

CUT professor helps Africa farmers adapt to climate change

Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) professor, Muthoni Masinde has developed a draught predicting tool to bridge the gap between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge. The tool, for Africa's small-scale farmers and flagship project called Information Technology and Indigenous Knowledge with Intelligence (ITIKI), was officially launched on 20-21 June 2019.



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ITIKI employs three Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools like mobile phones, wireless sensor networks, and artificial intelligence to enhance the system's effectiveness, affordability, sustainability, and intelligence.

Masinde says that the tool is a unique innovation that will help farmers deal and adapt to changing climate. "The weather and planting information is distributed to the farmers through text messages in their home languages and can be received on simple and low-cost mobile phones.

"We have achieved significant progress thus far, and we want to do what we can to support Africa and overcome our challenges. The tool has effectively been implemented in Mozambique, Kenya and South Africa, and we are looking to expand into other African countries."

The early warning system and forecasting tool integrates indigenous and scientific drought forecasting and uses a mobile application, a web portal, and SMS service to pull weather information through a network of sensors that monitor weather conditions for farmers.

Forecasts are available via the ITIKI Smartphone App and USSD service.

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