



AFRICA FOOD SYSTEMS FORUM 2025

Africa's Youth: Leading Collaboration, Innovation and Implementation of Agri-Food Systems Transformation

#AFSForum2025

AFS FORUM 2025

DAKAR, SENEGAL

SUMMIT REPORT



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CONTENTS

#AFSForum2025

Welcome	2
Program highlights	32
Recognition and awards	52
Knowledge products and reports	60
Plenary sessions	70
Stakeholder forums	82
Thematic sessions	88
AFSF agri-food investment room	98
Agri-food expo	102
Knowledge hub	106
Host country corner	110
Key performance indicators (KPIs)	118
Knowledge portal	129
AFSF in pictures	130
Onwards to AFSF 2026 in Kigali	136
Thank You to AFSF Partners Group and 2025 Annual Sponsors	138

Welcome





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The spirit of Teranga that carried us here must carry us forward — a spirit of generosity, solidarity, and shared purpose. Together, we can transform Africa's food systems from fragility to resilience, from subsistence to prosperity, from hunger to nourishment for all. The journey is long, but together we can make Africa not only food secure, but a breadbasket for the world. ”

WELCOME TO THE AFS FORUM 2025 REPORT

H.E. Hailemariam Dessalegn
Chair, AGRA Board

This year, we gathered in Dakar under the warm hospitality of the Government and people of Senegal, whose spirit of Teranga—generosity and solidarity—made the Africa Food Systems Forum 2025 a memorable milestone in our shared journey. On behalf of the Board and partners of AGRA, I extend our deepest gratitude to H.E. President Bassirou Diomaye Faye and his government for hosting us with such commitment and shared vision.

The theme of this year's Forum, “Africa's Youth: Leading Collaboration, Innovation, and Implementation of Agri-Food Systems Transformation”,

came alive in every discussion, showcase, and dialogue. More than 2,000 young leaders joined us in Dakar, and many online not as observers, but as drivers of change. They are transforming agriculture, building enterprises, shaping policies, and demanding urgent action. AFSF has once again proven itself as a unique platform where youth lead from the front, demonstrating that Africa's future lies in their creativity, courage, and determination to transform food systems on the continent.

Our collective task as leaders now is to create the conditions that make agriculture and food systems a desirable and rewarding career for young Africans. That means investing in education, innovation, and enterprise; ensuring fair access to land, finance, knowledge and markets; and placing women and youth at the centre of leadership, governance and accountability. If we succeed in this, Africa will not only feed itself but also play a vital role in feeding the world.

This report captures the insights, commitments, and innovations that emerged from Dakar. I invite you to reflect on them, use them, and act upon them as we progress on this journey together. Together, let us carry forward the energy of Senegal into a movement of delivery and accountability, ensuring that Africa's food systems become engines of opportunity, resilience, and shared prosperity.

Thank you for joining us.
Merci. Jéréjéf!





H. E. Paul Kagame President, Republic of Rwanda

I would first like to thank our honourable host, President Bassirou Faye, for welcoming us to this important gathering, and to extend my gratitude to the organizers of the Africa Food Systems Forum for creating a space for meaningful discussion. The transformation of Africa's food systems is both urgent and complex, touching on challenges such as climate change, financing gaps, and the need to modernize subsistence agriculture. Yet, it is also a tremendous opportunity for innovation, partnership, and inclusive growth.

In Rwanda, we have learned that meaningful change begins with connecting smallholder farmers to knowledge, technology, and investment. Through initiatives like climate-smart agriculture programs, public-private partnerships, and the Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture (RICA), we have empowered farmers and young people with the skills, resources, and networks to innovate and lead. These efforts have already reached hundreds of thousands of farmers, demonstrating the impact of strategic investment and collaborative action.

Above all, the future of Africa rests with its young people, who constitute the majority of our population. I call on them to take initiative, embrace responsibility, and contribute actively to solutions for the continent's challenges.



to solutions for the continent's challenges. Governments, institutions, and partners can provide support, but progress depends on youth engagement, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment. Each young person has the potential to turn ideas into transformative action—from innovative agricultural practices to sustainable business ventures.

We must harness the energy, creativity, and talent of our youth and women, ensuring that they are at the heart of Africa's food systems transformation. Let us all take responsibility, act decisively, and build the partnerships needed to secure a prosperous, sustainable, and food-secure future for the continent.

Thank you!





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We are at a decisive turning point that requires us to place young people at the heart of our development policies. To make African youth the driving force behind agricultural development, we must provide education and training that meets the needs of modern, intensive and sustainable agriculture. ”

H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye President, Republic of Senegal

Senegal was deeply honoured to host the 19th Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF 2025). I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all who joined us in Dakar. Your presence was more than symbolic, it was a powerful statement that together we are committed to transforming Africa's food systems into the foundation of food sovereignty, prosperity, and pride.

This year, our focus was on young people, the beating heart of our continent and Senegal. Sixty percent of Africa's population is under 25, and it is their energy, creativity, and courage that will shape the Africa we want. Our responsibility is to make food systems not a last resort, but a career of choice, full of dignity, innovation, and opportunity.

To achieve this, we must invest in our young people—through modern tools, education, technology, climate-smart innovations, and the development of vibrant value chains. We must open up rural areas, unlock markets through the AfCFTA, and build an environment where young Africans can dream big and succeed in agriculture. With the right support, Africa has the potential not only to feed itself but to help feed the world.



I warmly congratulate AFSF and AGRA and all partners for their tireless dedication to Africa's food systems. Senegal is proud to have shared the spirit of Teranga—our tradition of hospitality and solidarity—with the world during this Forum. I salute all the food systems stakeholders who joined us and call on them to work with us in making food systems a desirable career for young Africans and in securing food self-sufficiency for our continent. Let us now carry forward the momentum from Dakar, standing with our young people, and building together a future where agriculture is a source of pride, prosperity, and hope for generations to come.

I thank you!





H.E. Moses Vilakati

African Union, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment

On behalf of His Excellency Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I bring you warm greetings at the 2025 African Food Systems Forum here in Dakar, the Republic of Senegal.

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This Forum offers a unique opportunity for inclusive dialogue, strategic collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making. ”

We gather in a city renowned for its vibrant culture, rich history, and dynamic spirit a city that reflects the resilience and innovation needed to transform Africa's food systems. Allow me to express our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Senegal for their generous hospitality and support in hosting this year's forum. Harnessing these opportunities requires a clear vision and robust strategic interventions. The CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035), along with the Kampala Declaration, offers a bold roadmap to transform Africa's agrifood systems. It envisions increased production, expanded agro-processing and value addition, improved food and nutrition security, enhanced intra-African trade, and the creation of wealth- especially for our youth and women- while building a resilient agrifood systems in Africa.



The Kampala Declaration sets ambitious targets, including a 45% increase in agrifood production and the mobilization of US\$100 billion in public and private investments over the next decade. To support its implementation, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD, is developing domestication guidelines and a results framework to guide implementation. I urge all AU Member States to adopt these guidelines as they formulate and execute their National Agrifood System Investment Plans.

This Forum offers a unique opportunity for inclusive dialogue, strategic collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making. As we engage over the coming days, we must develop innovative responses to the pressing challenges within our agrifood systems, reinforce strategic partnerships, and shift from dialogue to impactful pathways that pave the way for a resilient and thriving agrifood future across Africa.





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AGRA will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with small-holder farmers, with civil society, with government, with the private sector, as we've done for the last 19 years, in transforming our food systems. Let us unite behind the Kampala Declaration, behind the CAADP to deliver this promise. ”

Alice Ruhweza
President, AGRA

This year, the AFSF community gathered in Dakar under the warm hospitality of the Government and people of Senegal, whose spirit of Teranga reminded us of the power of generosity, solidarity, and shared purpose.

This Forum was more than a convening. It was a call to action. At its heart was a powerful truth: Africa's future rests in the hands of its youth. Across the Youth Dome, the Agrifood Expo, and the many sessions, we witnessed young innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders reshaping the narrative of agriculture, bringing fresh ideas, bold ambition, and unstoppable energy. They are proving that agriculture is not the past, but the future.

Youth cannot transform Africa's food systems alone; we must rally around the Kampala Declaration and CAADP as our roadmap—to boost food output by 45%, cut post-harvest losses, triple intra-African trade, mobilize \$100 billion in investment, and empower women and youth as leaders. The time for promises is over; the task now is to turn ambition into action by embedding these commitments in national strategies, scaling investment, accelerating infrastructure, and embracing science, technology, and innovation.

Our sincere gratitude goes to His Excellency Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye, President, Republic of Senegal, Honorable Dr. Mabouba Diagne, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Sovereignty and teams for their strong leadership and for hosting the AFSF 2025. We are grateful to our board and the Partners Group under the able Chair H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Chair of AGRA Board of Directors.

As we reflect on this AFSF 2025 report, let us renew our commitment to work together to unlock Africa's potential, empower its youth, and build resilient food systems that feed our people, create jobs, and secure a self-sufficient, thriving continent.





Hon. Dr. Mabouba Diagne
Minister of Agriculture, Food
Sovereignty and Livestock,
Republic of Senegal

On behalf of the President of the Republic, the Government, and the people of Senegal, it was a great honor to welcome you to Dakar, the home of Teranga. It was a moment of pride for our nation to welcome leaders, farmers, innovators, development partners, and above all, young people whose energy and creativity are shaping the future of Africa's agriculture.

For Senegal, and for Africa as a whole, youth are at the heart of this transformation. We have seen their energy, their innovation, and their determination to feed Africa and create the jobs of tomorrow. We must continue to empower them, alongside women, as leaders of change — because they are the real accelerators of transformation.

Senegal is proud to have already met its commitments under the Maputo and Kampala Declarations. We have invested more than 10% of our national budget in agriculture, modernized smallholder farming, expanded irrigation, and strengthened seed systems. These are not just policy achievements; they are the foundation of a future where agriculture is a desirable career and a pathway to dignity and prosperity for millions of young Africans. We have presented various

legacy programs and look forward to closing most of them through securing the financing commitment and implementing.

As you reflect on the outcomes of AFSF 2025, I call on all food system actors — governments, private sector, development partners, and civil society — to join us in turning commitments into concrete action. Together, we can empower Africa's youth, unlock the full potential of our agriculture, and build resilient food systems that ensure a food-secure, self-sufficient, and thriving continent.





“

We are all part of the food systems value chains. We will mobilize our leadership, resources and renewed commitment to make food systems the engine of African food transformation, decent jobs creation for youth and women, but also based on dignity, sovereignty and shared and integrated development.

”

Mr. Amath Pathé Sene Managing Director, Africa Food Systems Forum

The Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) is not just a conference, it is a movement, a bold continent-wide call to action. In 2025, this movement brought us to Dakar, Senegal, from 31 August to 5 September, where over 6,500 participants from 86 countries gathered. Among them were 2 Heads of State and Government, 6 former Heads of State and Government, 39 Ministers across diverse portfolios, alongside parliamentarians, international agencies, development partners, researchers, private sector leaders, farmers, civil society, and youth. Hosted under the leadership of H.E. President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, the Forum reflected Senegal's spirit of Teranga—hospitality, generosity, and solidarity—creating an environment for collaboration and bold commitments.

With the theme “Africa’s Youth: Leading Collaboration, Innovation, and Implementation of Agri-Food Systems Transformation,” this year’s Forum placed young people firmly at the centre. The AFSF is a unique platform where youth lead from the front, transforming agriculture, building agribusinesses, shaping policies, and delivering real solutions. More than 2,000 youth leaders took part, underscoring their role as the architects of Africa’s future food systems.

Throughout the week, participants reflected on Africa’s continental agenda, assessed progress in financing, research, and partnerships, and explored practical solutions to accelerate transformation. Ministerial roundtables, special forums, thematic sessions, youth dialogues, and cultural showcases highlighted agriculture not only as a foundation for food security but also as an engine of enterprise, job creation, and economic growth.

Our deepest gratitude go to President Faye, the Government of Senegal, and the people of Senegal for their generosity in hosting us, and to our more than 40 partners, who renewed their commitment to this movement. A special thanks goes to the Local Organizing Committee, local national partners, our speakers, exhibitors, and to our delegates for your participation and contribution to the Forum.

As you read this report, we invite you to carry forward the spirit of Dakar. Together, let us mobilise our resources, unite our will, and transform Africa’s food systems into engines of dignity, sovereignty, and shared prosperity. We look forward to seeing you in Kigali for the AFSF 2026!



THE AFSF IN NUMBERS



6554
Delegates

86



Countries
represented

8



Current & former
Heads of State

40



Ministers of agriculture,
energy, youth affairs,
livestock & finance



50+
Heads of international
agencies and
organizations

35+



Members of
Parliament

100+



Investors
(deal room)

139+



exhibitors
including 7 countries



Program

209 Total sessions



- 9 Plenaries
- 7 Thematic sessions
- 7 Stakeholder forums
- 6 Master classes
- 25 Investment room sessions
- 13 Youth sessions
- 45 Special partner events
- 35 Partner side events
- 17 Knowledge hub events
- 10 Arbre à Palabres sessions
- 3 Culinary village stage sessions
- 21 Senegal Pavillion sessions

131



Workshops,
Masterclasses and
Side events

481



Speakers

15%



Youth speakers

42%



Women speakers





Investment Room

US\$ 18.5 Billion

In national food systems investment opportunities

- 6 Legacy programs
- 5 Country pitches

US\$ 90.5 Million

Active SME investment asks presented to investors

66



SMEs sponsored to pitch at the forum from **15 African countries**

100+



Investors registered attendance



Initiatives Launched



AFSF and UAE Food Cluster Global Future Foods Initiative



The UK-AGRA £5 million Partnership



The Agri-Energy Coalition: Powering food systems with clean energy



Africa Food Systems Media Fellowship



DPI for Agriculture: Enabling smart data, connected farmers, and open markets



8 reports and publications launched

THE AFSF IN NUMBERS



Field Visits

- 4 itineraries highlighting 4 mains topics on Agro-industrialization in Dakar and Industrial Parc
- Nature and food systems in Somone and small coast
- Food production in Thies Area and MSMEs



Off program

- Visit Senegal with historic, cultural and memorial tour at Goree Island and Dakar cultural sites and museums



Social media and media engagement

137

AFS social media posts between June – September



387

AFS social media posts between June – September



137

Journalists involved in the AFSF



7300

Social likes between June – September



170+

Pieces of media coverage across Senegalese, Pan African and International publications



1.18 million

Social impressions between June – September



50+

Interviews with ministers, development leaders, & youth



15,000 +

Online participants



HIGHLIGHTS

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This Forum was more than a convening. It is a call to action. At its heart is a powerful truth: Africa's future rests in the hands of its youth. The time for promises is over; the task now is to turn ambition into action by embedding these commitments in national strategies, scaling investment, accelerating infrastructure, and embracing science, technology, and innovation.”

”

Alice Ruhweza
President, AGRA



From 31 August to 5 September, more than 6,500 delegates from 86 countries gathered in Dakar, Senegal, for the Africa Food Systems Forum 2025. Hosted under the leadership of H.E. President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, the Forum was infused with the Teranga spirit of Senegal - an enduring culture of hospitality, generosity, and solidarity that fostered a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere for dialogue, collaboration, and bold commitments. With the theme “Africa's Youth: Leading Collaboration, Innovation, and Implementation of Agri-Food Systems Transformation,” the Forum highlighted the pivotal role of youth in driving Africa's agricultural transformation through leadership, innovation, and delivery.



Discussions highlighted how Africa's youth are pioneering innovative solutions, building meaningful partnerships, and driving the implementation of agricultural transformation agendas across the continent. This year's Forum reinforced the importance of ensuring that young voices are not only heard but empowered to act, setting the foundation for inclusive and sustainable food systems for generations to come.

Anchored in Africa's broader policy architecture—including Agenda 2063, the 10-year CAADP Strategy and Action Plan, the Kampala CAADP Declaration on Building Resilient and Sustainable Agri-food Systems in Africa (2026–2035), and the



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—AFSF 2025 built on the momentum of previous Forums to confront persistent and emerging challenges hampering food systems transformation. Sessions continued to emphasize the role of technology, renewable energy, innovation, nutrition, and value chain development, highlighting integrated approaches that link policy, investment, and knowledge systems to achieve measurable progress across Africa's food and agriculture sectors.

KEY COMMITMENTS



The Africa Food Systems Forum 2025 was a defining moment in highlighting and unlocking political, policy and financial commitments and innovations with youth at the centre. Guided by the Africa Agenda 2063, the new 10-year CAADP Strategy and the Kampala Declaration, the AFSF 2025, under the leadership of Africa's Heads of State, committed to a focused agenda of delivery to accelerate inclusive, youth-led and innovation-driven food systems transformation across the continent. Key elements that emerged as paramount to agri-food system transformation in Africa include:

- *Position Africa's Youth as Central to Leadership and Implementation:* Institutionalize youth leadership in food systems governance, CAADP
- *Accelerate Delivery on CAADP and the Kampala Declaration Commitments:* Drive coordinated implementation of national food systems pathways with clear targets, integrated planning, and results frameworks that track youth and gender outcomes.
- *Harness Innovation to Build Resilient, Inclusive Food Systems:* Invest in climate-smart, digitally enabled, and nutrition-sensitive innovations, led by young Africans and support ecosystems that turn ideas into scalable impact.

- *Unlock Regional Trade Through AfCFTA and Youth-Driven Value Chains:* Leverage AfCFTA to reduce barriers, harmonize standards, and boost intra-African trade in agri-food products—empowering youth to lead regional agribusiness growth.
- *Foster Collaboration Across Sectors for Systemic Impact:* Strengthen cross-sectoral partnerships to align policy, finance, knowledge, and delivery capacity—ensuring that Africa's food systems transformation is inclusive, coordinated, and future-ready.

Expanding agricultural trade: The UK-AGRA £5 million Partnership will work together with the Africa Union and AUDA-NEPAD to deliver the Kampala Declaration and will focus on expanding food corridors, regional trade platforms, and value-added agribusinesses to unlock Africa's agricultural potential and create more jobs.

The Agri-Energy Coalition: Powering food systems with clean energy: Launched by AGRA, Energy Saving Trust, GAIN, GEAPP, GIZ, GOGLA, IKEA Foundation, IRENA, IWMI, Partners in Food Solutions, REEEP, SEforALL, SNV, and Wageningen University & Research, the Coalition will tackle the challenges at the intersection of agriculture and energy in low- and middle-income countries. The Coalition will drive integrated renewable energy solutions—such as solar irrigation and cold storage—to boost productivity, reduce food waste, and strengthen food security, while advancing low-emission growth, improving smallholder livelihoods, and fostering sustainable food systems transformation across Africa.

Africa Food Systems Media Fellowship: Equipping African journalists for solutions-focused food systems reporting

AGRA in partnership with Farm Radio International and other collaborators launched the Africa Food Systems Media Fellowship to equip African journalists with the skills, networks, and resources needed to deliver solutions-focused reporting on agriculture and food systems. Unveiled at AFSF 2025 as part of AGRA's countdown to its 20th anniversary, the 12-month fellowship will provide training, mentorship, reporting grants, and access to experts, while amplifying stories on climate resilience, markets, nutrition, innovation, and inclusive transformation. The fellowship will strengthen storytelling that elevates the voices of farmers, youth, women, and innovators, reframing how Africa's food future is understood and advancing agriculture's central role in the continent's transformation.

Global Future Foods: Promoting cross-regional cooperation and build resilient food futures: The AFSF signed a memorandum of understanding with the UAE Food Cluster to advance the Global Future Foods initiative, fostering cooperation between Africa and the United Arab Emirates and GCC countries in diversifying food sources, strengthening resilient supply chains, and expanding markets for African produce.

DPI for Agriculture: Enabling smart data, connected farmers, and open markets: The Gates Foundation, the World Bank, Co-Develop, and the Centre for Digital Public Infrastructure

(CDPI, managed by Vital Wave) released a White Paper on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for Agriculture to guide the development of interoperable digital ecosystems. This initiative lays the foundation for stronger data systems, improved farmer access to digital services, and more transparent markets, while catalyzing future investment and private-sector partnerships.

Country Legacy Programs

Since 2023, the AFSF has introduced the Legacy Program, which enables selected countries to translate food systems policy into concrete, bankable investment opportunities that prioritize youth and women. Through this programmatic approach, governments present de-risked plans to mobilize public and private financing, engage development partners, and pilot transformative initiatives that continue to drive impact beyond the summit. The following countries developed and presented legacy programs:



Senegal:

Senegal is driving food sovereignty and agricultural resilience through a comprehensive approach that combines modernization, collective

organization, and innovation, supported by a total investment of USD 858 million. The Community Agricultural Cooperatives Program with World Bank and IFAD support, other partners, and government budget is establishing 20-hectare modern farms, aiming for 100 cooperatives by 2029 to strengthen food security and reduce imports. Complementing this, the Armed Forces are developing military and paramilitary farms that integrate food production with territorial security, youth reintegration, and social peace under the principle “Qui nourrit son peuple, défend son peuple.” Innovations such as SCEFI’s use of geospatial tools are de-risking agricultural finance, expanding credit access, and promoting Senegalese food culture, while OLAM’s Agri-Food-Feed-Fiber program supports 216,000 farmers, empowering women and youth and advancing education and competitive markets.

Finally, the country presented funding a \$34 million African Culinary Academy in Diamniadio to train youth in inclusive, nutrition-sensitive food systems and elevate African gastronomy while bridging farm-to-market linkages.

Strengthening Senegal’s MICE position:

The Forum also facilitated the development of a strategic plan to help Senegal optimize its potential in the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events) sector and strengthen its position on the global business tourism map. When implemented, the plan is projected to generate up to USD 1 billion in annual revenue.



Nigeria:

The Nigeria Postharvest Systems Transformation Program (NiPHaST) is the government’s flagship 10-year, USD 3.5 billion initiative to tackle post-harvest losses estimated at over ₦1 trillion annually. With agriculture contributing 24% to GDP and employing over 40% of the workforce, and smallholder farmers producing more than 70% of the country’s food, NiPHaST prioritizes expanding storage capacity, integrating handling and market linkages, and deploying climate-smart technologies.

Its decentralized framework will allocate 85% of storage capacity at household and community levels, 10% at state level, and 5% nationally, addressing inefficiencies across the value chain. By reducing losses in key staples such as rice, maize, sorghum, and tomatoes, the program aims to strengthen food security, improve nutrition, and unlock agriculture’s potential as a driver of jobs, economic growth, and regional stability.



Uganda:

Uganda’s Legacy Program (ULP) aims to mobilize USD 1.4 billion in investments across beef, dairy, coffee, soya, and maize value chains, positioning agriculture as a strategic driver of growth under Vision 2040. The initiative targets 85,000 new jobs, enhanced nutrition security, and export competitiveness while addressing low productivity, climate vulnerability, and protein deficits.

Key innovations include ICT-driven traceability for coffee and compliance with EU standards, expanded irrigation, farmer clusters, mechanization, and a USD 400 million investment plan for the coffee value chain, alongside beef and dairy value chain investments. The program prioritizes blended financing, value addition, youth and women inclusion, and global branding to strengthen markets, reduce imports, and unlock agriculture’s potential to drive GDP growth, poverty reduction, and regional food security.



Zimbabwe:

Zimbabwe's Legacy Program, the Zimbabwe Agricultural Food Systems Transformation, Investment, and Industrialization Roadmap (ZAFSTRIIR), aims to mobilize USD 1.042 billion across seven priority value chains—maize, soybean, sunflower, blueberries, beef, dairy, and poultry—to drive food security, nutrition, exports, and employment.

With the largest allocations to maize (USD 468M) and soybean (USD 403M), and high-value opportunities in blueberries and livestock, the program leverages robust policy incentives including tax breaks, VAT exemptions, duty rebates, and 100% repatriation rights. ZAFSTRIIR focuses on mechanization, irrigation, climate-smart technologies, export-oriented models, and youth- and women-led agribusiness, addressing current challenges such as post-harvest losses, limited processing, and constrained market access.

By fast-tracking public-private partnerships and scaling infrastructure, Zimbabwe seeks to enhance productivity, expand regional trade, generate jobs, and position agriculture as a central driver of economic growth and foreign exchange.



Liberia:

Liberia launched its USD 900 million Legacy Investment Program at AFSF 2025 to strengthen national food systems and drive agricultural transformation.

The initiative targets rice, maize, coffee, cassava, and oil palm, with production goals designed to reduce import dependence, increase exports, and create rural employment.

Key targets include 50,000 hectares of rice for self-sufficiency, 20,000 hectares of maize for food and livestock feed, 15,000 hectares of coffee to revive exports, 20,000 hectares of cassava for food security and agro-processing, and 18,000 hectares of oil palm to boost edible oil supply and foreign exchange earnings.

The program emphasizes providing the right inputs, infrastructure, technology, and services across value chains to enhance productivity and economic impact.



Somalia:

Somalia's Legacy Program translates the government's National Agricultural Transformation Plan into a USD 1.38 billion bankable investment initiative aimed at transforming the country's agribusiness and food systems.

Targeting six priority value chains—sesame, cowpea, maize, sorghum, lime, and fodder—the program seeks to boost productivity, climate resilience, and export potential while creating over 1 million on- and off-farm jobs for youth and women. By investing in irrigation, mechanization, agro-inputs, research and extension, digital innovation, and climate-smart practices, and fostering partnerships with farmer associations, cooperatives, and agribusinesses, the program aims to increase national food availability, scale exports, reduce rural vulnerability, and position Somalia as a reliable, competitive supplier of high-quality agri-food products.

All these investments raised interests from various partners and mechanisms for their implementation will be under way.

Financing MSMEs in the food systems

In each of the AFS forums, we organize what is dubbed as 'deal room' process which is a matchmaking platform providing private companies in food systems with access to finance, mentorship, and market entry solutions to support their growth objectives. The Dealroom brings together SMEs to potential investors, providing the SMEs with a platform to create awareness of their products and businesses and identify potential investors that can help them develop and scale up their businesses. 66 SMEs from 15 African countries were sponsored to pitch at the forum. An active SME investment ask of US\$ 90.5 Million was presented to the more than 100 investors who attended and participated in the Investment Room.

The MSMEs were of various ticket sizes from 20,000 USD to over 1 million USD and from various African countries, presenting investment ideas that can unlock financing which would otherwise not be possible to tap into.

Program highlights



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



A forum for the youth

Youth engagement at AFSF has grown significantly over the years—and rightly so, as young people make up the majority of Africa's population and must be the architects of their own future. At AFSF 2025, the youth agenda was fully mainstreamed into all activities with youth being in all conversations and not as a separate agenda or program. In addition, The Youth Dome area was the centrepiece of this engagement, a vibrant, youth-driven space that brought together over 2000 young people of which 1000 were coming from the host country and all 14 regions showing inclusivity. Within the youth dome, for the first time ever, was the indigenous peoples corner. Buzzing with energy, ideas, and solutions, the Dome provided a platform for youth voices to shape the agenda and showcase their leadership in food systems transformation.

The program was dynamic and intentional, ensuring meaningful youth representation in every session while offering tailored activities in the Dome. From CEO Chats, mentorship, and networking sessions to dialogues on inclusion—spotlighting indigenous peoples, women, refugees, and displaced youth—the Dome tackled the most pressing issues facing young Africans. It also highlighted the role of sports in collaboration with Seed Academy, arts, and culture in food systems transformation. With innovation showcases, GoGettaz Live Pitches, and youth-led agribusiness exhibitions, the Dome served as a powerful launchpad for connecting youth with resources, investors, and partners, reaffirming their central role in driving Africa's food systems transformation. The youth dome was visited by leaders, including H.E. President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, H.E. Malick Ndiaye, President of the National Assembly of Senegal, Head of the Senegalese parliament, and various leaders.



YOUTH TOWNHALL

“To make African youth the driving force behind agricultural development, we must provide education and training that meets the needs of modern, intensive and sustainable agriculture.”

- H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye,
President, Republic of Senegal



“Young people are at the heart of many governments. But let's not wait until there's a problem and you hope someone will come and help. You must be up there, actively engaged, doing your part, while we bring in support from other institutions.”

H.E. Paul Kagame,
President, Republic of Rwanda

“Young people are at the heart of many governments. But let's not wait until there's a problem and you hope someone will come and help. You must be up there, actively engaged, doing your part, while we bring in support from other institutions.”

and must leverage their energy, creativity, and skills to drive innovation, productivity, and food security across the continent.

During the Townhall, young leaders highlighted key challenges and issued a call to action for governments and partners to support youth in agriculture, underscoring the urgent need to empower youth and women to transform Africa's agriculture sector into a viable, inclusive, and prosperous engine for the continent's future.

Throughout AFSF 2025, a resounding message emerged from the sessions and the Youth Dome: Africa's young people are not just stakeholders — they are the drivers of change and innovators that can transform the continent's agrifood systems. Their energy, creativity, and commitment to sustainable solutions were evident in every discussion, highlighting the urgent need to empower youth, provide enabling environments, and create pathways for them to turn ideas into impactful actions. The following recommendations reflect the collective insights, priorities, and innovative proposals put forward by young leaders during the Forum, aimed at fostering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food systems across Africa.

- Financial & investment support:**
Expand access to credit, grants, and investment mechanisms tailored for youth-led agribusinesses, including blended finance and climate finance initiatives. Ensure youth are prepared for investment by integrating an investment readiness phase in empowerment programs.

- Capacity building & mentorship:**
Provide structured training in leadership, technical, and business skills while facilitating mentorship and collaborative spaces. Promote peer-to-peer learning networks and tailored coaching to ensure inclusive development, especially for youth with disabilities.

- Infrastructure & market access:**
Invest in irrigation, storage, processing, and distribution systems to help youth scale value chains. Develop cooperative hubs, support digital and e-commerce platforms, and train youth in market-oriented approaches and agricultural insurance.

- Innovation, technology & digital solutions:**
Encourage the adoption of digital tools, artificial intelligence, precision agriculture, and blockchain to improve productivity and resilience. Combine indigenous knowledge with scientific solutions and develop accessible digital platforms for all youth.

- Nutrition, health & food systems awareness:**
Promote diversified diets and nutrition-sensitive agriculture to improve community health. Use sport, entertainment, and social media to engage youth in agriculture and healthy eating initiatives. Empower youth to integrate nutrition considerations into food systems policies.

- **Policy, governance & enabling environments:** Include youth in all stages of policy design and decision-making to ensure sustainable impact. Promote intergenerational collaboration and strengthen cross-sector partnerships between ministries to support youth agripreneurs. Create spaces for youth to connect with national and continental decision-makers.
- **Empowerment, recognition and social impact:** Celebrate youth and women entrepreneurs to inspire engagement and highlight successful innovations. Shift mindsets from subsistence farming to business-oriented agriculture and mobilize youth to champion climate-smart, sustainable, and resilient food systems. Document and share success stories to foster learning and motivation across communities.





COUNCIL OF THE WISE

The Council of the Wise continued the intergenerational dialogue, bringing young people together with five former prime ministers to explore how experience, wisdom, and political support can strengthen Africa's agri-food systems. Chaired by H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, Former Prime Minister, Ethiopia & Chair of the AFSF Partner's Group, the session brought together 6 former Prime Ministers - H.E. Lionel Zinsou, Former Prime Minister, Republic of Benin; H.E. Mizengo Pinda, Former Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania; H.E. Mohamed Beavogui, Former Prime Minister of Guinea, and H.E. Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, Former Prime Minister of Niger.

The leaders reflected on the sacrifices of past generations in Africa's liberation struggles and urged youth to channel the same determination through innovation, digital tools, and collective action rather than armed struggle. The discussion emphasized that resilient food systems require blending the energy and creativity of young people with the knowledge and experience of older generations.

A central theme of the discussion was the persistent gap in access to finance, with agriculture contributing significantly to GDP yet receiving only a small share of available

credit—particularly for youth-led agribusinesses. The dialogue underscored the need for political mobilization, strong cooperative structures, and targeted policy reforms to expand opportunities for young agripreneurs. It concluded with a powerful call for youth to organize, articulate their priorities, and engage actively with policymakers, while urging governments to align resources and policies to empower the next generation and accelerate the transformation toward sustainable food systems. Key recommendations emphasized the importance of de-risked and bankable investments, alongside continuous training and capacity building for youth in the digital and AI era.



“
Young people, you must work together, organize yourselves, identify your priorities together, and use all the levers of relations and influence that you have to obtain political support. ”

**H.E. Mohamed Beavogui -
Former Prime Minister of
the Republic of Guinea**

HIGH-LEVEL MINISTERIAL ROUNDTABLE (CAADP)



The Ministerial Dialogue at AFSF 2025 underscored the transformative potential of renewable energy to drive Africa's agricultural and food systems transformation. Ministers and partners reflected on the urgent need to align agriculture, energy, trade, and environmental policies to accelerate progress toward the CAADP Kampala Strategy (2026–2035). A key theme was the need to measure country-level implementation and progress from 2026, with participants emphasizing that persistent energy deficits remain a major constraint to productivity, value addition, and resilience—especially in rural areas.

Discussions revealed several interlinked challenges, including widespread hunger and malnutrition, fragmented policies, limited access to finance, weak land tenure systems, and the mounting impacts of climate change on yields and water availability. Discussants stressed that without addressing energy deficits, climate resilience, and financing barriers, food system transformation will remain out of reach. Scaling renewable-powered technologies—such as solar irrigation, cold storage, and agro-processing systems—was identified as a crucial opportunity to empower rural communities and enhance inclusive growth.

The dialogue also took place against the backdrop of key global and continental milestones—UNFSS+4, the upcoming Africa Climate Summit, and COP30—highlighting the relevance of renewable energy in achieving climate and development goals. Ministers drew lessons from successful examples in Ethiopia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, and from regional cooperation models like the Malawi–Zambia rice trade accord, which demonstrate the power of cross-border collaboration.

The Ministers committed to prioritize:

- Integration of energy and agriculture strategies to enhance productivity, resilience, and value addition.
- Promotion of decentralized renewable energy (DRE) technologies, including solar irrigation, cold chains, and food processing systems.
- Support for rural communities and youth engagement to drive innovation and inclusive growth.
- Strengthening policy and institutional frameworks to enable cross-sectoral investments and implementation.
- Leveraging financing mechanisms to expand access to renewable-powered solutions and stimulate private-sector participation.
- Working on the CAADP indicators and M&E framework to measure progress by end of the year.
- Domestication of CAADP in each country and achieving the goal of allocating at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture and food systems.

- Use the CAADP roadmap as a living accountability framework to accelerate agrifood systems transformation and drive sustainable, inclusive growth across Africa.



MINISTERIAL DEEP DIVE: ENERGY



Energy is a critical enabler of agricultural transformation, agro-industrialization, and value addition. Yet, African agriculture continues to face a significant gap in powering its value chains, despite the continent's abundant renewable energy potential. Building on the energy discussions in the High-Level Ministerial Roundtable, AFSF 2025 convened its first Energy Ministerial Deep Dive on "Green Energy

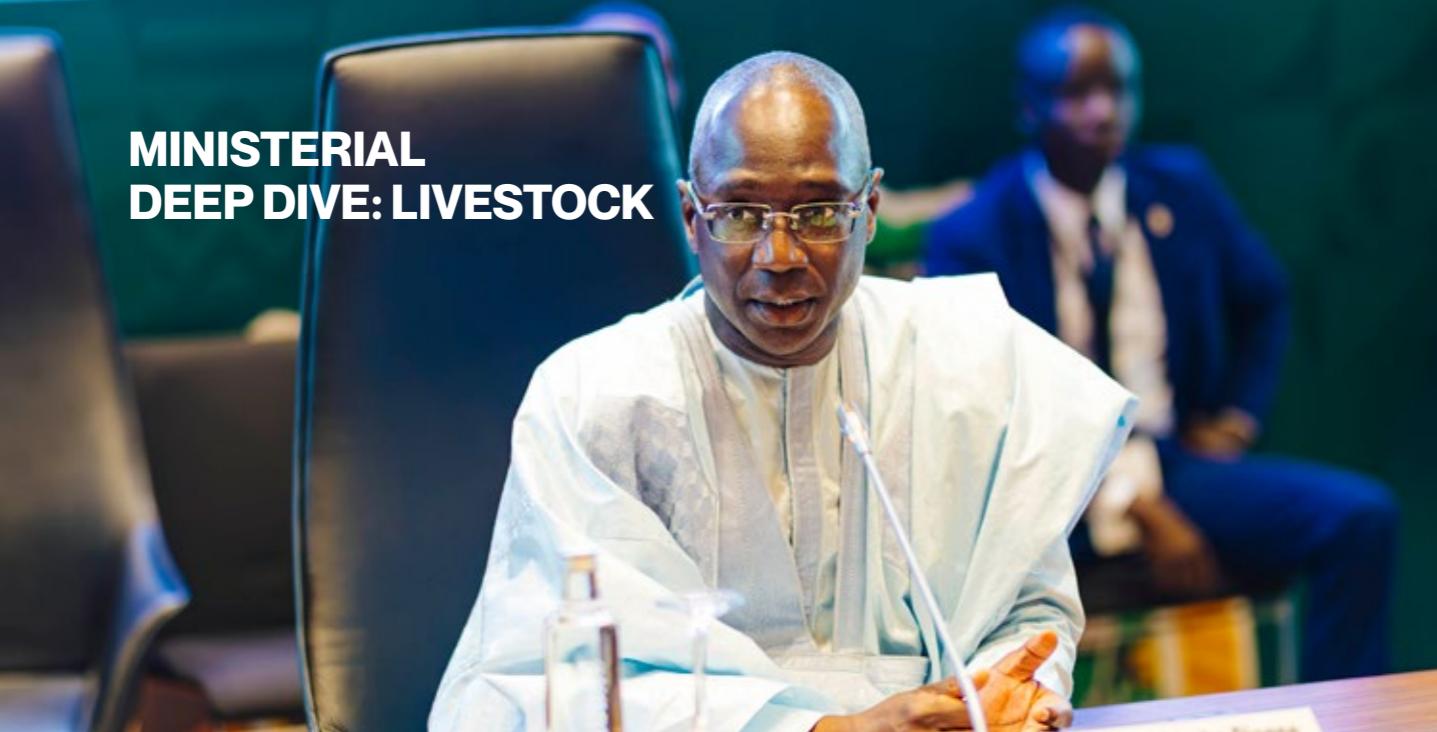
– Powering and Investing in Food Systems Value Chains," emphasizing that agricultural transformation depends on integrating energy, climate, and ecosystem considerations. Energy ministry representatives highlighted the vital role of reliable, affordable, and renewable energy in powering irrigation, storage, processing, and market access—essential links in food system value chains.

Ongoing initiatives, including large-scale solar irrigation programs, decentralized mini-grids supporting rural communities, and productive-use renewable energy hubs, already demonstrate the enormous potential of renewable energy to enhance agricultural productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve livelihoods.

Priority should focus on integrated approaches—combining tax incentives, technical standards, repair services, local capacity development, blended financing, private-sector engagement, and supportive policies—to ensure sustainable adoption and inclusive deployment of renewable energy solutions for agriculture. Public-private partnerships will be essential in advancing energy access, particularly clean energy, which is central to achieving countries' commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The forum reaffirmed the role of energy as a critical input for transforming food systems. It emphasized that policies, investments, and enabling environments, as well as programs aimed at strengthening food systems, must systematically integrate energy resources into power value chains and drive the modernization of agriculture. The discussions on energy at AFSF 2025 culminated in the launch of the Agri-Energy Coalition by AGRA, GOGLA and partners to advance integrated renewable energy solutions to power food systems.

MINISTERIAL DEEP DIVE: LIVESTOCK



In another first, livestock took centre stage with a dedicated Ministerial Deep Dive. An exclusive, high-level dialogue that brought together 13 countries and key development partners. Co-hosted by AU-IBAR, ILRI, and GIZ, the session marked a historic moment, underscoring the critical role of livestock in driving nutrition, income generation, and rural transformation across the continent.

The discussions converged on three priority pathways for livestock transformation:

- Youth-led agribusiness – Ministers called for a paradigm shift, positioning youth not just as herders but as CEOs of modern livestock enterprises, supported by technology, innovation, investment, and market access,

to export livestock products beyond African borders.

- Genetic improvement – A strong commitment was made to advance breeding programs and better animal genetics to boost productivity, incomes, and resilience for farmers, particularly to climate change.
- Regional cooperation and rapid response – Ministers endorsed innovative collaboration mechanisms, including direct peer-to-peer channels such as a “WhatsApp diplomacy” platform, to improve disease control, share innovations, and accelerate cross-border solutions.

PARLIAMENTARIANS' FORUM

The Parliamentarians Forum at AFSF 2025 highlighted the pivotal role of African legislatures in translating continental commitments into national policies, laws, and budgets. As the continent transitions from the Malabo Declaration to the CAADP Kampala Strategy 2026–2035, parliamentarians were urged to close implementation gaps, strengthen oversight, integrate agrifood systems into National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs) and enforce the 10% public expenditure target, while ensuring inclusive governance, youth engagement, and accountability.

The African Food Systems Parliamentary Network's 10-year Call to Action provides a framework for sustained accountability and momentum, guiding parliamentarians to act across short, medium, and long-term horizons. It outlines opportunities to fully harness the transformative potential of the CAADP 2026–2035. Legislators were encouraged to leverage their powers, promote regional cooperation, and foster inclusive decision-making with youth, women, and the private sector. Strengthening parliamentary capacity, institutionalizing Kampala priorities, and using the roadmap as a living accountability framework were emphasized as critical to accelerating agrifood systems transformation and driving sustainable, inclusive growth across Africa.



TERANGA – HOST SHOWCASE & FACTS OF THE DAY

The Teranga Moment at AFSF 2025 provided a warm and engaging start to each day, reflecting Senegalese hospitality and warm culture while connecting participants to the pressing food systems issues of the day. The morning kicker showcased the country's rich art, music, and cultural heritage, creating an atmosphere that was both inspiring and energizing.

By blending culture with content, the Teranga Moment offered participants a meaningful connection to Senegal and Africa, grounding discussions in local context while linking them to continental and global food systems priorities. It was a lively, welcoming, and insightful launch to the Forum's daily program. The Teranga showcase was part of the bigger picture and the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Event) agenda of Senegal and demonstrating the country as one of the main players on MICE in Africa but also to better position its business tourism on the global map. The Forum supported the design of a strategic plan to assist the country in optimizing its potential on MICE.



FIELD VISITS – EXPERIENCING FOOD SYSTEMS IN ACTION

A dynamic feature of the AFSF program is the inclusion of field visits, designed to connect high-level discussions with real-world impact. Hosted by Senegal, these curated visits allowed delegates, particularly investors and development partners, to experience food systems at work, from innovative startups and farmer cooperatives to agro-processing hubs and agri-tech projects.

Through these on-the-ground engagements, participants gained firsthand insight into Senegal's progress in advancing food systems transformation at the grassroots level, while exploring investable and scalable innovations with potential to drive broader continental impact.

The main sites visited were:

- **Petite Côte: Agroecology, Innovation & Women's Empowerment:** The visit highlighted the potential of community-led agroecology and coastal resource management in advancing sustainable livelihoods. At the *Lagune de Somone*, participants observed women-led oyster farming, fishing, and eco-tourism initiatives that demonstrate how conservation and economic empowerment can go hand in hand. At *Ferme des 4 Chemins* in Toubab Dialaw, a two-hectare agroecological



training farm, participants saw how organic farming, solar irrigation, and seed production are creating dignified livelihoods for women and youth. The farm's cooperative model and local market linkages, such as "Bio Dialaw," illustrated practical pathways for scaling sustainable agriculture.

- Niayes Zone: Food Security, Agricultural Innovation & Environmental Protection:** In the Niayes Zone, participants visited *Ferme Noflaye*, a 23-hectare pilot farm reintegrating former military personnel and women into agriculture through training in dairy, horticulture, and biogas-powered circular farming systems. The *Village des Tortues* showcased biodiversity conservation and environmental education through the protection and reintroduction of endangered tortoises. At *Vitagro*, an integrated agro-industrial hub, participants explored innovative models for agroecological production, processing, and accredited vocational training via *NOVAGRI*, highlighting how technology, skills development, and enterprise can drive inclusive and sustainable food systems transformation.
- Niayes Zone: Youth Entrepreneurship & Agricultural Innovation:** The third field visit showcased how youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship are reshaping agriculture in Senegal. At *Lycée Amary Ndack Seck* in Thiès, participants visited a pilot site for

school environmental and agroecology clubs where students engage in gardening, composting, and climate education, linking classroom learning to practical action and supporting school canteens with local produce. The visit to the *Périmètre Maraîcher de Touba Toul* demonstrated a successful partnership between local government and IFAD, providing a five-hectare irrigated area equipped with solar-powered pumping and storage facilities for 40 trained youth agripreneurs, including 31 women. The final stop, *DIA-AGRO* in the Mbao Forest, featured a youth-led agribusiness managed by a young woman entrepreneur producing a steady supply of vegetables such as lettuce, tomatoes, and peppers—an inspiring example of youth-driven agribusiness and innovation powering sustainable food systems.

- Diamniadio Zone: Industrial & Agro-Processing Hubs:** The fourth field visit focused on industrialization and value addition within Senegal's emerging agro-processing hubs. At the *Cargo-Village of ZESID* in Diass, participants toured an integrated logistics complex connected to Dakar's international airport, featuring bonded warehouses, office facilities, and an under-customs corridor designed to streamline exports and reduce congestion in Dakar. The visit underscored Senegal's ambition to become a regional logistics and export hub. At the *Integrated Industrial Platform of Diamniadio (P2ID)*, participants

explored three agro-industrial enterprises—*Djolof Eloc*, which produces juices from local fruits, cereals, and spices; *Galion*, a manufacturer of plastic packaging for the food industry; and *Baobaoshu*, which creates eco-friendly cardboard packaging.

- The final stop, *Le Lionceau*, showcased a pioneering Senegalese company producing nutritious baby food from local crops such as millet, fonio, baobab, and moringa, embodying innovation in child nutrition, local value addition, job creation, and support for sustainable agriculture.



Recognition and awards





AFRICA FOOD PRIZE

The 2025 Africa Food Prize for food systems leadership was awarded to two remarkable women: **Professor Mary Abukutsa Onyango** of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenya and Dr. Mercy Diebiru-Ojo of Nigeria of International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria.



Through her advocacy, research and policy influence, Prof. Abukutsa has registered new varieties, published widely and positioned indigenous vegetables as essential tools in combating malnutrition, conserving biodiversity, and creating resilient livelihoods. Her efforts have shifted national health policies and opened new markets, placing African vegetables at the Centre of global nutrition conversations.

“
It's not simply looking at the scientific work; it's also looking at the impact. Prof. Abukutsa's lifelong dedication has offered sustainable solutions to hidden hunger, ensuring that Africa's biodiversity is recognized as a global asset. Dr. Diebiru-Ojo's leadership has transitioned SAH beyond research to practical application, supporting the development of stronger seed systems in multiple countries. ”

**H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete,
Former President, United
Republic of Tanzania**



Dr. Diebiru-Ojo has transformed cassava and yam seed systems, giving farmers disease-free planting material and higher yields. Her work is shaping a new frontier in rapid crop multiplication,



transforming Semi-Autotrophic Hydroponics (SAH) from a scientific breakthrough into a scalable enterprise model that directly benefits farmers and seed entrepreneurs across sub-Saharan Africa.

The Africa Food Prize is the preeminent annual award that recognizes outstanding individuals or institutions that are leading the effort to change the reality of farming in Africa.

The US\$100,000 prize celebrates Africans who are taking control of Africa's agriculture agenda and puts a spotlight on bold initiatives and technical innovations that can be replicated across the continent to create a new era of food security and economic opportunity.

“

The winning mindset of our young GoGettaz finalists is solution seeking, innovative, and tech savvy. To our young GoGettaz: whether you won a top spot today or not, you are the continent's future. ”

Strive Masiyiwa,
Cofounder, GoGettaz Africa;
Founder & Chairman, Econet Group

“

These young entrepreneurs are not just building businesses; they are shaping the future, driving innovation, and solving some of the world's most pressing challenges. Their courage to dream big serves as a beacon of hope for generations to come. ”

Svein Tore Holsether,
President & CEO, Yara International;
Cofounder, GoGettaz

GOGETTAZ AGRIPRENEUR PRIZE

The 2025 GoGettaz Agripreneur Prize Competition attracted thousands of entries from young innovators across Africa, reflecting the central role of youth leadership in this year's Forum. As one of AFSF 2025's flagship youth platforms, GoGettaz showcased the depth of talent, creativity, and entrepreneurial ambition driving Africa's food systems transformation. Thirteen finalists from 11 countries advanced to Dakar after a rigorous multistage review process, bringing forward bold solutions in climate resilience, value addition, postharvest technologies, digital agritech, and green manufacturing.

In the days leading up to the live finals, the finalists participated in intensive pitch training sessions delivered by professional coaches, strengthening their ability to communicate their business models, articulate their impact, and engage investors. These efforts culminated in a high energy live pitch session in the Youth Dome broadcast by Al Jazeera which became one of the most vibrant and well attended moments of the Forum.



Two Grand Prize winners **Naglaa Mohamed (Egypt)** and **Samuel Muyita (Uganda)** each received US\$50,000 for their scalable, high impact ventures advancing soil health, food preservation, and sustainable production.



The **Impact Award**, totaling **US\$60,000**, was presented to **Daniel Wa Mukina (DRC)**, **Faïçal Abdoul (Burkina Faso)**, **Editha Mshiu (Tanzania)**, and **Fareeda Mustapha (Ghana)** for enterprises delivering exceptional social, economic, and environmental value. Seven additional innovators were recognized with Young Catalyst Awards, highlighting early stage promise and leadership.

In total, **US\$167,000** in grants was awarded. Beyond the accolades, all 13 finalists joined the **Generation Africa Fellowship Program (GAFP)** to receive continued mentorship, investment facilitation, leadership development, and post Forum visibility, ensuring their ventures continue to grow long after the competition. GoGettaz 2025 reaffirmed that Africa's youth are not just participants in food systems transformation, they are its architects.



“

These founders have turned constraints into thriving businesses. Collectively, they've increased annual incomes by an estimated 35%, saved millions of tonnes of produce from spoilage, and delivered food to over 500,000 households. Their businesses prove that innovation and resilience are alive across Africa's food systems. At AGRA, our role is to back them with stronger policy support, smarter finance, and access to bigger markets so they can multiply their reach and drive systemic change.

**Alice Ruhweza,
President, AGRA**

VALUE4HER WOMEN AGRIPRENEUR OF THE YEAR AWARD (WAYA)



Mathildah Amollo, Founder and CEO of Greatlakes Feeds Ltd, Kenya was the grand prize winner of the 2025 VALUE4HER WAYA.



Juliet Kakwerre N Tumusiime, Founder and CEO of Cheveux Organique, Uganda, was named Women Empowerment Champion while **Julienne Olawolé Agossadou**, founder of SEDAMI – La Reine des Champignons, Benin was recognized as Resilient & Inspirational Leader. **Roberta Edu-Oyedokun**, Founder and CEO, Moppet Foods, Nigeria, won the award for Outstanding Value-Adding Enterprise. **Joyce Waithira Rugano**, Founder, Ecorich Solutions, Kenya was honored as Female Ag-Tech Innovator, and **Onicca Sibanyoni**, Founder of

Jwale Farms, South Africa received the Young Female Agripreneur (Rising Star) award.

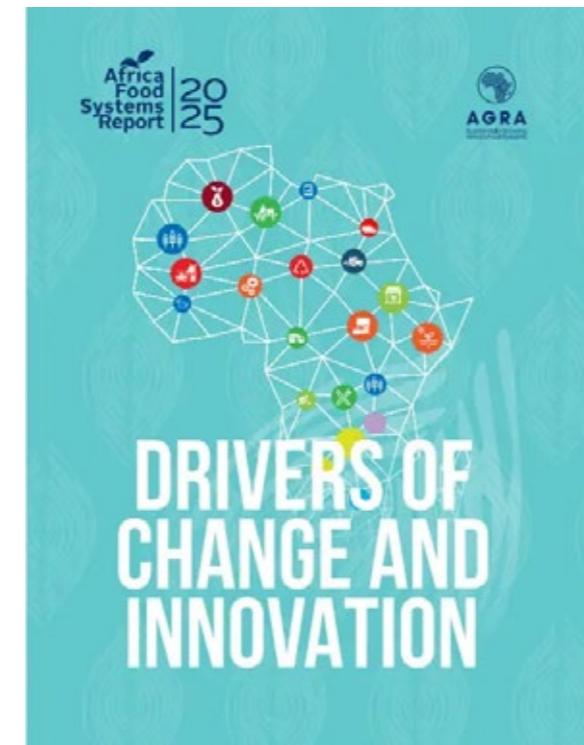
A total of **US\$300,000** in grant funding was awarded through AGRA's Value4Her program, a continental initiative designed to increase the performance of women agri-enterprises by expanding their access to markets, trade, finance, investment, knowledge, networks, and skills. This reinforces the strategic importance of investing in women-led ventures to unlock Africa's full economic potential.

Knowledge products and reports



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND REPORTS

Africa Food Systems Report (AFSR)



This year marked the launch of the Africa Food Systems Report (AFSR), the successor to the Africa Agriculture Status Report, as a new annual snapshot of the continent's food systems transformation, designed to be supplementary to and supportive of the CAADP Biennial Review. The AFSR 2025, titled "Drivers of Change and Innovation," highlights the urgent need to move

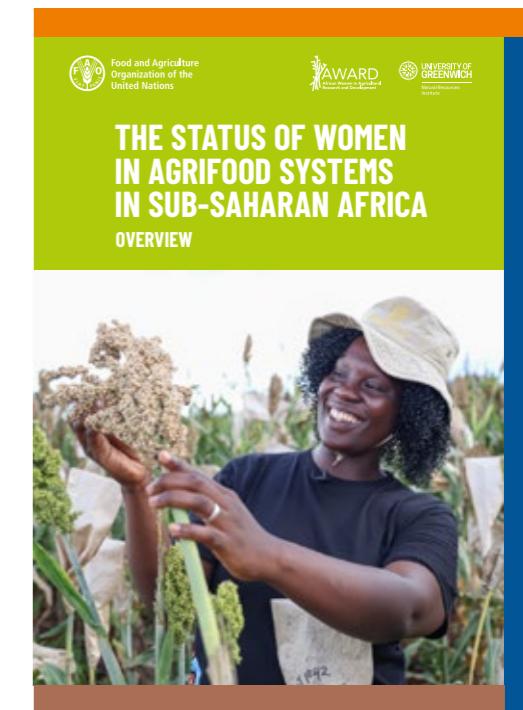
beyond fragmented progress toward integrated, systemic transformation of Africa's agrifood systems. It underscores the importance of governance, innovative finance, infrastructure, and knowledge as drivers of change, while introducing new food systems indicators to track performance across the continent.

The insights emerging from the report converge into five cross-cutting strategic imperatives:

- The need for systemic alignment is paramount, and countries must institutionalize a unified agrifood systems strategy aligned with the CAADP goals.
- Targeted investment, particularly blended finance, is essential to drive transformation on a large scale.
- Strengthened governance must underpin every intervention. This requires implementation capacity, decentralized authority, and consistent enforcement.
- Spatial transformation through the development of food baskets and trade corridors is paramount.
- Transformation must be informed and guided by next-generation knowledge systems.

Read the full report [here](#).

The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa



"Achieving gender equality and empowering women in agrifood systems is both a moral imperative and an effective policy choice"

The report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich (NRI), and African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) provided critical evidence of pervasive gender inequalities, despite women comprising nearly half of the workforce.

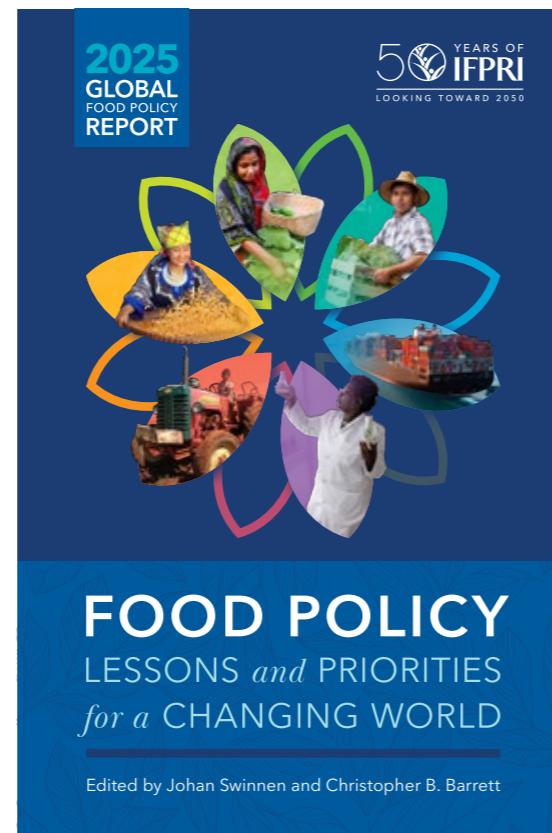
Titled “Let’s Grow Equality”, the report underscored the urgent need for investment, enabling policies, and gender-transformative approaches to unlock inclusive growth, food security, and climate resilience.

Policy recommendations

- Enhance women’s access to secure and decent employment.
- Strengthen women’s land, water and forest rights and women’s leadership in climate and environmental governance.
- Recognize and alleviate women’s unpaid care work.
- Prevent and address gender-based violence.
- Make gender equality and women’s empowerment a mandatory part of food security and nutrition policies and country action plans.
- Promote recognition, representation and redistribution of resources towards women for gender-just agrifood innovation.
- Enhance women’s participation and decision making at all levels – in their homes, communities, and at policy levels.
- Strengthen women’s groups and foster collective action in agrifood systems.

Read the full report [here](#).

The 2025 Global Food Policy Report (GFPR)



The report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) explored the role of evidence in shaping policies over the past 50 years. Titled “Food Policy: Lessons and Priorities for a Changing World”, it spotlighted how Africa can advance resilient, inclusive agrifood systems,

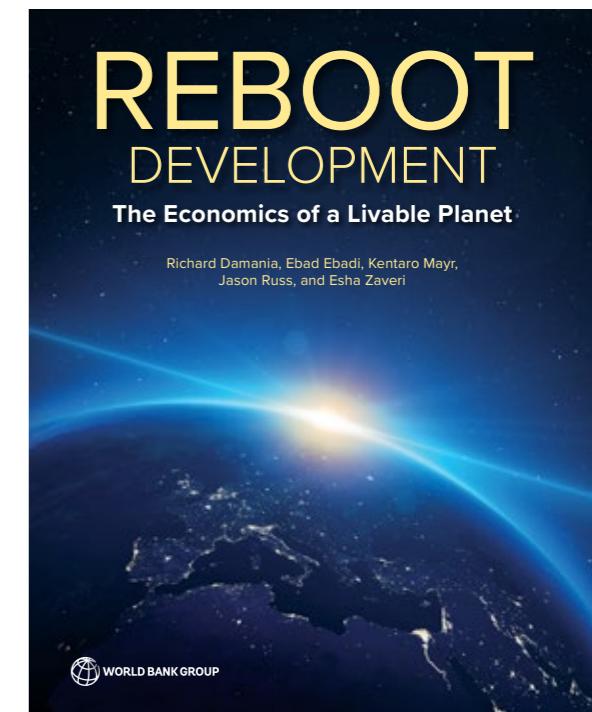
anchored in the 2025 Kampala Declaration and the new CAADP agenda—with a focus on equitable livelihoods for youth, women, and vulnerable groups.

Looking ahead to 2050, the report identifies **six broad priorities for food policy research**:

- Strengthening resilience and inclusion in food systems everywhere, with special attention to conflict- and disaster-affected regions and vulnerable groups.
- Improving diets and nutrition by addressing the root causes of poor food environments and enabling healthier choices.
- Harnessing new technologies responsibly, including digital innovations and AI, while ensuring equitable access and inclusion.
- Engaging the private sector to expand investment in food systems innovation, from R&D to sustainable value chains.
- Mobilizing and reforming existing public spending, including repurposing agricultural support to align with sustainability and nutrition goals.
- Fostering interdisciplinary research and policymaking, breaking down silos between agriculture, health, environment, and trade.

Read the full report [here](#).

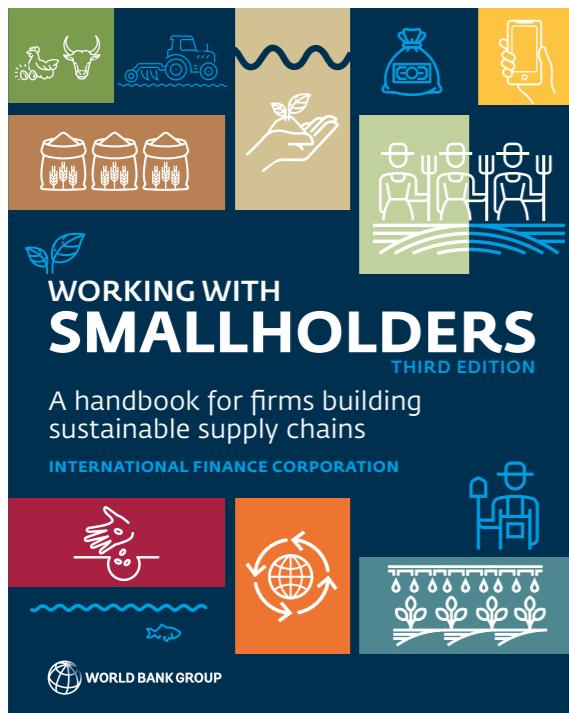
Reboot Development-The Economics of Livable Planet



The World Bank’s *Reboot Development: The Economics of a Livable Planet* (2025) warned that the natural foundations of development—land, air, and water—are under growing stress, threatening health, productivity, and economic stability. Over 90% of the global population is now exposed to degraded natural resources, with deforestation, pollution, and overuse of nitrogen fertilizers driving massive hidden economic

losses. The report reframed environmental protection as an economic necessity, arguing that safeguarding natural capital is essential for sustainable growth, job creation, and resilience. The report called for integrating environmental stewardship into development policy through

Working with Smallholders: A Handbook for Firms Building Sustainable Supply Chains



efficient resource use, restoration of forests and soils, smarter nitrogen management, investment in cleaner industries, and strong governance that aligns economic incentives with sustainability—ensuring that growth works with nature, not against it.

This World Bank Group's handbook highlighted how rising incomes, urbanization, and demand for meat, dairy, and biofuels are transforming global agriculture. Meeting this demand, especially in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, requires boosting productivity among smallholder farmers while addressing climate pressures, improving food quality, and reducing losses.

The handbook offered agribusinesses practical guidance and case studies on developing sustainable, resilient, and inclusive supply chains that benefit both companies and smallholders. It urged firms and partners to strengthen collaboration with smallholders by expanding access to technology, finance, inputs, and markets—using digital tools and sustainable practices to enhance productivity, profitability, and resilience across agricultural value chains.

A Growing Opportunity for Nutrition



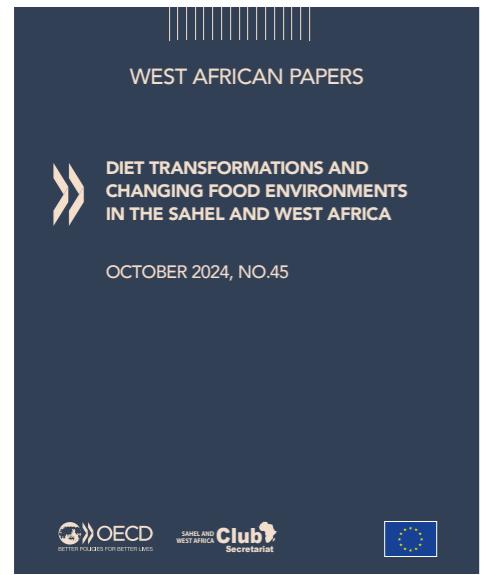
The report by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and nutritionists Kendra Byrd and Caroline Joyce highlighted how widespread micronutrient deficiencies, especially in countries with serious hunger levels, are driven by diets dominated by starchy staples and worsened by climate and seasonal food insecurity. It identified opportunity

crops—nutrient-dense, locally adapted, and resilient species—as a key solution to closing micronutrient gaps, improving dietary diversity, and strengthening food system resilience. The analysis focused on 41 hunger-affected countries, showing how scaling up opportunity crops can improve nutrition, empower women, and enhance climate adaptation. The report called for governments and partners to invest in research, data, and innovation to scale nutrient-rich opportunity crops, integrate them into national food and nutrition policies, and build supportive markets, financing, and infrastructure to mainstream these crops into resilient and sustainable food systems.

Building Resilience in Agrifood Supply Chains

The report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Quantis warned that climate change, geopolitical tensions, and trade disruptions are converging to threaten global food systems, with potential yield losses of up to 35% by 2050. It called for urgent action from governments, agribusinesses, and investors to build resilience through innovation, diversification, and strategic risk management. The report recommended diversifying crops and production regions, investing in regenerative agriculture, and using digital “control towers” to track and respond to risks in real time. Strengthening value-chain partnerships and expanding access to financing and policy incentives are key to advancing climate-smart, sustainable farming practices.

Diet Transformations and Changing Food Environments in the Sahel and West Africa



The OECD/Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) report examined how urbanisation, population growth, and rising incomes are rapidly reshaping diets and food environments across the region. It highlighted a growing shift from traditional staples toward more diverse, processed, and convenient foods, creating both opportunities for improved nutrition and risks such as diet-related diseases and inequality.

The report called for stronger data systems and coordinated policies to guide this transformation toward healthier, more inclusive, and sustainable food systems. It recommended a comprehensive approach to agrifood resilience through diversification, innovation, and collaboration—urging investment in regenerative agriculture, digital climate-risk monitoring, stronger value-chain partnerships, and financing mechanisms to scale climate-smart, sustainable farming practices.



Plenary Sessions



YEAR IN REVIEW 2024-2025: WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?



Stock take of African food systems

Food systems transformation extends beyond agriculture to encompass climate resilience, value addition, processing, and inclusive market access. This was the central message of the African Food Systems Year in Review, which reflected on achievements, persistent challenges, and priorities for building resilient, sustainable, and inclusive food systems.

Policy recommendations

- Scale up investment in digital and physical infrastructure to unlock market access and finance for youth and SMEs.
- Foster stronger partnerships among governments, private sector, and innovators with a focus on SMEs and youth-led enterprises.
- Promote indigenous products and success models to inspire locally driven transformation and regional integration.
- Accelerate financing and blended investment mechanisms to de-risk and attract private sector capital.
- Use data-driven decision-making to guide policy and financing, align budgets with the CAADP Kampala framework and ensure accountability through strong monitoring and evaluation.



Empower women in agri-food systems: Advancing Nutrition & Health

“ We need to step up our game in technology so that we can prolong the shelf lives of this nutritious food and make sure that the food reaches everybody.”

Ms. Juliet Laverley - President, Women's Farmer Network of Sierra Leone

The session reinforced that investing in women is a strategic and effective approach to achieving food security, improving nutrition, and enhancing climate resilience. Anchored in the launch of *The Status of Women in Agri-food Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa* report, the discussion highlighted that women are the backbone of Africa's food systems, yet they continue to face persistent gender inequalities. Evidence from the report was central to the conversation, showing where targeted interventions can have the greatest impact and informing policies to empower women across agrifood systems.

On nutrition, speakers emphasized the need for nutrition-sensitive policies and interventions that improve dietary diversity, food safety, and fortification programs, particularly when led by women. The session also highlighted the role of technology and infrastructure in strengthening value chains, enabling women and youth to access markets, share knowledge, and scale innovations that improve both nutrition outcomes and climate resilience.



Policy recommendations

- Enhance women's leadership and participation across agrifood systems, ensuring inclusion in decision-making at all levels.
- Increase access to resources, technology, and infrastructure through targeted financing, land rights support, digital tools, and improved rural infrastructure for women and youth in agriculture.
- Invest in nutrition-sensitive initiatives by supporting programs that promote dietary diversification, food fortification, food safety training, and youth-led nutrition innovation hubs.
- Integrate gender, nutrition, and technology in value chains by designing supply chains that leverage digital tools, ensure equitable roles, fair remuneration, and improved market access for women and youth.
- Leverage evidence and strategic investments by using gender- and nutrition-disaggregated data to guide interventions, monitor impact, and scale successful women- and youth-led agrifood enterprises.

Digitalization & AI 4 Next Gen



"We are living in a world where the youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow but innovators of today."

**Ms. Aggie Asiimwe Konde,
Director - Communications, External
Engagement & Advocacy, AGRA**

The Digitalization and AI 4 Next Gen session showcased how African youth are driving agricultural transformation through digital tools and AI. The discussion emphasized youth inclusion in policy, integrated digital ecosystems, and scalable technology solutions that increase productivity, market access, and entrepreneurship.

Policy recommendations

- Embed youth at the centre of digital and AI innovation in agriculture, including policymaking and program design.
- Provide patient capital, credit facilities, and policy-backed funding to scale youth-led agri-tech startups.
- Promote integrated digital ecosystems combining traceability, precision agriculture, and advisory services.
- Prioritize low-tech, locally relevant solutions and B2B2C business models to enhance adoption and impact.
- Design digital innovations to solve African problems and serve local markets while fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship.



Governance of food systems: Priority actions and investments to implement CAADP



"Smallholders are collectively the biggest investors in Africa's food systems – they must be heard and supported."

Elizabeth Nsimadala, President, Eastern African Farmers Association (EAFF)

The Governance of Food Systems plenary underscored the pivotal role of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) 2026–2035 Strategy in driving Africa's food systems transformation. Leaders highlighted the urgency of mobilizing domestic resources, reducing dependence on imports, and leveraging regional integration, institutional innovation, and private sector engagement.

Policy recommendations

- Embed youth- and women-focused financing mechanisms, including risk-sharing products, to support smallholders and SMEs.
- Develop and operationalize food corridors linking agriculture, trade, and infrastructure for regional integration.
- Mobilize resources through innovative financing models such as crowdfunding and blended finance.
- Invest in AI, digital tools, and technology-driven solutions to enhance agricultural productivity and efficiency.
- Strengthen institutional coordination by integrating agriculture, trade, and environmental functions and implementing robust accountability frameworks.



Food systems trade & markets

"Political will and leadership will determine the success of this summit. Implementation is everything."

Hon. Claver Gatete, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations & Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)



Unlocking the full potential of the AfCFTA requires harmonized standards, modernized logistics, and investment in food corridors, storage, and border efficiency. The Food Systems Trade & Markets plenary emphasized that connecting food corridors and food supply chains is essential to overcome Africa's paradox of producing enough food yet struggling to deliver it efficiently due to fragmented policies and persistent trade barriers. Leaders, youth innovators, and private sector actors stressed the centrality of SMEs and women- and youth-led enterprises, with digital tools, agro-processing zones, and value addition emerging as critical drivers of competitiveness. Strong political will and cross-sector partnerships are needed to translate commitments into measurable outcomes.

Policy recommendations

- Fast-track AfCFTA implementation by harmonizing standards and reducing non-tariff barriers.
- Invest in food corridors, logistics infrastructure, and one-stop border posts to cut trade costs and delays.
- Establish compliance and standardization hubs to help SMEs, women, and youth access export markets.
- Mobilize affordable credit, blended finance, and domestic investment to scale agro-processing and value addition.
- Expand vocational training and enterprise support programs to strengthen youth participation in food trade and markets.



Biodiversity, Climate & Land: Making the Conventions work for Africa

"Young people are not flowers; they need their voices catalyzed into action."

Ms. Clariece Ngumi, Founder, Arabuko Limited



The *Biodiversity, Climate, and Land* plenary focused on making the Conventions work for Africa by translating the Rio Conventions into integrated, continent-wide action. While Africa is on the frontline of climate, biodiversity, and land crises, it also holds the assets—its youth, agrobiodiversity, and local knowledge—to drive global solutions. Speakers called for a shift toward community-driven approaches, innovative finance, and coherent policy frameworks, showcasing examples such as agroforestry, blended finance, and youth-led innovations. A dedicated youth dialogue further highlighted the urgency of embedding Africa's next generation in both decision-making and implementation to restore ecosystems and build resilient food systems.

Policy recommendations

- Strengthen monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) systems to track and verify progress on climate, biodiversity, and land commitments at the national level.
- Empower communities and youth by embedding them in decision-making and supporting grassroots-led, locally relevant solutions.
- Foster collaboration among governments, private sector, and civil society to harmonize actions across the three Rio Conventions.
- Unlock tailored finance by scaling blended finance models and designing accessible mechanisms for SMEs and youth innovators.
- Promote policy coherence to align climate, land, and biodiversity agendas with food systems strategies and national development plans.



Healthy and productive ecosystems – Africa Fertilizer & Soil Health Initiative

**“We don’t give back what the land gives us;
it’s time to rebuild Africa’s soils.”**

H.E. Ali Mohammed Ibrahim, Senior Advisor to the State Minister of Agriculture and Horticulture, Ministry of Agriculture, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Healthy soils are fundamental to Africa’s food security, climate resilience, and biodiversity. Speakers stressed the urgency of translating political commitments—from Abuja, Nairobi, and Lomé—into practical, investable actions through the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan. The session stressed the need for bottom-up, farmer-centred approaches, robust MRV frameworks, and blended finance mechanisms to de-risk investments, scale innovations, and ensure long-term soil health and food system resilience.

Policy recommendations

- Translate the Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan into country-level, actionable roadmaps.
- Mobilize transformative finance using blended public-private platforms and avoid inefficient subsidies.
- Strengthen soil health research and make data accessible and actionable for farmers, policymakers, and investors.
- Prioritize youth and farmer inclusion in policy design, financing mechanisms, and decision-making.
- Scale integrated approaches combining fertilizers, agroforestry, irrigation, organic amendments, and local knowledge.



Champion and invest in the future



“Agricultural extension must be rebranded as a career of choice for Africa’s youth.”

**Tajudeen Yahaya,
Co-founder Extension Africa**

**“When Africa bets on its youth,
it bets on its future.”**

**Alice Ruhweza,
President, AGRA**

**“From declarations to impact:
we must track progress and
deliver results.”**

**H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn,
Board Chair, AGRA & Former Prime Minister,
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

The closing plenary of the AFSF 2025 provided a powerful and inspiring conclusion to the week, celebrating youth leadership, innovation, and concrete commitments to transform African food systems. The ceremony honoured outstanding agripreneurs through awards, showcasing the next generation of change-makers. Leaders emphasized translating commitments into action, fostering youth and women’s leadership, enabling inclusive markets, and promoting climate-smart investments.

The session reinforced the need for scalable solutions, stronger extension services, and policy reforms to ensure that Africa’s youth and women are central to driving resilient, inclusive, and productive food systems. The plenary closed with a unifying call to action to carry forward the forum’s momentum through partnerships, accountability, and sustained investment in Africa’s agricultural future.

Stakeholder Forums



Civil Society Forum



Civil society must move beyond dependency and fragmented efforts to become a unified, credible force that drives implementation, amplifies farmer and youth voices, and holds

“The current system doesn’t accommodate farmers; it breaks farmers.”

Ms. Vivian Onano, Founder & Director, Leading Light Initiative

governments accountable. The Civil Society Roundtable at this year’s AFSF emphasized the vital role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in advancing the Kampala CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035) through advocacy, inclusivity, and grassroots-driven solutions. The discussion reinforced that civil society’s legitimacy lies in delivering concrete results, fostering trust, and ensuring that smallholder farmers, women, and youth are at the centre of food systems transformation.

Policy recommendations

- Strengthen civil society networks at national, regional, and continental levels to build a unified voice.
- Create enabling policy environments that respond directly to the needs of smallholder farmers, women, and youth, and ensure policies move from paper to practice.
- Reform financing mechanisms so resources flow directly to small producers and grassroots innovators.
- Scale and invest in successful community-driven models rather than duplicating efforts with new pilots.
- Institutionalize accountability by tracking budgets and commitments, with CSOs using public platforms to demand transparency.



Farmers’ Forum

“Farmers don’t need policies on paper – they need action in the fields.”

Ms. Latifa Diedhou, Nutrивie, Senegal

Coordinated action from governments, private sector, development partners, and farmer organizations is critical to translate policy into action, strengthen cooperatives, and ensure climate finance directly benefits producers, ultimately enabling resilient, inclusive, and sustainable African food systems. The dedicated farmers forum at AFSF continued to raise the

voices of farmers as central to food systems transformation on the continent. The dialogue emphasized that turning policy commitments into tangible action requires strengthening farmer organizations, improving access to finance, and empowering marginalized groups to participate actively in food systems transformation.

Policy recommendations

- Align government policies with actionable agricultural investment plans and ensure implementation beyond paper commitments.
- Encourage private sector investment and de-risk agriculture to build inclusive value chains.
- Support the formation and strengthening of farmer cooperatives and organizations to enhance bargaining power and market access.
- Ensure climate finance reaches farmers directly, bypassing bureaucratic bottlenecks and intermediaries.
- Empower youth and women to actively participate in agrifood systems through targeted programs, capacity building, and inclusive policy frameworks.



PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM

Partnering with the Future: The Private Sector's Role in Youth-Led Agri-Food Innovation

The Private Sector Roundtable highlighted youth as key drivers of Africa's food systems transformation. Creating an enabling ecosystem where young entrepreneurs can thrive requires innovative investment models, coordinated programs, and mentorship. Systemic reforms and collaboration across public, private, and civil society sectors are key to unlocking youth potential and scale impact across the continent.

Policy recommendations

- Expand blended finance and risk-sharing mechanisms to de-risk youth-led agribusiness investments.
- Leverage digital platforms to enhance youth access to markets, finance, and traceability tools.
- Invest in early technical education and demonstration centers to build pipelines of agri-innovators.
- Use data-driven approaches to scale effective youth programs, reduce duplication, and optimize resource allocation.
- Strengthen multi-sector partnerships and integrate youth into governance and decision-making across food systems.



RESEARCHERS' FORUM:

Education of Young Scientists: Attracting Youth to Research, Science, and Innovation

Food systems transformation depends on Africa's ability to harness the creativity and talent of its youth in research, science, technology, and innovation. At the Researchers Forum, the focus on *Education of Young Scientists: Attracting Youth to Research, Science, and Innovation* underscored the urgency of strengthening pathways for young researchers to lead the continent's agri-food transformation.

Policy recommendations

- Embed structured mentorship programs within national research agendas to strengthen pipelines for young scientists.
- Increase funding and competitive grants to support youth-led, locally relevant research and innovation.
- Align curricula with market and community needs and expand targeted programs to boost women's participation in science and leadership.
- Invest in infrastructure and digital tools to enable innovation, experimentation, and data-driven decision-making.
- Promote cross-sector collaboration and policy reform to de-risk research investments, protect intellectual property, and foster networks for knowledge sharing and solution scaling.



Thematic Sessions



Agri-food systems leadership & governance



“Don’t aspire to be someone else. Africa needs solutions from Africans – in seeds, soils, and innovation.”

Mr. Enock Chikava, Director of Agricultural Delivery Systems, Gates Foundation

Civil society must move beyond dependency and fragmented efforts to become a unified, credible force that drives implementation, amplifies farmer and youth voices, and holds governments accountable. The Civil Society Roundtable at this year’s AFSF emphasized the vital role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in advancing the Kampala CAADP Strategy and

Policy recommendations

- Prioritize leadership development as a core investment for agrifood systems governance.
- Embed women and youth at the centre of policy design and implementation processes
- Expand funding for African-led R&D on seeds, soils, and climate adaptation.
- Strengthen accountability through performance tracking and mutual review mechanisms.
- Build systemic, cross-sectoral partnerships linking agriculture with nutrition, trade, infrastructure, and climate policy.



Agri-tech & digitalization



“The private sector holds power. We need to have a viable business model for adoption.”

Amb. Prof. Muhammadou M.O. Kah, Ambassador of the Gambia to Switzerland and the Geneva-based international organizations

Data is a valuable, monetizable asset that, when responsibly managed, can connect farmers to markets and finance. This session emphasized that while Africa has no shortage of digital innovation, adoption remains low because many solutions are unaffordable, fragmented, and built on weak business models. Shifting the financial burden of digital services away from farmers to

Policy recommendations

- Move from fragmented pilots to scalable and financially viable business models.
- Shift costs from farmers to value chain actors through models like “off taker pays.”
- Empower farmers as entrepreneurs and co-creators in digital solutions.
- Ensure farmer data is responsibly shared, secured, and leveraged to unlock finance and markets.
- Mobilize innovative investment and cross-sector partnerships to scale digital agriculture.



Climate resilience



“Finance is the means of implementation, without it, solutions remain only ideas.”

Ms. Rokiatou Traoré, Founder and Executive Manager, Herou Alliance

The session, focused on *Empowering African Youth, Women, and Farmers for Climate Action in Food Systems* emphasized the critical role of inclusive, locally driven approaches in building resilient food systems. Climate change disproportionately affects youth, women, and rural communities, and addressing it requires integrating land, biodiversity, and climate agendas.

Policy recommendations

- Invest in inclusive, human-centred digital and climate tools for farmers, youth, and women.
- Recognize, support, and finance grassroots innovations as scalable solutions for resilience.
- Shift finance models from risk-based exclusion to impact-based inclusion to enable equitable access.
- Strengthen policies and governance for integrated land, water, and energy management.
- Ensure youth and women are actively represented, trained, and empowered at negotiation and decision-making tables.



Nutrition & health



“It’s not enough to produce healthy food; we must build ecosystems where nutritious choices are accessible, affordable, and desirable.”

Dr. Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Ensuring affordable, accessible, and desirable nutritious diets requires coordinated, cross-sector action, targeted investments, and the empowerment of women and youth. This was the key message of the Nutrition and Health session. Despite women’s central role in food production,

Policy recommendations

- Establish a Global Nutrition Forum to strengthen accountability for nutrition outcomes.
- Develop cross-sector policies to improve access to diverse and nutritious diets.
- Invest in women’s knowledge, finance, and technical capacity for nutritious crop production.
- Scale climate-resilient and agroecological practices to enhance nutrition and food security.
- Leverage technology and youth-led platforms for traceability, value chain integration, and nutrition innovation.



Regional trade & markets



“Regional integration requires a blend of different types of investments, infrastructure, and strong partnerships. The “how” of implementation is more crucial than the “what”!“.

Mr. Mansoor Ahmad, Deputy Head, FCDO

The *Regional Trade & Markets* session at AFSF emphasized that delivering on the ambitions of the Kampala Declaration and the revised CAADP Strategy requires bold action to shift Africa’s food systems from fragmented, import-dependent models to integrated, resilient regional

economies. With food demand projected to rise by over 50% by 2050, speakers highlighted the role of harmonized policies, modernized logistics, and regional food corridors in connecting surplus zones with demand centers, reducing import bills, and creating higher-value jobs.

Policy recommendations

- Prioritize implementation of the Kampala Declaration and CAADP Strategy to operationalize regional trade and food corridor frameworks.
- Invest in value addition and agro-processing infrastructure, including technology centers and quality control systems.
- Embed structured mentorship and targeted financing to expand youth and women’s participation in regional trade and agribusiness.
- Design flexible, accessible financial products and blended finance models to unlock capital for farmers and SMEs.
- Strengthen cross-border collaboration, harmonized trade policies, and data-driven decision-making to scale intra-African trade.
- Ensure youth and women are actively represented, trained, and empowered at negotiation and decision-making tables.



Sustainable Production



“Agroecology isn’t just farming—it’s regenerative Africa in action.”

Mr. Ibrahima Sow, Special Advisor on Environment, Cabinet of the Senegalese Presidency

This thematic session focused on “Regenerating Africa” highlighted how young African agripreneurs are leading food systems transformation through agroecology, demonstrating its potential to deliver climate resilience, nutrition, and economic diversification. Participants showcased youth-led initiatives applying agroecological principles—soil regeneration, diversification, circular economies, and local governance—while emphasizing the importance of co-creation, inclusive participation, and evidence-based scaling.

Policy recommendations

- Recognize agroecology as a mainstream investment and policy priority.
- Co-create solutions with youth and women to ensure relevance and ownership.
- Scale evidence-based agroecology models through partnerships, policy alignment, and knowledge networks.
- Expand platforms for farmer-buyer connections, carbon market participation, and cooperative development.
- Promote inclusive participation, ensuring women, marginalized youth, and breastfeeding mothers are actively engaged.



Women in food systems



“Putting women at the forefront of agrifood systems has shown tangible results.”

Ms. Nana Amoah, Director, Gender Youth & Inclusiveness, AGRA

Closing gender gaps in agrifood systems could increase yields, improve food security, and boost rural economies and addressing systemic barriers requires a sharp focus on four main areas:

- Access to productive resources and services
- Decent work and entrepreneurship
- Understanding and addressing unpaid care work in agrifood systems
- Gender transformative approaches to transform attitudes, behaviours and power dynamics in households.

This thematic session further examined the Status of Women in Agri-food Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa report, highlighting their pivotal role while exposing persistent gender inequalities. Despite powering half the agrifood workforce, women face systemic barriers including limited access to land, finance, technology, leadership, and decision-making spaces.



AFSF Agri-food investment room



AFSF Agri-food investment room

The Investment Room at AFSF 2025 provided a dynamic matchmaking platform connecting governments, SMEs, and investors to advance agricultural financing and partnerships.

Over the course of the week, **11 countries** showcased opportunities—six through Legacy Programs highlighting national strategies and five through country pitches—presenting a total of **US\$18.5 billion** in national food systems investment opportunities. The Legacy Programs continued to serve as flagship platforms for investment pledges, underscoring scalable national priorities and strengthening pathways for transformative food systems financing.

An active SME pipeline worth **US\$90.5 million** was tabled for consideration, featuring **66 SMEs** engaging directly with more than **100 investors**.



Agri-Food expo





The Agri-Food Expo at the CICAD exhibition centre was one of the largest and most dynamic features of AFSF 2025. Bringing together 139 exhibitors, it showcased cutting-edge technologies, innovative products, and collaborative solutions through pavilions, startup booths, and private sector showcases. It was also home to the Culinary Village, L'Arbre à Palabres, and the Senegal Pavilion. Altogether, the Expo provided a vibrant hub for networking, discovery, and action, bringing the Forum's themes to life through interactive exchanges, exhibitions, and cultural experiences.

L'Arbre à Palabres

Incorporating the traditional African gathering concept of “**L'Arbre à Palabres**” has become an exciting and popular feature of AFSF. In 2025, the stage hosted over 10 sessions, bringing together farmers, chefs, youth, scientists, and policymakers in a relaxed, cultural space of dialogue. Through storytelling, live demonstrations, and debates, it highlighted food systems breakthroughs—from climate-smart farming and indigenous knowledge to digital tools, AI, and youth-led innovations—celebrating Africa’s resilience and creativity in shaping sustainable food futures.

Culinary village

The Culinary Village was another vibrant and immersive feature of AFSF 2025. Through live cooking demonstrations, tastings, and chef-led showcases, the sessions brought to life “recipes of change”—illustrating what good food for all means through sustainable, nutritious, and climate-smart choices. It featured three powerful sessions: Collaboration, highlighting regenerative food systems and the role of underutilized crops, with chefs, farmers, and scientists working together to improve taste, nutrition, and soil health; Innovation, showcasing climate-friendly actions and food innovations that support both people and planet; and Implementation, exploring how to scale positive food systems solutions that champion good food for all. The culinary village organized on Wednesday September 3rd a Jollof rice competition of between 3 chefs from Senegal, Nigeria and Ghana and it was won by the Senegalese Chef Astou Gning.



Knowledge hub



The Knowledge Hub was another first at AFSF 2025 and quickly became a highlight for participants. This immersive learning space offered access to reports, data, and research from across Africa, alongside interactive masterclasses and workshops for youth, entrepreneurs, startups, and governments.

Delegates engaged in hands-on sessions covering topics from agri-food innovation and nutrition-sensitive entrepreneurship to soil health, climate-smart agriculture, and investment strategies.

By combining knowledge, practical skills, and real-world solutions, the Knowledge Hub made AFSF 2025 a truly immersive, transformative experience.



Host country corner



Senegal – The Land of Teranga Leading Africa’s Youth-Led Transformation



Each alternate year, the Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) is hosted in one of AGRA's partner countries, offering a platform to spotlight regional priorities and innovation. In 2025, the Forum found its perfect host in Senegal — the Land of Teranga, known for its warmth, stability, and forward-looking leadership.

Senegal's selection came at a historic moment. In 2024, the nation elected the youngest president in Africa's history, H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Faye, whose vision for inclusive growth and youth empowerment mirrors the Forum's 2025 theme: Youth-Centred Food Systems Transformation. Under his leadership, Senegal is redefining what it means to connect food, climate, and innovation — placing young people at the heart of economic and environmental renewal. One of Africa's fastest-growing economies — with projected growth of 7% in 2025 — Senegal positions agriculture as both a

pillar of prosperity and a pathway to sovereignty. The sector contributes about 15% of GDP and employs the majority of the population. Through its Food Security Strategy 2026–2035, Senegal aims to achieve food and nutritional sovereignty and become a modern, competitive agricultural power. Complementary initiatives — from the Communal Agricultural Cooperative (CAC) to large, irrigated programs and agri-innovation hubs — illustrate a national drive to reduce the food import bill and build resilience from the ground up.

Senegal's hosting of AFSF 2025 was not just symbolic — it delivered real, measurable impact. Under the High Patronage of President Bassirou Diomaye Faye and Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko, the Forum became a celebration of national pride and continental leadership.

For the first time, farmers and livestock producers were officially honoured as national heroes in a ceremony led by Dr. Mabouba Diagne, Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty, and Livestock. The event paid tribute to their indispensable role in feeding the nation and driving its sustainable development. A special posthumous honour was also given to Ahmed Amar, a pioneer of the agricultural sector, symbolizing the continuity between generations of Senegalese farmers.



The National Assembly, led by Hon. El Malick Ndiaye, hosted a Parliamentary Roundtable on the Future of African Food Systems, emphasizing the legislative role in achieving Vision 2050. The discussion reinforced Senegal's model of linking national sovereignty with youth-driven entrepreneurship and research-led innovation.

The Forum also served as a launchpad for strategic partnerships and investments. A landmark \$300 million agreement was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and The Cornerstone Group — Hajib Al Shams Joint

Venture to modernize Senegal's agriculture through renewable energy and bioenergy.

The six-year Build–Operate–Transfer model will solarize farms, aquaculture sites, and laboratories, create a carbon credit fund, and support agricultural insurance — with ownership ultimately transferred to local producers.

Additional investments and partnerships announced during the Forum included:

- \$250 million from development partners and private investors, including the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the Italian “Cassa Depositi e Prestiti”.
- \$130 million from the World Bank's Food Systems Resilience Program (FSRP) to strengthen climate adaptation and food systems infrastructure.
- \$120 million from IFAD to scale youth and women-led agribusinesses across Senegal.
- An agricultural budget increase from CFA 120 billion (2024) to CFA 130 billion (2025), reaffirming state commitment to food sovereignty.

Senegal's hosting of AFSF 2025 leaves behind more than investments — it leaves a vision.

It demonstrated how political will, youth leadership, and public-private collaboration can converge to accelerate Africa's agricultural transformation. From recognizing farmers as national heroes to creating a renewable-powered agriculture roadmap, Senegal turned the Forum into a living example of what a sovereign, inclusive, and resilient food system can look like.



Senegal Pavilion

Throughout AFSF 2025, Senegal's leadership in food systems transformation took centre stage. A series of dedicated sessions, dialogues, and exhibitions highlighted the country's progress, policy innovations, and youth-driven vision for agricultural development. The Senegal Pavilion hosted over 20 sessions and featuring over 80 speakers from government, research institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

Reflecting Senegal's renowned Teranga (hospitality), the Pavilion created an engaging and inclusive atmosphere that celebrated national successes and the leadership of youth and women. It spotlighted the vital role of family farms and local innovations across key themes such as agricultural transformation, investment, soil health, school meals, climate-smart technologies, and pastoralism.

With lively exchanges, exhibitions, and even cooking demonstrations, the Pavilion became a true embodiment of Senegal's dynamic approach to food systems transformation. It not only showcased the country's achievements but also reinforced its commitment to building sustainable, inclusive, and resilient agri-food systems for Africa—aligned with its Vision 2050 and Food Security Strategy 2026–2035.

Day 1 – Lessons from the World, Inspiration for Africa



The Pavilion opened with “Lessons Learnt – How Did You Do It?”, co-hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and APIX, where four countries (China, Ireland, Rwanda and the Netherlands) shared their agricultural success stories. The event embodied the spirit of cooperation, offering lessons on modernization, resilience, and technology adoption.

Later that afternoon, APIX led the conversation “Lever les freins à l'investissement dans l'Agriculture et l'Élevage”, addressing barriers to agricultural financing. The day concluded with an inspiring dialogue by Interlait Senegal, focusing on “La jeunesse sénégalaise face aux défis de la souveraineté alimentaire en lait”. The session spotlighted youth innovation in the dairy sector, connecting local value chains with national strategies for food sovereignty.

Day 2 – Scaling Local Strengths



The second day placed partnerships and communities at the center. APIX presented “Opportunités d'Investissements dans les Filières Agro-sylvopastorales et Halieutiques”, showcasing transformative projects from the national Vision 2050 plan.

IFAD followed with a dynamic, youth-led session on rural employment and community empowerment, featuring testimonies from the AGRIJEUNES program. DyTAES and its partners brought the agroecology movement to life in “Mettre à l'échelle les exploitations agricoles familiales”, while the International Society for Horticultural Science highlighted biodiversity through “Les bénéfices multiples des espèces sous-utilisées”.

In the afternoon, the Pavilion shifted toward inclusivity and innovation: IPAR, IFPRI, and IDRC reimagined school feeding programs as engines for local agriculture; IRD unveiled “*Le sol, racine invisible de notre sécurité alimentaire*”, a youth-moderated dialogue on soil health; and ENABEL concluded the day with insights from across West Africa on training and supporting SMEs.

Day 3 – Youth, Women, and Technology Take the Lead



Energy soared as the Pavilion turned into a space of action and inspiration. The morning began with the “Gender-Smart Agribusiness Pitch”, where women entrepreneurs presented climate-smart business ideas to investors and banks. This was followed by the “Café Entre Pros Jeunes”, hosted by RENCJES, connecting 50 young entrepreneurs with policy and finance leaders. The “*Jeunesse et approche One Health*” session by SOHIC called for stronger national investments in youth-led innovation. Later,

CRES discussed healthier food environments, and a joint session by MEOSS, BWI, SAED, and Geomatica showcased satellite-based water management to anticipate climate crises.

The afternoon brought color and creativity: ISRA and Tree Aid co-hosted “*Jeunesse et femmes africaines en agroforesterie*”, followed by a multi-sensory celebration of “*Céréales sèches et légumineuses*” — complete with live cooking, tastings, and research showcases. The day closed with the “*Prix de la Meilleure Jeune Linguère*”, honoring three outstanding rural women entrepreneurs from across Senegal — a moving tribute to women’s leadership in transforming local economies.

Day 4 – Pathways for the Future



The Pavilion’s final day opened with IPAR’s “*Agri-Food Jobs for Youth and Women*”, outlining concrete partnerships to create green, decent jobs in the agri-food sector. The

closing session, “*Pastoralisme, changement climatique et souveraineté alimentaire*”, convened researchers, pastoralists, and youth leaders to chart inclusive pathways for climate-resilient livelihoods across the Sahel. It was a fitting finale: reflective, forward-looking, and full of purpose.

By the Forum’s end, the Senegal Pavilion had hosted **over 20 sessions**, bringing together

400+ participants from government, research, business, and civil society. It celebrated Senegal’s leadership in action — a nation opening its doors to the continent, sharing its successes, and amplifying African voices. From investment opportunities to soil science, from youth dialogues to cultural showcases, the Pavilion told a single story: that Senegal’s food systems transformation is not a promise for tomorrow — it is already happening today.



Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)



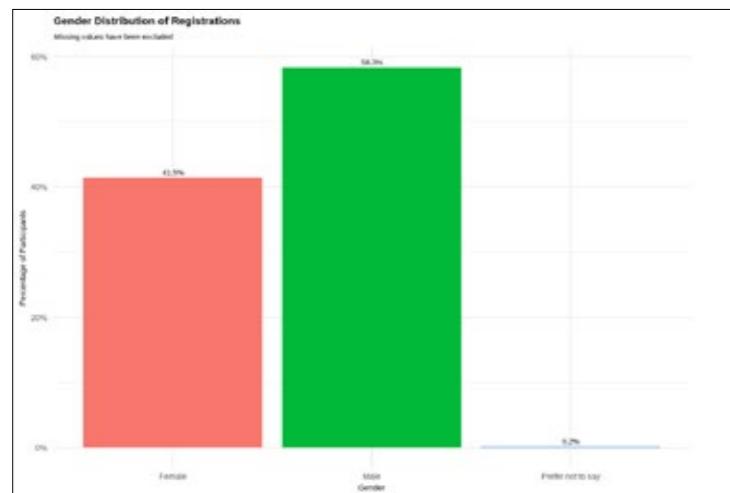


Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

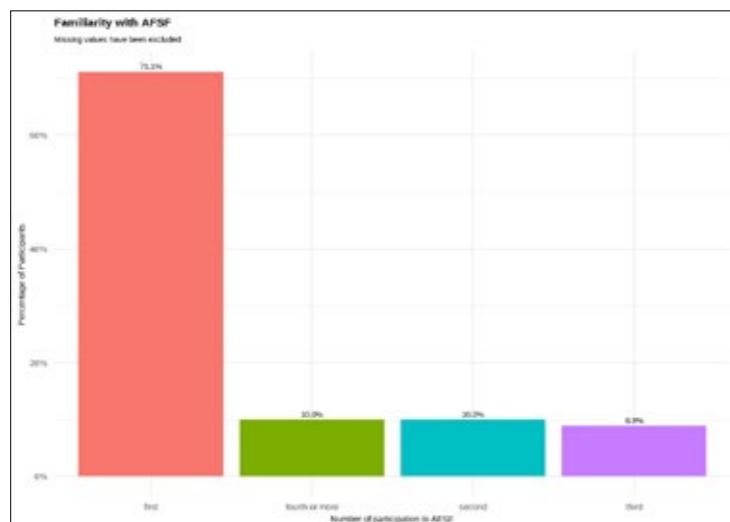
Objectives	Key indicators	Target by next AFSF
Annual Summit Commitment (see AFSF commitment tracker implemented with 79 commitments)	Number of commitments implemented out of 79 recorded	At least 20 % by 2026 and half by 2027
CAADP implementation	Number of countries that have domesticated CAADP	At least 5 by end 2026 and 20 by end of 2027
Sector policies with youth- Nutrition- Climate Food Systems at the center	Number of countries with sector policies youth- Nutrition- Climate Food Systems at the center	At least 5 by end 2026 and 20 by end of 2027
Legacy programs: Finalization of main documents and use as tool for resources mobilization Projects and investment received with 1-2 years	Legacy Programs finalized and investment received	At least 5 by end of 2026 and 12 by end of 2027
66 MSMEs Projects pitches	Number of MSMEs with financing	At least 20 by end of 2026 and 12 by end of 2027

Objectives	Key indicators	Target by next AFSF
Key reports and knowledge products presented and to be used to inform national policies	All reports available and being used by policy makers	By first quarter 2026
Review of investments received so far	Amount of investment per legacy programs	20 to 50% by next AFSF
Partnerships and deals	Number of partnerships	At least between 10-20 recorded
For the host country MICE industry development report developed to support the improvement of event organization and management	Strategic document finalized and implemented from 2026 and tested for JOJ 2026	By end of October
Organize small events to review the implementation of the AFSF 2025	Number of events organized to keep AFSF alive and measurement before Kigali Summit	By mid of 2026
Participants attending the forum and disaggregated	Number of delegates attending and disaggregated	Target was 5000 +

AFSF 2025 Key Figures



41,5% of the attendees were female.



Most of the attendees were primo participants.

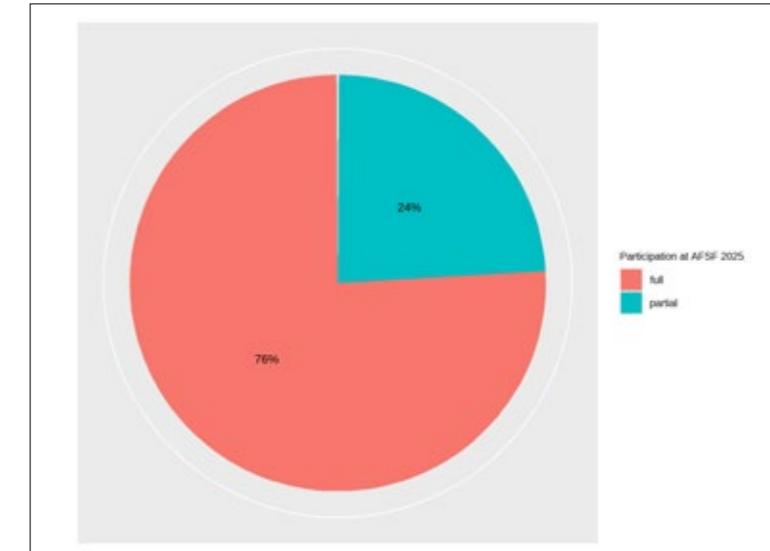
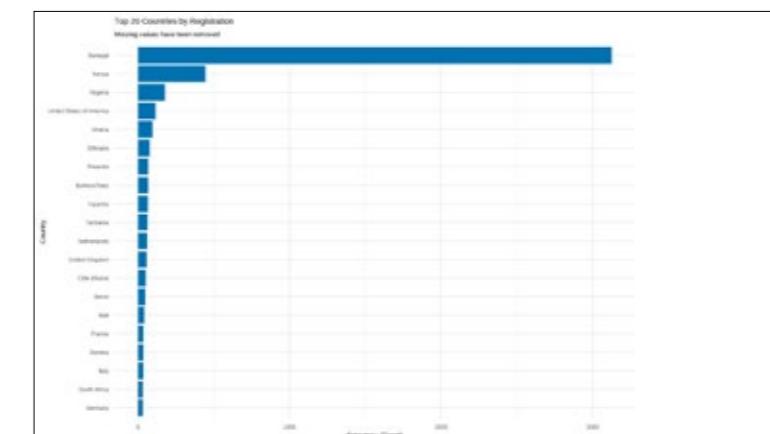
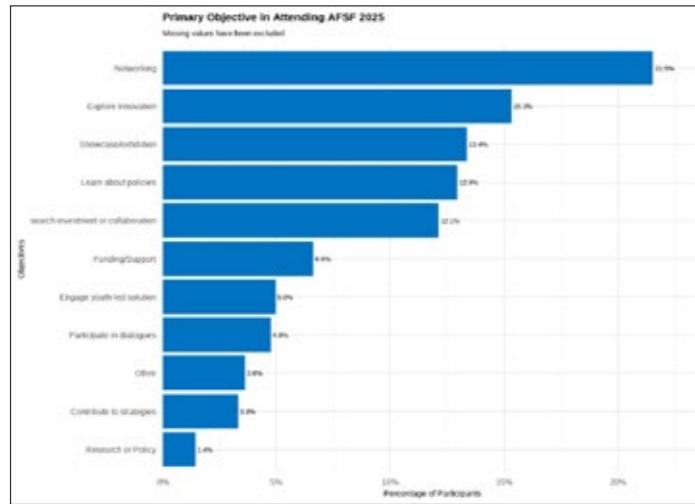


Figure 3.4: Number of days at AFSF 2025

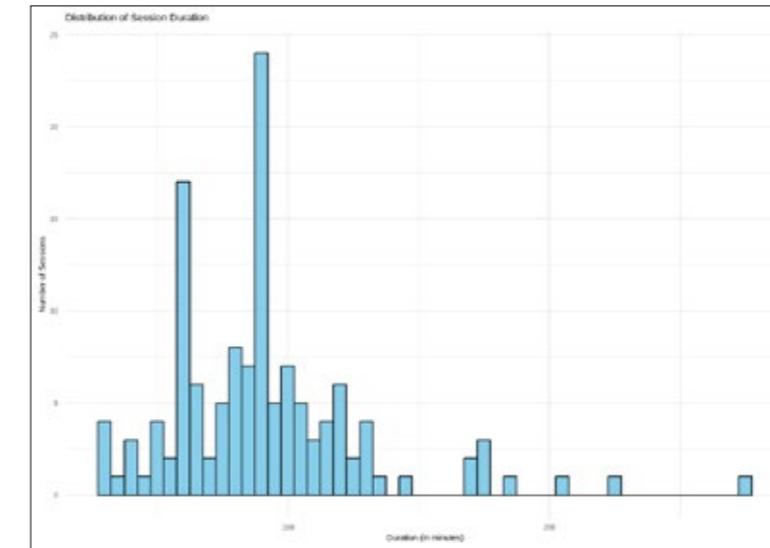
We observe that more than three-quarters of participants fully participated.

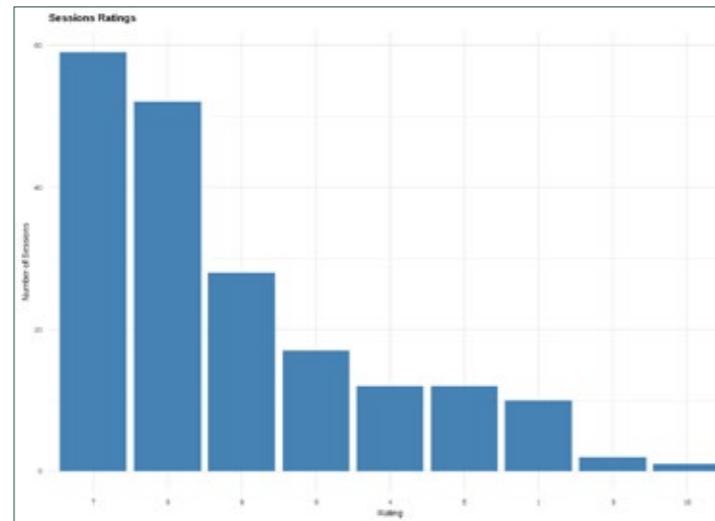


Participants living in Senegal were the most represented, but 20 countries had more than 30 persons present in this forum.



Networking comes first as the motivation of most of the forum attendees.





Three quarters of the sessions were considered to be very engaging (rated 8/10).



Summary of 2025 feedback and experience (Delegates Survey)

Overall, 2025 was rated as a world class event and successful compared to 2024. See below the summary of the participants feedback on the programming and logistics

Summary Statistics of programme Scores

Variable	No. of Respondents	Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Theme of the forum	559	8	8	1	10
The sessions' topics	559	8	8	1	10
Youth dome	466	8	7	1	10
Ministerial summit	278	8	7	1	10
High level leadership	391	8	8	1	10
Parallel Thematic Sessions	479	8	7	1	10
Exhibition booth	482	8	8	1	10
Knowledge hub	431	8	7	1	10
Host country leadership	475	8	8	1	10
The overall programme	558	7	7	1	10
The Forum's app	490	7	7	1	10
Pre-summit – side events	339	7	7	1	10
SMEs' Deal rooms	322	7	7	1	10
Plenaries	459	7	7	1	10
Parliamentarian session	247	7	7	1	10
Digital exhibition	368	7	7	1	10
TEDX Talks	236	7	7	1	10

Table 4.1: Summary Statistics of Logistic Items Scores

Variable	No. of Respondents	Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Security	534	9	8	1	10
Ticketing and flights	299	8	7	1	10
Airport Transport	301	8	7	1	10
Hotel Booking	300	8	7	1	10
Accommodation	358	8	7	1	10
Branding and Look and Feel	530	8	8	1	10
Medical health and safety	338	8	7	1	10
Quality of Tech and Audio-Visual	549	8	7	1	10
Friendliness and Helpfulness	558	8	8	1	10
Room Layout and Ambience	494	8	7	1	10
B2B Facilities	473	8	7	1	10
Exhibition	531	8	8	1	10
Digital expo	426	8	7	1	10
Registration	534	7	6	1	10
Accreditation	389	7	7	1	10
Ground Transport	431	7	7	1	10
WiFi	514	7	7	1	10
Catering Services	526	6	6	1	10
Translation and interpretation	454	7	6	1	10



KNOWLEDGE PORTAL

- AFSF 2025 Communique
- Side events reports
- Partners social events reports
- Listen to the AFSF Podcast pod here
- TEDx Report
- Deal Room report



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Save the Date to Kigali 2026



The Government of Rwanda serves as a long-term host of the AFSF, championing its agenda throughout the year and hosting the annual forum in all even years. The AFSF Partners Group and the Government of Rwanda under the leadership of H.E. President Paul Kagame welcome you to Kigali, Rwanda in 2026.

The preliminary theme is being build around key word:
nutrition , resilience and investment.



Thank You to AFSF Partners Group and 2025 Annual Sponsors

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The Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) Partners Group remains the backbone of the Forum's delivery, coherence, and year-round strategic alignment. Comprising leading multilateral institutions, development partners, philanthropic organizations, private-sector actors, research bodies, and continental agencies, the Partners Group provides essential guidance, technical expertise, and strategic oversight. In 2025, the Group continued to shape the direction of the Forum by strengthening the Secretariat, thematic platforms, supporting the youth-centered agenda, advancing commitments, and ensuring that the Forum remained a high-impact, multisectoral platform focused on Africa's food systems transformation.

AFSF 2025 would not have been possible without the generous support of our partners and annual sponsors, whose investments enabled the successful delivery of the Dakar Summit. Their contributions ensured world-class programming, expanded youth participation, strengthened knowledge products, and enhanced logistics and delegate experience. As we move toward AFSF 2026 in Kigali, we extend our deepest appreciation to all sponsors for their continued collaboration and shared commitment to advancing Africa's food and agriculture priorities.

Thank you!



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