

## Smallholder Farmers Hold Solutions to Global Food Crisis

16 September 2008 - As governments converge in New York to discuss 'Africa's Development Needs' and how to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), smallholder farmers from Africa will be there as well to make the case that they hold the solution to the global food crisis.

Since 2005, a number of agricultural commodity prices have sharply risen, culminating in a 23 percent increase (in US dollar terms) in the FAO Food Price Index from 2006 to 2007. Escalating food prices have already led to food-related protests and riots in many countries, including several in Africa, as the number of people left hungry has increased. This complicates the achievement of internationally agreed goals on hunger reduction, including MDG 1 which calls for the proportion of people who suffer from hunger to be halved between 1990 and 2015.

**Ndiogou Fall** and **Elisabeth Atangana** are two representatives of African farmers movements who will be participating in events at the UN during the week of 22 September. They are coming to the UN not only to speak out against the policies which have led to the current food crisis, but also to suggest what it would take to turn the food crisis to an advantage.

Indeed, the *2008 World Development Report* notes that in sub-Saharan Africa 470 million people are located in rural areas, agriculture employs 65 percent of the labour force and the sector drives 32 percent of GDP growth. Agricultural growth has been found to be four times more effective in reducing poverty than growth in other sectors. Consequently, the implementation and scaling-up of initiatives to support improved agricultural productivity, particularly amongst smallholder farmers will be critical to speeding growth, increasing incomes and improving the lives of the continent's people.

With the assistance of the international community, rural producers who are the prime victims of the present crisis can become the prime actors of its solution.

**Mr. Ndiogou Fall** (Senegal), President, Network of Peasant and Agricultural Producer Organizations of West Africa (ROPPA)

**For interviews in NY:** Flore-Anne Bourgeois - Mobile: 347.845.3485 / Office: 212.963.0152

**Web:** <http://www.roppa.info>

Ndiogou Fall is President of the Executive Committee of ROPPA, the main umbrella group for peasant farmers in West Africa. ROPPA gathers organizations from 10 different countries in the region representing more than 40 millions peasants. The organization focuses on capacity building and advocacy work at the local, regional and international levels.

*Mr. Fall has been invited by the UN Secretary-General to speak at the Roundtable on Poverty and Hunger at the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals on 25 September and is available for interviews in French or English (translated).*

**Ms. Elisabeth Atangana** (Cameroon) President, Sub-regional Platform of Peasant Organizations of Central Africa (PROPAC)

**For interviews in NY:** Flore-Anne Bourgeois - Mobile: 347.845.3485 / Office: 212.963.0152

For many years, Ms. Atangana has been active in the development of the farmers movement in Central Africa and in the African continent. She has founded various women associations and rural organizations. She has also supported various sustainable rural development programs and participated in the creation of a training center specialized in agriculture.

*Ms. Atangana will be a panelist at an event on 22 September from 3-5:30pm in Conference Room 2 which also features the President of Malawi, the UN Secretary-General, Jeffrey Sachs and the FAO Director-General, Jacques Diouf. FAO is also supporting her travel to New York. She is available for interviews in French or English (translated).*