



Brussels Policy Briefing n. 51 Agriculture as an engine of economic reconstruction and development in fragile countries

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<http://brusselsbriefings.net>

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

Rajendra K. Aryal – Senior Programme Advisor, Resilience Building, FAO

R. Aryal is a Senior Response and Resilience Coordinator with about 24 years of experience in food security, sustainable livelihoods, resilience building, operations, communication and advocacy, and response and recovery in nearly 30 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe. Previously he was a Senior Programme Advisor at the global Food Security Cluster (WFP/FAO) advocating for effective coordination and humanitarian-development linkages in food security sector with regional, national and sectoral coordination mechanisms through advice, advocacy, partnership, networking and mentoring in collaboration with national authorities, field Food Security Cluster Coordinators, NGO partners, donors and academia. Before joining FAO, he worked for GIZ in Afghanistan and Nepal. He also worked for the UN Capital Development Fund as Programme Officer in Nepal.

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. In that context, 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>). Since 2016 she leads the CTA group on agribusiness development.

Katharine Downie – Head of Data Quality Assurance, M&E, Knowledge Management and Innovation - Somalia Resilience Program (SomReP), World Vision

Dr Katharine Downie is a Knowledge Management, Monitoring & Evaluation and Learning Specialist with over 25 years' experience in East Africa managing research programs and setting the M&E, Research, Innovation and Knowledge Management agendas for research institutes, humanitarian and development organizations and innovation labs with multiple donors and agencies. Katharine holds a PhD in Zoonotic Epidemiology from the University of Edinburgh. She is currently Head of Quality Assurance, M&E, Knowledge Management and Innovation for the US\$ 80 million Somalia Resilience Program (SomReP). SomReP is a consortium of seven international NGOs - ADRA, ACF, ACTED, CARE, Danish Refugee Council, Oxfam GB and World Vision Somalia, funded by Sida, DFAT, the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation. Prior to joining SomReP, Katharine worked as a Senior Scientist, leading the USAID-funded Technical Consortium for Building Resilience, with a strategic focus on resilience measurement and theories of change. Katharine has additional experience in public health, water and sanitation, nutrition, food security, epidemiology, livestock and agriculture, editorial and writing, gender

based analysis and project management. Katharine speaks and writes French and English with good working proficiency of German and KiSwahili.

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.

James Putzel – Professor, Department of International Development, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

Professor James Putzel (BA, MA McGill, DPhil Oxford) is Professor of Development Studies at the [Department of International Development](#) at the London School of Economics. Between 2000 and 2011 he was Director of the [Crisis States Research Centre](#) at the LSE. He is well-known for his work on agrarian reform including his book *A Captive Land: The Politics of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines*, as well as his research on social capital, democratisation and the political economy of development. His recent research has focused on politics, governance and economic development in crisis states. He has undertaken research in the Philippines, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Senegal. He is co-author of [Meeting the Challenges of Crisis States](#) (2012) and lead author of the OECD book, [Do No Harm: International Support for Statebuilding](#) (2010). Putzel was a founding member of the Fragile States Council of the World Economic Forum and sits on the International Advisory Board of the China International Development Research Network.

Harma Rademaker – Programme Manager, Cordaid, the Netherlands

Harma Rademaker is programme manager at Cordaid head office in the Netherlands. She manages the Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience programme together with her colleagues in Cordaid's country offices in Horn of Africa and South East Asia. Her professional area of interest is resilient livelihoods and food security. She applies people-centred approaches, such as community managed disaster risk reduction and resilient recovery. She has a background in tropical agriculture and rural development and has worked on agriculture, fair trade and value chains, gender policies and project management for several organisations.

Alexandros Ragoussis – Economist, Thought Leadership, Economics and Private Sector Development, IFC, World Bank Group

Dr Alexandros Ragoussis is an Economist at Thought Leadership, IFC, and Fellow of the German Development Institute (DIE). Over the last years he has written extensively in the field of international economics and policy, held positions at the OECD and the German Development Institute, and taught Economics at the University of Sydney and at Sciences-Po, Paris. A Greek national, Alexandros studied engineering and geography in Athens and Brussels, and holds a PhD in economics from the University of Sydney.

Bernard Rey – Deputy Head of Unit, Unit C1 – Food Security, Rural Development, Nutrition, Director General for International Cooperation and Development, European Commission

Dr. Bernard Rey holds a PhD in Veterinary Medicine and an MSc in Economics of Development. In his early career, he worked in international agricultural research institutions in Mexico, the Netherlands, and Ethiopia. He subsequently served in the Delegations of the European Union in Nigeria, Kenya, and Madagascar in charge of the EU Rural Development portfolios in these countries. After he headed the EU Development Cooperation in Kenya, he was appointed Deputy Head of Unit for Sustainable Agriculture and Food and Nutrition Security in EuropeAid Headquarters. In this capacity, he chaired over 2 years the group of development partners to the Africa Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and represents the European Commission in the CGIAR governing entities.

Annick Sezibera – Executive Secretary, CAPAD, Burundi

Annick Sezibera shares the experience of her farmer organisation "CAPAD" in Burundi, a very small agriculture-dependent country of 27,384 km² and about 13 million inhabitants, half of whom are young people under 15 years old. A doctor by training, Annick Sezibera decided to give up her profession to invest in the rural movement. In 2000, she, together with 25 other Burundian farmers, created a collective, the Confederation of Agricultural Producers Associations for Development (CAPAD), which now has more than 117,000 member households. Since 2009, Annick has served as the Executive Secretary of CAPAD and in 2015, she led the creation of a branch of CAPAD, called SOCOPA. It is a cooperative society for the processing, packaging and marketing of agricultural products and raising of livestock in order to increase the incomes of CAPAD farmers. With a view to better understanding business management in relation to SOCOPA, Annick Sezibera has just completed a training course with an MBA degree from Sorbonne University in Paris.

Bing Zhao – Director and Global Coordinator of Purchase for Progress (P4P), UN World Food Programme

Dr. Bing Zhao is the Director and Global Coordinator of the Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), taking up this role in April 2016. P4P aims at helping smallholder farmers to raise agricultural productivity, explore formal market and improve livelihoods, while contributing long-term sustainable food security and nutrition for the poor and hungry, and the attainment of SDGs. During 2012-2016, as Head of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM), a United Nations regional institution under ESCAP, he made great headway in promoting the role of agricultural engineering and mechanization in achieving agricultural sustainability in the Asian-Pacific region. Dr. Zhao holds a BA degree in international studies from Beijing Foreign Studies University and a Master's degree in international business law from the University of Rome 'La Sapienza'. His PhD degree was obtained from the Third University of Rome (Roma Tre) in the area of economics and law with a specialization on Consumers and Market.