

Agritech Expo Tanzania: Bringing about sustained pro-poor changes in agriculture

Exclusive interview with Al-amani Mutarubukwa, knowledge management and communications specialist for the Agriculture Markets Development Trust (AMDT), an exhibitor at Agritech Expo Tanzania in Arusha.



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Let's start with some background on your organisation and the work that you do, particularly in the agri sector?

Al-amani Mutarubukwa: The Agriculture Markets Development Trust (AMDT) was established by the Governments of Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, and Switzerland, as a long term facility with a lifespan of at least 10 years. The goal of the Trust is to increase incomes and employment opportunities for poor women, men, and young people in Tanzania. With a strong pro-poor focus, the Trust works with the private sector, government and civil society organisations to promote the Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach to stimulate changes to market systems that provide for those living in poverty.

Which current projects are you particularly excited about at the moment?

Mutarubukwa: AMDT supports the development of the selected value chains, so as to directly improve the livelihoods of the productive poor. We aim at building the capacity and incentives among target market actors so as to bring about sustained large scale pro-poor changes in the selected market systems. Currently, we are focusing on three value chains of sunflower, maize, and pulses.

What, in your view, are the main challenges facing the agri sector in Tanzania and the region?

Mutarubukwa: The agri sector in the country and the region is facing more or less similar challenges, to mention but a few:

- High cost of investment/finance, inadequate physical infrastructure to support the sector,
- Poor farming techniques, limited access to quality farm inputs,
- Relying too much on rain;
- Lack of marketing data and information,
- Inadequate production and post-harvest technologies,
- Low production and productivity resulting in low revenue,
- Limited market access due to inadequate marketing and agro-processing facilities.

AMDT's interventions are designed to address such kind of systemic constraints.

What is your vision for the industry?

Mutarubukwa: AMDT envisions an agricultural sector where productive poor women, men, and youth in Tanzania have increased and sustained income and employment opportunities. AMDT believes that enabling large-scale systemic change targeting market systems critical for the productive poor creates a much stronger chance of achieving sustained pro-poor impact.

What surprises you about this sector?

Mutarubukwa: Despite the fact that over 75 percent of the country's population depends on the sector, at least 6.6 million people are still wallowing in poverty (the productive poor) and the sector's contribution to the GDP is not increasing at the desirable pace. AMDT is an alternative program, which entails revamping the sector in the selected value chains by investing, together with market actors, in interventions that are:

- based on diagnosed constraints and pro-poor opportunities,
- are well coordinated to leverage investments and resources targeting similar outcomes,
- stimulate the development of inclusive, competitive, and resilient agricultural market systems, leading to sustained benefits and impacts for the poor.

You are an exhibitor at the first Agritech Expo Tanzania in January. What will be your message at the event?

Mutarubukwa: We are encouraging everyone to attend as we expect it to be a great platform for networking.

What are you most looking forward to at Agritech Expo Tanzania?

Mutarubukwa: We are looking forward to interacting with our key stakeholders, strengthen existing relationships with AMDT target audience - smallholder farmers, men women and youth, MSMEs, farming professionals and other industry players.

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