

Global Goals on poverty and hunger require \$265 billion annually – UN conference told

26 January 2017 – The world must take urgent action to mobilise the estimated \$265 billion a year needed to achieve the first two Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty and hunger by 2030, the head of the United Nations agency for financing rural development projects has told an international conference.

“The need is urgent,” Kanayo F. Nwanze, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said at last night’s opening of a conference, titled “Investing in inclusive rural transformation: innovative approaches to financing,” held in Rome, Italy on 26-27 January.

“Despite decades of commitments and considerable effort to end poverty and hunger, nearly 800 million children, women and men still go hungry every day, and an almost equal number live in extreme poverty,” he added, stressing the need to be more creative in using public resources and mobilise financing.

He also emphasized the need to make it easier for the private sector and philanthropists to invest in rural areas, where rates of poverty and hunger are highest.

Speakers agreed it cannot be left up to governments alone. In 2015, Official Development Assistance (ODA) was approximately \$192 billion and only \$9 billion of that was earmarked for agriculture.

The conference comes at a critical time with political changes and humanitarian crises – such as war, migration and natural disasters – reshaping global priorities and potentially diverting money away from development.

The majority of these poor and hungry people live in rural areas of developing countries. Investments need to be targeted to transform rural areas into vibrant places that offer all people the opportunity to have decent jobs and lead dignified lives free of poverty and hunger.

Mr. Nwanze stressed that the financing needs for development are enormous, but so are the opportunities. “Agri-food is already a \$5 trillion sector, and it is growing,” he said. “It holds tremendous promise for the private sector and for producers in developing countries.”

Co-organised by IFAD, the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Brookings Institution and the University of Warwick, the conference brings together development agencies, governments, philanthropic organisations, the

private sector, academia and farmers' organisations to look at innovative ways to mobilise money and smarter ways to spend it.

IFAD invests in rural people, empowering them to reduce poverty, increase food security, improve nutrition and strengthen resilience. Since 1978, it has provided about \$18 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects that have reached some 462 million people.

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Starting in Builth Wells today, Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns and Minister for Wales, Guto Bebb will meet farmers, farming unions and other representatives from the agriculture sector to seek their views on powers returning from the EU.

In particular, the discussion is expected to focus on where decisions might, in future, be taken at a local level and the areas in which UK wide frameworks might be desirable.

Over the following weeks, Ministers will meet representatives from a range of sectors, including manufacturing and life sciences, in a number of locations across the whole of Wales. They will be seeking answers from these sectors to seven key questions:

1. What thinking have you done about these powers returning from the EU?
2. What do you think would work best for the people you represent?
3. Where do you think consistent standards or local variation may be required?
4. How best do we ensure day 1 legal certainty and continuity?
5. What opportunities do you think exiting the EU offers the people/industry you represent?
6. What should we do to make sure that we don't create barriers to living or doing business within the UK?
7. What common standards do we need to make sure that the UK can strike future trade deals that benefit the whole of the UK?

Speaking ahead of the first event, Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns, said:

I am determined to make sure that Wales is in the strongest possible position to benefit from Brexit and these events will help us to understand how the UK Government can deliver the best solution.

The people I plan to meet over the coming weeks are in the engine room, helping to keep the Welsh economy growing. By working together I am confident we can make the most of this unique opportunity to build a stronger, fairer Britain that works for everyone.

Steve Hughson, Chief Executive of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, said:

With a rapidly changing political and financial climate, it is essential that all areas of the agricultural industry come together and devise a way to make the most out of these changes.

It is fitting that the first of the UK Government's meetings takes place today here at the showground, the home of the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, which has become an important platform for such high profile consultations over the years.

Representing over 21,000 members from all agricultural and rural sectors and communities throughout Wales, the society will be contributing to these discussions and helping shape and influence the future of Welsh agriculture.

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5-year-old trains to walk on wires

5-year-old Zhang Wang trains to walk on wires in a series of 'Spartan' workout plans designed by his father. The plans include one-arm push-ups, rock climbing and Chinese Kung Fu cudgel.

The boy from southwest China's Sichuan Province has become an internet

celebrity in China.

His father, previously a migrant worker, has his son's best interests in mind, despite the training seeming quite arduous for such a young child. The father hopes that training his son like this will build his confidence and extend his range of interests.

His father sees safety as a top priority and always accompanies his son when training.

75% of Chinese to give out digital 'red envelopes'

More and more Chinese people have followed the fashion of giving out digital "red envelopes," cash gifts exchanged through a smartphone app, to friends and relatives while celebrating the Spring Festival, also known as Chinese lunar New Year.

A survey conducted by United Overseas Bank (UOB) showed that three quarters of Chinese people plan to give out their "red envelopes" through their smartphones during the Spring Festival holidays, China Youth Daily reported.

And the reason for the increasing popularity of the digital "red envelope" over the traditional ones is because of the freshness, fun and convenience it brings, the survey shows.

Lately, updates to Tencent's QQ and Alipay, two popular apps in China, have added to the fun people can experience while giving out and grabbing the digital "red envelope." With the introduction of Augmented Reality (AR) technology, grabbing the digital "red envelope" through these two apps will be similar to playing the game Pokemon Go.

In the meantime, another survey by Rong360, an online financing platform, has shown some worrying results. It said nearly 21 percent of the people surveyed said they used to be at odds with their friends or relatives because of digital "red envelopes." Nearly 20 percent of the people surveyed said that the atmosphere of New Year celebrations was affected with family members busily grabbing "red envelopes" through the phones.

The Rong360 survey also showed that 46 percent of those surveyed said they had given out "red envelopes" just to get people to praise or forward their postings on social media like WeChat or Weibo. But over 29 percent of people said that they will just ignore these digital "red envelopes".

The giving of red envelopes on occasions like Chinese New Year is a tradition among the Chinese people. Typically, older members of the family give the red

envelopes to the children in the family to celebrate lunar New Year.