

organisations to guarantee an equal power relationship between the private sector and farmers.

Joe Cerell, Director of the Bill Gates Foundation in Europe, maintained that sustainable value-added chains are important to break the vicious circle of poverty and social marginalisation. Summing up the debate in her closing word, GIZ Management

Board Chair Tanja Gönner stressed the aspects of trust, cooperation and knowledge transfer. Gönner pledged that the European development partners would “make their contribution to ensuring that the synergy effects of cooperation between government, the private sector and smallholders really come to bear. And they will see to it that smallholders can also benefit from

new, innovative approaches, such as agricultural insurance.”

*Jörg Freiberg, GIZ, Eschborn, Germany*

For more information on the event and the video live-stream, see [www.smallfarmersbigbusiness.org](http://www.smallfarmersbigbusiness.org)

## “Socio-economic benefits must reach poor producers and workers”

Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Secretary General of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, on preconditions for sustainable agricultural development and the role of the private sector.

■ **Mr Chambas, the international community increasingly recognises the need for continued and targeted assistance towards agriculture and development in sub-Saharan Africa. Representing the 79 countries in the African-Caribbean-Pacific region, what is your position on this issue?**

At the Global Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change in Hanoi last September, participants concluded that food security is and will remain a critical issue for the global community. By 2050, we will have an estimated world population of nine billion; to feed all these people, and to meet the growth in per capita consumption, we must increase global food production by a staggering 70 per cent. We are at a crossroads; as a global community, as a donor community, and as individual governments, and we have important decisions to make.

■ **G8 nations see investment in agriculture as a key route to economic growth, and African agriculture is operating in a progressively more global economy ...**

Discussions at the G8 recognised that development requires not only aid, but also the promotion of economic growth, and highlighted the pivotal role

played by agricultural development. Together the G8 countries made a pledge to encourage investment in agriculture as a central route towards poverty alleviation. They also highlighted the role of the private sector – from multinationals to smallholder growers – as key drivers for development.

■ **How do you judge the potential of private sector investment?**

There is a huge potential if it's based on principles of sustainability, provide essential technical assistance, and ensure that socio-economic benefits reach poor producers and workers.

■ **The topic under discussion – engaging the private sector in sustainable agricultural development – addressed some of the key issues during the European Development Days. As Keynote Speaker, you opened the high-level panel “Small farmers – big business?” How do you consider such an initiative in the debate?**

The scenario we face today is challenging. The potential to further increase the cultivated acreage is relatively small. Furthermore, over the past century, the “green revolution”, which was so dramatic in its potential, did not benefit everyone. We therefore



Photo: V. Duteigne

*Mohamed Ibn Chambas*

have a new policy environment, with an increased emphasis on agriculture, and with development programmes designed around donors and governments working hand-in-hand with the private sector. In the case of small-scale growers, and small and medium-sized companies, they need support to capture the benefits and take advantage of innovations. They otherwise face growing disadvantages – with particular challenges facing women. In the spirit of this new policy environment, the panel “Small farmers – big business?” has brought a broad representation of players to address the critical theme of how best to involve the private sector while maintaining clear agricultural development and poverty alleviation objectives.

The high-level panel has been a very positive example of collaboration where individual institutes and organisations have worked together and put aside their individual perspectives and views, to address a common theme, remaining focused on the target: food security and poverty alleviation, with small-scale farming and sustainable production methods at the forefront.