



THE CORPORATE COUNCIL ON AFRICA
U.S.-AFRICA AGRIBUSINESS FORUM
JUNE 25-27, 2008 · CHICAGO, IL

“INVESTING IN AGRICULTURE LINKS IN AFRICA”

PLENARY SESSIONS

Updated 05/19/08

Thursday, June 26, 2008

8:30 – 9:45a.m.

PLENARY 1. Commodity Exchanges – Shaping the Future of African Agribusiness

Agricultural commodity exchanges are essential requirements to realize investment returns from structured trade, to build value-chains, and to re-establish the profit motive for farmers and millers. Although commodity markets for coffee have long existed in Africa, recently several more broadly based commodity markets are emerging in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda. Regional trade associations, such as the East African Grains Council, bring a valuable opportunity for high-volume, improved market information platforms, and dynamic trading contracts. In West Africa, a commodity exchange based on the West Africa Monetary Union is gaining interest. The Commodity Department of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange continues to offer innovative products for all traders.

4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

PLENARY 2. Infrastructure Networks - New Investments to Build Markets

African leaders acknowledge that improving infrastructure is essential to stimulate business and investment. Many African countries are increasing investment in agriculture-friendly infrastructure such as roads, cold storage chains and cell phone transmitters. Technology and innovative cost recovery tools are included in infrastructure design to finance maintenance of the infrastructure for its intended use.

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PLENARY 3. Agribusiness – Anchoring African Markets

The importance of agricultural transformation increases as Africa’s 53 diverse economies take their place among emerging markets. Investors are noticing opportunities in the simultaneous creation of new financial and commodity markets. The African Union/NEPAD’S Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) places agriculture at the center of a coordinated strategy to catalyze economic growth throughout the continent. The combination of a more dynamic market infrastructure with an agricultural focused economic strategy can create new horizons for the over 70 percent of African households that are involved in agriculture as farmers and consumers. These changes also create significant opportunities for U.S. businesses to increase investment and trade with Africa.

12:00 – 2:00 p.m.

PLENARY 4. [Closing Lunch]: Financing – Developments and Challenges

The role of financial markets in translating ‘vision’ into ‘change’ is often overlooked, even though Africa’s financial markets are innovative and growing. Indicative of the solid links between open financial markets and economic growth in Africa are the seven stock markets dotting the continent, stable exchange rates, and the free flow of currencies fueling trade and investment. Several African banks are expanding their footprints sub-regionally and continent wide. However, additional measures are needed to integrate rural African agriculture into the emergent financial markets.

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