SERIES INTRODUCTION
In the year 2050 there will 9 billion people. How do we feed them safely, fairly and well? And make sure very mouth is fed.

Dr. Adesina
My name is Akin Adesina. I’m the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for Nigeria. I’ve been on the job for a year now and it’s exciting and challenging but I love it.

COMMENTARY
In Nigeria Doctor Akin Adesina is a government minister with a mission.

Dr. Adesina
My job is to make sure that I unlock the potential of agriculture in Nigeria – we should not be importing food.

COMMENTARY
The Minister’s provoked a debate. On a globalized planet should countries like Nigeria really try to grow all their own food?

Chef Uche
I’m not going to stand up and I want to make a lasagna and I can’t find the ingredients for it and because I live in Nigeria, I’m not going to have lasagna.

COMMENTARY
Where should we grow our future food? What is stopping fertile countries feeding themselves? And in a globalized world is self-sufficiency really the answer?

Atsuko Toda
I enjoy Nigerian food tremendously. One of the wonderful things about working in rural areas is that one has the opportunity to travel to different parts of the country and in every different location I’ve been so happy to have amala, or garri or semovita or eba and all the soups that are produced locally with different vegetables are indeed delicious.

COMMENTARY
In Nigeria’s teeming market places – where most of its hundred and sixty two million people buy food – they’re proud of Nigerian food.

Man in market 1
Locally made food are very important, they contain nutrients that are very good for the body, like vegetables, fruits.

Man in market 2
Foods that are made in Nigeria has the natural content, it has not been chemicalised and all those things. So to me I prefer foods that are made in Nigeria.
Folusho Olaniyan
There should be a premium on Nigerian vegetables because if you compare them, our plantain, the tomatoes, they are richer. Most of them are not grown artificially like most of the things you get outside Nigeria.

COMMENTARY
Fifty years ago Nigeria was proud of how much food it produced. Agriculture was sixty per cent of GDP and a major source of export revenue. The Minister calls them the glory days of Nigerian farming.

Dr. Adesina
Nigeria was a powerhouse in food in the Sixties. We were accounting for eighteen per cent of the global production of cocoa at the time. We were accounting for forty seven per cent of the world supply of shelled groundnuts in 1961.

But they disappeared and why? That was because Nigeria found oil and when Nigeria found oil, Nigeria went away from agriculture so we went away from being a country which was self-sufficient in food in the Sixties to, today, a country that is spending a whopping amount of eleven billion dollars a year importing basic food items.

COMMENTARY
Now Nigeria – the world’s seventh most populous country - is one of the world’s largest food importers. Oil, bureaucracy, corruption, the overweening power of foreign suppliers - everyone has an opinion why there’s so much less homegrown food.

Man in market
You know why we are importing some food here is because we don’t have the machineries, chemical or whatever to produce in a quality form. So what is the need of importing food if there is no need because everything here in Nigeria, we have it.

COMMENTARY
As consumer organizations point out, it’s foreign suppliers who have most economic muscle.

Ify Umenyi
People that do the importation have greater power, greater control, maybe even more financially capable to flood the market with whatever they want to flood the market with.

COMMENTARY
With his usual security escort the Minister arrives at a farmers’ rally. He’s here to launch the government’s new plan to help Nigeria feed itself. Whatever the reasons for falling behind, says Minister Adesina – who’s an agricultural economist – Nigeria can bring back the glory days.

Dr. Adesina
I’m delighted to see the work that’s gone on in Lagos state, delighted to see the great initiative and effort of the state government in getting the youth into agriculture in supporting rice farmers and supporting cassava farmers.

We are launching today here what is called the Growth Enhancement Support. Under that initiative we’re targeting five million farmers every year to get seeds and to get fertilizer.

COMMENTARY
The message: Nigerians should produce their own food just as they wear their own garments like asoke and the Ankara - a message rammed home by the state governor.
Governor Fashola
I am happy when our people are holding parties and I see the ‘aso-oke’ and the Ankara - then the economy is kept here. But if we continue to make parties, and we are eating imported food at that party, those parties, and it inconveniences and it challenges, prospers not our economy, another economy. Let us continue to think inside.

We must understand, yes many of us want to live in the cities and wear ties. But the place to make money is where you get your hands dirty. Is where you work. We must think of wealth in terms of productive activity.

That is why Brazil is leaving us behind, because Brazil can feed itself. We have the land, we have the water we have the men and we now have the policy, let us embrace it.

Dr. Adesina
My job is to make sure that I unlock the potential of agriculture in Nigeria. We have 84 million hectares of land - arable land - as a country, and we are not using even more than forty per cent of those.

We have 230 billion cubic metres of water – we are not using irrigation. We have great sunshine. So with all of that – cheap labour, a market of 167 million of consumers, I should not be importing food.

My job is to make sure that I unlock the potential of agriculture in Nigeria. We have 84 billion hectares of land - arable land- as a country, and we are not using even more than forty per cent of those.

We have 230 billion cubic metres of water – we are not using irrigation. We have great sunshine. So with all of that – cheap labour, a market of 167 million of consumers, I should not be importing food. I should be producing food, processing food, adding value to it.

So we set for ourselves huge targets. First and foremost is to add to the domestic food supply by 20 million metric tons of food between now and 2015. Second is to reduce our dependency upon imports and in fact become self-sufficient in rice by 2015.

De Schutter
The policy pursued in Nigeria - which is to rebuild the ability for the country to feed itself - is vital for that country and for many other food deficit countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

The reason is simple - with climate change and speculation on the market for agricultural commodities, prices in the future will be higher they will be more volatile. And so countries which have not invested in local food production, countries which depend highly on food imports to feed themselves, will be in a very dire situation in the years to come.

COMMENTARY
Could Nigeria even become a food exporter and help feed the future nine billion? It’s an ambition supported by the UN agency which assists small farmers, IFAD.

Atsuko Toda
For particular commodities, we should be selective – those commodities should be produced at a scale at a quality which can be exported to other international markets. And I think that should be the long term goal of Nigeria…

But currently I think the first goal of Nigeria would be food self-sufficiency and ensuring that Nigeria for all its major commodities can produce locally.
COMMENTARY
Rice is key. If Nigeria grows more, it could replace both rice and wheat imports. The government is boosting production with eighteen new rice processing plants. Their products something to boast about.

Dr. Adesina
One of the things I’m most excited about is this. You know, Nigerians love to buy imported rice. That’s because the local rice they complain it’s coloured, it’s broken, and it has stones in it… Well that’s not rocket science, we’ve fixed that problem.

This is Nigerian rice. It's long grain, parboiled, high-quality rice coming out of the new integrated rice mills we have in Nigeria. This rice is the best rice you’ve ever had. It's actually better than any rice that comes in from India or from Thailand. And it’s proudly Nigerian rice.

COMMENTARY
In the market they seem to agree.

Market woman
Have you tasted Nigerian rice and this foreign rice? Don’t you notice the difference? If you eat Nigerian rice it’s sweeter than this one, this foreign rice. The difference is clear.

COMMENTARY
Rice farming in Nigeria’s been constrained by poor crop management techniques and shortages of fertilizer and irrigation. But some farmers claim home-grown rice can now not only be good quality - but cheaper too.

Farmer Adesanya (subtitled)
Our rice is cheaper than imported rice. And it’s plump and tasty. It’s natural. It doesn’t contain preservatives. Aside from that we can use our rice bran to feed the animals. With the imported rice, they just give us the rice and they benefit from the by-products. We just get the rice.

COMMENTARY
Adesanya farms on the outskirts of Lagos. A model farm owned by Lagos state to try and put the Minister’s grow-Nigerian theories into practice. Farmer Adesanya, too, recalls the old glory days of Nigerian farming.

Farmer Adesanya
Without farming, tell me. Are we not going to eat?

(Subtitles) It was the work of our forefathers – we had cocoa houses, we had groundnut pyramids which disappeared. Now thanks to the Minister, we are returning to those days. He knows that’s where the heart of Nigeria is.

COMMENTARY
As we film, Farmer Adesanya’s planting corn, ugwu, peppers, yams and other traditional Nigerian crops. The idea – to show that with the right fertilizer, irrigation and equipment – Nigeria could have a Green Revolution of its own – with self-sufficiency and more jobs.

Farmer Adesanya’s thrilled.

Farmer Adesanya
(English) It is only farming that can absorb more than sixty per cent of the workforce. They are taking the right step, we have to go back fully into farming.
Nigeria can be self-sufficient in food production provided you deal with the genuine farmers, provided our government encourages farmers. Our farming system is upright. The type of land we have in Nigeria is superb. We can have more than enough food in Nigeria provided the government comes to the aid of the farmer.

COMMENTARY
Adesanya's just one of many farmers - the government hopes – who'll now be planting more cassava; a crop which provides basic carbohydrate for over half a billion people worldwide. Nigeria's the world's biggest producer.

Adesanya says previous cassava harvests here were left to rot. Now he's more hopeful.

Farmer Adesanya
Right now we are in the cassava plot. So this area has just been ploughed for cassava plantation. You can see our boys on the farm now planting cassava.

COMMENTARY
Like rice, cassava is crucial to the Minister’s self-sufficiency strategy. He believes cassava could be processed into tasty food for the supermarket shelves.

Dr. Adesina
Nigeria is the largest producer of cassava in the world, but we are not adding value to cassava. At the same time we are the largest importer of wheat in the world, and so by substituting high quality cassava flour in bread - up to the level of twenty per cent - we can reduce our dependency on wheat imports and also create jobs locally.

COMMENTARY
In Lagos, it's the Children's Day March. A chance to convince future generations about future food, Nigerian-style. Not foreign wheat-only bread - but local cassava bread.

Titilola Akinpeju
Today is Children’s Day, and the Federal government has decided that we should distribute the bread which was commissioned to UTC to use twenty per cent cassava and eighty per cent wheat for bread to distribute to the children.

Young girl A: The cassava bread is delicious
Young boy A: I love it, it’s sweet!
Young boy B: It’s delicious more than ‘agege’ bread.

COMMENTARY
For the Minister it’s a business opportunity for Nigeria.

Dr. Adesina
Here is cassava bread - it’s made of twenty per cent high quality cassava flour and eighty percent wheat flour. This is commercial - this is not government. This bread is tastier bread, it’s better bread, it’s healthier bread. And finally is that it’s cheaper. This bread costs sixty nine per cent the cost of wheat bread. And so this alone is going to save the economy almost close to two billion - one point five two billion dollars - every year just by making that substitution. So our President directed us that we should commercialize this cassava bread and you see the private sector this is from UTC, one of the largest corporate baker in the country.
Folusho Olaniyan
UTC is a wholly indigenous company owned by Nigerians one hundred per cent. Run by Nigerians and making products fit for the Nigerian market

The Minister said we should include cassava, let us see how we can do this. Competition was naturally worried that, you know, this was a big risk. But we decided to go along that line because you know – yes we can pay the price if it goes negative, but if it goes positive there are so many benefits that you can bring into the organization. So yes we challenged industry and conventional norms in the baking industry and we are happy we did it; we’re happy today.

COMMENTARY
Nigerian cassava replacing imported wheat – and not just in bread. A big opportunity for the future.

Atsuko Toda
For Nigeria, cassava is an incredibly important crop. It is the largest producer of cassava in the world. What we really need to do is develop the markets and demand for cassava and so therefore to have cassava flour which becomes a natural demand for this large production is excellent and we do believe that there are also other areas whereby cassava can be used for other products.

Dr. Adesina
We are also making quite a lot of pastries that are coming out of this. The whole sense here is that it is about the economy - it’s about economics. We are creating markets for our cassava farmers right now that they have never had before.

COMMENTARY
It’s not just rice and cassava. As we met the Minister, an unexpected arrival. Mrs Ero has come down from the North to see the Minister’s aide to promote her local crop acha only grown in the North.

At last she’s found someone to help her.

Titilola Ero
We have women - over two hundred of us are farming something called acha. I came here sometime ago to see the Minister concerning our farm in Bauchi.

I’ve come back to give them some reports on some directives that the Minister gave. This is my dream Nigeria, if it goes on the way and manner I have seen him responded to me. If it goes on like that, in fact, we are just starting.

COMMENTARY
So - is the Minister really going to promote indigenous foods like Mrs Ero’s? Or is he suggesting everything’s turned into bland Western-style processed food? Our Nigerian director was keen to know.

Interviewer
We’re not going to lose those indigenous wonderful little gems that we can’t find anywhere else are we?

Dr. Adesina
We have great food in Nigeria you have eba, you have amallah, you have lafon, you have okron, you have pepper soup - those are the things that are unique to us. And what I’m saying is we’re going to focus on that.
Look, the Chinese have Chinese rice, the Japanese have tofu. What we have – amallah, we have eba, we have yams, those are the things that we are promoting now for people to like our local food.

So for example one thing we are doing with yams right now, we’re going to start doing with yams, is instead of buying that tuber of yams and transporting it - slice the yam, deep freeze it, precook it, make it available in the supermarket, so that anybody that wants to have breakfast, all they have to do is take it off the supermarket shelf, take it and put it in water, or fry it - within ten mutes It's done.

We must as a continent make it easier to process and add value to food. Africa must go back to its own food but make it easier to process and add value to.

**COMMENTARY**
But there are still problems. Many fertile countries like Nigeria are dogged by shortages, inefficiencies and worse. Right now Farmer Adesanya could certainly do with more fertilizer.

**Farmer Adesanya (subtitles)**
Two bags of fertilizer is not enough for the quantity of our maize. Forty kilograms of maize will cover about three hectares of farmland… and for you to cover three hectares of farmland with fertilizer, you have to use about eighteen bags of fertilizer. When we have that - work will flow, and food will be plenty in the country.

**COMMENTARY**
Minister Adesina has a terse explanation for fertilizer shortages... and a promise of action.

**Dr. Adesina**
Mister President has directed that we must clean up this situation of corruption that we find in the fertilizer sector in Nigeria - where only eleven per cent of farmers get the seeds and fertilizers that are subsidized by government.

**COMMENTARY**
Under the Minister’s new plan, farmers register to buy subsidized fertilizer straight from commercial suppliers. The state middle men are being cut out of the distribution chain.

**Dr. Adesina**
Federal government does not buy fertilizer or distribute fertilizer in Nigeria anymore. Fertilizer is no different from Coca-Cola or Pepsi-Cola, it’s a commodity.

There’s no reason for them to be supplying the commodity to my warehouse, they should be selling it directly to farmers. And when the government was doing it, sometimes you get fertilizer that is half bag, some you get sand instead of fertilizer - it was a very corrupt system.

So what we have right now is we have moved to what we call ‘Private Sector Driven Delivery Systems’.

The role of government has changed, we are targeting this year, four point five million farmers to get subsidised fertilizer - but not through the old system. They get it through what we call an electronic wallet. We have a database of all the farmers we are targeting so we know them. We have all their biometric information.

**Farmer**
First of all you receive text messages inviting you to come here you know and come here to collect these things at subsidised rates. Now the invitation also gives you virtual numbers which will stipulate the numbers you use for the collection of urea fertilizer.
Dr. Adesina
… and you collect your two bags of fertilizer and you go home.

There is no politician between you and your fertilizer, there’s no local government chairman between you and the fertilizer.

COMMENTARY
Nigeria growing more of its own food by cutting out corruption. For small-scale farmer Adesanya, it’s a huge prize.

Farmer Adesanya (subtitles)
Now, regarding corruption…if we eradicate corruption, our country will be lifted up. Now because of the Minister’s programme, the farmers collect the fertilizer themselves. No-one intercepts and takes from it. Fertilizer has become cheaper because of the absence of middle-men. We have educated farmers - so we don’t need middle-men.

COMMENTARY
But do people really want to eat only food grown at home? Chef Uche cooks fusion dishes – African food with a global twist.

Chef Uche
I like to think of myself as a fusion chef - I like to cut across cuisines, push them. Most of the ingredients I use, I got in Africa, Europe, just a mix of everything.

COMMENTARY
Chef Uche fears that policies favouring home-grown produce can be out of place in today’s globalized world. He worries what would happen if government policies were to make imports too expensive or even unavailable.

Chef Uche
The essence of food is to convey a message - Food is a universal language.

It would be unfair for all of a sudden to deny people certain things based on what they can afford. I would now have money and I want to buy something and you tell me it’s not available for me because the government says you can’t have this. Food is everybody’s basic right, I don’t think anybody should have a say on what somebody should eat or what somebody shouldn’t eat.

I’m not going to stand up and I want to make a lasagna and I can’t find the ingredients for it and I have people that want to have lasagna and because I live in Nigeria all of a sudden I’m not going to have lasagna. Now what makes me different from the guy living in Italy? We are all human beings, you understand. So we should have, it’s choice. It’s our right.

COMMENTARY
Imported food effectively banned or rationed? No talk of that here in Nigeria yet. They’re just encouraging local food.

But such bans have been imposed in some countries – using high import barriers and taxes. Nigeria’s consumer groups are already on the case.

Mrs Ify
Whatever the policy will be must give consumers access to the variety, availability so that they can not be caged down to buying from one source and give consumers the access to variety and opportunity also to exercise their right to choice.
Fulosho Olaniyan
So make the options available - and then let people decide what they want to eat! And, at the end of the year, we can look at the data of the supermarkets and see what people actually buy, whether they buy more of the imports or more of the local.

COMMENTARY
Consumers free to decide – governments promoting farming – Nigeria reckons it’s the right way to feed the future.

Dr. Adesina
Africa has the largest amount of land available right now in the world. Nigeria alone has enough amount of land not only to feed itself but to be the largest food exporter on this continent.

We have a world that’s going to be soon nine billion people that we have to feed. The fact is what is Africa’s role in feeding that world itself? And feeding that world… it’s huge.

COMMENTARY
Of course the farmers who have the largest role in feeding Africa remain its small-scale farmers, themselves consumers voters, employers, and job creators.

De Schutter
An attempt for a country to rebuild its food production and to feed itself is an opportunity for small farmers that must be seized upon.

And by investing in these food producers, we encourage a local food processing industry to emerge, we encourage the local marketing of this produce. For we create employment in other sectors of the economy than the agricultural sector itself. So it’s an opportunity that must be seized upon to re-launch rural development and to reduce poverty in these countries.

COMMENTARY
And those are sentiments Farmer Adesanya can only endorse.

Farmer Adesanya
The government has to know that, without farmers, no great nation. And without food - no life!

So that’s why we say “great farmer great nation. No farmer, no life.” Because no farmer, no food. No food, no life.
Nigerian Minister for Agriculture, Akinwunmi Ayo Adesina believes it is his job to ensure Nigerians eat food grown in Nigeria – and he’s determined to overcome the obstacles to Nigerian self-sufficiency in food production. He has also provoked a debate – on a globalized planet should countries like Nigeria really try to grow all their own food?

Series information: Future Food
[link]
A series of 6 x 25-min films exploring key questions around global food security.

In discussions of feeding the planet, many now argue for a new way of thinking about food technology, food policy and food science. Since the days of the “Green Revolution”, which promised enough food for all but which ultimately reduced crop varieties, created a dependency on fossil fuels and depleted the land, studies have shown that “agroecology” – the application of ecological principles to the production of food – could double food production in the next 10 years sustainably. But can low-yield sustainable farming methods feed 9.5 billion people by 2050? Without GM crops or synthetic fertilizers, can farmers increase food production by 70 percent?

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