

World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development

The World Bank launched its World Development Report 2008 on 19 October in Washington DC

URL: www.worldbank.org/wdr2008 (Table of Contents pasted below)

Compilation of information by the UK Food Group

[Agriculture for Development](#)

"A reconsideration of agriculture's role in development has been long overdue. Developing country agriculture is caught up in the far-reaching changes brought by globalization, the advent of highly sophisticated and integrated supply chains, innovation in information technology and biosciences, and broad institutional changes -especially in the role of the state and in modes of governance and organization. This report seeks to assess where, when, and how agriculture can be an effective instrument for economic development, especially development that favors the poor. The report's website will contain the outline and various drafts, and information on consultations."

While the analysis of the problem is clear - neglect of agriculture, need for renewed investment, the prescription is mostly more of the same: the liberalisation of markets and (GM) technology push.

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2007/oct/17/food.comment. However, the report also

"recommends measures to achieve more sustainable production systems and outlines incentives to protect the environment".

web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21513382~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html

Three commentaries on the report are linked below: Action Aid, Institute for Agriculture and Trade policy (IATP) and Oxfam.

The launch follows the publication of a report by the Bank's own internal evaluation unit on the bank's performance in agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. go.worldbank.org/PPY96H0ES0

In an article in the International Herald Tribune, Professor Sachs called the evaluation "a blistering, devastating critique." Professor Easterly, a research economist at the bank for more than a decade... [said] "Here's your most important client, Africa, with its most important sector, agriculture, relevant to the most important goal - people feeding their families - and the bank has been caught with two decades of neglect."

www.iht.com/articles/2007/10/15/africa/15worldbank.php?page=1

Action Aid International

www.actionaid.org/main.aspx ?PageID=947

"Dangerous" World Bank Report

HungerFREE slams bank's first agriculture report for 25 years

The World Bank's World Development Report (WDR) on agriculture, was today rejected by ActionAid's

[HungerFREE campaign](#), as

"a dangerous document that will worsen not fix the crisis among the world's small farmers."

"Rather than recycle the Bank's past failures, radical new directions are needed...
...a shift to more socially-owned system of policy formulation, and a new model of agricultural policy guided by the objective of achieving the right to food. Under this vision, agricultural policy wouldn't be a plan unilaterally formulated and imposed from above, but the result of participation of farmers and consumers. Potential reforms would be assessed through a right to food lens (as defined in the UN Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food) according to whether they would strengthen or weaken local food systems, and enhance or undermine people's ability to claim their right to food or access productive resources."

IATP

www.ecofair-trade.org/pics/en/EcoFair_Trade_Paper_No_10_Murphy_Santarius.pdf

The World Bank's WDR 2008: Agriculture for Development - Response from a Slow Trade - Sound Farming Perspective

by Sophia Murphy and Tilman Santarius

"For the first time in 25 years, the World Bank's annual Development Report (WDR 2008) is dedicated to agriculture. The World Bank is not alone in producing a report on agriculture this year. This review of the WDR 2008 is written from the perspective of the EcoFair Trade Reform Proposal, looking for synergies and informed in its critique by the thinking of the panel and the perspectives gathered in the whole EcoFair Trade Dialogue."

OXFAM

What agenda now for agriculture? A response to the World Development Report 2008

[**Download a PDF file of the full paper \(146K\)**](#)

Introduction

"After two decades of indefensible neglect, agriculture is back on the agenda. The World Bank's publication of the "World Development Report 2008: Agriculture For Development" (hereafter WDR), the first WDR on agriculture since 1982, reflects this renewed interest in the sector's potential to reduce rural poverty and inequality.

The context is now vastly changed: as the Report outlines, agriculture faces new challenges, from natural resource degradation, and climate change to trade and market liberalisation, the rise of powerful new private actors and the development of new technologies. So what is the agenda now for agriculture?

This Briefing Note argues that the broad messages of the WDR 2008 are welcome. However, to tackle rural poverty effectively in this new context, policies for rural development will need to change, along with the conception of how different institutions will deliver those policies. In emphasising efficiency gains, the WDR fails both to grapple with new relations of power in the global marketplace and to ensure that equity (including gender equity) remains a core goal for policy-makers."

WDR 2008

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