



AGRICORD



FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS SIDE EVENT AT THE AU-EU AGRICULTURAL MINISTERIAL MEETING IN ROME, JUNE 2025.

Title: Enhancing Investment, Sustainability, and Trade: The Role of Farmers and Farmers' Organizations (FOs) in African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Agricultural Cooperation in the context of the CAADP Kampala Declaration and the European Commission's Vision for agriculture and food.

Co-organized by: The Pan-African Farmers Organization and AgriCord

Time and venue: Friday, the 27th of June at 13h00-the Philippines room, FAO Headquarters

1. Background & Rationale

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and the EU's vision for agriculture and food share a common goal: fostering inclusive, sustainable, and resilient agricultural systems.

The CAADP, established under the African Union, puts an emphasis on improving agricultural productivity, enhancing food security, and promoting economic growth through trade facilitation and regional integration. The European Union's vision for agriculture and food, among others, puts an accent on prioritizing food security, enhancing adaptability and innovation within the sector and fostering dialogue across the entire value chain. Both policy frameworks recognize the need to address challenges and opportunities to create a fairer competitive environment for all actors involved in the agri-food sector, including young people who play an essential role for the agricultural sector and rural areas.

The new CAADP Kampala declaration provides another opportunity for the EU and the AUC to enhance their cooperation to scale up the Africa-Europe Rural Transformation action agenda, guided by the 'Joint Africa-EU Strategy' and the 'Joint Vision for 2030', which focuses on strengthening economic cooperation and promoting sustainable development in Africa, with agriculture playing a key role in the partnership. By working together, the AU and the EU can foster the sustainable economic, social, and environmental development for the African continent.

Farmers and their organizations are key actors in driving these ambitions by ensuring that policies translate into action on the ground. Farmers' organisations have been strongly advocating to increase the incomes and improve livelihoods, food and nutrition security and safety of organized smallholders and family farmers in Africa by strengthening regional, national, and local farmers organizations.

For more than a decade, under IFAD's Farmer Forum architecture, comprehensive EU funded capacity building programs for Farmers Organizations have been implemented by FOs themselves. This is the case of closing FO for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP 2019-2025) program, its peer programs in Asia and Latin America, as well as Farmers Organizations Leading Research & Innovation on agroecology for sustainable food systems (FO-RI, 2022-2026), managed by AgriCord. On the same page, a new farmers' organization's global capacity building program FO4IMPACT is expected to be implemented in Africa through the Panafrican Farmers Organisation (PAFO), its members and AgriCord. Through capacity building on advocacy these

programs contribute to the actualization of the African and the European agricultural policy frameworks. They strengthen cooperation between African and European farmers and their organizations for mutual benefit.

Farmers' organizations provide essential services such as access to finance, training, and markets. They also serve as key stakeholders in policy advocacy, ensuring that farmers' voices shape decision-making processes at the AU-EU level. As the AU and the EU strengthen their cooperation in agriculture, it is crucial to highlight the indispensable role of farmers, particularly young and women farmers, in shaping investments, sustainability strategies, and trade opportunities.

2. Objectives

This side event aims to:

- Showcase the contributions of farmers and farmers' organizations in achieving the objectives of CAADP and EU agricultural and rural development policies.
- Explore strategies for enhancing investment in sustainable agricultural practices agroecology and climate-resilient agriculture, with a focus on smallholder farmers and youth engagement.
- Discuss ways to facilitate fair and sustainable trade between Africa and Europe, ensuring benefits for family farmers and cooperatives.
- Identify recommendations to strengthen AU-EU agricultural cooperation through farmer-led initiatives and strengthened engagement of young people.

3. Key Themes

1. Investment in Agriculture

- Unlocking finance for smallholder farmers, cooperatives and farmer led businesses for sustainable agricultural value chains
- Youth-focused investment models to attract young farmers to agriculture

2. Sustainability & Climate Resilience

- Agroecological and climate-smart farming practices and farmers' role in biodiversity conservation and soil health and compensation for ecosystem services
- Strengthening extension services and knowledge-sharing networks

3. Trade and Market Access

- Overcoming barriers to AU-EU agricultural trade through capacity building and accompanying measures
- Strengthening farmers' position in regional and international value chains and markets and boosting local value addition

4. Expected Outcome

- Recommendations for AU-EU agricultural cooperation that prioritize farmers' organizations.
- Increased visibility of farmers and farmers' organizations' contribution to inclusive, sustainable, and resilient agricultural systems, ecosystem services, and economic growth.

- Strengthened partnerships between the African and European farmers' organizations, governments, and private sector actors.

5. Format

Moderator: Mr **Ishmael Sunga**, CEO of SACAU

Opening words: by Mr **Moses VILAKATI** Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment African Union Commission

by Mr **Luis Planas Puchades** Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Spain

Keynote – Mr **Musa Sowe**, President of National Coordinating Organizations for Farmers Association of the Gambia and, Vice-president of ROPPA

Expert panel:

Unlocking finance for smallholder farmers, including youth, and addressing barriers to market access, Ms **Betty Chinyamunyamu**, CEO of National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi

FOs' role in IFAD programs and IFAD investments contributing to scaling up, Mr **Ron Hartman**, Director for Global Engagement, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization, IFAD

Relevance of supporting FOs within EU policy framework, Mr **Philippe Le Clerc** Policy Officer, Sustainable Food Systems/DG INTPA, European Commission

Agroecological/climate-smart farming practices and compensation for ecosystem services, Ms **Kati Partanen**, Board member of the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners/MTK, Finland and Board member of the WFO

Question and answer: 10 min

Summary remarks – Mr **Pieter Verhelst**, Board member of Boerenbond, Belgium and President of AgriCord

6. Target Audience

- AU and EU agricultural ministers and policymakers
- Representatives from farmers' organizations and cooperatives
- Development partners and financial institutions
- Agribusiness stakeholders and trade representatives
- Researchers and civil society organizations

This side event provides a unique opportunity and platform to discuss the EU-AUC African Agriculture agenda and reinforce the central role of farmers in shaping AU-EU agricultural policies and investments. All the relevant stakeholders will be invited to join us in advancing a shared vision and cooperation for a resilient and prosperous agricultural sector in Africa and Europe.