Market Information and UNECA

Where’s the ValueAdded?

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Keynote Address
UNECA Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on
The African Food and Agricultural Market Information Hub (AFAMIH):
A Platform for Strengthening Collaboration between Regional Market
Information Systems in Africa
Addis Ababa – May 9-11, 2011
Objective & Strategy of the Hub

- “Increase regional agricultural trade and food security by improving and linking the existing regional food and agricultural markets information systems efforts in providing marketing services, to generate, disseminate, and make efficient use of market information throughout Africa.”

- “Concentrate on providing support to regional market information systems through key public and private regional organizations on selected commodities with the greatest potential impact on intraregional trade, food security, export and overall economic and social development.”

- Does UNECA have a comparative advantage in doing this?
The Context of AFAMIH

- Importance of agricultural market information to both private & public decision makers, when markets are changing rapidly:
  - Increasing urbanization and income growth → exponential growth in demand for marketing services
  - Liberalization, regionalization, globalization & decentralization
  - Recent food crises and pressures to “bring back the state” (Globalization in Reverse)

- Lack of market information serves as a non-tariff trade barrier

- Mixed private incentives to produce it
The Context of AFAMIH

- ITC revolution
- New market institutions (e.g., weather-based insurance, agricultural exchanges)
- Rediscovery of Agriculture (e.g., CAADP) and role of RECs
- High inland transport costs in Africa → What role for continental vs. subregional trade?
The Context of AFAMIH: African Regional MIS Activities

- COMESA/FAMIS (COMEASA Food and Agricultural Market Information)
  http://famis.comesa.int/home/1/en/

- RATIN (Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN)
  http://www.ratin.net/

- RESIMAO (West-African Market Information Network)
Plethora of Actors in Market Information

- Private actors with their own ICT (e.g., cell phones; Internet)
  - Farmers
  - Traders
  - Agro-businesses
- Various types of MIS:
  - Gov’t supported
  - Farmer-org.
  - NGO-supported
  - Private-sector
  - Mixed models (e.g., ECX)
- RECs – e.g., thru CAADP
- FAO

Use of ICT for social-economic activities by individuals, public structures, & private firms.

The ICT Pyramid
Adapted from Kizito, 2011
Dangers for AFAMIH

- Building a supply-driven rather than demand-driven system ➔ Need to know UNECA’s MIS "customers" and their needs
- Trying to build a regional system on the basis of weak national, subnational & sub-regional systems
- Ignoring what already exists (e.g., regional MIS networks)
- Building a centralized system rather than a support service to more decentralized actors
Where Does UNECA Fit In?

- Facilitating contact among private actors?  
  Unlikely

- Compiling and posting info from MIS and national agricultural statistics agencies?  What can UNECA do better than the FAO?

- Providing technical support?
  - What types?
  - Does UNECA have in-house capacity?
  - If not, is it a more efficient funder of this support than the RECs?
Possible Areas of UNECA Comparative Advantage

- Advocacy for MIS and agricultural statistics support from national governments
- Develop methods to measure MIS impact (cf. work on impact of agricultural research)
- Facilitation of MIS networking across the continent to facilitate mutual learning
Possible Areas of UNECA Comparative Advantage

- Sponsor thematic meetings (including virtual meetings) among MIS on precise topics

- Provide support/technical assistance on outlook, price and policy analysis, including analysis of international market trends & their implications for regional, subregional and national markets
What Can Be Learned from the Market Information Cooperation Network of the Americas?

- Market Information Organization of the Americas (MIOA)
  http://www.mioa.org/english/oima.htm

- MIOA - Strategic Action Plan
  http://www.mioa.org/english/strategicplan.htm

- MIOA - Country-Level Market Information System (MIS) Assessments
  http://www.mioa.org/english/evaluations.htm
Other Ideas?

Let’s get to work!

Thank you!