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Humboldt Forum for Food and Agriculture: The World Faces Dire Food Shortages

Berlin (ots) -

- Problem Likely to Expand to Developed Countries
- Agricultural Productivity Growth Declining
- Governments and Businesses Need to Urgently Invest in Agriculture

In response to the threat of global malnutrition and food insecurity, the recently established Humboldt Forum for Food and Agriculture has urged the immediate adoption of a five-point plan of action, entitled "Food First".

According to the Forum, annual agricultural productivity growth has fallen since the 1960s from around four per cent to about one per cent today, due largely to an ongoing decline in agricultural research investment. Meanwhile, the Forum predicts that the price of food will continue to increase; the world's population and per capita food consumption will continue to grow, while land, water and other resources as well as the impact of global warming will increasingly constrain growth in global food production. One of the main forces of food prices are the prices for energy. Therefore, high prices for fossil fuel and other sources of energy will have a direct impact on food prices.

Stressing the need for immediate action, the Forum warned that the world's political and business leaders must return to the basics and invest in agricultural innovation as a key priority, particularly during the current global economic crisis. Otherwise, the world faces an even more uncertain future with food shortages likely to worsen and expand to the developed world, leading to increased inflation, political and economic instability as well as social unrest.

Key recommendations include the establishment of an A25 - an International Monitoring Board; the return of global agricultural innovation to the political agenda; a renewed commitment to invest in agriculture of developing countries; the creation of new funding and the reallocation of existing resources; and an acknowledgement that food and bio-energy can co-exist.

About HFFA The Humboldt Forum for Food and Agriculture is a leading think tank in global agriculture that brings together a unique mix of internationally recognised thinkers from science, civil society and industry. Its goal is to develop scientifically based policy recommendations for the future of global food and agriculture. For further information, please contact: www.humboldtforum.org

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