School feeding’s role in supporting agricultural development and educational achievement is to be the central topic of an address by H.E. Ogbeni Rauf Argebesola, Governor of Osun State, Nigeria, leading experts and British parliamentarians at a special event in the UK’s House of Commons on Wednesday 22nd January.

The Governor has been invited by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Agriculture and Food for Development and the Partnership for Child Development (PCD) Imperial College London, to speak at a meeting attended by development experts focusing on the evolution and improvement of government-led Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programmes in low and middle income countries which feed school children using food grown locally by smallholder farmers.

These programmes have the potential to bring countries closer to the UN Millennium Development Goals of halving poverty and hunger, and ensuring universal primary education by 2015. Appropriately designed school feeding programmes have been shown to increase access to education and learning, and improve children’s health and nutrition, especially when integrated into comprehensive school health and nutrition programmes. At the same time, programmes which source their produce locally provide a regular and reliable income for smallholder farmers.

Osun State is itself at the vanguard of the HGSF movement with its O’Meals school feeding programme feeding over 240,000 children from over 1328 government run schools. The O’Meals programme has proved to be a ‘win-win’ for children and farmers alike; with primary
school enrolment increasing by 24% since the inception of providing free school meals, whilst at the same time securing farmer livelihoods and access to markets. The O'Meals programme also encompasses wider school health and nutrition initiatives including hygiene promotion and deworming children for common worm infections which have negative impacts on their development and learning abilities.

Speaking about the success of the school feeding programme Governor Aregbesola said, "That well fed and healthy pupils are learning under an encouraging environment in order to secure a great future for themselves and the country, stands as one of the greatest achievements of our administration."

Lord Cameron of Dillington who will be chairing the event said, “I invite all those working for equitable agricultural development as well as for universal quality education to learn about a successful programme in Nigeria that is helping to ensure progress on both fronts.”

The meeting will also see speeches by: Lead Health and Education Specialist at The World Bank, Professor Donald Bundy; Chief of School Feeding and Chronic Hunger at the World Food Programme Food, Mr. Peter Rodrigues; Senior Food & Nutrition Security Advisor at The New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), Ms. Boitshepo Bibi Giyose and Senior HGSF Technical Advisor at PCD, Imperial College London Professor Josephine Kiamba.

PCD, which launched its six year HGSF initiative in 2009, supports government action to deliver high quality, cost effective school feeding programmes sourced from local farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

The APPG on Agriculture and Food for Development regularly holds meetings in the UK Parliament to explore and stimulate discussions on contemporary issues. Next week’s dialogue offers the opportunity for parliamentarians, civil servants, academics and other representatives of civil society to hear and discuss ways in which HGSF is working to reduce poverty, improve education and ensure food security within and across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

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Notes to Editors

The Parliamentary meeting ‘The Evolution of Home Grown School Feeding' will take place on Wednesday 22nd January 2014 from 2 – 3.30pm in Committee Room 16 of the House of Commons.

The Partnership for Child Development (PCD) is a global consortium of civil society organizations, academic institutions and technical experts, with a Coordinating Centre based within the Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Imperial College London. Since the creation of PCD in 1992, it has been at the forefront of harmonizing multi-sectoral efforts to enable low-income countries to implement effective, scaled, and sustainable school health and nutrition programmes. PCD currently works with over 50 countries and over 100 development partners at international, regional, sub-regional and country levels. www.child-development.org

Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) is highlighted in the New Partnership for Africa’s Development’s (NEPAD) vision for nationally owned, sustainable programmes aimed at improving the food security of smallholder farmers, many of whom are women. They are guiding governments to include HGSF as a key intervention within the food security pillar of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) framework. www.hgsf-global.org

The All Parliamentary Panel Group (APPG) on Agriculture & Food for Development was established by parliamentarians in October 2008 in response to growing concerns over the heightening food crisis and a steady decline in the funding of agricultural research for international development at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

H.E. Engr. Rauf Aregbesola is an engineer and political activist who, between 1999 and 2007, led the infrastructural transformation of Lagos, one of the world’s largest megacities. As Governor of Osun, he has focused on strengthening the State in the areas of economic
development, agriculture, youth employment, healthy living, education, and peace and security.

Professor Donald Bundy is the Lead Health and Education Specialist for the Africa Region at The World Bank. He is also a Visiting Professor at the School of Public Health, Imperial College London. Before joining The World Bank, he was a Professor of Epidemiology at Oxford University. Since 1978, he has worked in the field of international child health and founded PCD in 1992.

Ms. Boitshepo Bibi Giyose is the Senior Food & Nutrition Security Advisor at NEPAD’s Planning and Coordinating Agency, an organ of the African Union. Her main focus is on integrating nutrition at policy and programme level into agriculture and other development agendas. She holds an MSc in International Nutrition from Cornell University, New York, and a BSc in Nutrition and Dietetics from Appalachian State University, North Carolina, USA.

Mr Peter Rodrigues is the Chief of the School Feeding and Chronic Hunger Unit at the World Food Programme. An Economist with a degree from Rajasthan University, Jaipur, India, he has been working in the humanitarian field since 1988. He worked for 14 years in Southern Africa and has been deployed in major emergencies in Myanmar, Gaza, Haiti and in the Horn of Africa. At WFP Headquarters, he was the Senior Advisor to the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer for five years before assuming his current role.

Useful links

- H.E. Rauf Agregbesola to Address UK Parliamentarians on HGSF in Nigeria
- Global Handwashing Day in Osun State, Nigeria
- PCD takes part in West African Exchange to Advance HGSF Programmes in Ghana and Nigeria

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For further media information please contact Francis Peel at the Partnership for Child Development, Imperial College London on 020 7594 3292 or email &nbsp; f.peel@imperial.ac.uk
Governor of Osun State to address UK parliament on the importance of HGSF in Nigeria

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