

UNFCCC Farmers Constituency

UNFCCC SHARM EL-SHEIKH JOINT WORK ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY Workshop 1 - BONN, 17 JUNE 2025

Co-facilitators, Parties, colleagues,

My name is Elizabeth Nsimadala, President of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation, and I am honored to speak today on behalf of the **Farmers' Constituency** - which represents farmers from every region of the world who are united by their shared commitment to feeding communities, stewarding the land, and contributing meaningfully to climate action.

We welcome this workshop and the recognition of farmers as critical partners - not just observers – but key players in the design and delivery of effective climate action in the agriculture sector. Across the globe, the climate crisis is not a distant concern, it is our daily reality.

To address the first question related to systemic and holistic approaches:

As farmers, we are **ambitious agents of change**. In East Africa, farmers are responding to climate challenges with innovation, entrepreneurship, and a deep commitment to sustainability. We are constantly seeking out best practices that can help us not only produce the crops and livestock products wanted by consumers but also help us earn a decent living and care for ecosystems.

We seek and depend on practices that safeguard our soils, water, biodiversity, food production, and livelihoods. Whether described as regenerative agriculture, agroecology, climate-smart agriculture, or something else—what truly matters is what works: practices that are economically viable, ecologically sustainable, and socially inclusive. Let us not be confined by terminology—farmers are solution-oriented and open to innovations rooted in practical experience and local knowledge.

Here are some illustrative, farmer-led examples:

- **In the Ethiopian highlands**, farmers have actively exchanged experiences and engaged in peer-to-peer training to enhance livestock production using locally available feed and resources—insights and lessons that have emerged through the RISING Africa project.
- **In Cambodia**, natural ponds co-designed with farming communities have enabled water storage for vegetable irrigation and created additional income streams from aquatic plants, fish, and frogs. These systems have also improved soil health by enhancing organic matter and nutrient cycling.

To address the second question, farmers see five ways in which systemic and holistic approaches can contribute to this joint work.

Firstly, there is a need for a shift in mindset inside and outside this room. Farmers must be seen as co-creators, implementers, and innovators of solutions not recipients of top-down solutions. We need strategic partnerships which mean we are fully integrated into the planning, financing, and monitoring of climate action—across the entire policy and value chain. This includes ensuring that climate, biodiversity, and green economy strategies are informed by the needs, innovations, and investment priorities of farmers. Results of a recent survey, for example, have shown that only a few farmer organizations were involved or consulted in the preparation of revised NDCs.

Secondly, we call on the international community to partner with farmer organizations and co-operatives. We are ready. Around the world, we are self-organized, by farmers for farmers, trusted by and rooted in communities, and equipped to deliver last-mile support. My own organization represents 25 million farmers, and there are many organizations and alliances like ours. **Farmer organizations** are essential in identifying and ensuring resources reach diverse farming systems—especially women, youth, and Indigenous producers.

Third, investing in agriculture through available, accessible and predictable finance at farm-level - From fair returns from the market through to identifying and overcoming barriers hindering access to finance for farmers, especially in developing countries. There must be a clear strategy to close the adaptation finance gap including diversifying financial tools through grants and de-risking existing financial instruments, strengthening public-private partnerships and leveraging the role of our organized structures as direct access channels and trusted intermediaries. We need fast, transparent, and targeted disbursements for Loss and Damage, as well as a permanent active observer seat on the Loss and Damage Fund.

*(Not read due to time constraint) - Across East Africa, we have identified investment priorities to support systemic and holistic approaches. **These include**, for example:*

- *Climate-resilient infrastructure, including early warning systems, that give adequate advance warnings to farmers for issues like pest and disease outbreaks and allow us to take action on time*
- *National agriculture research and extension systems supported by international research institutes for co-creation, co-research and integration of indigenous/traditional knowledge in partnership with farmer organizations*
- *Support for the systematization and provision of affordable data systems and farmer-led knowledge exchange. **In Kenya**, for example, AICCRA has developed tailored climate information services and digital agricultural advisory services that support gender and socially inclusion.*

Fourth, indicators and targets for the global goal on adaptation must be co-developed and co-defined with farmer representatives. We need tools and support to monitor mitigation and adaptation, to assess vulnerabilities, that are all responsive to the realities of rural contexts and define success in our own terms. Strengthened research and technical partnerships can help build an evidence base that can quantify the costs of climate impacts on agriculture.

And finally, there is an urgent need to think and act in longer-term timeframes. We need stable and enabling policy environments, and fair and transparent value chains, which support decent livelihoods. These are critical for giving farmers the confidence to respond to an increasingly volatile and uncertain climate. We have examples where unexpected changes in policy have led to a loss of confidence and a feeling of betrayal amongst the local farming community. It is also imperative that the barriers between farmers and finance must be overcome so that finance is available, accessible, and predictable for all farmers – particular for women and youth.

In conclusion, farmers around the world are already adapting, innovating, and transforming agriculture. We are a conduit for local development and just transitions. The future of agriculture is not a burden to be managed - it is a global opportunity for food security, resilience, and prosperity.

We ask you to connect climate goals and this joint work with farmers' everyday realities. Let us move from **dialogue to delivery** with farmers at the center.

Thank you.