

**REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**



**PRIME MINISTER**

**PRIME MINISTER**

**Dr. Edouard Ngirente**

**Keynote address at the African Green Revolution  
Forum (AGRF) 2019**

**Theme: “Grow Digital: Leveraging Digital  
Transformation to Drive Sustainable Food Systems  
in Africa”**

**Accra, Ghana | 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

- **Your Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana,**
- **Your Excellency, Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of the Republic of Togo,**
- **Your Excellency, Mouhamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger,**
- **Your Excellency, Yemi Osinbajo, Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,**
- **Excellencies Former Heads of State and Government,**
- **Honourable Ministers, here present,**
- **Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President of AGRA and AGRF Secretariat,**
- **Representatives of international organisations,**
- **Development partners,**
- **Distinguished Participants,**

**Good morning,**

- 1.**It is my great pleasure and honour to attend this African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) 2019 representing H.E. Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda. I wish to convey to you all his warm greetings and best wishes for a successful meeting here in Accra.
  
- 2.**I wish to sincerely thank H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana for hosting this forum. I warmly appreciate the hospitality extended to us and also recognize the tireless work done by the organizers of this forum.
  
- 3.**This African green revolution forum is an important platform. It gathers agriculture stakeholders to discuss and deliberate on how to increase efforts to grow digital as a means to drive sustainable food systems in Africa. My remarks will focus on how to leverage digitalization to drive agricultural transformation.

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**4.**Besides agriculture illiteracy, the African food system faces other challenges ranging from input supply to production and commercialization of agriculture output. Therefore, the current food security situation in Africa is worrying with about 21% of the population (more than 256 million people) facing undernutrition.

**5.**To improve the food system, African heads of State and Government adopted the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation. This Declaration sets the Africa 2025 Vision for Agriculture which is implemented within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) as a vehicle to achieve the First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Africa's Agenda 2063.

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**6.**The digitalization of processes and information sharing through mobile technologies, the Internet, big data and analytics, as well as drones among others; has proven to play a big role in agriculture transformation. The associated benefits are observed in terms of agriculture business intelligence, creation of new types of jobs, improvement of access to agriculture information, knowledge and markets.

**7.**Specifically, the use of ICT, digital tools and services can impact the following agriculture areas:

- **Fertilizers:** Africa should endeavour to apply efficiently mineral fertilizers. In this regard, ICT applications support in educating farmers, in supply chain management, reducing cost; and weighing the required quantities to apply according to the soil composition.

- Reduction of post-harvest losses: digital tools contribute in the reduction of post-harvest losses by linking farmers with buyers through awareness and supporting in keeping quality products in warehouses monitored through sensors.
- Youth in agriculture: digital tools can be used in attracting youth in agriculture through social media campaigns. Also, there are job opportunities in the agriculture that the youth can tap in.
- Agriculture literacy: ICT can be leveraged in building the needed capacities for farmers through customized education applications.
- Stunting: The application of technologies in agriculture results in the increased quality and quantity of food production. Specific ICT applications help citizens to have access to information related to a better understanding of a balanced diet.

**8.**To leverage the digitalization in the transformation of agriculture, Governments need to ensure affordable access to ICT, digital literacy and development of local contextualized content. Therefore, there is a need to prioritize the creation of skilled human capital. In addition, support should be given to young entrepreneurs with promising agriculture tech-start-ups while continuing to set the required ICT infrastructure.

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**9.**In Rwanda, besides policies and strategies developed, the government continues to do reforms and investments per the undertaken digital transformation journey. The fibre optic was extended across the country reaching all district offices and all border posts. The 4G LTE (Long-Term Evolution) population coverage has reached 96%, while mobile phone penetration is 74.78% as of June 2019 and 52% of Internet subscribers.

**10.** There are also service access points or tele-centres across districts that allow citizens to get access to digital services. Under the digital talent policy, the digital ambassadors' program is being implemented to increase the general citizens' digital literacy to allow Rwandans to effectively use ICT and digital tools in their daily lives.

**11.** In the agriculture sector, in the 4th edition of the Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA4) [2018-2024], the agriculture sector digitalization has a paramount importance. ICT has a preeminent place in the strategy being in agricultural input supply, production; and commercialization of output.

**12.** In leveraging digitalization to drive agriculture transformation, Rwanda in partnership with various stakeholders developed the following applications:

- Agricultural Land Information System (ALIS): a web platform that allow us to visually map

public land available for investment and private plots with at least 1 hectare, and provides details on plot size, general soil type, proximity to infrastructure and agro-climatic conditions. This application is also accessible online.

- Weather and Crop calendar: is a mobile application designed to provide farmers with information on weather forecasts and crop calendars.
- SMART Nkunganire: is a mobile phone application accessible to farmers both offline and online, and that helps farmers to register and access subsidized fertilizers and other agriculture inputs.
- Agriculture Management Information System (MIS): allows us to track the implementation of the strategic and operational plans by capturing monthly information on different indicators in a decentralized manner.

- Cure and Feed your livestock: which provides to livestock owners with real-time information on animal disease control and animal feeding strategies.
- Agri-Marketplace: is an application that connects producers and traders to facilitate trade and access to price information. It offers farmers with details on best providers of inputs and best marketplaces to sell their products, as well as market prices.
- Agriculture Data Warehouse: this is a system being developed, that will serve as a centre of integrated data from various agriculture IT systems, for data analytics and forecast.

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**13.**With all these mentioned efforts, Rwanda attests the major role of digitalization in enabling the transformation of the agriculture value chain. For instance, we are now able to digitally trace the

demand and supply of input like fertilizers, and seeds across the country; also farmers' access to agriculture information and markets. We have noticed that with all these tools, the agriculture value chain management have improved.

**14.**Despite all this achievements, the journey to transform agriculture continues. There are still some rooms for improvement in regards to harmonization and better coordination to ensure sustainability of positive impact. We need also to continue strengthening collaboration with private sector in order to keep increasing citizen access to digital infrastructure, digital literacy, and creation of relevant digital content.

**15.**To conclude, I would like to reiterate that the digitalization is of a paramount importance to drive agriculture transformation and sustainable food systems in Africa. Therefore, let us invest in the required infrastructure and systems, human capital development, promote African innovations, and

improve agriculture processes and services, to feed Africa and fight malnutrition and stunting on the continent.

**16.** With these remarks, I thank you once again for your kind attention.