

COMMENTARY

Comments at the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) Held at the UN Complex in Nairobi Kenya, September 5-9, 2016



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paltry 0.1% of patents world-wide?

Africa's agricultural transformation cannot be achieved with incremental efforts, doing the things that have been done before – technology transfer to small holders, gifts of seeds, livestock and machinery and inputs, and pilot projects. A transformation, a green revolution, and a climate-smart one at that, calls for innovation, new thinking, and approaches that can radically change things. It calls for innovation. But according to UNESCO report on Science in 2015, Africa lags the rest of the world. If Africa has 15 % of the world's population and produces somewhere around 6 or 7% of global GDP, why does it only represent 1.3% of the world's R&D investment, and a

To achieve a green revolution, Africa needs to invest in more scientists, including more women scientists, and in better quality science in a wide range of fields. There are good policies in place: under Agenda 2063 – science and innovation are recognized as foundations of economic growth. In 2007, African countries had committed to a target of public investment in R&D 1% of GDP. In 2013, you had reached about 0.45%. Just reaching that 1% at current estimates of Africa's GDP could represent an additional \$12 billion per year for research. This is significant, and can contribute to innovation if directed to help strengthen not only traditional agriculture fields and engineering, but also biotech, genomics, informatics, maths and social sciences like nutrition and public health, economics, marketing, business and sociology. These research investments can be leveraged with the nearly \$40 billion in pledges from donors and banks in the AGRF opening panel and from the private sector. Only with innovation will we transform Africa's agriculture into productive and value-adding sector of the economy, create jobs in the rural areas and achieve a healthy, food secure, prosperous and sustainable future for Africa's women, men and children.

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