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Aid Agencies Join to Improve Effectiveness in Poor Countries

Latest collaboration aimed at boosting agricultural sectors



The World Food Programme's Josette Sheeran, with John Danilovich, head of the MCC, holds a cup from a school feeding program.

By Kathryn McConnell
Staff Writer

Washington — Poor countries receiving grants from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) will be able to get more impact from that aid under new agreements between MCC and other major aid agencies.

“We are enhancing our efforts by partnering with organizations that share our core belief that generating sustainable prosperity, development and growth can improve the lives of the poor,” MCC Chief Executive Officer John Danilovich wrote in a blog posted on MCC's Web site.

MCC's most recent agreement was with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). Danilovich and Josette Sheeran, WFP executive director, December 5 agreed that the two aid agencies would coordinate funding to stabilize domestic agricultural supplies and local markets in poor countries.

One potential area of collaboration will be linking MCC's funding for agricultural development with WFP's Purchase for Progress program, in which the agency buys locally produced food from small farmers for distribution as food aid.

By providing a reliable market for smallholder farmers, cooperatives and small traders, WFP wants to increase producers' incomes and give them a strong incentive to invest and increase production, the agency says.

Purchasing from small producers also can stimulate local economies, a principal MCC objective, Danilovich told *America.gov*.

The partnership with MCC provides a new opportunity for WFP to link its humanitarian assistance with long-term solutions to hunger, Sheeran said when signing the agreement at MCC headquarters in Washington.

Danilovich and Sheeran also agreed to share ideas so they can be more effective in assisting host countries to reform their poverty reduction and food security policies to reflect best practices in achieving gender equality, according to MCC.



Women sort cowpeas at a farm cooperative in Mozambique that made a sale of the product to the World Food Programme.

MCC investments in developing robust agricultural sectors aim to give rural families and businesses the capacity to provide for themselves and their communities today and to acquire greater capacity to face potential food crises in the future.

More productive agricultural sectors also will help ensure that the increasing number of people moving to urban areas have access to affordable, safe food, MCC says.

Also collaborating with MCC and WFP is the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), an international nonprofit established in

2006 with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In June, AGRA's head, former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and Danilovich agreed to join to help African countries tackle poverty and hunger through sustainable improvements in the productivity and incomes of small-scale farmers and poor rural households.

The partnership approach between AGRA, WFP and MCC “prevents duplication of efforts, enhances the impact of each project activity and helps our partners attract investments in long-term growth,” Danilovich wrote in his blog.

In November, MCC and the Agence Française de Development agreed to coordinate to make poverty reduction more effective in the developing world, beginning in African countries where both agencies are engaged — Burkina Faso, Benin, Morocco, Mali, Madagascar and Senegal. Agence Française de Development is France's finance agency focused on international development.

In October, MCC signed an agreement with Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to increase coordination in countries in which both work — including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Tanzania. The agencies will work to identify opportunities for private sector investment, especially in agribusiness, and in using microfinance to prepare for projects devoted to the climate and environment.

In February, MCC and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development agreed to increase on-the-ground cooperation in partner countries including Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia in education, water and sanitation, transportation and governance, especially related to transparency and anti-corruption.

Since 2004, MCC has obligated nearly \$6.3 billion in grants to 18 countries receiving MCC multiyear anti-poverty grants.

Press releases announcing MCC's agreements with [WFP](#), the [Agence Française de Development](#), [Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), [AGRA](#) and the [United Kingdom's Department for International Development](#) are on the agency's Web site.