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### **The Potential Role of Information Communication Technology in Promoting Agriculture.**

This study has been carried out in order to maximise the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in promoting agriculture. The study was guided by the following objectives; assessment of the past and current performances of ICT in promoting agriculture, identification of the ways on how to improve on agriculture using ICT, identification of challenges and recommendations. The study sample composed of 120 respondents of which 20 were peasant farmers without land who live by providing labour on other peoples' farms/fields, 60 were peasant farmers with land to farm on, 20 were those having relatively small farms and other 20 were those selected randomly from the institutions whose services were agriculture-based. This study analyses situations experiences and ideas of the sample respondents using ICT in promoting agriculture. Information generated is mainly qualitative although socio-demographic data such as age, sex, number of networks use by a single respondent, level of education has been basically quantitative and the report produced is a descriptive one. On the basis of findings, the results showed that most farmers have at least a means of communication at home and those who do not have can access them through their neighbours or use a localised private / public point. Marketing of farm products is made simple by accessing the consumers through the use of communication channels available and specialised mode of farming has been recorded the order of the farm activities. Dissemination of modern farming skills and technologies has been backed up through communication stations since not everybody could be trained in the demonstration farms. Most agricultural stakeholders focus on media centres (ICT) as a priority in reaching farmers either for their inputs or outputs. Packed audio/video, DVDs and CDs translated into local language is a modification of disseminating farming skills to the farmers currently in use. As a medium of exchange, transfer of money to acquire inputs has been facilitated through ICT networks, minimising the burden of unnecessary changes in agricultural prices/inputs. Despite the advantages ICT has in promoting agriculture, the findings reveal that, farmers have limited skills to operate handsets' receivers, use of alien language (English) already configured in the handsets, network disruptions, costly airtime, repair and maintenance of the handset receivers and the cost of acquiring of the handsets. The result for all these are poor adaptation of farming systems, use of traditional and less resistant seeds/animals breeds, poor storage facilities, loss of resources and time wastage which are demotivating factors to the farmers. This has been the reason for under taking this study. As a result of the findings above, the conclusion and recommendation were that: there should be an improvement in the network connectivity linking urban and rural areas; and establishing a central database for agricultural information. Manufacturers should modify handset receivers which translate languages including ICT in all education curricula and liberalising local telecommunication markets to foster competition.

**Key Words: Information Communication Technology, Agriculture.**