



partageons les connaissances au profit des communautés rurales  
sharing knowledge, improving rural livelihoods

***For immediate release***

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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

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### **E-Learning in Agriculture Top CTA Priority**

**Wageningen, The Netherlands, 26 May 2011** - The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) in collaboration with its partners, has been and will continue to champion and facilitate innovative e-learning solutions in agriculture, said Mr Rodger Obubo, CTA's representative at the e-Learning Africa Conference being held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, 26-28 May 2011. The conference is the largest gathering of eLearning and ICT supported education and training professionals in Africa, enabling participants to develop multinational and cross-industry contacts and partnerships, as well as to enhance their knowledge, expertise and abilities.

"CTA supports several needs-based e-learning initiatives that have attracted much interest from ACP countries and our partners. CTA's strategic plan 2011-2015 also emphasizes e-learning using distance learning platforms and using digital libraries and will support development of policies that promote digital and open access to information", said Obubo.

In conjunction with the University of Pretoria, CTA conducts online courses on research methodology and veterinary communication and extension which involve assignments and sharing through chat sessions. The research methodology course involves planning research projects, experimental design, data collection and analysis, presentations and writing skills to enhance agricultural research capacity. Enhancement of research capacity will help to address numerous challenges in effectively satisfying the food and nutrition needs of ACP's growing population and in meeting the requirements for competing in global markets.

CTA is also conducting a series of face-to-face Web 2.0 technologies training to improve the access and use of online resources and collaborative generation of agricultural research content among CTA partners in Africa. CTA also supports innovative projects aimed at facilitating access to relevant information by farmers using mobile applications such as mobile phones.

Together with FAO and other partners, CTA is developing online learning modules in a series called Information **MA**nagement **R**esource **K**it (IMARK) in order to provide an interactive learning environment

in which information professionals can learn new concepts and approaches for effective information management. In doing this, CTA and partners intend to build online communities and networks with online facilitation competence. The online Training Kit for Participatory Spatial Information Management and Communication is a product of another CTA initiative that will be used by PGIS practitioners for training and other professional work. With a Creative Commons license, its content can be used and republished as required by our development partners. CTA has also championed 'blended learning', which involves a combination of any form of instructional technology (e.g., videotape, CD-ROM, Web-based training,) and face-to-face instructor-led training, with tremendous success.

## **Ends**

### **About CTA and e-learning**

The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) was established within the framework of a co-operation agreement between the African Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Union, referred to as the Lomé Convention, in order to improve the management of agricultural information in ACP countries. The Centre seeks to establish fora for promoting dialogue and the exchange of information between organisations and professionals in ACP States in order to enhance their technical capacity and skills in information and communication management for agricultural and rural development.

CTA aims to improve the availability of, and access to, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and well-adapted information on priority information topics for ACP agricultural and rural development. CTA also seeks to improve the communication management capacity of ACP agricultural and rural development organizations. Given these objectives, CTA has a very active training programme on information and communication management themes.

### **About eLearning Africa Conference**

eLearning Africa is the Continent's premier annual conference on ICT-enhanced learning. Focusing on youth, skills and employability, this year's conference identified 6 broad themes, each with a range of sub-themes that will contribute to a rich discussion, robust action and informed decision-making. Discussions will focus on the affordability, sustainability and pedagogical integration of ICTs in ways which can improve the learning, living and employment opportunities of young Africans. Mobile learning in health, education and agriculture and Open Educational Resources (OER) feature very highly on the agenda. Given the popularity of OERs, the eLearning Africa Debate will provide a platform for discussions about the controversies surrounding the OER enterprise. With its new and dedicated research stream, eLearning Africa aspires to nurture African research and knowledge in the field of ICTs in education.

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