

## 2025 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

### Re-imagining the future of women in agrifood systems: Harnessing science, technology and finance to advance gender equality

10 April, 2025

#### Background

As we approach 2030, progress on the SDGs faces significant setbacks, with no country on track to achieve gender equality. Between 2019 and 2022, over 1 billion women and girls in nearly 40% of countries experienced stagnation or regression in gender equality, and ongoing global crises are expected to worsen this trend.

Gender inequality is particularly evident in agrifood systems, where women play vital roles in both production and consumption, especially in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, 66% of working women are employed in agrifood systems, often in off-farm segments, yet they face marginalization, poorer working conditions, and limited access to resources like land, technology, and financial services. Discriminatory social norms drive this inequality.

Science and technology can help address these challenges by improving women's access to resources, supporting education and employment, and empowering them in leadership roles. African leaders have recognized the importance of gender in agrifood systems and committed to gender-sensitive policies, with goals to reduce the yield gap between male and female farmers by 50% and empower 30% of women in agrifood value chains by 2035.

#### Objectives

The proposed side events will aim to:

- Contribute to the Implementation of the AU post Malabo Agenda: [CAADP Strategy and Action Plan - 2026-2035 | African Union](#). One of the key objectives of the strategy is advancing inclusivity and equitable livelihoods, and it specifically calls for promotion of gender-responsive agricultural technologies and innovations.
- Showcase solutions: present successful initiatives that leveraged science, technology and gender-disaggregated data to break the barriers and empower women in agrifood systems. Particular emphasis will be given to initiatives that helped in overcoming the socio-cultural barriers that otherwise prevent the introduction of science and technology in support of gender-equality;
- Amplify the voices and concerns of grassroots women on the gender digital divide and their challenges in the agrifood systems. The side event will provide a platform

for grassroots women’s representations to engage with different multi stakeholders on their peculiar challenges, concerns and solutions.

**Tentative Agenda (60 minutes)**

**10 April**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
<b>7 min</b>	<b>Opening and welcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minister of Agriculture of Uganda Representative (TBC)</li> <li>• Mr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel (ADG), Regional Representative for Africa, Regional Office for Africa, FAO</li> <li>• Mr Stefanos Fotiou. Director. Office of Sustainable Development Goals and UN Food Systems Coordination Hub.</li> </ul>
<b>20 min</b>	<b>Roundtable discussion: Financing gender equality: unlocking investment to empower women in agrifood systems and address financial independence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms Christine Akumu, Principal Gender Officer at Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (TBC)</li> <li>• Local Development Bank (TBD)</li> <li>• Member State representative – ECA suggestion (TBD)</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: FAO</p>
<b>20 min</b>	<b>Roundtable discussion: Empowering women and advancing gender equality through science, technology and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RO Proposal (TBC)</li> <li>• Member State representative – ECA suggestion</li> <li>• Young grassroots women’s representative (TBD)</li> </ul> <p>Moderator: ECA</p>
<b>10 min</b>	<b>Q&amp;A from the audience</b>	Moderator: TBD

<b>3 min</b>	<b>Closing remarks</b>	ECA representative (TBC)
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