



FARMER-led SIDE EVENT

"AU - EU partnership and the role of FOs in Resilient food systems and sustainable agri value chains "

The African Union - European Union Agriculture Ministers Conference

30 June 2023, FAO HQ, Rome, Italy

12:30 – 14:30

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Context

Cooperation and partnerships between continents and countries are regular occurrences in international affairs and it is often to facilitate social, cultural, economic and political relationships between the parties that are involved in such partnerships. The Africa-EU Partnership, with its continental approach, is an instrument of political dialogue and cooperation, overarching and complementing existing development relationship frameworks between EU and African countries.

Under the Rural Transformation Agenda signed in 2019, strengthening Farmers Organisations and Farmers' Capacities and Promoting Sustainable Rural Development were key components of the action agenda. It aims at launching a multinational EU cooperation program with African continental, regional and national farmer organisations which will focus on farmers' integration into value chains, while strengthening them to influence policies and business environments, enhancing the governance, accountability, and service delivery. Within the framework, it was specified that African and European farmers will enhance their skills in operating an agribusiness through interactions, targeted seminars and selected training that will expand their knowledge and create new networks. Among other things, taking stock of the advances of the Rural Transformation Agenda will enhance further the key role of small-scale farmers to integrate into local and global sustainable agricultural value chains and evolve to meet the quantity and quality standards required for national and exports.

Under this context, 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 organisations. This is how the Farmers Organisations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) program was initiated (2019-2024) and its peer programs in Asia and Latin America. . The emphasis is on economic services, advocacy, and institutional development of the membership-based farmers organisations in order to strengthen the cooperation between African and European farmers. Similarly, to ensure the peer-to-peer approach, which has proven to be an effective way to work on many environmental, business development and financial sustainability topics, another programme was co designed by Farmers Organisations Leading Research & Innovation on agroecology for sustainable food systems (FO-RI, 2022-2026). The purpose of this programme is to foster a transition towards resilient, productive and sustainable agroecological food systems through farmer-led innovation and research.

A side event is planned to be organized during the fifth African Union - European Union Agriculture Ministerial Conference in Rome (Italy) to showcase the role and value addition by African Farmers Organisations and Agri Agencies operating in partnership.

Objective and outcomes

The main objective of the session is to undertake a stocktaking of the key contributions and main achievements of the joint programmes (FO4ACP and FORI) in strengthening the capacities of farmers organisations and promoting sustainable rural development.

The expected outcomes are:

- a) To understand how the implementation of the Rural Transformation Agenda has contributed to strengthening the capacities of Farmers Organisations and promotion of sustainable rural development.
- b) Stocktaking of the main achievements of joint programmes so far (FO4ACP and FORI) and the main challenges which can be capitalised in future programs and projects.
- c) The creation of an African-European Farmers’ exchange platform that will enhance cooperation and experience sharing among farmers organisations and farmers in both continents.

Proposed format and potential speakers/panellists.

Chair: AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the African Union Commission.

Special Guests: Two Ministers from (one from Africa and one from Europe)

Moderator: Mr. Ishmael Sunga, CEO South African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU).

The session is organised into three discussion blocks of 45 minutes, each including a keynote framing presentation and Q&A with the audience. The first discussion session will focus on keynote presentation on the role of Farmers Organisations in building resilient food systems and sustainable value chains. The second session is dedicated to showcasing success stories of economic services of member-based farmers organisations. The session will be concluded with a panel discussion on Agroecology practices and soil health maintenance for agricultural productivity.

<i>When</i>	<i>What</i>	<i>Who</i>	
12.00–12.15	Introductory remarks	Parliamentary State Secretary, Dr. Ophelia Nick – Germany Finnish Delegate (tbc)	
12.15–12.30	FO’s role in IFAD’s rural transformation strategy	Marco Camagni, IFAD	Presentation about how to strengthen farmers organisations capacity for resilient food systems
12.30–13.10	Showcasing Success Stories about economic services, advocacy, and institutional development of the membership-based farmers organisations.	1) Showcasing Regional FO4ACP Projects (PAFO and RFOs) 2) Showcasing National Projects (NFOs and AgriCord)	Presentation by each presenter for 10 minutes each on achievements and lessons learned

13:10 - 13:25	Q&A with the audience	speaker, panelists, moderator	Max 1 minute per question
13.25 – 13.45	The role of Farmers Organisations leading innovation and research for agricultural transformation and climate action.	DG INTPA (tbc).	Presentation on how FOs can be a catalyst for innovation and research for transformation and climate action
13.45– 14.00	Panel discussion: Promoting Cooperation between EU and African Farmers Organisation through AU-EU Farmers Exchange Programme.	African Farmers Organisations: PAFO, EAFF World Farmers Organisations: WFO	15 minutes discussion by panellists.
14:00 - 14:15	Discussion with the audience	Speaker, Panellists, Moderator	
14.15 – 14.25	Wrapping up: Main messages for the Plenary Session	Moderator Mr. Ishmael Sunga	
14.25 – 14.30	Concluding thoughts	Chair	