

African Expert Urges Support for Small Farmers

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By CRI reporter Chen Xuefei

Supporting small farmers in irrigation can achieve a big impact in food security in Africa as an important complementary measure, said Timothy Williams, Chairman of the [International Water Management Institute](#) Project in Ghana.

Williams attended the just concluded World Water Week in Stockholm and talked with CRI's Nordic reporter Chen Xuefei.

Williams said that they did a three year project to look at a range of technologies that are usable for farmers and evaluate the importance of these small technologies for agricultural yields and for improving incomes of farmers. The small technologies include China- made motorized pumps, small reservoirs that can be used by a group of farmers for both agriculture, livestock watering and fisheries.



Supporting small farmers with motorized pumps from China and helping them building small reservoirs can not only ensure their food security but also increase their income in Africa, according to Timothy Williams, an agricultural expert in Africa. [Photo: CRIENGLISH.com]

"So these technologies provide for farmers to grow crops not just during the rainy season, because they can grow crops all year round, it means instead of one crop per year, they can grow two crops, but also provide an opportunity to diversify."

William said it brought a multiply effect. Farmers can not only grow staple food crops, but also grow nutritious food like vegetables and fruits which can complement their meal.

"So these technologies would not only provide food security, but also improve nutrition security."

In addition, farmers are able to sell the surplus in market and the surplus can provide income allowing them to buy other services such as education and health care for their children.

With the pumps, people will also need different kinds of pipes to distribute the water. It creates a value chain market that needs traders to sell these things and traders to sell extra food and vegetables.

"We found farmers that have these pumps are among the richest, the aim of this project was to prove that the use of the pumps are profitable. And we should look at the opportunities by governments, donors and other development partners that can make the use of this technologies more widely accessible to a large number of farmers."

Williams said with traditional means of watering with buckets to transport water, farmers can only grow 0.1 hectares

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of land while using different size motorized pumps, they can cultivate one hectare of land depending on the availability of water around.

William said that the research indicates that motorized pumps and small reservoirs can reach many more farmers. If the use of pumps can reach 185 million farmers in Africa, it will lead to an additional 22 billion US dollars of income.

"It will have a great impact on the household security and household welfare of the poor in Africa. "

Williams said that he is not opposed to big projects, but governments must take adaptable and complementary measures so that all farmers can benefit.



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