**Former President of the African Development Bank Babacar Ndiaye to lead Investment Day at this year’s AgriBusiness Forum.**

*African expert calls on everyone involved in agriculture to step up to the fore for the sake of the entire continent’s development and in the fight against poverty.*

12th November 2012, Brussels, Belgium

With the AgriBusiness Forum 2012 just around the corner, **Babacar Ndiaye, former President of the African Development Bank** and **founder of the African Business Roundtable (ABR),** outlines his demands towards the African and international community to act and establish basic and fundamental financial policies to create real change, after years of debates and establishing potential visions and objectives.

“Africa’s agricultural potential cannot induce people into a self-righteous optimism, but should instead incite a responsible and pro-active approach from the sector’s various players because parallel to these important opportunities there exist inherent risks that can no longer be ignored,” explains **Babacar Ndiaye**, who will preside over the **Investment Day** session at this year’s **AgriBusiness Forum** in Dakar, Senegal on Wednesday 28th November.

Citing Ghana as a country to learn from, he highlights that without agricultural development African countries will not be able to alleviate poverty or increase income sufficiently. “It is estimated that economic growth based on the agricultural sector is capable to reduce at least twice as much poverty as a growth based on the non-agricultural sectors”. He also notes that there are many risks linked to agriculture, from climate change to the international financial crisis, but this in fact should be an impetus to act now and not wait till tomorrow.

**Ndiaye’s** message is clear:“We need to focus on research and development and sustainable technological innovation. Without this and without real financial structural change which allows rural communities to access funds at reasonable interest rates, the sector cannot evolve.” “The numbers are staggering - the proportion of arable lands still to be cultivated is around 60%. It is estimated that by 2025 around 330 million youth, of which two-thirds are from rural areas, will intergrate the job market,” he says and calls on all actors to get to grips with the potential but also the enormity of the task ahead.

Babacar Ndiaye will be accompanied by **Abdoulaye Bio Tchané**, former **Director Africa at the IMF and former President of the West African Bank of Development (BOAD)**, who will also outline his roadmap for investment in the Agri-Food sector alongside other financial experts.

The Investment Day (Wednesday 28 November) will centre around the *Financing African Agriculture: Mechanisms, Strategies, Models* with a focus on Commercial Banks, Donors and Foundations, Private Equity Funds and Development Finance Institutions. It is part of this year’s ‘three-key-pillars’ forum, entitled ‘*Boosting African Agriculture through Partnership, Investment and Technology’*. Opened by **Senegal President Macky Sall,** the forum is co-organised by **EMRC**, **UNDP,** co-organiserof AgriBusiness Forum 2011 in Johannesburg and **PanAAC** and will take place in collaboration with **FAO,** the **Rabobank Foundation**, the **Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa** **(FARA), UniBRAIN, Nigeria’s Kwara State, Syngenta Foundation** and **Amiran Kenya.**

To guarantee an environment conducive to launching new business projects, the forum will be accompanied by an **Exhibition** and **B2B sessions**. This year’s forum will also highlight **youth & agriculture** with innovative and ground-breaking projects during the internationally recognised **Project Incubator Award**, sponsored by **Rabobank Foundation**, which will spotlight four leading innovative businesses with the winner taking home a cash prize of **US$15,000**.

To view **Babacar Ndiaye** entire interview in french – please click [here](http://www.emrc.be/en/events/agribus2012/partners/5-min-with-babacar-ndiaye---former-head-of-the-african-development-bank.aspx).

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