

Press Release
May 3, 1995

*International
Policy
Council
on
Agriculture
Food
and
Trade*

"RESEARCH IS THE MOST PRECIOUS SEED CORN WE CAN PLANT"
SAID LORD PLUMB OF COLESHILL,
CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY
COUNCIL ON AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND TRADE (IPC).

LORD PLUMB MADE THE STATEMENT AT THE 15TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE IPC, HELD MAY 1 AND 2. THE CONFERENCE, WHICH FOCUSED ON MEETING THE WORLD'S FOOD NEEDS IN THE 21ST CENTURY, WAS HOSTED BY WINROCK INTERNATIONAL, A GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION BASED IN ARKANSAS. SOME 25 COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED AT THE CONFERENCE, WHICH INCLUDED FARM LEADERS, AGRIBUSINESS EXECUTIVES, RESEARCHERS, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

DR. ROBERT THOMPSON, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF WINROCK AND A MEMBER OF THE IPC ELABORATED: "THERE IS A CRISIS IN RESEARCH FUNDING AROUND THE WORLD. THE DROP IN FUNDING FOR RESEARCH IS PARTICULARLY TROUBLING SINCE THE RESEARCH WE FUND TODAY WILL DETERMINE WHETHER OTHERS HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT IN THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS."

WITH FOOD DEMAND SET TO DOUBLE BY 2025, INCREASING AGRICULTURAL YIELDS IS IMPERATIVE, AND SUSTAINED INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IS THE SUREST WAY TO INCREASE CROP YIELDS IN THE FUTURE.

RESEARCH TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL YIELDS IS ALSO CRITICAL TO PROTECTING THE WORLD'S ENVIRONMENT. WITHOUT YIELD INCREASES, FARMERS WILL BE FORCED TO EXPAND PRODUCTION ON FRAGILE LANDS THAT ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO EROSION AND SOIL DEGRADATION.

LIBERTY MHLANGA, GENERAL MANAGER, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, ZIMBABWE AND IPC MEMBER, CALLED ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMS FACING AFRICA. "AFRICA IS THE ONLY REGION OF THE WORLD WHERE PER CAPITA FOOD PRODUCTION HAS FALLEN OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS."

"SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES WILL NOT ENSURE THAT PEOPLE ARE FED," NOTED DEAN KLECKNER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION. "COUNTRIES MUST PURSUE SENSIBLE AGRICULTURAL POLICIES THAT ALLOW THEIR AGRICULTURAL SECTORS TO PROSPER AND COMPETE FOR WORLD DEMAND. COUNTRIES MUST ALLOW FREE TRADE TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ADDRESSING WORLD FOOD IMBALANCES."

THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY COUNCIL ON AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND TRADE WAS FOUNDED IN 1987 TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS FACING GLOBAL AGRICULTURE. ITS 32 MEMBERS HAIL FROM 22 COUNTRIES, AND REPRESENT FARMERS, AGRIBUSINESS, ACADEMICS AND POLICYMAKERS.