Harnessing the potential of the mobile phone for connecting farmers with climate information

By Manyewu Mutamba
mmutamba@sacau.org
SACAU

Background

- Farming community highly isolated, poorly integrated with national economy - geography, infrastructure
- Cellular phones proving to be the game changer
- Fastest spontaneous adoption rates of any technology
- Challenge is to go beyond basic use
- How to transform this into a multi-purpose platform
- Timely given the challenges of climate change
- A key focus of Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)
Key areas of opportunity in CSA

New impetus to overcome persistent challenges

- Early warning systems, weather advisories
- Extension services – interactive, wide reach, cost effective
- Improve farmer organisation - cost effective, efficient
- Better market integration - price discovery, reduce transaction costs, expanded markets
- Aggregation – tackle scale issues, increase bargaining power, quality products
- Innovative financing frameworks, reduced risk for private players
- Data gathering – efficient, geo-referenced
- Payment and remittance systems
- Cab corruption, exploitation of farmers
- Growing interest from the youths
Challenges of cellular platforms in CSA

• The high cost of data, low bandwidth, suitable devices, smartphones
• Low literacy levels – better among the youths
• Language challenges
• Tailoring content for platforms
• Emergence of numerous uncoordinated platforms
Thank You