



## **Brussels Development Briefing n. 42**

### **Women entrepreneurs – key players in ACP agribusiness development**

17th September 2015, 9h00-13h00

ACP Secretariat, 451 Avenue Georges Henri, 1200 Brussels, room C

<http://brusselsbriefings.net>

### **BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS**

#### **Stephanie Barrientos - Institute of Development Policy and Management**

Stephanie Barrientos is Professor of Global Development at The University of Manchester. She has researched and published widely on gender, agribusiness, employment, trade and labour standards, corporate social responsibility, fair and ethical trade. She has undertaken research in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. She led research on Gender and Ethical Trade in African Horticulture (funded by DFID) and led the UK Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Impact Assessment (2003-2006). She coordinated studies for Cadbury Plc Mapping Sustainable Cocoa Production in Ghana and India. This informed the Cadbury Cocoa Partnership (UK£45m) followed by Mondelez Cocoa Life (US\$4000m) to support cocoa farmers, as well as Cadbury's move towards Fairtrade. She co-coordinated with Professor Gary Gereffi (Duke University) the DFID funded international research network Capturing the Gains: Economic and Social Upgrading in Global Value Chains linking researchers in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and USA ([www.capturingthegains.org](http://www.capturingthegains.org)). She has advised a large number of companies, NGOs and government organisations. Stephanie has a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship (2013-16) examining Gender and Transformation in Global Value Chains. She leads the Working Out of Poverty theme at BWPI, University of Manchester. ([www.bwpi.manchester.ac.uk/research/researchprogrammes/workingoutofpoverty/](http://www.bwpi.manchester.ac.uk/research/researchprogrammes/workingoutofpoverty/))

#### **Rosemund Benn, President, Pomeroun Women Agro-Processor Association, Guyana**

Rosemund Benn is the President of the Pomeroun Women's Agro-Processors Association, launched in 2001 as a community response to the spoilage of fruit which grew in abundance in the Pomeroun area, coupled with the high proportion of women who were not involved in paid employment, including female heads of household. Through the work of the Association in fruit processing for sale, the lives of its members and more broadly of farmers and women in the community have been transformed as women have been given the opportunity to manage their business and generate an income as well as to travel and interface with people they might not have met outside of the work of the Association.

#### **Isolina Boto – Manager, CTA Brussels Office**

Isolina Boto is the Manager of the CTA Brussels Office. Isolina has more than 20 years of experience in development. She worked for the European Commission, various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Within CTA, she worked in various positions at headquarters, in the Netherlands, especially on co-funded technical programmes on Agriculture and Rural Development implemented at regional level. Since 2004 she heads the CTA Brussels Office, dealing with policy issues related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of agricultural and rural development and leads CTA policy group on regional trade. She coordinates and organizes the regular Brussels Development Briefings on topical development policy issues (<http://brusselsbriefings.net>). The office produces a daily news service on key policy areas of ACP-EU cooperation on trade, fisheries, climate change, food security and development policy (<http://brussels.cta.int>).

### **Jacqueline Church – Policy Officer, European Investment Bank**

Jackie Church is a Policy Officer at the Brussels office of the European Investment Bank. She focuses on the Bank's activities in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, as well as the blending of EU grant and loans in regions outside the EU.

### **Viwanou Gnassounou – Assistant Secretary General, ACP Secretariat**

Viwanou Gnassounou, from Togo, is an economist, financial expert and project manager with 17 years of experience in agricultural and natural resource policy formulation, aid programming, sectoral commodity export strategies, and trade. Before joining the ACP Management Team, he was co-manager of a Consulting firm, which provides support in the areas of development policies. He also set up and managed an agricultural products industrial processing company based in Togo. Mr. Gnassounou holds a Master's degree in Economic Analysis and Policy, a Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA) in Development Economics (MPhil equivalent), and a Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées (DESS) in Economic Development and Development Project Management (MSc equivalent) from the Centre for Research and Studies in International Development at the Université d'Auvergne, France. He is fluent in English, French and Mina (Togo), with basic knowledge of German. Mr. Gnassounou took office on 1 April 2015.

### **Michael Hailu – Director, Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)**

Michael Hailu, an Ethiopian national, is the Director of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) based in the Netherlands. CTA is a joint institution of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the European Union working under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Mr. Hailu has over 25 years of professional experience in agricultural research and development in Africa and Asia. Prior to joining CTA in mid-2010, he held senior leadership positions at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) based in Nairobi, Kenya and at the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia. Mr. Hailu has led the development and implementation of CTA's 2011-2015 strategic plan refocusing the Centre's work on three priority themes—supporting agricultural policies and strategies; enhancing inclusive value chains; and strengthening capacities of ARD institutions and networks in knowledge management and ICTs. He has degrees from the University of Pittsburgh and Addis Ababa University. He has also been trained in strategic leadership at the Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

### **Jean-Pierre Halkin –Head of Unit DEVCO/C1, EuropeAid, European Commission**

Jean-Pierre Halkin joined the DG Development of Commission in 1986. From 1992 to 1997, Jean- Pierre Halkin went to Côte d'Ivoire as Economic Adviser where he dealt with a broad portfolio including rural development programmes, value chains, regional trade, and access to market. He was also in charge of the coordination of a vast food security intervention mitigating the impact of the Liberian war in four countries (Liberia, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Sierra Leone). Since then, Jean-Pierre has been working in Brussels, in the field of external relations where he took various posts including the coordination of the task force on "Drugs/Money Laundering" and management of food security interventions in Asia. In 2006, Jean-Pierre Halkin was appointed Head of the Unit in EuropeAid in charge of Food Security and Nutrition, Rural Development and Agriculture, Environment and Climate Change. Since 2011, Jean-Pierre has been in charge of the Unit in EuropeAid which is responsible for Rural Development, Food Security and Nutrition. This Unit provides methodological supports on the following sectors: Food Security and Nutrition, Rural Development and Agriculture, Environment and Climate Change.

### **Kobusingye Lovin - Team Leader , Kati Farms, Uganda**

Kobusingye Lovin, a young entrepreneur linking Ugandan fish farmers with markets, is the general manager and main investor in Kati Farms holding 75% of the shares. She is also directly in charge of international sales and marketing. Because fish farmers were having trouble finding marketing outlets for

fresh farmed fish, Ms Lovin started adding value to fish. Her breakthrough came when she thought of making sausages from fish. Ms Lovin went through the process of developing her and her suppliers' capacities and finding markets for her innovative products with the support of Ugandan government institutions. Kati Farms and her fish suppliers now reliably deliver processed fish products to 30 local supermarkets and 23 hotels, in addition to many low-income consumers through street vendors.

### **Tepsy Ntseoane – Eve's Eden Farming Enterprise, South Africa**

Tepsy Ntseoane is the COO of Eve's Eden Farming Enterprise, an agro-business that has grown into a company that produces food for caterers. Eve's Eden Farming Enterprise occupies 539ha of land in Vanderbijlpark which lies in the South of Johannesburg in South Africa.

### **Christian Planchette – Senior Training Officer, Enterprise Competitiveness, International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations**

Christian Planchette is highly experienced in designing, developing and delivering enterprise and export competitiveness programmes for SMEs in developing countries. He ensures by design that these programmes are transformational for the enterprise and produce long-lasting outcomes and impact. In addition to offering training and counselling to SMEs, his programmes build local autonomous delivery capacities, and transfer to local partner institutions the ownership for national programme implementation, thus empowering both the enterprises and the country's support institutions for sustainable results.

He has been very involved since the beginning in ITC gender programmes, in particular the ACCESS! for African Businesswomen in International Trade programme for empowering women entrepreneurs; he is now developing and piloting a Trade Accelerator programme for young entrepreneurs to accelerate their enterprise growth and success, and to turn occasional exporters into regular exporters.

Mr Planchette understands enterprises well, as before joining the UN in 2002, he worked in different technical and managerial capacities in financial control, business analysis, strategic planning, technical marketing, training and development, and has a broad business experience ranging from large multinational manufacturing for which he worked for eight years, down to micro enterprises such as the services enterprise he founded and operated for five years.

He has an MBA degree from Carnegie Mellon University, as well as a degree in electrical and mechanical engineering from ENSAM, a top engineering school in France.

### **Alberta Vitale – Associate Director, Women in Business Dev. (WIBDI), Samoa**

Associate Director Alberta Vitale oversees all of Women in Business Development Inc's operations, which includes the organic programme, finance, media and communications, donor projects and human resources. She currently sits on National Advisory Organic Steering Committee chaired by Samoa's Prime Minister, the Private Sector Support Facility, the Samoa National Tripartite Committee, Samoa National Codex Committee, and Trade Commerce and Manufacturing Sector Plan Steering Committee. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration with a major in marketing and management from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

### **Mereia Volavola – Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Island Private Sector Organisation (PIPSO)**

Mereia Volavola has been the Chief Executive Officer of PIPSO since 2010. She has vast knowledge and experience in the area of Finance and Banking. Prior to joining PIPSO, Ms Volavola held the position of CEO of the Capital Markets Development Authority in Fiji. She has also worked for the Reserve Bank of Fiji, HFC Finance Ltd and Housing Authority. Mereia Volavola holds an MBA in Banking and Finance with a Distinction from the University of Wales, UK and a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of the South Pacific in Economics and Business Management. She is a former Board Member of Merchant Finance Ltd in Fiji.

**Simone Zoundi –CEO SODEPAL-SA, Burkina Faso**

Simone Zoundi is the President of SODEPAL, a Medium Enterprise created in 1991 in partnership with Nutriset France for the launch of food supplements standards in accordance with Codex Alimentarius standards. Promoter of SODEPAL, convinced that the enhancement of local resources provides an opportunity to create jobs, contributes to wealth, fights against malnutrition, which represents a real issue in the region, she is committed to develop the following areas: nutritional supplements, bakery, biscuit, sweet manufacture, a springboard for the development of local resources. Simone Zoundi holds a Diploma in Etudes Commerciales Supérieures et Administration des Entreprises in Toulouse.