

President Kikwete: Innovative Partnerships Are Essential for Development Success

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- “ Partnerships are desirable and necessary and have worked well for Tanzania, ” said President Kikwete
- Innovative partnerships in agriculture are increasing the productivity of the sector across Africa
- For partnerships to be sustainable, there must be trust, which takes time to build
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Cape Town, South Africa – Innovative partnerships are essential to the success of African development, said business, government and civil society leaders in a plenary session on the second day of the World Economic Forum on Africa. “ Partnerships are desirable and necessary and have worked well for us, ” Tanzanian President Jakaya M. Kikwete told participants.

Kikwete described how his government has worked with farmers, local and international business, donor partners and civil society groups to develop the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a public-private initiative to drive growth and productivity in Tanzania ’ s breadbasket region. A SAGCOT Centre has been established and a Catalytic Fund will be launched in a few months. He also noted that his government is collaborating with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) chaired by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. “ The innovative partnerships that we have created address one particular problem we face – how to transform Tanzanian agriculture, which is predominantly subsistence and marked by low productivity. ” Added Annan: “ Our vision is not just to help farmers to feed themselves but also to feed the markets so Africa can become part of the global food security system. This is not a pipe dream. ”

Governments cannot do everything, Annan argued. “ That mindset has to change. ” Partnerships offer a way to different players with differing skills and resources to join together and create a venture that is greater in value than the sum of the parts. “ We in the private sector live with partnerships, ” explained Strive Masiyiwa, Group Executive Chairman of Econet Wireless Group. “ Anyone trying to build a global business knows you cannot do anything without a sincere approach to partnership. ”

Sustainable businesses regard the communities in which they operate as partners, Godfrey G. Gomwe, Executive Director of Anglo American South Africa, stressed. “ We look at ourselves as partners of development with host governments. ” For some governments, partnering with business is hard enough; joining together with civil society requires a major leap of faith, said Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Chief Executive Officer and Head of Mission, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). “ This is a sector that is not incorporated in formal structures, ” she explained.

According to Mark Suzman, Director, Policy and Advocacy, Global Development, at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, there are three keys to successful partnerships: clear definition of the roles of each partner, understanding that joining together offers clear mutual benefit and the willingness to be flexible. “ Very few partnerships work seamlessly from the start, ” Suzman noted. “ The difficulty is doing the upfront mapping [to determine if] the partnership will really add value and be self sustaining. ” Reckoned Annan: “ For partnerships and relationships to work and be sustainable, there has to be social trust. Otherwise, some groups will not get into partnerships, or if they do, they will not last. ” Building that trust, however, takes time, warned Rajiv J. Shah, Administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and a Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum on Africa. “ It takes a lot of time working together. ”

To African business, government and civil society leaders considering partnerships, Masiyiwa offered this advice: “ You must first know your partner. If you want to go into a partnership, start building them among yourselves as Africans. Know the terrain. Go travel. Africans often don ’ t know Africa. ”

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