

2025 Forum of the Standing Committee on Finance | UNFCCC)

8 - 9 September 2025



Presenter:

Ms. Dianne Sibanda

Chairperson: ESAFF and BOFA



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From the perspective of farmers and local communities, how can policymaking processes become more coherent and inclusive, so that climate finance and agricultural policies truly reflect grassroots priorities

About: Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers Forum- (ESAFF)

ESAFF works in 17 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa



5.5 Million
Smallholder
Farmers



Led
Initiated
Owned



- Formed after the movement which started in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg – South Africa

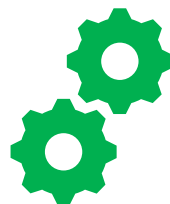


Registered in Tanzania in the year 2007-
00NGO/1097 – URT (NGO Act) 2002

Headquarters Morogoro – Tanzania



Vision: A strong effective forum of empowered Small-Scale Farmers with united voices in the policy processes for ecological agriculture and poverty free Eastern and Southern Africa region.



Mission: Empowering Small Scale Farmers in ESA to influence development policies and promote ecological agriculture through capacity strengthening, research and networking.

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Context

Smallholder farmers and local communities are at the frontline of climate impacts (droughts, floods, pests), with limited buffers to absorb shocks.



Yet, we are often excluded from decision-making processes, so policies risk being top-down and misaligned with our real needs.



Climate finance and agriculture policies are fragmented, with weak local delivery and accountability.

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Current Gaps



Limited grassroots consultation in policy design



Weak accountability and monitoring on how funds reach communities



Climate finance mechanisms often complex and inaccessible



Fragmented policies– agriculture, climate & finance policies rarely speak to each other



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why inclusion is non-negotiable?



Who grows the food?

Smallholder producers contribute about one-third of the world's food



Rainfed dependency in Africa

95% of Africa's food production is rainfed, making farming highly vulnerable to rainfall variability.

Jobs & youth



Agriculture remains the biggest employer of young people in Sub-Saharan Africa (60% of youth employment, 2021)



Implication



Without locally led design and delivery, climate and agriculture investments will miss the people who manage risk daily and deliver food security

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What this means for policy design



Design with, not for

Institutionalize farmer voice (women & youth) in agenda-setting, budgeting and oversight **not just consultation at the end.**



Measure inclusion

Set KPIs for % of finance reaching local actors, share of women/youth funded, and community-validated outcomes.



Channel funds closer

Create direct windows and devolved financing to farmer organizations, cooperatives with simplified access.

Target rainfed resilience



Prioritize water harvesting, soil health, agroforestry and climate-information services where rainfed risk is highest.

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Benefits of Inclusive Policy Processes



Relevance: Policies address real grassroots challenges, making them more effective and impactful.

Accountability: Direct participation strengthens transparency and monitoring of policy outcomes.

Ownership: Farmers and communities feel part of the process, increasing buy-in and sustainability.

Resilience: Policies co-designed with communities are better at reducing vulnerabilities and building adaptive capacity.

Equity: Inclusion ensures marginalized groups (women, youth) have their needs met.

Innovation: Local knowledge and practices enrich policy solutions with context-specific innovations.

Ensuring Climate Finance Reflects Grassroots Priorities



Direct funding windows for farmer organizations and cooperatives.



Support local farmer organizations to act as bridges between governments and communities



Institutionalize farmer representation in policymaking platforms (national, regional, continental and global)



Flexibility in funding criteria to recognize traditional practices, agroecology, and Indigenous knowledge systems as valid climate solutions.



Capacity building on financial literacy, climate adaptation planning and project management for grassroots actors.

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Nothing about us without us



www.esaff.org

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