

PRESS RELEASE

Investing in new farming technologies key in transforming African agriculture

Farmers are making incredible progress and can become more productive and profitable with the right tools, technologies and knowledge.



[Nairobi, September 11, 2020]: Transforming African agriculture into an engine of economic growth that will have benefits far beyond the farm sector lies in investing in and making accessible new farming technologies for Africa—from better seeds to machinery to digital tools, said Dr. Denis T. Kyetere, the Executive Director of African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF)

The remarks were made by Dr. Kyetere in a panel session focusing on *Accelerating the growth, sustainability, and inclusivity of digital agricultural solutions* during the 10th African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) virtual Summit 2020, held between 8th-11th September 2020 and hosted by the Government of Rwanda.

Some of the other speakers in the session included Hon. Joseph Mucheru, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communications, Hon. Paula Ingabire, Rwanda's Minister of ICT and Innovation and Mr. Liam Condon, President, Bayer Crop Science.

The panel session explored ways towards increasing the overall sustainability of digital solutions for African agriculture.

Dr. Kyetere noted that as African farmers are beginning to innovate, increase productivity and drive progress across economies, other challenges including drought & climate change, pest and diseases, low access to technologies, market failure and inefficient value chains and adulterated agro-inputs threaten gains already made by the farmers.

"We have developed and deployed a digital application - Market Information Support System for Cassava Mechanisation and Agro-processing (*MISS CAMAP*) that facilitates farmer access to e- extension services and markets, *Agridrive App* that supports access to mechanisation services and *Hello Tractor App* which provides remote tracking of farm assets, preventing fraud and machine misuse," said Dr. Kyetere.

He pointed out that digital solutions can be deployed to enhance crop management, seed inspection and seed certification processes with capabilities for seed inspection with real-time data generated from the field allowing quick decision making, data management and product traceability throughout the certification process which supports efficient seed dispatch and cross border trade of the seed.

In terms of adoption of digital solutions in agricultural value chains and the potential for growth, Dr. Kyetere noted that digital agriculture innovations can help to increase smallholder yields by up to 70 per cent and incomes by up to 40 per cent.

"The uptake of these solutions is considered a game-changer in the transformation of African agriculture. For example, *Hello Tractor App* has served 22,500 farmers in Nigeria and Kenya and reports a 200 per cent increase in customer yields," he said.

To accelerate growth of digital agricultural solutions, Dr. Kyetere called for the need for sound national strategies including creation of an enabling policy and regulatory environment to support adoption of digital solutions especially with regards to ensuring affordability of mobile phones, connectivity and internet access in the rural areas.

"Agricultural transformation is within our reach. Our farmers can improve their productivity, increase their wealth and health and continue the path of progress if they have access to the right mix of farming innovations including digital agricultural solution," said Dr. Kyetere.

The session panelists called for increased digital penetration in rural areas through the spread of mobile technology to play a transformative role in shifting food systems towards more sustainable and efficient practices.

“Time is ripe for digital solutions to accelerate agriculture development in Africa. As in most other innovations, an enabling environment would be key to supporting private sector investment and allowing access to the solutions by those who need them,” emphasized Dr. Kyetere.

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About AATF (www.aatf-africa.org)

Founded in 2003 to address Africa’s food security prospects through agricultural technology, AATF believes that the agricultural sector is a key foundational pillar as Africa consolidates its economic growth and carves out its new position as a major global economic powerhouse and the next growth market in the world. It was formed in response to the need for an effective mechanism that would facilitate and support negotiation for technology access and delivery and formation of appropriate partnerships to manage the development & deployment of innovative technologies for use by smallholder farmers in SSA:

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