



Ahead of the 2019 African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF), Africa Urged to Embrace Digital Technologies to Improve its Agriculture

- Ghana announced as the host of the 2019 AGRF
- DFID, Corteva, USAID and UPL join the AGRF group of partners

Accra, Ghana, April 16, 2019 – Rapid growth in digital innovations and an inclusive agricultural transformation have been at the heart of Africa’s sustained economic growth witnessed in the past two decades. The continent’s economy grew by 35 percent between 2000 and 2014 and poverty rates are falling, with the percentage of people living on less than \$1.90 a day declining from 54 percent in 1990 to 41 percent in 2013.

Now, the continent has been urged to take full advantage of the digital technologies to drive an agricultural transformation that will revolutionise life by overcoming isolation, speeding up change, creating more and decent jobs of the future, and taking success to scale with a sight at inclusion.

This call was made today at the official announcement of Ghana as this year’s host of the annual global agricultural forum, the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) to be held later in the year, 3-6 September.

Now in its 9th edition, the AGRF is considered the world’s premier forum for African agriculture. It pulls together stakeholders in the agricultural landscape to take practical actions and share lessons that will move African agriculture forward.

Organized under the leadership of H.E. President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, AGRF 2019 theme will be: **“Grow Digital: Leveraging Digital Transformation to Drive Sustainable Food Systems in Africa.”**

Under this theme, the Forum will look at how to harness digital technologies that have witnessed an unprecedented growth and adoption ushering in an era of disruptive innovation, knowledge economies and big agri-data. For example, mobile-based technologies have become an integral part of life in most parts of Africa with more than 44 percent of sub-Saharan Africans on mobile phone subscriptions. It is projected that there will be 634 million unique mobile subscribers across Sub-Saharan Africa by 2025, over 50 percent of the population.

Speaking at launch event in the Ghanain capital Accra, Hon. Dr. Owusu Afriyie Akoto Ghana’s Minister of Food and Agriculture said; “Ghana is delighted to host this year’s AGRF; the first country to host the Forum twice since we last held it here in 2010 when the Forum moved to Africa. The Forum will provide us with an opportunity to share with and learn from our peers on the use of digital technologies to accelerate agricultural growth.”

“The Government has prioritized agriculture through increased budget allocation and the development of flagship projects like the Planting for Food and Jobs that is transforming our agriculture. AGRF will be an opportunity to scale this up,” added Hon. Dr. Owusu Afriyie Akoto.



H.E. Lionel Zinsou, Former Prime Minister of Benin and member of the Board of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) which hosts the AGRF Secretariat said that Africa has seen unprecedented growth and adoption of digital technologies and has an opportunity to leapfrog the agricultural transformation trajectory of the past.

“Digital technologies are playing crucial role in agriculture by connecting farmers with services and information they need. This is especially critical for the youth who are digitally savvy and finding opportunities to engage in agriculture at a place of their passion. Our role is to ensure that they are supported to move these technologies to scale. This is what the AGRF will seek to do by identifying and catalyzing the enabling policies, programs, and investments to leverage digital transformation to drive sustainable food systems in Africa.”

The Forum will take stock, evaluate actions, and learn from compelling evidence across the continent, presented by many of the most inspiring leaders, including young people, turning agriculture into thriving enterprises. Farmers will demonstrate how the use of technology and better farming methods is able to transform entire communities and nations; Ghana’s and other public sector thought leaders will share experiences in delivering policies and investments to advance jobs and food security; while private sector champions and agripreneurs will showcase their efforts in innovation and opening up scalable and sustainable market opportunities in Africa’s evolving food systems. The Forum will also look at critical climate change adaptation and resilience actions that should be taken to promote resilience in the face of climate change and other emerging threats.

Ghana was selected as the host for this year’s Forum due to its agricultural leadership on the continent by placing agricultural transformation at the centre of its economic transformation and for adopting a digitalization and pro-technology strategy. Through its Planting for Foods and Jobs (PFJ) strategy, the country has benefitted from bumper harvest enabling it to export food such as maize, sorghum, cowpea, plantain and yam to Burkina Faso and Cote d’Ivoire. The campaign also created over, 790,000 jobs in 2018 against 745,000 in the previous year.

Media Contacts:

Ghana Ministry of Food and Agriculture

Issah Alhassan at donphlavour@yahoo.com or 0208602970/0555056700

AGRF

Waiganjo Njoroge, Interim Head of Communication, AGRA at wnjoroge@agra.org or Tel. No: +254 723 857 270 (Nairobi).

About the AGRF

AGRF is a partnership of institutions that care about Africa’s agriculture transformation. The AGRF Partners Group is made up of a coalition of 21 leading actors in African agriculture all focused on putting farmers at the center of the continent’s growing economies. Partners currently include the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank, the African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP), the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Corteva, the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Grow Africa, the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Mastercard Foundation, NEPAD Agency, OCP Group, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), Syngenta, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), UPL, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and Yara International ASA.

