

PAFO-COLEACP INNOVATION SERIES: Innovations and successes of African farmer-led businesses and SMEs

Session N°2
Grow local: Conquering local markets
21st January 2021, 12h00-14h00 (GMT/UTC)

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

Debisi ARABA – Managing Director, AGRF, Kenya

In 2020, Debisi joined AGRA from the CGIAR system, where he has served for the past four years as the Africa Region Director at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT).



At CIAT, he helped lead the institution's mission to increase prosperity and improve human nutrition in Africa through research-based solutions in agriculture and the environment. Prior to CIAT, he held other roles as the Senior Manager, African policy engagement, with the CGIAR research program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), and as the Senior Technical Adviser on Environmental Policy to the Nigerian Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

In addition to his institutional roles, he is a recognized thought leader across the African agricultural sector. He serves as a member of the *Montpellier Malabo Panel* of experts working together to enhance African and European government support of national and regional agricultural development and food security priorities in Africa. He has also served as a member of the Advisory Committee of the *African Leaders for Nutrition* and as a member of the *New Vision for Agriculture Transformation Leaders Network* of the World Economic Forum.

Debisi holds a Doctorate degree from the Centre for Environmental Policy, Imperial College London, a Masters in Public Administration from the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, a Masters in Clean Technology from the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, and a Bachelors degree in Physical Geography from the University of Ibadan.

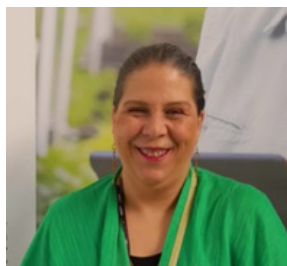
Komi AGBOKOU – President and Founder, Choco Togo

After completing his Master's degree in Health Psychology at the University of Lomé in 2001, Komi Agbokou enrolled at the University of Tübingen in Germany for a PhD. He then made the choice to return to Togo and support employment creation and entrepreneurship. In 2007, he became the Founding President of the association *Enfant-Développement-Développement (EFD)*, supporting youth education and work in the energy sector with the project «Sole Africano» providing affordable solar kits.



Komi created in 2013, the cooperative *CHOCOTOGO*, which specializes in the processing and added-value of certified organic cocoa beans (with Ecocert and Fairtrade certifications) in Akébou region. It employs 60 part-time women at the Kpalimé production site and 15 young people at the production site in Lomé. *CHOCOTOGO* has received numerous awards including the first prize of «Best Young Company in 2015», the prize of «Young Agricultural Entrepreneur» at Expo Milano in 2015. The cooperative was also named «Success» of the Francophonie in 2016. Komi Agbokou is also treasurer of the Interprofessional Council of the coffee-cocoa sector of Togo (CCOC-Togo) and secretary of the association of transformers of coffee-cocoa sector of Togo (ATCC).

Fatma BEN REJEB – CEO, Panafrican Farmers Organisation (PAFO)



Fatma Ben Rejeb has been working with farmers organisations for more than 20 years. She began her involvement in land and legal affairs with farmers and their grassroots organizations. Subsequently, she held the administrative and financial management then the international cooperation and the partnership management at the Tunisian national farmers organization. She has been Director of the North African Farmers' Network, UMNAGRI. Fatma received a Diploma of Advanced Studies in Political Science, a Masters in Juridical

Sciences and a Certificate of Specialized Studies in Political and International Studies. She is fluent in Arabic, French, English, Italian and basic knowledge in Spanish.

Isolina BOTO – Head of Networks and Alliances, COLEACP

Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEACP, a non-profit Association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the EU, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions.

Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission and has also worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEACP, she was the Manager of the CTA Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of agricultural and rural development. She has led agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of SMEs, entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.



Bertille Guèdègbé MARCOS - Les Jus Tillou, Benin



Ms. Bertille GUEDEGBE Agricultural engineer decided to create her own pineapple production company in 2000 after 15 years of work in a design office.

In 2000, she started her pineapple production project on 1 Ha thanks to the income generated by the sales of corn and cassava.

Today, with more than 20 years of experience in the pineapple sector, she is at the head of 2 companies specializing in the production and processing of pineapples into juice, dried fruits intended for local, sub-regional and international market (LES FRUITS TILLOU SARL and its subsidiary LES JUS TILLOU SA). These companies and production units have obtained various certifications in recent years (global gap, organic for the European and American market, fair trade, HACCP, ISO22000 in progress). She works with a network of more than 1,600 producers. Thanks to her involvement in the pineapple sector, in 2020 Benin obtained its Protected Geographical Identity (PGI) which is a real recognition of its quality among the various varieties of pineapple in the world.

Jeremy KNOPS – General Delegate, COLEACP

Jeremy holds a Master’s degree in Business Engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM). Prior to joining COLEACP in 2009, he was involved in Guatemala with the daily operations of a farmers’ cooperative exporting loquats to the EU and the US. He started to work for COLEACP as an expert in charge of matters related to private standards and certification for ACP producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Jeremy is an accredited coach for leadership and professional development. He has been appointed as General Delegate of COLEACP in June 2019.



Catherine KROBO EDUSEI – Managing Director, Eden Tree Limited, Ghana



Catherine Krobo-Edusei is the founder and managing director of Eden Tree, a Ghanaian company specialized in the production and marketing of high-end fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs in Ghana.

Catherine started the company in 1997, on her return to Ghana from the UK, where she worked in the banking sector for ten years after graduating in Business Administration at Camden College.

She is nationally recognized in Ghana as a strong promoter of women in business and received the 2013 national award from the Chartered Institute of Marketing in Ghana for “outstanding contribution towards nation-building”.

Elizabeth NSIMADALA – President, Panafrican Farmers Organisation (PAFO)

Elizabeth Nsimadala is a Ugandan young agriprenuer, the President of the Pan Africa Farmers Organization (PAFO) and the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF). She was recently appointed on the Advisory committee for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, serves on the Global steering committee for Forest Farm Facility (FFF), is a Governing Council member for Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism (AFFM) and sits on the steering committee of Pan Africa Agribusiness Apex Chamber (PAAAC) among others. She is



a passionate cooperator who with others spearheaded the push to have the regional law on cooperatives - The East Africa Cooperative Societies Bill 2015 through the East Africa Legislative Assembly which awaits ascent by the EAC Heads of states. Elizabeth is also a farmer champion who has been at the fore front of championing farmer led agriculture technology and innovation through the EAFF farmers' owned eGranary mobile initiative that virtually aggregates farmers for input, service and output markets. As a result of her efforts in supporting Farmers Organizations, she was Globally recognized by the World Farmers Organization as one of the women contributing to sustainable development.

Escipión OLIVEIRA GOMEZ – Assistant Secretary-General, Dept Sustainable Economic Transformation and Trade, Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)



Escipión Oliveira joined the OACPS in July 2020 as Assistant Secretary-General in charge of the Department of Structural Economic Transformation and Trade. Prior to his appointment and since 2011, he was the Deputy Executive Director of Caribbean Export Agency.

Mr. Oliveira is a national of the Dominican Republic with over 20 years of experience in the development, management, supervision and evaluation of multi-donor programs and projects for the creation and strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and intermediary organizations (IOs) in developing countries.

Mr. Oliveira holds a master's degree in business administration with a specialization in finance and has a graduate degree in business from «Catholic University of Leuven «(UCL) (Belgium) as well as a bachelor's degree in economics from the» Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo».

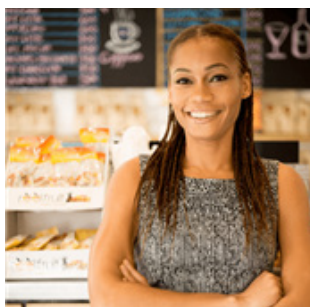
Dimitry VAN RAEMDONCK – Fund Manager, EDFI AgriFI

Dimitry is an experienced impact investment professional, passionate about entrepreneurship and development. In 2018, he joined AgriFI, an EU-funded blending facility in agri-business in developing countries, as Fund Manager. AgriFI is managed by the EDFI Management Company, an asset management company established by the 15 European DFIs, also managing other facilities such as ElectriFI. Prior to that, Dimitry has worked for the Belgian Development Finance Institution (BIO) for 12 years as an investment officer, and later as team leader of the direct investment department. He started his career as a consultant in strategy and corporate finance, focusing on fast growing SMEs. Dimitry holds a Master Degree in business administration from the Solvay Business School in Brussels.



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Affiong WILLIAMS – Founder & CEO, Reelfruit, Nigeria



Affiong Williams is the CEO/ Founder of ReelFruit the largest fruit processing, packaging and marketing company in Nigeria. The company, founded in 2012, retails a range of dried fruit and nut snacks through a variety of channels including over 450 Supermarkets, Airlines, Schools, Hotels, and concluding export sales via Amazon.com ReelFruit is an award-winning brand, winning both an international Women In Business Competition in the Netherlands. She has also recognized by Forbes Magazine as one of the most promising '30 under 30' entrepreneurs in 2015. Affiong is passionate about agribusiness and looking at innovative, market-driven solutions to add value to local produce given Nigeria's unique agricultural landscape.

Affiong Williams obtained a post graduate diploma in Business Administration from Wits Business School, Johannesburg, South Africa. In 2018, she also participated in the Stanford SEED Transformation Program- Stanford Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies. She worked for 4 years for Endeavor Global, a global non-profit which catalyzes economic development by supporting small to medium enterprises in developing markets. Affiong is passionate in unearthing the job and wealth creation potential of agribusiness and global trade.