

2nd UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4)

Concept Note for Session Co-leads

July 27-29, 2025 – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. Title of the session:

Farmers' organizations: Key enablers in transforming food systems

2. Type of the session:

Stakeholders Action Session

3. Date and time of the session:

28 July 15:00-16:20 - CR5 (115 seats)

4. Session background (max 300 words):

The session will bring together producer organizations, smallholder representatives, policymakers, and financial actors to explore how producers, through their organizations, can actively shape decision-making processes, equitably access resources, and hold systems accountable. It will also examine the contributions and solutions provided by farmers' organizations in building sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems.

A key focus will be on what meaningful producer participation looks like in practice, including:

- **Institutionalized inclusive governance frameworks**, with permanent mechanisms that also include – in addition to small-scale Producers - Youth, Indigenous Peoples, Women, Pastoralists, Fisherfolk, and SMEs at national and international levels;
- **A shift from consultation to co-creation**, where producers are involved in shared decision-making, participatory monitoring, and the use of multistakeholder accountability tools;
- **Farmers' contributions and solutions**, such as agroecology and sustainable agriculture, are supported;
- **Improved access to finance**, with a focus on reshaping funding mechanisms to directly reach and respond to the needs of small-scale producers.

By centering producers in the conversation, this session aims to identify actionable strategies that move beyond token participation toward systemic inclusion and co-leadership, thereby paving the way for more equitable and resilient transformations in food systems.

5. Context (max 300 words):

Despite their central role in feeding the world¹ and managing vital natural resources, producers—farmers, fishers, pastoralists, herders, and forest-dependent communities—are often marginalized in food systems governance. They frequently face limited access to finance, are excluded from policymaking spaces, and rarely see concrete benefits from global commitments. Core concerns such as land tenure, participatory governance, improving livelihoods, restoring soil and water health, and promoting agrobiodiversity—including neglected and underutilized species—remain insufficiently addressed in many national food systems pathways. The worsening impacts of climate change further threaten their livelihoods.

The UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) has called for bold action and innovative solutions to transform the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed. Central to this transformation is the critical role of farmers' organizations in building sustainable and inclusive food systems. But, potential for further progress hinges on democratic governance and decision-making processes. Power asymmetries exist and play a crucial role in determining who has access to resources, who makes decisions, and ultimately, who benefits. Therefore, to truly transform food systems, navigating and addressing power is essential².

For many farmers organizations and networks, agroecology presents a powerful opportunity to create an enabling environment for small-scale farmers to collectively address the multiple challenges they face, and participate in program development and decision-making processes. The emergence of farmers' organizations and agricultural cooperatives has been a collective response to longstanding challenges faced by smallholder farmers and fishers, including exclusion from policy development processes. Evidence from the CERES 2030 report confirms a positive correlation between membership in farmers' organizations and increased farm incomes. Similarly, a 2013 FAO study emphasized that organized farmers are better equipped to tackle inequality and marginalization. Therefore, investing in and strengthening these organizations is not just strategic but crucial for building equitable, climate-resilient, and sustainable food systems.

6. Session objectives:

Clearly state what the session aims to achieve.

- **Amplify the voices and priorities of producers** by providing a space for them to share lived experiences, challenges, and proposals for food systems transformation.
- **Identify pathways for meaningful producer participation** in policy design, implementation, and accountability—shifting from consultation to co-creation.

¹ Beyond absolute number of holdings, family farmers also work on a significant portion of the world's farming land. According to FAO census data from 91 countries, regional averages are: 85% in Asia; 62% in Africa; 83% in North and Central America, 68% in Europe and 18 % in South America.

² UNDP Food and Power Initiative, 2025.

- **Explore solutions to improve producers' access to finance and resources**, with a focus on tailoring funding mechanisms to the realities of small-scale and marginalized producers.
- **Highlight gaps and propose corrective measures** to align national food systems pathways with producers' needs, especially on income, natural resource stewardship, and agrobiodiversity.
- **Generate actionable recommendations** to inform partnerships, institutional mechanisms, and accountability structures that center producers in global and national food systems governance.

7. Link UNFSS+4 objectives

The session contributes directly to Objective b (Partnerships and Tracking Commitments) — by promoting models of inclusive governance and co-creation that reflect producers' lived realities.

8. Key message(s) of the session:

- Producers must be recognized as knowledge-holders and co-creators, not just beneficiaries, in food systems governance—this requires institutionalized, permanent mechanisms for their meaningful participation. Agroecology as a science, practice and a movement is an expression of such meaningful engagement and recognition of farmers' role in ensuring sustainable food systems.
- Farmers' organizations play a crucial role in ensuring inclusive governance that extends beyond consultation, meaning farmers' organizations should be part of decision-making, participatory monitoring, and multistakeholder accountability across national and global processes.
- Financing mechanisms must be redesigned to directly reach small-scale producers through their organizations, particularly in marginalized regions, with simplified access and tailored support.
- Bridging the gap between policy and practice requires investing in locally grounded solutions that align research, funding, and decision-making with producers' real-world needs.

9. Session format (max 100 words):

The session is composed of 2 rounds of mini-panel/roundtable followed by a Q&A with the audience. The first round centers on farmers' experience and priorities while the second brings in actors from finance and policy where access to resources and governance issues will be discussed.

10. Guiding questions for speakers:

- What would it take to move from *ad hoc* participation to **permanent and institutionalized roles** for producers, youth, women, and Indigenous Peoples in food systems governance?
- What does **co-creation with producers** look like in practice, and how can it be embedded across food systems policy cycles—from design to monitoring?
- Why do current funding systems fail to reach small-scale producers, and how can we **redesign them** to be more inclusive and accessible?
- What role can governments, donors, and private finance play in **bridging the gap** between financial institutions and producers, especially those in marginalized regions?

11. Desirable outcome:

The session is also expected to (a) amplify and elevate the voices and priorities of smallholder, family, and marginalized producers, identifying measures to align national food systems pathways with their needs, especially on income, natural resource stewardship, and agrobiodiversity; (b) come up with ideas and pathways to improve producers' access to finance and resources, particularly those that cater to their contexts and needs; (c) identify recommendations to inform partnerships, institutional mechanisms, and accountability structures that center producers in global and national food systems governance.

12. Tentative run of show

Time	Segment	Focus
15:20 - 15:25	Opening and Framing Moderator: Oliver Oliveros, Agroecology Coalition	Moderator welcomes participants and provide framing of the Session
15:25 - 15:40	Round 1: Farmers' experience and priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LatAm: Luz Haro Guanga, Network of Rural Women of Latin America and the Caribbean Asia: Ivan Emmanuel Pineda, Asian Farmers Association (AFA) Africa: Elizabeth Nsimadala, East African Farmers Federation (EAFF) Global: Andrea Porro, World Farmers Organization (WFO) 	<u>Q to farmers reps:</u> Briefly, in your context and regions, what are the key priorities and concerns that you would like to see addressed in our journey towards FS transformation? What are the gaps in the FS pathways (e.g., themes) in terms of themes/topics and mechanisms?

		3 mins each
15:40 - 16:00	<p>Round 2: Facilitating access to resources and addressing participatory governance</p> <p><i>Additional speakers joining the farmers panel</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Kyakulaga Fred Bwino <i>State Minister of Agriculture, Uganda</i> Amb. Javier Niño Pérez - tbc <i>Ambassador of the European Union to the African Union</i> Brigit Pickel - tbc <i>Director General for Africa, BMZ</i> 	<p>2nd set of Discussants: React on what they have heard from Round 1 1 minute each</p> <p>Q to WRO and AFA: <i>What would it take to move from ad hoc participation to permanent and institutionalized roles in food systems governance?</i> 2 mins each</p> <p>Q to EAFF and RED LAC: <i>What does co-creation with producers look like in practice, and how can it be embedded across food systems policy cycles—from design to monitoring?</i> 2 mins each</p> <p>Q to 2nd set of discussants: <i>Governments and development cooperation institutions play a key role not only in supporting but in ensuring that there is an environment conducive to farmers meaningful engagement in governance as well as financing that is accessible and understandable for farmers and their constituencies. How are you stepping up to this challenge?</i></p> <p><i>In Uganda, for instance, what role does your Ministry do in bridging the gap between financial institutions and producers, especially those in</i></p>

		<p><i>marginalized regions?</i></p> <p>3 mins</p> <p><i>For BMZ and EU: Why do current funding systems seem to not sufficiently reach small-scale producers, and how can we redesign them to be more inclusive, simpler and accessible? And one goes beyond pilot phase?</i></p> <p>3 mins each</p>
16:00 - 16:15	Questions from the Audience	<p><i>Moderator turns to the audience for quick reaction, e.g., around partnerships, institutional and accountability mechanisms can be put in place.</i></p> <p>Solicit 2 questions at a time before turning over to discussants for response.</p>
16:15 - 16:18	Closing remarks Ishmael Sunga <i>Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU)</i>	Raise key messages heard during the discussion
16:18 - 16:20	Vote of thanks. End of session	Moderator thanks participants and panel discussants.

13. List of speakers:

Name	Organization	Affiliation/Title	Country/ Region	Gender	Contact Information (email/phone /WhatsApp)
Luz Haro Guanga - Confirmed	Network of Rural Women of Latin America and the Caribbean	Ecuadorian peasant farmer - Counselor of the Board and Vice President for Andean countries at the Ibero-American Union of Municipalists; the Principal Vocal of the Board of Directors of the Ibero-American Network of Municipalities for Gender Equality (RIMIG), leading the axis of Equal Opportunities in Rural Areas and Food Security; Executive Secretary of the Network of Rural Women of Latin America and the Caribbean - RedLAC	Ecuador	Female	
Elizabeth Nsimadala - Confirmed	Eastern Africa Farmers Federation - EAFF	Elizabeth Nsimadala is a Ugandan Smallholder Farmer and Agriprenuer, she is the President of Eastern African Africa Farmers Federation, a board member and former president of Pan Africa Farmers Organisation – PAFO. Elizabeth has been part of the Business Engagement group for UNFSS +4 she also previously served on the Advisory Committee of the UNFSS 2021 and she	Uganda	Female	elizabethnsima@gmail.com info@eaffu.org Mobile and What's up no. +256788718187

		also coordinated the Pre -Summit Producer Independent Dialogues at regional, continental and Global level.			
Ivan Emmanuel Pineda - Confirmed	Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development	<p>Aquaculture farmer and agripreneur, member of the Philippine Family Farmers' Agriculture Fishery Forestry Cooperatives Federation (AgriCOOPh) and Sta. Catalina Multipurpose Cooperative</p> <p>Practicing Integrated Farming that encompasses tilapia grow-out and fingerling production, swine breeding and fattening, coconut and banana production, and a layer chicken facility for egg production.</p>	Philippines, Asia	Male	
Andrea Porro - Confirmed	World Farmers Organization	Dr. Andrea Porro is the Secretary General of the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) as of January 2024. He brings 18 years of expertise as a project leader and subject matter expert in agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) across over 15 countries. A graduate in Agricultural Sciences from the University of Milan, he began his career in agricultural extension in 2006, focusing on	Italy	Male	andrea.porro@wfo-oma.org

		agrometeorology and technology transfer. Dr. Porro holds a Master's in Crop Production and Protection and a Doctorate in Plant Biology and Production. His academic journey includes research at UNIMI and a full professorship in agroecology in Sierra Leone. Since 2014, he has worked with international organizations, managing large-scale projects and teams in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Nigeria.			
Ishmael Sunga - TBC	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU)	Ishmael Sunga is the CEO of SACAU and has more than 30 years of experience, mainly in the development sector. Prior to his current position as head of a regional farmers' organization for southern Africa, he previously worked in various capacities for research and academic institutions, and for international development agencies.	Zimbabwe	Male	Ishmael.sunga@sacau.org
H.E. Ambassador Javier Niño Pérez - TBC	EU Delegation to the African Union	H.E. Ambassador Javier Niño Pérez has been serving as the Head of the EU Delegation to the African Union since January 2024. A Spanish national, he has held various positions within the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission, including Director/Deputy	Spain	Male	

		<p>Managing Director Americas, Head of Division US and Canada, and Head of Division Turkey. He has served as the EU Ambassador / Head of Delegation in Haiti and Cuba and has held various positions within the Political and Economic Sections of European Commission Delegations in Trinidad & Tobago and Burkina Faso. He holds a Master of Arts in Advanced Political Studies from the College of Europe in Bruges, an LL.M. in European Law from the Free University of Brussels, and a degree in Law from the University of Valladolid.</p>			
Birgit Pickel - TBC	<p>Director-General for Africa, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</p>	<p>Birgit Pickel is Director-General for Africa in the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). She has more than 20 years of experience in development policy and cooperation, including 11 years in management positions. Her regional focus is on West- and Southern Africa, thematic focus is on global health, governance, and sustainable economic development, including skills development, civil society, civic engagement, and international volunteering. Mrs. Pickel has lived and</p>	Germany	Female	

		worked in the USA, South Africa, Zambia, and Yemen, and short-term missions to Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon, and Bangladesh. She holds an MA in Political Science and a postgraduate certificate in Development Studies.			
Hon. Kyakulaga Fred Bwino - Confirmed	State Minister of Agriculture, Uganda	Hon. Kyakulaga Fred Bwino is a Ugandan politician and Microbiologist with extensive experience in leadership both in the Legislative and Executive arms of Government; particularly in the fields of Agriculture, Science, Technology and Innovation, Security, Health, Political Mobilization and Public Sector Management. He is currently the Minister of State for Agriculture, Animal Industry and fisheries (Agriculture) a position he assumed in June 2021 and Member of Parliament representing Kigulu North- Iganga District to the Parliament of Uganda on the National Resistance Movement party ticket. He previously served in leadership roles on the Parliamentary	Uganda	Male	

		<p>Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation for 5 years during the 10 th Parliament. He has also been a lecturer on Plant Pathology and Microbiology at Islamic University in Uganda for 10 years. He holds a Doctorate in Public Administration from Uganda Management Institute, a Masters degree in Procurement from Makerere University and is currently finalizing his Agricultural Research in Plant Pathology Microbiology</p>			
Oliver Oliveros-Confirmed	Agroecology Coalition	<p>Oliver is the Executive Coordinator of the <i>Agroecology Coalition</i> and head of the Coalition Secretariat. Prior to this, he was the interim Executive Director of the <i>Global Alliance for the Future of Food</i>, a group of foundations leveraging their resources in shifting food systems towards greater sustainability and equity. He also worked as the Stakeholder Engagement Lead at the <i>2021 UN Food Systems Summit</i>, coordinating the engagement of 100+ food systems champions globally in elevating food systems agenda. He was Deputy Director at <i>Agropolis</i></p>	Philippines, France	Male	+39 3896189277

		<p><i>Fondation and brokered dialogue and research partnerships between the scientific community and the civil society as Global Coordinator of the DURAS Project and at the Global Forum on Agricultural Research. Oliver was extensively involved in project evaluation and investment programming in the agriculture and rural development as well as in the formulation of the Philippine Agenda 21 and the country's Development Plan at the Ministry of Socio-economic Planning in Manila.</i></p>			
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14. Additional links/documents:

Include any reference documents or links relevant to the session.

15. Contact information of the session leads and co-leads:

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