

## Media Partnerships to Promote African Farmers

Wednesday, 09 December 2009

Last Updated Wednesday, 09 December 2009

(source: IPS South Africa)

Almost 80 million smallholder farmers in Africa, supply about 80 percent of its food. In order for Africa to establish a prosperous and sustainable economic future, the voices of its farmers must be amplified.

To enable this, journalists from across the West Africa region attended a media workshop in Accra, Ghana, hosted by Inter Press Service IPS Africa ([www.ipsnews.net/africa](http://www.ipsnews.net/africa)) on behalf of the International Fund for Agricultural Development ([www.ifad.org](http://www.ifad.org)). ABOVE: Terna Gyuse (left), IPS Africa regional Editor introducing guest speaker Mohamed Beavogui, IFAD Director for West and Central Africa region, to participants at the media training workshop.

The workshop aimed to build the capacity of local journalists and editors from West and Central Africa to gain the skills and knowledge they need to report on the food crisis and how it can be solved, particularly with the contribution of smallholder farmers.

This forms part of the activities for the "Communication Campaign on Farmers and the Food Crisis: Focus on West and Central Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean" small grant funded by IFAD.

The goal of this grant is to amplify the voice of farmers by ensuring their needs; perspective, experience and expertise are heard as part of the continuing global debate on rising food prices and how to achieve global food security.

Training was facilitated by IPS Africa's regional Editor Terna Gyuse in collaboration with Farm Radio International ([www.farmradio.org](http://www.farmradio.org)), a Canadian-based, not-for-profit organization working in direct partnership with approximately 300 radio broadcasters in 39 African countries to fight poverty and food insecurity. ABOVE: Ghana Radio News representative Augustina Apik (left) and Teresa Atogyire from Ghana Broadcasting Corporation answer questions from Rite FM radio presenter Owuraku Asamoah (centre) during a mock interview session with participants at the media workshop.

The training was planned to coincide with the IFAD Regional Project Implementation Workshop for West and Central Africa, providing an opportunity for reporters to not only network with IFAD officials but also hear first-hand of the challenges and success of small-holder interventions in the region.

Guest speakers included Mohamed Beavogui IFAD Director for West and Central Africa, who answered critical questions about the "Challenges of Agriculture in West Africa". Participants also appreciated the session on "Web 2.0 Tools for journalists" presented by Roxana Samii.

Annina Lubbock, IFAD's Senior Technical Adviser on Gender and Poverty Targeting, facilitated a discussion on "Gender, Agriculture and Climate Change", and told participants that "a gender perspective and a focus on women's empowerment is essential both to feed the world and for climate change. The majority of farmers, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa are women. Women's contribution to food crops vary between 40 percent in Latin America and up to 80 percent in sub-Saharan Africa", she added.

The bilingual sessions in French and English also included a role-play exercise on interviewing techniques, where participants teamed up with each other during mock interviews.

An IFAD organised field trip on December 4, provided a timely opportunity for participants to meet with farmers at the local celebration of a nation-wide Farmers' Day (public holiday in Ghana).

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