

Regional training workshop for satellite crop monitoring using the CropWatch system

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Speech of Ms. Mohenee Nathoo,

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Good Morning,

It is my honor and privilege to welcome you today on this very important event which concerns satellite crop monitoring and its role in agriculture. I understand that during this workshop you are going to discuss and explore the various applications and benefits of satellite crop watch in addressing the challenges faced by our agriculture sector.

As we are all aware, agriculture and more specifically food production is a priority on our agenda contributing to the economy, providing livelihoods to millions of people and feeding our growing population. However, this vital sector faces numerous challenges, such as climate change, water scarcity, pests, diseases, and the need for sustainable practices. In order to overcome these challenges and ensure food security, it is crucial that we embrace technological advancements and innovative solutions.

Satellite crop watch is one such solution that has revolutionized the way we monitor and manage our crops. By utilizing satellite imagery, we can obtain accurate and timely information about the health and condition of our crops. This information is invaluable in making informed decisions regarding irrigation, fertilization, pest control, and disease prevention. It enables us to optimize resource allocation, minimize losses, and maximize yields.

The benefits of satellite crop watch extend beyond individual farmers. It also plays a pivotal role in national and global food security. By monitoring crop conditions across regions and countries, we can identify potential food shortages or surpluses and take proactive measures to address them. This information can be used to inform policies, facilitate trade, and ensure a stable and secure food supply chain.

Furthermore, satellite crop watch is a powerful tool in adapting to the impacts of climate change. With the ability to detect changes in temperature, precipitation, and vegetation patterns, we can anticipate and mitigate the effects of climate variability. This technology allows us to develop climate-smart agricultural practices, optimize water management, and implement early warning systems for extreme weather events. By doing so, we can build resilience in our agricultural systems and protect our farmers' livelihoods.

However, in order to fully harness the potential of satellite crop watch, we must work together as a region. Collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and capacity-building are essential components of this endeavour. This workshop provides us with a platform to exchange experiences, learn

from each other's successes and challenges, and develop a regional strategy for the effective use of satellite crop watch.

The Government of Mauritius has been actively supporting climate smart agricultural practices in Mauritius and Rodrigues by reducing vulnerability of farmers to climate change through improving water conservation and increasing the efficiency of irrigation. Several projects have been/are being implemented by the FAREI under its Climate Change Adaptation Programme to sensitize farmers on new climate resilient methods of production.

One of the main constraints for increasing water use efficiency at farmers' level is the availability of agro-meteorological data to optimize irrigation water use, promote improved irrigation water use, promote improved irrigation scheduling and prevent wastage of water under both open-field and protected conditions.

In this respect the FAREI has set up Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) at Wooton CRS, Reduit CRS, Richelieu CRS, Belle Mare LRS, Pamplémousses Organic Research Station, Mapou MF, Flacq MF, Plaisance DC and Riviere des Anguilles DC. Apart from further improving the efficient utilization of water and enhancing vegetable and fruit crops production, the Automatic Weather Stations will also:

- i. Provide disease forecasting facilities for Potato, Onion, Tomato, Squash and Banana.
- ii. Allow the continuous monitoring of agro-climatic parameters in order to enhance climate resilience in different agro-climatic zones across the island.
- iii. Facilitate the assessment of foodcrop damages by harsh climatic conditions in farmers' localities.
- iv. Assist in the implementation of the CROPWATCH Innovative Cooperation Programme which has the objective of facilitating and stimulating agricultural monitoring for the advancement of the SDG goals of zero hunger. Data obtained from earth observation satellite data can be calibrated using real data received from the I-Metos AWS.

I encourage all the participants to actively engage in discussions, share their expertise, and contribute to the collective knowledge pool. Let us take advantage of this opportunity to forge partnerships, strengthen networks, and establish a regional community of practice. Together, we can overcome the barriers and unlock the transformative power of satellite crop watch for the benefit of our farmers, our economies, and our food security.

To conclude, I would like to thank the organisers for having chosen Mauritius and the FAREI which is the local partner, to host this event. I also thank all the sponsors, and participants for their commitments to this workshop. Let us make the most of this gathering, and may our efforts pave the way for a future where satellites crop watch becomes an integral part of our agricultural practices, ensuring food security and prosperity for all and achieving sustainable development goals particularly Goal 2: zero hunger.