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## Poverty Alleviation in Developing Countries: Principles for Agricultural Knowledge and Information System

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### Abstract

Developing countries are facing two dilemmas, poverty (especially rural poverty) and un-sustainability of their agricultural production systems. Current research and observations indicate that rural poverty and un-sustainability are linked. The only feasible way out of current crisis is establishment of more appropriate Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems (AKIS). The AKIS is understood as a system that links rural people and institutions to promote mutual learning and generate, share and utilise agriculture-related technology, knowledge and information. The system integrates farmers, agricultural educators, researchers and extensionists to harness knowledge and information from various sources for better farming and improved livelihoods.

The linkage among environment, poverty and AKIS are complex and in many cases, poorly understood. The conventional AKIS of Third World countries have been criticised for their inability to alleviate poverty and contribute to sustainable agricultural development. Therefore, there is a need for innovative AKIS(s). The process of developing international guidelines and principles has been difficult. In a truly international context, there are many issues to consider and little can be taken for granted. The regulatory context varies, the cultural/religious context varies, and social and economic priorities for development vary. Despite all these limitations this paper based on the research conducted in developing countries particularly in Iran attempts to provide some principles which are essentials in establishing AKIS(s).

Such an innovative AKIS should be fundamentally different from traditional knowledge systems that support conventional agriculture. The AKIS should evolve along with changes in values and policies. It includes new actors and different roles and tasks than traditional agricultural knowledge system. Farmers deserve a more prominent placement than traditional end of the pipe user of knowledge. Other stakeholders including consumers, interest groups and government should also be considered. It requires new technologies, production systems and farming practices, which tend to be more knowledge intensive. Scientists should play a different role than their traditional producers of innovations.

**Keywords:** Agricultural research, poverty, Sustainability