



## **Seminar on Meeting Information and Knowledge Needs of Farmers in Africa through e-Agriculture**

Lubrandt Conference Room, Lusaka Hotel, Cairo Road  
Lusaka, Zambia  
14 July 2008

### **REPORT**

IAALD Africa Chapter

The Africa Chapter of the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialist (IAALD) held a one-day seminar on *Seminar on Meeting Information and Knowledge Needs of Farmers in Africa through e-Agriculture*, on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008 at the Lusaka Hotel in Zambia. The main goal of the seminar was to examine the emerging field of e-agriculture and review specific cases of e-agriculture initiatives in Africa and their impact on sharing, managing and delivery of agricultural information and knowledge services to rural-based farmers and communities to help them improve the quantity and quality of their agricultural production. The seminar was sponsored by ITOCA (Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa), a not-for-profit organization based in Centurion, South Africa.

### **Participants**

The seminar was attended by 28 participants (**Annex 1**) from Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These included agricultural research scientists, extension officers, library and information professionals, lecturers, managers and information and communication technology officers.

### **Programme**

The seminar was opened by Mr Mutukelwa Mukelabai - Head, National Agricultural Information Service (NAIS) of Zambia. Altogether, eight presentations were made by individuals representing international, regional and national organizations (**Annex 2**). These included presenters from FAO Regional Office for Africa, Ghana; ITOCA-Information Training & Outreach Centre for Africa, South Africa; Celtel Zambia Plc; SADC Plant Genetic Resource Centre, Zambia; and the University of the Free State, South Africa. A presentation was also made on behalf of Family Alliance for Development and Co-operation (FADECO), Tanzania.

The opening session of the seminar featured as a news item on the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) Television news on Monday evening, 14 July and Tuesday morning, 15 July 2008.

Professor Patrick Ngulube, from the Department of Information Studies, University of South Africa, gave a vote of thanks.

## **Major Issues**

A number of issues were raised with regard to meeting the information and knowledge needs of farmers in Africa. These ranged from policy issues to challenges in dissemination of agricultural information and knowledge exchange using modern information and communication technologies (ICT). The lack of synergies between the agriculture and ICT sectors to work together in most African countries was noted as a major hindrance to meeting the information and knowledge needs of farmers using modern tools.

Further, participants noted/raised the following issues:

- Sophisticated mobile phone handsets are being purchased by users in many African countries. However, facilities available on these phones are being under-utilised because the suppliers or the service providers never conduct training or advise the user of the phones on the facilities available.
- Considering that coverage of mobile phone networks in Africa is slowly reaching the rural areas, stakeholders in the agricultural sector on the continent should start engaging governments and mobile phone services providers and lobby for value-added services to be provided on the networks and for lower prices for mobile handsets and solar chargers for the farmers.
- Stakeholders in the agricultural sectors in Africa should actively contribute to the formulation of national ICT strategies and policies in order to ensure that e-agriculture strategies and policies form part of the national e-strategies.
- Organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) should provide support to its Member states in Africa to articulate their e-agriculture strategies and policies.
- Farmers should be encouraged to give feed-back to agricultural information and knowledge service providers on the suitability of the various ICT tools and systems being used in the delivery of agricultural information and knowledge services and on the quality of the services being provided.
- Farmers and intermediaries (extension workers) should be sensitized on the benefits of various ICT-based tools and services; otherwise they will not readily adopt the tools and use the services.
- Market information systems being developed in some African countries are largely targeting commercial farmers and farmers located in peri-urban areas. There is a need to go beyond

the urban and peri-urban areas and target small scale farmers and peasant farmers living in rural areas.

- There is a need for national platforms/forums where stakeholders in the agriculture sector can share and exchange information and knowledge about e-agriculture. Further, participation and contribution to the global e-Agriculture Community of Expertise from Africa should be encouraged.

## Annex 1 - Participants

<b>Names</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Country</b>
Ms. Lesego Ramore	Botswana College of Agriculture	Librarian	Botswana
Davy Mumba	Zambia Agricultural Research Institute	Senior Analyst	Zambia
Clemence Namponya	University of Free State Library	Director	South Africa
Julius Siwale	Zambia Agricultural Research Institute	Senior Agricultural Research Officer	Zambia
Christopher Simuntala	Central Veterinary Research Institute	Research Scientist	Zambia
Dr. Edgar Kayesa	Central Veterinary Research Institute	Research Scientists	Zambia
Ms. Boitumelo Garekwe-Modid	Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority	Librarian	Botswana
Darlington Kahilu	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives	Content Manager	Zambia
Sturbs Malambo	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives		Zambia
Ms. Victoria Butigieg	Emerald Group Publishing Limited	Emerging Markets Publisher	United Kingdom
Kennedy Hamudulu	SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre	Technical Officer – Documentation & Information	Zambia
Ms. Jenevieve Namangala	Zambia Agricultural Research Institute	Librarian	Zambia
Mathew Moyo	National University of Science and Technology	Lecturer	Zimbabwe
Ms. Moria Namumba	Zambia College of Agriculture - Monze	Library Officer	Zambia
Trywell Kalusopa	University of Botswana	Lecturer	Botswana
Patrick Boyd Nkhoma	Copperbelt University	Librarian	Zambia
Prof. Patrick Ngulube	University of South Africa	Professor	South Africa
Ms. Laverne Page	Library of Congress	Area Specialist – Africa & Middle Eastern Division	United States
Buyisile Maseko	Ministry of Education	College Librarian	Swaziland
Collin Malaza	Central Bank of Swaziland	Research Librarian	Swaziland
Jack Motebejane	Africa Institute of South Africa	Deputy Director	South Africa
Samson Kubanja	National Assembly of Zambia	Senior Registry Officer	Zambia
Ms. Refilwe Motshabi-Chikondenji	Botswana National Library Service	Principal Librarian	Botswana

Ms. Mpho Likhang	Lesotho Agricultural Research Department	Librarian	Lesotho
Jerome C. Kwesha	Celtel Zambia PLC	Regulatory Affairs Officer	Zambia
Vimbai Hungwe	ITOCA	Senior Programme Officer - Training	South Africa
Gracian Chimwaza	ITOCA	Executive Director	South Africa
Justin Chisenga	FAO Regional Office for Africa	Information Management Specialist	Ghana

## Annex 2 - Programme

### Seminar on Meeting Information and Knowledge Needs of Farmers in Africa through e-Agriculture

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#### PROGRAMME

**Chairman:** Vimbabi Hungwe, Senior Programme Officer – Training, ITOCA, South Africa

08:30 - 09:00hrs	Arrival and registration of participants
09:00 - 09:30hrs	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Introduction of participants</li><li>- Justin Chisenga, President, IAALD Africa Chapter</li><li>- Gracian Chimwaza – Executive Director, ITOCA, South Africa</li><li>- Mutukelwa Mukelabai - Head, National Agricultural Information Service, Lusaka, Zambia</li></ul>
09:30 - 09:55hrs	<i>FAO's Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network (VERCON) initiative</i> , Justin CHISENGA, Information Management Specialist, FAO, Accra, <b>Ghana</b>
09:55 - 10:20hrs	<i>Telecommunications Evolution, ICT Sector Policies and Regulatory Governance - Role in Agriculture</i> , Chabuka Jerome KAWESHA, Regulatory Affairs Manager, Celtel Zambia Plc, Lusaka, <b>Zambia</b>
10:20 - 10:30hrs	Discussion/Questions and Answers
10:30 - 10:50hrs	Tea/Coffee Break & Networking
10:50 - 11:15hrs	<i>Improving Access to published scholarly literature in Africa: AGORA, HINARI, OARE and TEEAL programs</i> – Gracian CHIMWAZA, Director, ITOCA, Centurion, <b>South Africa</b>
11:15 - 11:40hrs	<i>Using ICTs for Managing Network Genebanks: The Case of SADC Plant Genetic Resources Centre</i> - Barnabas W. KAPANGE, SADC-PGRC, Lusaka, <b>Zambia</b>
11:40 – 11:55hrs	Discussion/Questions and Answers
11:55 - 12:20hrs	<i>Benefiting from convergence: Increasing Importance of ICT in the Delivery of Information to Farmers</i> - Clemence R. NAMPONYA, Director, Library and Information Services, University of the Free State, <b>South Africa</b>
12:20 - 13:00hrs	Discussion/Questions and Answers

13:00 - 14:00hrs	Lunch/Break & Networking
14:00 - 14:25hrs	<i>Applications of ICTs in Managing, Sharing and Delivery of Agriculture Information – Case of ZARI Davy Simumba, Senior Analyst, Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, Chilanga, <b>Zambia</b></i>
14:25 - 14:50hrs	<i>Meeting the Challenges of Rural Development through ICTs, Joseph SEKIKU, FADECO, <b>Tanzania</b></i>
14:50 - 15:20hrs	Discussion/Questions and Answers
15:20 - 15:45hrs	<i>The e-Agriculture Initiative: Sharing of Innovative Experiences - Justin CHISENGA, Information Management Specialist, FAO, Accra, <b>Ghana</b></i>
15:45 – 16:00hrs	Discussion/Questions and Answers/Way Forward
16:00 – 16:15hrs	Closing tea/coffee break

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*1 August 2008*