

AFS Forum 2024: Heifer International Makes Case for Catalytic Financing & Technology to Accelerate Africa's Food Systems

The conversation with key stakeholders is on how innovative financing can catalyse tech. integration that enables smallholder farmers to improve productivity.

KIGALI, RWANDA, August 28, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Heifer International](#), a global nonprofit organisation, leveraging technology and innovation, and working with key government and development partners to end hunger and poverty, will engage stakeholders at the Africa Food Systems Forum 2024, ([AFS Forum 2024](#)). The organization will be deepening the conversation with key stakeholders on how innovative financing can catalyse technology integration that enables smallholder farmers to improve productivity.



Speakers at the forum will discuss how technology and innovative finance can transform food systems

The AFS Forum, Africa's leading platform for dialogue and collaboration on food security, holds September 2 – 6 in Kigali, Rwanda. It brings together thousands of industry leaders, policymakers, innovators, development agencies, private sector giants, farmers and agripreneurs to discuss critical challenges and opportunities in Africa's food systems.

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Adesuwa Ifedi

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame will join other world leaders at the event, in a demonstration of the high-level commitment to addressing challenges facing Africa's food systems. Organised by AGRA, the AFS Forum is widely considered the continent's biggest gathering of stakeholders in the agriculture sector. The theme for this

year's event is 'Innovate, Accelerate and Scale: Delivering Food Systems Transformation in a Digital and Climate Era'.

At this year's summit, Heifer International, along with strategic partners, young innovators and smallholder farming organisations within Heifer's ecosystem, will highlight their experiences at various sessions and side events during the summit, in what the organisation hopes will inspire collaborative action and drive change in the area of leveraging innovative financing to accelerate technology integration in agriculture.

Heifer's Mechanisation for Africa project presents an important illustration of the possibilities of a unique model of applying catalytic funding to innovation that drives transformation in agriculture. In a report released earlier this year, the organisation showed how Heifer's innovative financing of a tech-led tractor leasing initiative created by agritech company, Hello Tractor, catalysed the initiative's expansion, unlocking commercial capital, and powering beneficiary smallholder farmers in the pilot phase to over 200% increase in income. The initiative also created over 250 jobs for young Africans as tractor owners, booking agents, tractor operators and technicians.

Adesuwa Ifedi, Senior Vice President, Africa Programs, of Heifer International, said: "We are inspired by the incredible contributions that young visionary African innovators can make towards transforming our food systems and we are actively backing their innovations. Through our various programs, especially AYuTe NextGen, we provide the catalytic financing and market knowledge that these innovators need to iterate and scale their agritech solutions for challenges faced by smallholder farmers.

With the integration of finance and technology, we are able to move smallholder farmers from sustenance to a business, and support them to take their businesses to scale and profitability, while creating much needed new jobs across the value chain for young people.

Working alongside smallholder farmers through this journey has informed our reflections on what is critical to transform Africa's food systems. At this year's AFS forum, we will be engaging with critical partners, stakeholders and policy makers, to continue to deepen this conversation, leveraging on our experience, to fast track the food systems transformation we all seek."

This year, Heifer will be attending the 2024 AFS Forum with several young innovators from six African countries who the organisation has been working with to strengthen their innovations to support smallholder farmers on the continent. Heifer is excited to give an opportunity for generations to connect in agriculture, recognizing that the future of Africa's agriculture will be dependent on the next generation and their capacity to introduce fit for purpose technology and innovation into the sector.

Delegates at the 2024 AFS Forum are expected to spotlight and discuss innovations, technological advances, policies, business models, and investments required to accelerate sustainable food systems transformation in Africa. The gathering also presents public and

private sector leaders another opportunity to discuss the urgent need and modalities of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and meet the Malabo Declaration's commitments by 2025.

About Heifer International

Since 1944, Heifer International has worked with more than 46 million people around the world to end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way. Working with rural communities across Africa for 50 years, Heifer International supports farmers and local food producers to strengthen local economies and build secure livelihoods that provide a living income. Heifer is currently operating in 19 countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas. For more information, visit <https://www.heifer.org>.

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