AODIRF-GODAN DIGITAL FORUM

THEME: “SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL/DIGITAL INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES”

Part of the Food Convergence Innovation-Africa Initiative

3 December 2020 at 1pm UTC +00, Webinar

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

With the unprecedented speed and connectivity that defines 21st century society, food is playing a central role in enabling wellbeing and prosperity at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. Equally, hunger persists for more than 690 million people, where food insecurity is undermining prospects for accessing these opportunities and accelerating a vicious cycle of malnutrition and environmental degradation. As the world’s population grows to around 10 billion by 2050, the global agriculture-food system is under pressure to provide sufficient supply and equitable access to nutritious food in ways that can be sustained economically and environmentally.

The onset of COVID19 has been characterized as, ‘mutually exacerbating catastrophes’. The escalating impacts of the Pandemic and the Pandemic response over the past year have brought into sharper focus the interconnectedness of all facets of human, economic and planetary health, and the imperative of investing in a Whole-of-Society collaborative effort to meet the intractable development challenges espoused by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Pandemic is only the most recent of increasingly frequent extreme adverse events arising from cumulative 1st-industrial-revolution externalities like climate change, inequity, food insecurity, and physical and mental chronic diseases that narrow our room for maneuver for any one sector to solve their immediate challenges.

Achieving food security and ending all forms of malnutrition through sustainable agriculture and making markets work is a global priority for the UN in the next 10 years, as enshrined in the SDG 2: Ending Hunger. Achieving this goal is further propelled in sub-Saharan Africa through commitments to the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and Africa’s policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security and nutrition, economic growth and prosperity for all: The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

Activating policies and commitments to achieve these goals is no simple task. It means sustainably increasing agricultural productivity, while creating more resilient food production systems, and shaping more accessible and equitable markets, replacing simple economic convergence by convergence economy. In convergence economy, adequate supply of, demand for, and equitable access to, and consumption of safe and nutritious food that directly tap into
possibilities for improving the health of people and that of the planet, while preserving biodiversity and containing healthcare costs and supporting farm-anchored economic growth.

The role of digital strategies embedded into investment made in behavioral change and ecosystem transformation including supercomputing infrastructure, are key to support a Convergence Economy in sub-Saharan Africa is key, both for modeling complexity and embracing solution portfolios, as well as for the speed of transmission of information that enables adaptive learning and iteration around solutions in our highly dynamic contexts. Digital technology and strategies to embed them in how we live and work can establish the connective tissue that help break-down barriers between sectors and how individuals interact with them. This digital revolution is reshaping the way individuals live and work fundamentally, and there is optimism regarding the opportunities Industry 4.0 may offer for sustainability.

**Sustainable and Equitable Agricultural Development**

National developments and agricultural and food systems policies explicitly acknowledge the need to transform and modernize agriculture in order to achieve food security, create jobs and protect the environment. In a global economy that is increasingly knowledge and information driven, open data is more than just a tool for IT specialists. Impacts from open data can be realized throughout our food systems from agricultural to consumer choices to their health, wellbeing and productivity, and include:

- enabling more efficient and effective decision making by stakeholders at all levels, from smallholder farmers to policymakers;
- fostering innovation that everyone can benefit from – as a raw material for creating new services, insights, and applications;
- driving organizational and sector change through transparency in food production chains, and by openly measuring progress against targets.

Governments can play a pivotal role by publishing their own relevant datasets, making sure they are ready for reuse, and providing an enabling environment that encourages responsible data collection and publishing by other data suppliers. The development of policy, strategies and investment plans is foundational to realizing the many benefits of open data for food, nutrition, agriculture and planetary health, and how they interface with other forms of data used across sectoral boundaries.
Forum Aims and Objectives

The aim of this virtual forum is to bring together key actors in the agricultural, technological and financial sector across the continent to discuss within the food and agricultural development priorities, investment policies and strategic planning that promotes a economic convergence that reinforces a resilient food system built on sustainable agriculture production, improved food and nutrition security, employment opportunities and reduced poverty in the context of pandemics, and how we can fully improve frameworks and showcase best practices and innovative solution in the attainment of the Agenda 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Three main objectives:

1. Discuss mobilizing investment that drives linkages of food and agricultural development and open data priorities to intersectoral data policies, and strategies and investment plans across the entire agricultural-food value chain, using food safety as the entry-point. This includes identifying priorities for national governments as well as its key stakeholders, and the opportunities that regional and global initiatives provide for leveraging AU policy priorities and the sustainable development agenda.

2. Discuss the real-world use cases strategic planning and examples for countries to consider and emulate.

3. Promoting collaboration, knowledge sharing and exchange and collective action among local, national, regional and global stakeholders in agriculture and nutrition

Policy questions:

1. Question: What drives your organization’s digital investment strategy for sustainable and productive agriculture?
2. Question: How important is the release, use and reuse of data for a sustainable agri-food sector?
3. Question: How can digital tech help prevent future agri-food systems disruptions shall another pandemic or other similar event occur in the future?
4. Question: How should digital investments aiming at agri-food be linked to other sectorial investments?
5. Question: How can Governments (and donors) further coordinate/guide digital investments in agri-food?
Expected outputs

It is anticipated that this digital forum will lead to:

- Enhanced understanding and awareness on how investment priorities for economic convergence can help achieve the objective of the SDG2 and AU development priorities.
- Identification of key financial and investment elements and issues in the development of a sustainable agri-food ecosystem, trade and the digital economy.
- Enhanced sharing of strategies amongst developing countries on addressing and leveraging the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic towards accelerating the continent’s agricultural and digital transformation.
- Increased commitment and mobilization of partnerships to support the full implementation of the African Union’s Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030);
- Convergence: generate evidence to respond to public/private sector organizations/corporations etc. need to develop services and products that have potential to prevent and control pandemic prone infectious diseases/food contamination and grow a sustainable and equitable economy.

Speakers (in order of appearance):

- Mr. Wisdom Donkor, CEO AGDIC/AODIRF
- Mr. Andre Laperriere, Executive Director GODAN
- Dr. Laurette Dubé, Dir. McGill University MCCHE
- Dr. Matieyetu (Abdu) Konlambique (IITA)
- Dr. Ranajit Bandyopadhyay (IITA)
- Dr. Shawn Brown, CEO Pittsburgh Supercomputing Centre
- Dr. Raja Sengupta (McGill University)
- Martins Awofisayo, Managing Director HIL Industries
- Dr. Steven Adler, CEO Ocean Data Alliance/IBM Chief Data Scientist (Ret.)
- Dr. Ralph B. Manyara, Head Breeding Automation & Pipeline Connection, BAYER
- AU/AfDB/WB: Tbc
- Dr. Francis Boachie, deputy CITO, University of Ghana Supercomputing Centre

Targeted participants

Participants to the webinar will be from the representatives from the African Governments and Private Sector, Financial sector, Civil Society Organizations, Agribusiness Association, Trade Association, Non-governmental Organizations, Ambassadors, think-tanks, Academia.

Venue, dates and language
The webinar will be virtual (zoom) and will take place on Thursday 3 December 2020 at 1pm UTC +00. The panel discussion will be conducted in English and French.

**Registration links**
For registration and participation kindly register with the following website:  [www.aodirf.org](http://www.aodirf.org)

**Information**
All information/question relating to this webinar should be communicated to Mr. Kwaku Antwi (E-mail: okantwi@gmail.com)

**Summary of proposed agenda (with timing in minutes):**

1. **Introductions and Opening Remarks**
   GODAN/McGill (15) – set scene for convergence economy and enabling food systems in context of commitments to digital transformation in Africa

2. **Panel 1: IITA/Pittsburgh SCC, McGill: Use case of Food Safety as Entry point for Private Sector Engagement in creation of FCI ecosystem**
   What is current state, where are gaps? Show importance of integration and concerted multi-sector approach to address gaps (e.g. digital data, institutionalizing FCI thinking) – How can digital architecture address gaps and catalyze concerted approach to FCI ecosystem building for improved trade and social impact? (25 min + discussion 15 min)

3. **Panel 2: Multi-sector/jurisdiction investment, capacity building in Food systems digital transformation**
   WB, IBM, Bayer, (EU-AU Digital Task Force?), Ghana supercomputing – Anchoring with existing relevant initiatives and policy commitments and investment in e-commerce: How will action contribute to SDGs and how to mobilize investment (segue to agro-ecology and climate finance) How to ensure interface between open data and other sector/privately held data? (30 min + discussion 15 min)

4. **Closing**
   GODAN - AODIRF (10)
## DETAILED AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:50 – 12:59 +00</td>
<td>Zoom login / Networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>01:00 – 01:18 +00</td>
<td><strong>EMCEE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Welcome Remarks (3min): Wisdom Donkor, CEO AGDIC/AODIRF</td>
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<td>- Joint Keynote: Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition as Key enabler of Convergence Economy In Africa</td>
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<td>- Andre Laperriere (GODAN)</td>
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<td>- Laurette Dube (McGill)</td>
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<td><strong>Rapporteur:</strong> Akinremi Peter Taiwo, CEO, Africa Rapporteur network</td>
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<td>1:18 - 1:20 +00</td>
<td><strong>EMMCEE Acknowledgement</strong></td>
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<td>1:20 – 1:45 +00</td>
<td><strong>High Level Panel 1 Discussion (25 min): Food safety, FCI and Private Sector</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator:</strong> Kwaku Antwi, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation&lt;br&gt;<strong>Speakers:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. IITA&lt;br&gt;2. HARVESTFIELD INDUSTRIES LIMITED&lt;br&gt;3. McGill University&lt;br&gt;4. Pittsburgh Supercomputing Centre&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussants (15min):</strong>&lt;br&gt;We do have some discussants in the room and they will share their own perspective, based on their experiences and the lessons they've learnt developing and implementing various policies and initiatives with regards to the topics been discussed.&lt;br&gt;1. Lucy Akua Kyerede Quainoo, Agribusiness Value Chain Federation, Ghana&lt;br&gt;<strong>Rapporteur:</strong> Akinremi Peter Taiwo, CEO, Africa Rapporteur network</td>
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<td>01:45 – 2:00 +00</td>
<td><strong>Presentation:</strong> Recommendations, Rapporteur General</td>
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<td>2:00 - 2:30</td>
<td><strong>High Level Panel 2 Discussion (30 min): Multi sector/jurisdiction investment, capacity building and digital transformation</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator:</strong> Kwaku Antwi, Africa Open Data and Internet Research Foundation&lt;br&gt;<strong>Speakers:</strong>&lt;br&gt;1. World Bank&lt;br&gt;2. IBM/Ocean Data Alliance&lt;br&gt;3. BAYER&lt;br&gt;4. Ghana Supercomputing Centre&lt;br&gt;<strong>Discussants (15min):</strong>&lt;br&gt;We do have some discussants in the room and they will share their own perspective, based on their experiences and the lessons they've learnt developing and implementing various policies and initiatives with regards to the topics been discussed.&lt;br&gt;1. Name (tbc)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Rapporteur:</strong> Akinremi Peter Taiwo, CEO, Africa Rapporteur network</td>
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<td>2:45 - 2:55</td>
<td><strong>Recommendations</strong> : Rapporteur(s)</td>
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<td>2:55 +3:00</td>
<td><strong>Conclusions/closing remarks:</strong> GODAN, AODIRF</td>
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