

Aerial Solution for Georeferenced Orthomosaics and DEM

Lehmann Aviation, a manufacturer of professional micro civil drones, has announced a new aerial solution for georeferenced orthomosaics and DEM: the LA300 fully automatic personal drone which is now working with the GoPro Hero3+ camera, in addition to the Nokia Lumia 1020. ◀

▶ <http://bit.ly/1t3YGKV>



Lehmann LA300.

Racurs Unveils 2014 Conference Venue

Racurs will be organising its annual conference on the island of Hainan, China, this year. The 14th International Scientific and Technical Conference called 'From Imagery to Map: Digital Photogrammetric Technologies' will take place from 20 to 23 October and will be co-organised by Smartspatio Technologies from China. ◀

▶ <http://bit.ly/1t42rjE>

Family Farming

Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and some other West-African countries have accomplished the first Millennium Development Goal to halve the proportion of undernourished people between 1990 and 2015. Despite this, the proportion of people in Sub-Saharan Africa living on less than USD1.25 a day only reduced from 56% in 1990 to 48% in 2010, according to UNDP figures. Over 400 million Africans are still living in extreme poverty, and 70% of them reside in rural areas and depend on agriculture. African Union has proclaimed 2014 as the 'African Year of Agriculture and Food Security'. At its launch in January in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, José Graziano da Silva, FAO director general, presented a new cure to poverty: 'family farming'. "For decades small-scale farmers [...] were viewed as part of the problem of hunger," he stated. "That could



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not be further from the truth." The task is now to increase the efficiency of subsistence farmers. The conditions can be created, according to da Silva, by giving those farmers access to financial services, training, mechanisation and technology. This is noble indeed, but it will most likely become the nth consecutive attempt doomed to fail. The idea of offering financial services to the poor sounds endearing, but it bothers me greatly, as a 'financial service' is just a phony term for luring the poor into debt. And there is no good at all in debt when the debtor is vulnerable. Financial

institutions will be the only ones to profit, since they are allowed – by law – to create currency out of thin air and to reap the benefits of interest. And that's not all – there is a second snag: farmers depend on world market food prices for their survival. A report by the World Development Movement, an organisation campaigning to eradicate poverty and injustice, shows that the world's most powerful financial institutions speculate on the future price volatility of agricultural products. Originally invented to warrant farmers a fixed price and thus certainty of income well before harvest, these derivatives also enable speculators, who have absolutely no affinity with food cultivation, to profit from daily fluctuations in prices. Speculators have also discovered that they can make tremendous gains from price rises and falls that they themselves have triggered. The abovementioned report – entitled *The great hunger lottery: how banking speculation causes food crises* – stresses that speculation adds to spikes in food prices which affect the poor the most. Furthermore, food prices become destabilised, which impedes farmers in planning and investing. Hence, family farmers may get squeezed twice by the financial industry: first by debt, and then by speculation. It's a shame that financial trading based purely on the expected price changes of assets rather than on their tangible value can bring so much profit to a greedy few, while the vast majority – who actually produce those assets – pauperise, and may even become victims of famine.

