



Press Release

Low Uptake of Data Blamed for Food Insecurity in Africa.

Accra, July 25, 2017; Low uptake of

The huge disconnect existing between researchers and policy makers is the main cause of food security in Africa, Minister for Monitoring and Evaluation, Dr. Anthony Akoto Osei has said.

Speaking at the first ever “*West Africa Evidence to Action Conference*” on agriculture and food security at the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) in Ghana, Legon, Dr. Osei blamed policy makers for sitting on strategic data that can cushion the continent from hunger and poverty.

“Africa has a lot of rich research data that that if well utilized can have immediate impact and benefit farmers and the citizens who desperately need it,” said Dr. Osei.

He added: “With the right level of support, collaboration between researchers, evaluation experts and decision makers, the translation of evidence-based research findings into actionable policy and programmatic guidance is an achievable goal.”

Dr. Osei who officially opened the two days Conference yesterday promised Ghanaians that his ministry will demonstrate through credible data how government programmes and policies are contributing to improve economy and livelihoods.

“As a Government, if our actions are not making a huge difference in the lives of our people, then we have to interrogate our relevance,” he added.

Dr. Osei said his Ministry was in the process of putting in place the key building blocks to ensure that Monitoring and Evaluation was mainstreamed into the national planning process with priorities clearly defined at the ministerial level.

“I will be coming to some of you for advice and more importantly, to take advantage of the incredible resource and knowledge that have been made possible through this conference,” he said.

Dr. Osei said: “The Evidence to Action Conference seeks to achieve a measured driven and data informed policy for action while facilitating enhanced collaboration among researchers, policy and decision-makers and stakeholders”.

“As a regular user of policy information and data, it is my wish that you will outline clear recommendations on how to ensure that monitoring, evaluation and evidence-based research positively impact on national and regional priorities of African governments as well as the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations,” he added.

Minister for Agriculture, Dr. Owusu Afriyie commended ICED for hosting the first ever Evidence to Action conference in Ghana.

“I am extremely delighted to be here today to be part of this historic occasion marking the official opening of the first ever ***“West Africa Evidence to Action Conference on Agricultural Development and Food Security”***, he said. “The theme of this Conference — ***Towards an Evidence Based and Data-Informed Policy, Action and Practice in Africa*** — is very appropriate given the fact that our region is not food sufficient. We definitely need strong recommendations on the policy and practice changes needed to ensure that the West Africa region becomes more food secure”.

“It is sad that 50 years after independence, the African continent continues to bear the burden of hunger which is exacerbated by shocking levels of food loss and waste,” he said. “In order to turn the continent’s food security options around, we need to move beyond focusing on increasing productivity at farm level and scale up efforts to proactively implement policy and practice recommendations coming out of research and evaluation projects being undertaken by various value chain actors.”

Dr. Afriyie said that agriculture is the backbone of Ghana’s economy and the government was committed to ensuring that agricultural activities are enhanced in the country to benefit farmers in particular and the population in general.

“I am excited about the focus of this conference and commend ICED together with the partners for creating this wonderful platform to discuss research and evaluation. This conference could not have come at a better time,” he added.

The Chief Executive Officer and President of ICED, Dr. David Ameyaw said the Conference provides an excellent platform for delegates to learn, share information, build networks and partnerships with the overall objective of identifying effective strategies and interventions for ensuring data generated from research and evaluation projects was well utilized.

“Through our analysis, we found that many monitoring and evaluation programs across the continent are still operating at the nascent stage and there is therefore an urgent need for them to be supported to get to the next level,” he said. “This is the absolute right time to set up Africa’s first Evaluation and Development Centre because the continent and its development partners are increasingly focused on getting good returns on investments made in the development sector.”

The Conference is being hosted by the International Centre for Evaluation and Development (ICED) in collaboration with Agricultural Technology Adoption Initiative (ATAI), the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Assets and Market Access (AMA Innovation Lab), Institute of Statistical Social & Economic Research and Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA).