

**AL-SUMAIT PRIZE**  
FOR AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT



# Al-Sumait White Paper Food Security In Africa May 2016 #2

This White Paper examines the complex food security challenges faced across Africa in order to encourage better understanding and solutions of the problem.

It is the second in a series produced in conjunction with Al-Sumait Prize, an annual award by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) for the advancement of economic, social, human resources, and infrastructure development in the African continent.



مؤسسة الكويت للتقدم العلمي  
Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences



# The Food Security Challenge Confronting Africa

**Africa is the world's second largest continent, home to nearly 1.2 billion men, women and children living in 53 countries.** According to the United Nations, Africa's population will practically double by 2050, a pace of growth that many analysts believe will exacerbate agricultural productivity and livelihood challenges on a continent where millions still battle poverty, hunger, poor education and ill health.

Eighteen out of the 20 countries with the world's highest total fertility are located in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Not all the news is negative, however. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) noted in a 2015 report that '... Africa Region has been experiencing a major structural transformation, witnessing significant demographic, economic and political changes', which it said has contributed to sustained economic growth leading to substantial improvements in the livelihoods and welfare of millions of Africans.

**“Africa has been experiencing a major structural transformation, witnessing significant demographic, economic and political changes.”**

Farmers around the globe are no stranger to damaging weather, pests and diseases. But African farmers face numerous other hurdles. For example, around 80 percent of Africa's farmers cultivate less than two hectares, a smallholding culture that allows little economy of scale.

According to FAO, fertilizer in some African countries can cost up to 10 times more than in other developing nations, which is a major issue as a large proportion of soil in Africa is considered low quality. Around 55 percent of the land in Africa is unsuitable for any kind of agriculture except nomadic grazing, a US Department of Agriculture study concluded. (Eswaran, et al., 1997) And the scarcity of water for irrigation adds to the list of serious food insecurity problems in many countries.



## Why is food security a challenge for Africa?

The World Economic Forum (WEF) says the food security challenge in Africa, or anywhere else on our planet, for that matter, is a straightforward need to feed a fast escalating demand for food. But although everyone needs food, addressing the problem of delivering it demands tackling issues, from ageing demographics, skills development and global warming to enhancing agricultural productivity with efficient business models and addressing greenhouse gas emissions, water use and waste. In other words, says the WEF, it's not 'just about food and feeding people but also about practically all aspects of an economy and society'.

### The food security threat

Drought and other extreme weather, pests and livestock diseases, climate change, political instability and corruption, cash crop dependence, lack of an agricultural infrastructure, AIDS, military unrest and rapid population growth all contribute to Africa's food security challenge.

The UN's World Food Program (WFP) says ongoing conflict in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo has contributed significantly to the level of hunger in the two countries. By comparison, the organization notes, hunger is on the retreat in more peaceful parts of Africa such as Ghana and Rwanda.

FAO says food availability in the 40 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa has increased by nearly 12 percent over the past two decades. It reports the prevalence of undernourishment in Sub-Saharan Africa declined from 33 percent to 23 percent between 1990-92 and 2014-16. However, the total number of undernourished people continues to increase with an estimated 217.8 million in 2014-16 compared to 175.7 million in 1990-92.



**The World Economic Forum (WEF) has detailed what it sees as the five core reasons behind food insecurity in Africa and elsewhere:**

**1. Population growth** – this varies considerably across countries. Africa is expected to double its population from 1 to 2 billion by 2050. Populations in the developing world are also becoming increasingly urbanized, with 2.5 billion additional urban residents projected in Africa and Asia.

**2. Changing tastes** – not only is the population growing, but its diet is changing too. As people become more affluent they start eating food that is richer in processed foods, meat and dairy. But to produce more meat means growing more grain.

**3. Climate change** – currently, 40% of the world's landmass is arid, and rising temperatures will turn yet more of it into desert. At current rates, the amount of food we're growing today will feed only half of the population by 2050.

**4. Water scarcity** – this is another impending crisis: 28% of agriculture lies in water-stressed regions. It takes roughly 1,500 litres of water to produce a kilogram of wheat, and about 16,000 litres to produce a kilogram of beef. In 2050, we'll need twice as much water.

**5. Troubled farmers** – in developed countries, less than 2% of people grow crops or breed animals for food. Fewer and fewer people are choosing farming as an occupation. Meanwhile, food prices are rising, arable land continues to be lost to sprawl and soil is being degraded by over-farming.

**“food availability in Sub-Saharan Africa has increased by nearly 12 percent over the past two decades... however, the total number of undernourished people continues to increase”**



## Paths to security success

FAO believes Africa's success in achieving food and nutrition goals depends on several key national and regional drivers – effectiveness of political leadership and governance, the quality of the policies and strategies in the food and agricultural sector, the soundness of the macro-economic environment, the inclusiveness of economic growth, and the degree of economic integration or interconnectedness, among others.

Achieving the above demands an inclusive commitment to accelerating sustainable agricultural growth, promoting structural transformation, fostering public private partnerships to speed increased productivity and job creation and enhancing trade and regional integration, according to FAO.

### Leading by example

In its 2015 report entitled 'Regional View of Food Insecurity - Africa', FAO spotlighted a number of national and regional initiatives designed to eradicate hunger and ensure food and nutrition security. It noted how the Ghana has partnered with the private sector and civil society in implementing and reviewing policies and programs to develop the agricultural sector, which has helped rehabilitate the country's rubber plantations, to increase production of palm oil and cocoa, and for developing new supply chains for sorghum and the *Allanblackia* (tallow tree) industry.

Other examples include Kenya where agribusiness PPPs have been involved in the provision of inputs, value-addition through agro-processing, technology transfer through commercialization, contracting and warehousing, and Nigeria, where the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) has changed the role of government from direct procurement and distribution of fertilizer to a facilitator of procurement, regulator of fertilizer quality and catalyst of active private sector participation in the fertilizer value chain.



## ABOUT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF)

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Established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation, the Geneva, Switzerland, based WEF is committed to improving the state of the world by engaging the foremost political, business and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas. It is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests. The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance. Moral and intellectual integrity is at the heart of everything it does. WEF believe that progress happens by bringing together people from all walks of life who have the drive and the influence to make positive change.

## WHY WE NEED TO IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY AND SORT OUT HUNGER

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FIVE KEY FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM:

- *Some 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life. That's about one in nine people on earth.*
- *Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest prevalence (percentage of population) of hunger. One person in four there is undernourished.*
- *66 million primary school-age children attend classes hungry across the developing world, with 23 million in Africa alone. Poor nutrition causes nearly half (45%) of deaths in children under five - 3.1 million children each year.*
- *WFP calculates that US\$3.2 billion is needed per year to reach all 66 million hungry school-age children.*



## A Prize For Health In Africa

**Today there is a new force in the drive to improve food security in Africa – a powerful initiative conceived by the Amir of the State of Kuwait, H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.**

Launched in December 2015, the **Al-Sumait Prize** will be awarded annually to the best international research or development initiative that is deemed to contribute significantly to solve major development challenges facing African nations, in particular the least developing countries in the fields of Food Security, Health and Education.

The prize has been named after Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Sumait, a Kuwaiti physician who devoted his life towards helping the poor in Africa in the field of health and education, the first prize to be awarded will be in the field of Health. Al-Sumait Prize will encompass a sum of one million US dollars, a gold medal, a plaque and a certificate of recognition, to be awarded annually to individuals or institutions who have made significant advancements in addressing major challenges in the selected field for that year.

The A-Sumait Board of Trustees is composed of prominent international personalities in the field of development in Africa and world renowned philanthropists. The Board is chaired by H.E. Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait and Chairperson of the Abdulrahman Al-Sumait Prize.

Other board members include Mr. Abdulatif Al-Hamad , Director General and Chairman of Board of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Mr. Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, Former President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Kwaku Aning, Former Deputy Director General and Head of the Department of Technical Cooperation, International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Tareq Al-Mutawa , Executive Member of the Board of Public Gathering Charity Committee and Director General and Chairman of Board of Sadeer Company for Trading and Contracting, and Dr. Adnan Shihab-Eldin, Director General of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.



**“Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Sumait, a Kuwaiti physician who devoted his life towards helping the poor in Africa in the fields of health and education.**

For more information, please visit [www.alsumaitprize.org](http://www.alsumaitprize.org)



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The Al-Sumait Prize is managed by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS).

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