



Revolutionising data use to feed the planet

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The world within which African agriculture operates is changing rapidly. This tests the relevance and accuracy of our data and knowledge base. But rising investments and policy interest in Africa's agriculture demands an up to date picture of the reality on the ground. The Agriculture in Africa – Telling Facts from Myths project contributes to this by analysing nationally representative household surveys from 6 African countries conducted under the Living Standards Measurement Study – Integrated Surveys on Agriculture Initiative launched in 2009. We need revisiting some of the hypotheses underpinning the debates about Africa's structural transformation and its farmers' resilience.

Regular checking and fine-tuning facts is critical to ensure that the renewed investments and policies supporting Africa's agriculture and food security are well-directed.

The phenomenon of big data - where information comes from different sources ranging from connected devices to sensors and GPS - offers enormous potential to develop innovative products and services. Turning Big Data—call logs, mobile-banking transactions, online user-generated content such as blog posts and Tweets, online searches, satellite images, etc.—into actionable information is key. New insights gleaned from such data mining should complement official statistics, survey data, and information generated by Early Warning Systems. Generating value at the different stages of the data value chain will be at the centre of the future knowledge economy.

The discussions will aim at sharing use of tools and applications for better data collection to inform policy. Improved data collection and use will be discussed in three areas of interest to developing countries: increasing productivity and agricultural transformation, promoting trade and increased market access for farmers and natural resource management by communities.

Introduction: *Michael Hailu, Director of CTA*

Moderator: *Bernard Rey, Deputy Head of Unit, Rural Development, FNS, EC/DEVCO*

Panel:

- **Household surveys and empirical grounding : telling facts from myths**
Luc Christiaensen, the World Bank
- **Linking farmers to markets through improved data**
Fleur Wouterse, AgriConnexions, IFPRI, CTA, Regional Farmers Organisations Project
- **Promoting Participatory Data**
Barthélemy Boika Mahambi Yela, Réseau Ressources Naturelles (RRN), République Démocratique du Congo (RDC), Giacomo Rambaldi, CTA

Discussion and way forward