

CFS Side Event 14: How can data and digital technology support small-holder farmers and enable more equitable, inclusive and sustainable food systems?

14 October 2021 – 12:45 CET

Speakers:

Roldan G. Gorgonio – Undersecretary, Department of Agriculture, the Philippines

Máximo Torero – Chief Economist, FAO

Elsa Simões – Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of Cabo Verde to the Rome Based Agencies

Beatrice Gakuba – Executive Director, African Women Agribusiness Network

Josh Woodward – Senior Digital Advisor, USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security

Viviane Faria – Enterprise Customer and Product Success Manager, Trimble Ag Business Solutions

Kevin McDonnell – Crop Science and Biosystems Engineering, University College Dublin

Jenna Slotin – Senior Director of Policy, Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (moderator)

Organizers: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, US Department of Agriculture, FAO, Digital Agriculture Association

Summary

This side-event addressed the risks and opportunities of using data and digital agricultural technologies for food system transformation with panelists representing the governments of the Philippines and Cabo Verde, FAO, the African Woman Agribusiness Network, USAID, Trimble Ag Business Solutions, and University College Dublin. Panel members discussed what they believe is needed to foster system-wide collaboration, equity, and inclusivity across the food system and how the CFS data workstream can support these processes at the global, national, and regional levels. The discussion centered on the critical role that data plays in climate adaptation and rational decision-making, the vital role internet access and connectivity play in ensuring high-quality data collection, the importance of equity and inclusivity in data governance policies to avoid exacerbating inequalities present in the current food system, and the central role that smallholder farmers and youth play in digital agricultural transformation. Participants also discussed the need to align the international community, donor networks, and national governments with flexible approaches that fit local needs to move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach to digital transformation.