

# Message to Davos to empower farmers

Ishmael Sunga, SACA CEO, is taking a strong message to Davos, calling for greater global attention to the world's farmers, in particular, smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa in order to improve food security. In the face of major threats and challenges such as low commodity prices and climate change, global demand for food and agriculture products are rapidly increasing.



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The World Economic Forum's 46th Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland takes place this week and brings together over 2,500 world leaders in government, business, civil society and media to discuss global challenges. This year's theme is "Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution". One of the key drivers of this revolution is digital technology, which is creating new capabilities with dramatic and widespread impact across political, social and economic systems.

## Mastering the fourth industrial revolution

"Farmers need to understand and master this fourth industrial revolution. Indeed, digital technology presents perhaps the greatest prospects to revolutionise smallholder agriculture on the widest scale, within the shortest period of time and at the lowest cost. Similarly, farmers' organisations will need to develop digital technological capabilities in order for them to continue to remain relevant to farmers," said Sunga.

"The future belongs to those who are able to harness the potential of information communication technologies (ICTs). Smallholder farmers are increasingly connected through their mobile phones, presenting us with an opportunity to empower them with information. "Information is power, and it is increasingly a crucial source of competitiveness. It is at the core of investment decisions and planning around what to produce, in what quantities, for whom, when, how, and at what cost, as well as effective operations management such as when to irrigate and when to apply fertilizers," he noted.

Sunga will be sharing examples of how the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) is using digital technology to overcome farmer fragmentation. SACAU has successfully piloted a digital aggregation platform, which it is now preparing to roll out. "This platform has been designed by farmers, for farmers," Sunga added.

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