

International

Developing agri-food businesses in the African continent



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World population is growing at a rate of 50 million per year. By 2050, there could be over 9 billion people on the planet.

At the same time, a World Bank report indicates that the middle classes (daily income of \$2 to \$20 dollars) will grow considerably in the future, from 1.8 billion in 2010 to nearly 5 billion people in 2030.

According to the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), agricultural production would have to increase by almost 60% to meet the needs of world population growth and changes in dietary habits.

How can this be achieved? There are only two possible ways: increasing the surface area of farmed land and increasing production yields. Allowing for global warming, and based on the estimate that two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas, the FAO anticipates an increase of just 4% in farmed land by 2050. A long way off feeding two billion extra human beings!

Increasing production yields therefore appears the best solution to meet these needs.

Given the uncertainties associated with economic growth, the potential of non-farmed arable land, the impact of climate change on surface areas and yields, the reappraisal of production methods, demand for animal products and our ability to reduce losses and waste, every opportunity to increase and improve production must be seized, from North to South.

The stakes for Africa are particularly high, with a population expected to exceed one billion by 2025, a middle class on track to increase from 375 million people in 2013 to more than 500 million by 2030, and a high rate of urbanisation, with 65 cities of more than one million inhabitants.

Unigrains has been supporting Fert's actions for almost 20 years. This French agri-agency was founded in 1981 by the heads of professional grain organisations who felt that assistance with agricultural development in countries with large rural populations was urgently required, particularly in Africa, by fostering dialogue between farmers and helping them organise their own approach as part of an open, diverse and environmentally-friendly agricultural industry. The idea is not to propose a model, but to allow producers to decide what they want to do and how they want to do it. It is essential that these farmers earn a living from their work, are able to support their families and contribute to feeding their country.

These are the conditions on which large-scale agri-food businesses will emerge on the African continent.

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