizer.org features interactive maps of nutrient depletion, use and production in Africa, numerous publications available for download, market information crucial to agricultural intensification and relevant news. The website serves stakeholders in the movement to make Africa self-sufficient in food production. The stakeholders include farm organizations, researchers, policymakers, extension specialists, the agro-input industry, the private sector, donors and funding agencies and the media.

According to IFDC President and Chief Executive Officer Amit H. Roy, “The concept of AfricaFertilizer.org grew out of the Africa Fertilizer Summit. Providing such information will help initiate and fuel the African Green Revolution that smallholder farmers so desperately need and deserve.”

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The Africa Fertilizer Summit was convened by the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and implemented by IFDC. The Summit was held in Abuja, Nigeria, in June 2006. According to the *Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for an African Green Revolution*, "Africa's farmers face a variety of constraints including low productivity, limited access to new agricultural technologies and weak markets. Without adequate inputs, farmers often cannot meet the food needs of their own families, much less those of a rapidly growing population. To feed themselves and their countries, farmers will need to shift from low-yielding, extensive land practices to more intensive, higher-yielding practices, with increased use of improved seeds, fertilizers and irrigation."

The *Abuja Declaration* continued, "A move toward reducing hunger on the continent must begin by addressing its severely depleted soils. Due to decades of soil nutrient mining, Africa's soils have become the poorest in the world. It is estimated that the continent loses the equivalent of over \$4 billion worth of soil nutrients per year, severely eroding its ability to feed itself. Yet farmers have neither access to nor can they afford the fertilizers needed to add life to their soils. And no region of the world has been able to expand agricultural growth rates, and thus tackle hunger, without increasing fertilizer use."

Fertilizer use in Africa averages only eight kilograms per hectare, about 10 percent of the world average. According to the *Declaration*, "Addressing Africa's fertilizer crisis therefore requires urgent and bold actions. Given the strategic importance of fertilizer in achieving the African Green Revolution to end hunger, the African Union Member States resolve to increase the level of use of fertilizer from the current average of eight kilograms per hectare to an average of at least 50 kilograms per hectare by 2015."

IFDC is a non-profit, science-based organization meeting the integrated soil nutrient management needs associated with a sustainable global food supply. IFDC was established in 1974 in response to the twin crises of food insecurity and rising energy prices. These parallel crises threaten the world again. The Center's collaborative partnerships combine cutting-edge research and development with training and education, helping IFDC enrich and sustain the lives of people throughout the developing world.

The African Union is Africa's premier institution and principal organization for the promotion of accelerated socio-economic integration of the continent, which will lead to greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples.

The AU is based on the common vision of a united and strong Africa and on the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion amongst the peoples of Africa.

As a continental organization it focuses on the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent as a prerequisite for the implementation of the development and integration agenda of the Union.

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