

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My Dear Friends and Colleagues:

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I bring you this issue of the *JSDA*. One of the most pivotal aspects of the sustainability of societies is the ability for them to sustain themselves through agricultural production. Staple food production for local consumption is tremendously important while cash crop production is significant for the international market. The majority of the papers in this issue focused on matters pertaining to agriculture. There is no question that agricultural production is imperative to Africa's development. Many of the countries of Africa have adopted the plan for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include focusing on agricultural production in order to reduce poverty on the continent. It is precisely because as much as 67% of Africa's labor force is employed by agriculture and because about 33% of the gross domestic product of the continent is accounted for by agriculture that the governmental and non-governmental sectors are heavily engaged in agricultural production on the continent.



The growth in agricultural production has not kept pace with the exponential increase in human population. It is because African farm yields are very low that emphasis must be placed on improving research and development of the agriculture sector. African universities and research entities must help in research and development. The papers in this issue shed some light on the sustainability of agricultural production and key areas where government and private sectors must focus. Such areas include: agricultural markets and improving agricultural productivity, investment in infrastructure which will enhance agricultural growth, rural agricultural production, and capacity building. Some of the papers address policy matters which are germane to the efforts to improve agricultural production. The empowerment of agricultural communities through government and private efforts is central to the efforts of fighting hunger and alleviating poverty on the continent. Extension services at universities continue to provide cutting edge research which is necessary to improve agriculture in Africa. Some of the papers in

this issue address important matters confronting local communities, households, and regions across Africa. Partnerships for agricultural supply chains, community land management and research are helping to increase the growth in agriculture and it is quite refreshing to see matters related to partnerships in agricultural production addressed in this issue.

Overall, it is clear from the papers in this issue that agriculture plays an important role in the sustainable development of African countries. African countries are increasing their leadership roles in the investment in agricultural development. Efforts to combat hunger and poverty are increasing across the continent and finally agricultural techniques and policies are improving in Africa.

We thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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