

AFSA Newsletter | AFSA

ALLIANCE FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN AFRICA

Shifting Narratives, Cultivating Movements

VOLUME 2

MAY-AUGUST, 2025

FREE ISSUE

INSIDE



African Chefs' Gathering
Celebrates Culinary Heritage
and Calls for Food System
Transformation



AFSA Launches New Podcast: "The Battle for African Agriculture"

EDITOR'S NOTE

Between May and August 2025, AFSA and its partners have made significant strides in advancing food sovereignty, climate justice, and farmer-led seed systems across the continent. From shaping policy at continental platforms to celebrating African cuisine with parliamentarians and chefs, our collective work has deepened agroecology's relevance in both grassroots realities and high-level dialogues. Notable highlights include the African Chefs' Gathering in Addis Ababa, a landmark moment for the "My Food is African" campaign, and sustained advocacy for Farmer Managed Seed Systems through regional trainings, festivals, and two major policy brief launches.

We also continued to expose the power structures influencing Africa's food systems, publishing bold reports on the role of Development Finance Institutions and the misuse of climate finance. Our interventions at the UNFCCC in Bonn, the UNFSS+4 Africa Regional Meeting, and the CAADP post-summit debrief called for systemic shifts grounded in justice and African knowledge. Meanwhile, our journalist trainings in Addis and Dakar helped reframe how agroecology and territorial markets are covered in African media. Across regions, from the Congo Basin to the EAC, AFSA's field dialogues, strategy meetings, and youth leadership trainings mobilised diverse actors in defense of land, seed, and community resilience.

This newsletter is more than a record of activities. It is a window into the growing continental movement to reclaim Africa's food systems. It captures how agroecology is being defended, practised, taught, and legislated, in kitchens, on farms, in parliaments, and across borders. As you read, we invite you to join us in shifting narratives and cultivating movements that center Africa's farmers, cultures, and ecologies.

Multi-Country Field Dialogues Strengthen Agroecological Trade Cooperation in the EAC



AFSA and its national partners have carried out a series of field dialogues and cross-border exchanges across Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda under the Cross-Border Trade for Agroecological Produce in the EAC Region initiative. These dialogues were designed to strengthen coordination and align policies across the region, bringing together farmers, traders, government officials, and civil society to collectively shape a more inclusive and sustainable agroecological trade system. Activities ranged from market visits to policy consultations, all aimed at amplifying smallholder voices in regional trade discussions.

In Uganda, stakeholders visited the Busia border market and held a major consultation in Bugiri, gathering over 140 participants in total. Tanzania hosted more than 130 actors in Arusha and Karatu, who toured farms and markets before convening for a plenary session. In Kenya, AFSA facilitated a field exchange at Bee My Partner Farm in Njoro and a national dialogue with stakeholders from regulatory bodies, media, and border associations. Rwanda's engagement included a Rubavu market visit and policy dialogue co-organised with ROAM, involving trade and customs institutions, local leaders, and women-led enterprises. Across all four countries, participants identified common barriers such as duplicative certifications, slow customs procedures, lack of harmonised standards, weak cold-chain systems, and limited data on agroecological produce.

The dialogues concluded with consensus on urgent reforms to facilitate cross-border agroecological trade. These included adopting national agroecology policies, harmonising standards with mutual recognition, and establishing "green desks" at border posts to support agroecological traders. Participants also called for scaling Participatory Guarantee Systems, improving cold storage and digital platforms, and launching public awareness campaigns. Together, these outcomes position agroecology not only as a tool for ecological farming but also as a regional trade enabler that supports resilient livelihoods for women and youth in the EAC.



AFSA Launches Landmark Report to Shift Financial Power Toward Agroecology

In March 2025, AFSA convened over 100 food systems actors from across Africa in Nairobi to examine how global financial systems sustain industrial agriculture while undermining ecological balance and smallholder livelihoods. The meeting brought together civil society organisations, policymakers, and grassroots movements, culminating in the release of a bold roadmap titled ["Shifting Financial Power: Defunding Industrial Agriculture – Redirecting Funding to Agroecology."](#) The report calls for urgent redirection of resources from extractive agribusiness models toward African-led agroecological systems that promote equity, biodiversity, and resilience.

The report exposes how major Development Finance Institutions, , channel billions of dollars into industrial agriculture that relies on toxic inputs, land consolidation, and monoculture exports. These investments, it warns, marginalise smallholder farmers and degrade ecosystems.

The report exposes how major Development Finance Institutions, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and private equity funds, channel billions of dollars into industrial agriculture that relies on toxic inputs, land consolidation, and monoculture exports. These investments, it warns, marginalise smallholder farmers and degrade ecosystems. Despite agroecology's proven benefits for climate adaptation and nutrition, only 2.7 percent of European agricultural aid between 2016 and 2018 supported agroecological initiatives. Participants emphasised that reversing this imbalance is essential for achieving food sovereignty and environmental justice.

Discussions in Nairobi also highlighted the public health and social costs of industrial agriculture. Participants raised concerns about pesticides, 76 percent of which are banned in the Global North but still marketed in Africa, and about the erosion of seed sovereignty through the AfCFTA Intellectual Property Rights protocol. The myth of "unused land," often used to justify land grabs, was challenged as a narrative that displaces communities and destroys local food systems. At the same time, hopeful stories emerged from across the continent, including community seed banks in Kenya and national agroecology policies in Senegal and The Gambia.



Congo Basin Partners Build a Shared Voice for Agroecology

Between April and May 2025, six national civil society partners in the Congo Basin countries held coordinated trainings on Advocacy and Policy Influencing for Agroecology. The workshops took place in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. Organized under AFSA's My Food Is African and Food Sovereignty in the Congo Basin initiative, in collaboration with the Congo Basin Biodiversity, Climate and Agroecology Initiative (COBCAI), the trainings aimed to build advocacy capacity and establish strong national frameworks for agroecology.

Each workshop brought together around 50 participants, including farmer organizations, youth and women networks, indigenous leaders, faith groups, journalists, and policymakers. Facilitated by AFSA and local trainers, the sessions provided practical skills in policy analysis, campaign planning, and stakeholder engagement. Agroecology was presented not just as a farming approach but as a human rights and justice issue, linked to land, climate, and food systems transformation. Each

.... the trainings aimed to build advocacy capacity and establish strong national frameworks for agroecology.

country co-created a draft National Agroecology Advocacy Strategy rooted in local realities, from land tenure reform in Cameroon to forest governance in the DRC.

These strategies mark a turning point in regional coordination. The connections built since the 2023 Kinshasa convening have evolved into a growing community of practice, reinforced through a six-country reflection session held in Kampala later in 2025. With local ambassadors now leading efforts to influence policies and mobilize public support, AFSA and its partners have laid the groundwork for a unified agroecology movement in the Congo Basin.

EAC Stakeholders Validate Regional Study on Agroecological Trade

From 29 to 30 April 2025, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) convened a two-day validation workshop on Cross-Border Trade in Agroecological Produce at Maanzoni Lodge, Nairobi. The event brought together 59 participants including 25 women and 34 men from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Participants represented traders, policymakers, researchers, and agroecological entrepreneurs. The objective was to review and validate findings from a regional study that explored trade policies, existing barriers, and emerging opportunities to harmonize EAC frameworks around agroecological produce.

Participants engaged in discussions on how to increase small-scale farmers' access to regional markets, strengthen policy alignment, and address non-tariff barriers affecting the fair and sustainable movement of agroecological goods. The study underscored the growing demand for healthy, locally produced food, but also revealed that policy incoherence and certification challenges continue to constrain trade. The workshop served as a collaborative space to refine recommendations and chart a way forward for agroecology-focused regional trade integration.

Key resolutions included expanding the study to Burundi and South Sudan, establishing agroecology trade corridors, and forming a regional technical working group to coordinate efforts. Participants also recommended the development of affordable certification systems, the integration of agroecology into EAC trade and agriculture policies, and enhanced training for border officials. The meeting concluded with a strong commitment to advance agroecology as a foundation for sustainable, inclusive, and intra-African trade, reaffirming AFSA's role in linking local producers to regional markets.

The study underscored the growing demand for healthy, locally produced food, but also revealed that policy incoherence and certification challenges continue to constrain trade.

African Stakeholders Reject UPOV 1991, Call for Seed Laws That Uphold Farmers' Rights



Regionally, they committed to promoting the African Model Law as a framework for inclusive seed regulation.

From 13 to 15 May 2025, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), in partnership with the Association for Plant Breeding for the Benefit of Society (APBREBES) and the African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), held a three-day

capacity building workshop on Plant Variety Protection (PVP) and Farmers' Rights in Entebbe, Uganda. Hosted at Lake Victoria Granada Hotel, the workshop brought together 58 delegates from 18 African countries, exceeding expectations and drawing

civil society groups, farmer organisations, and government representatives from non-UPOV 91 member states. The focus was on demystifying PVP frameworks, evaluating UPOV 1991, and strengthening the alignment of seed laws with farmers' rights.

Participants examined the growing push to adopt UPOV 1991 in African countries and raised concerns about its compatibility with local seed systems, food security, and national sovereignty. They explored alternative models that affirm the role of farmers as seed breeders and biodiversity custodians. Key discussions centered on the risks of standardised seed laws that marginalise traditional practices, and the importance of locally adaptable, inclusive legislation that protects farmer-managed seed systems. Presentations and group sessions highlighted how UPOV 1991 undermines seed sharing and innovation by restricting informal exchanges central to African agriculture.

The workshop concluded with a resounding call for African governments to reject UPOV 1991 and instead promote policies that respect farmers' rights and support democratic seed governance. AFSA and its partners outlined follow-up actions at three levels. At the continental level, they will engage with African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) processes to guard against UPOV-aligned protocols. Regionally, they committed to promoting the African Model Law as a framework for inclusive seed regulation. At the national level, delegates pledged to influence parliaments and policymakers to enact seed laws that protect seed sovereignty and prioritise farmer-led innovation across Africa.



AFSA Champions Agroecology and Civil Society Voices at UNFSS+4 Africa Regional Meeting

From 5 to 7 May 2025, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) took part in the Africa Regional Preparatory Meeting for the UN Food Systems Summit +4 (UNFSS+4) held at the UNON Complex in Nairobi. Organised by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and regional

partners, the meeting gathered government delegates, UN agencies, and civil society organisations to assess progress since the 2021 summit and shape Africa's position for the global stocktaking scheduled for July 2025. Representing AFSA, Andrew Adem participated in high-level

discussions, a panel on partnerships and accountability, and informal exchanges with national convenors and development partners.

During the panel on Partnerships and Accountability, AFSA stressed that genuine transformation must be led by communities and rooted in inclusive governance. Adem

highlighted that small-scale producers are not passive actors but the primary drivers of food system change. In engagements with FAO Africa and the UNFSS Hub, AFSA advocated for the full recognition of agroecology and food sovereignty in national food system pathways. They urged greater alignment with African knowledge systems and called for policies informed by local realities and solutions rather than external blueprints.

AFSA's presence also shed light on key gaps in the regional dialogue. The dominance of private sector interests and the marginalisation of grassroots voices revealed the urgent need for more balanced participation. While some officials informally acknowledged agroecology, few endorsed it publicly. In response, AFSA proposed a coordinated civil society strategy ahead of the global summit, including the creation of a common Africa CSO position paper, assessment of agroecology integration in national plans, and the hosting of a side event to spotlight community-led innovations. These actions aim to secure a stronger role for agroecology and food sovereignty in shaping Africa's food future.

AFSA Leads Strategic Civil Society Response to CAADP Post-Summit Gaps

The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) convened a two-day Strategic Post-Kampala CAADP Summit Debrief from 22 to 23 May 2025 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kampala. The gathering aimed to assess civil society engagement in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) process and plan next steps following the January 2025 African Union Summit that adopted the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035) and the Kampala Declaration. Despite their stated ambition, these frameworks were criticised by many civil society actors for failing to sufficiently include agroecology, food

sovereignty, and the perspectives of smallholder farmers, women, and youth.

While inputs on gender and local seed systems were partially included, agroecology remained marginal.

— AFSA Board Chair Hakim Baliraine



sovereignty, and the perspectives of smallholder farmers, women, and youth.

The meeting brought together farmer organisations, advocacy networks, and technical experts to analyse the CAADP framework and identify opportunities to influence National and Regional Agri-food Systems Investment Plans (NASIPs and RASIPs). AFSA Board Chair Hakim Baliraine opened the session by acknowledging that while inputs on gender and local seed systems were partially included, agroecology remained marginal. AFSA General Coordinator Dr. Million Belay delivered a keynote tracing Africa's agricultural policy evolution and critiquing the dominance of Green Revolution models that sideline African food systems. He presented agroecology as a holistic, inclusive alternative rooted in biodiversity, traditional knowledge, and ecological resilience.

Participants affirmed the urgency of coordinated advocacy to ensure agroecology and food sovereignty are integrated into CAADP implementation. The meeting concluded with a unified commitment to influence NASIPs and RASIPs, mobilise regional civil society alliances, and deploy technical expertise to reframe Africa's food policy future. With AFSA at the helm, civil society actors pledged to keep agroecology central to the continent's unfolding agricultural transformation.

Faith Leaders and Farmers Demand Justice Ahead of AU-EU Agriculture Talks in Rome

On 26 June 2025, African faith leaders, farmers, and civil society organisations gathered at the Circo Massimo Farmers' Market in Rome for a side event ahead of the 6th African Union–European Union Agriculture Ministerial Conference. Co-organised by SECAM, AFSA, ESAFF, and European allies such as CIDSE, MISEREOR, DKA, Broederlijk Delen, CCFD-Terre Solidaire, and FOCSIV, the event spotlighted two urgent issues in Africa–Europe agricultural relations: the continued export of banned pesticides from Europe to Africa and the growing threats to farmer-managed seed systems across the continent. [Delegates demanded bold policy actions from both AU and EU institutions to halt toxic trade and uphold farmers' rights.](#)

When we lose seeds, we lose options. We lose sovereignty.

— Hon. Françoise Uwumukiza, East African Legislative Assembly

Speakers strongly denounced UPOV-style seed laws that criminalise traditional seed saving and warned of Europe's double standard in exporting highly hazardous pesticides prohibited for domestic use. "Seed are life," said Hakim Baliraine, Chair of AFSA. "When we lose seeds, we lose options. We lose sovereignty." Hon. Françoise Uwumukiza of the East African Legislative Assembly emphasized that the debate is about justice and dignity, not technology. Suzy Serneels of Broederlijk Delen



condemned Europe's pesticide exports as immoral, while PELUM Association's Medius Bihunirwa warned that residues are now present in African food, water, and even human bodies, with women and children most at risk.

Faith leaders framed the situation as a moral crisis. Rev. Fr. Richard Rwiza declared,

"If these pesticides are too dangerous for Europeans, they are too dangerous for Africans." The event concluded with clear policy demands: the EU must ban the export of all pesticides prohibited within its borders and require that food imports comply with the same standards. The AU was urged to enforce the

continental framework on farmer-managed seed systems, reform restrictive seed laws, and invest in agroecological alternatives. Together, participants affirmed their resolve to resist exploitative practices and to advance seed sovereignty, food justice, and ecological farming across Africa.



African Chefs' Gathering Celebrates Culinary Heritage and Calls for Food System Transformation

The African Chefs' Gathering and Policy Convening on African Food Systems was held in Addis Ababa from 27 to 29 May 2025, bringing together 140 participants from 23 African countries, including chefs, parliamentarians, youth leaders, civil society actors, and policymakers. Organized by AFSA and its partners, the event celebrated Africa's rich culinary heritage while catalysing dialogue on systemic transformation in food systems across the continent. Over three days, participants exchanged knowledge, shared stories, and crafted strategies to reclaim African food systems as spaces of cultural dignity, ecological resilience, and political sovereignty.

Through culinary demonstrations, storytelling, and policy discussions, the convening highlighted the vital role of food in shaping identity and sovereignty. From ancestral recipes to new policy proposals, the event underscored that African food is not merely heritage but a force for future transformation. Chefs were honoured not only as cooks but as educators and innovators who demonstrated how traditional ingredients and local methods such as fermentation and seasonal foods provide solutions for nutrition, sustainability, and cultural pride.

Policymakers and parliamentarians emphasized the need to connect community wisdom with legal frameworks by implementing regional food policies, protecting indigenous seeds, and investing in food education. Media professionals and civil society organisations urged a coordinated effort to change perceptions of African food through storytelling, digital campaigns, and initiatives like "#MyFoodIsAfrican" that foster consumer awareness and political engagement. Participants also stressed the importance of integrating African cuisines into school feeding programmes and creating culinary training opportunities that celebrate African ingredients and traditions.

The gathering culminated in the adoption of the [Declaration on African Food](#)

The convening concluded with renewed energy to transform African food systems through collaboration, creativity, and policy reform.



Sovereignty, which affirms the right of African people to define their own food systems. The Declaration calls for institutional recognition of African cuisines, protection of indigenous knowledge, and a commitment to decolonise food education and governance. Far from symbolic, it was presented as a living document and a collective message to the UN Food Systems Summit and beyond, marking a rallying call for a Pan-African movement led by chefs, farmers, and food advocates.

The convening concluded with renewed energy to transform African food systems through collaboration, creativity, and policy reform. Participants left with a shared vision of an Africa where food is not just sustenance but a foundation for sovereignty, culture, and resilience.

AFSA Champions Agroecology at UN Climate Talks in Bonn



In June 2025, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), through its Climate Change Working Group, actively participated in the 62nd Session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies (SB62) held in Bonn, Germany. From 16 to 22 June, AFSA engaged in

negotiations and workshops with a focused mission: to ensure that agroecology is recognised as a central pillar in the Sharm el Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security (SJWA), and across other climate negotiation

streams including adaptation and resilience.

Building on momentum from COP29, AFSA's advocacy in Bonn was shaped by strategic consultations such as its post-COP29 civil society debrief and the African Group of Negotiators (AGN)

... to ensure that agroecology is recognised as a central pillar in the Sharm el Sheikh Joint Work on Implementation of Climate Action on Agriculture and Food Security (SJWA), ...

planning meeting. These preparatory sessions helped coordinate African voices and strengthened demands for people-centred and biodiversity-based climate solutions. At SB62, AFSA collaborated with the AGN and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group to promote agroecology as a holistic response to the climate crisis—one that links adaptation, food sovereignty, and ecological sustainability.

AFSA also fed into statements by official UNFCCC observer groups like ENGOs and YOUNGOs, reinforcing calls for inclusive and equitable climate policy. Its presence in Bonn confirmed agroecology's growing traction in international climate spaces. As the world prepares for COP30, AFSA remains a key player in elevating agroecology as a transformative solution rooted in African realities and led by communities on the frontlines of climate change.

AFSA Trains New Leaders to Scale Agroecological Enterprises Across Africa

The training emphasised steward ownership — a model that safeguards mission integrity and community governance in agroecological enterprises — while fostering collaborative learning and strategic thinking.



From 17 to 20 June 2025, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) hosted a dynamic Training of Trainers (ToT) on Agroecological Enterprise Sustainability at Country Lake Resort in Garuga, Uganda. The four-day workshop convened 51 participants — 32 women and 19 men — from eight countries, with youth making up more than half of the attendees. The training aimed to equip national-level facilitators with practical tools to mentor Agroecological Entrepreneurs (AAEs) and leaders of Territorial Markets (TMs), addressing gaps in business mentorship, financial strategy, and long-term resilience.



Expert-led sessions featured Rootical on Systemic Venture Building and Human-Centered Design, and United Social Ventures on Financial Management and Unit Economics. Participants were introduced to the Business Model Canvas, AFSA's AFSAT tool, and hands-on pitch development frameworks to enhance investment readiness. The training emphasised steward ownership — a model that safeguards mission integrity and community governance in agroecological enterprises — while fostering collaborative learning and strategic thinking.

A highlight of the program was a field visit to Kanyes Dairy Farm, where participants observed women-led agroecological innovation, circular resource use, and livestock integration in practice. Inspired by the experience, participants closed the workshop by refining investment-ready business plans and designing mentorship pathways to support agroecological entrepreneurs in their home countries. The training reinforced AFSA's commitment to building leadership and business capacity for a sustainable agroecological economy across Africa.

AFSA Exposes the Role of Development Finance Institutions in Shaping Africa's Green Revolution



THE AGRO-CAPITAL NEXUS

Understanding the role of DFIs in the African Green Revolution.

A new AFSA report titled ["The Agro-Capital Nexus: Understanding the Role of DFIs in the African Green Revolution"](#) sheds light on how Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) are financing and influencing Africa's rapidly transforming food systems. As supermarkets expand into cities, processed foods become more common, and agribusinesses scale up production for export and formal markets, the report reveals the powerful yet often unseen hand of DFIs driving this change.

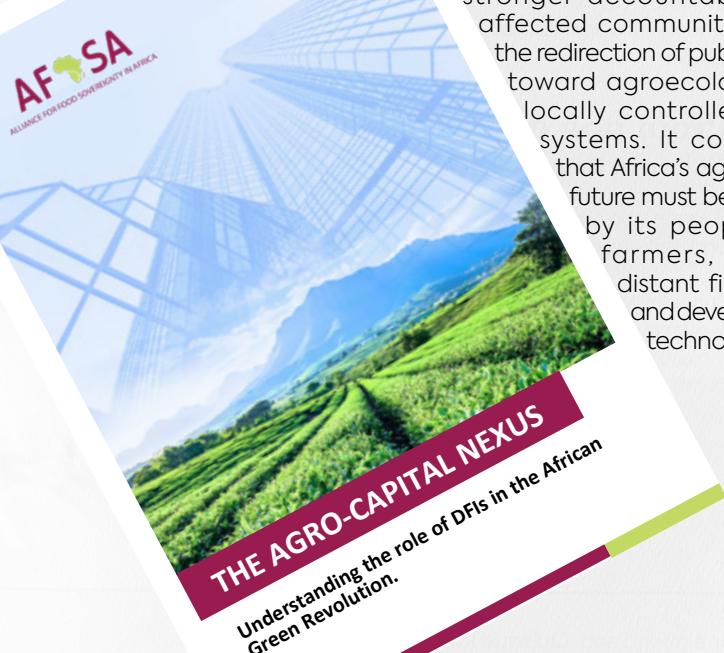
The report details how DFIs—public banks backed by governments and multilateral institutions—are not merely financiers but active agents in promoting a model of agriculture rooted in industrial inputs, large-scale production, and private equity control. Since 2019, six leading DFIs, including the International Finance Corporation (IFC), African Development Bank (AfDB), U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Proparco, British International Investment (BII), and FMO, have invested more than

... DFIs are constructing food systems that prioritise growth, efficiency, and market expansion at the expense of equity and sustainability.

three billion dollars directly into agribusinesses and food companies across Africa. These investments fund enterprises in agrochemical supply, logistics, food processing, and formal retail sectors.

The report further highlights the role of philanthropic foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which often align with DFI strategies and co-finance projects that promote input-heavy, technology-driven farming. It also raises concerns about the growing use of climate finance, including through the Green Climate Fund, to justify industrial agriculture under the label of "climate-smart" solutions. This pattern, the report warns, risks legitimising extractive agricultural models that undermine biodiversity, smallholder livelihoods, and food sovereignty.

AFSA's findings reveal how DFIs are constructing food systems that prioritise growth, efficiency, and market expansion at the expense of equity and sustainability. The report calls for greater transparency and public oversight of DFI investments, stronger accountability to affected communities, and the redirection of public funds toward agroecology and locally controlled food systems. It concludes that Africa's agricultural future must be shaped by its people and farmers, not by distant financiers and development technocrats.



New Databases Unite 540 Agroecological Enterprises and 80 Territorial Markets Across Africa

African Agroecological Entrepreneurship (AAE) is gaining momentum as national platforms across the continent strengthen their coordination, leadership, and operational capacity toward greater self-sufficiency. In a major milestone, emerging platforms in Zambia, Senegal, and Togo have profiled and developed comprehensive databases covering more than 540 agroecological enterprises and 80 territorial markets, marking a significant step in mapping Africa's growing agroecology ecosystem.

The creation of these interconnected databases signals a shift from fragmented initiatives to a more structured and collaborative approach among agroecological actors. By consolidating information on enterprises and markets, the new systems provide a foundation for evidence-based planning, informed decision-making, and strategic advocacy. They also enhance visibility

for small-scale entrepreneurs and local markets that form the backbone of Africa's sustainable food systems.

These efforts reflect a broader transformation in how agroecological enterprises and territorial markets are organised and supported. The national platforms are establishing mechanisms for data management, peer learning, and joint action that align local innovation with continental goals for food sovereignty and ecological resilience. The initiative strengthens partnerships among farmers, market actors, and policymakers, ensuring that the voices of grassroots enterprises inform continental dialogues on agroecology and rural development.



Journalists Trained to Champion Agroecology and Territorial Markets

ddis Ababa, Ethiopia — On 21 July 2025, the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) convened a one-day journalist training focused on “Re-shaping the Narrative: African Agroecological Entrepreneurship and Territorial Markets for African Food Sovereignty.” The workshop brought together 20 journalists from 10 African countries to build their capacity to report on Agroecological Entrepreneurship (AAE) and Territorial Markets (TMs). Facilitated by leading experts Ruth Nabaggala, Mamadou Goïta, and Isaiah Esipisu, the training challenged participants to move beyond dominant industrial agriculture narratives and to tell grounded, evidence-based stories that reflect Africa’s agroecological realities.

Through interactive sessions, journalists explored agroecology as a science, practice, and movement, while learning how to frame stories that reflect food sovereignty, biodiversity, and community empowerment. The training encouraged critical reporting on corporate-driven models and promoted the amplification of African-led solutions that center sustainability and justice. Emphasis was placed on strengthening the public discourse around agroecology’s economic and ecological benefits, particularly for rural communities.

A key highlight was the field visit to agroecological farms and communities in Ethiopia, where participants engaged directly with farmers and entrepreneurs practicing organic composting, integrated farming, and market-linked innovations.

The training encouraged critical reporting on corporate-driven models and promoted the amplification of African-led solutions that center sustainability and justice.

These firsthand experiences enriched the journalists’ understanding of how agroecology contributes to resilient local food systems. The training concluded with a collective pledge to elevate agroecological voices in national and regional media, supported by AFSA’s ongoing media partnerships and follow-up initiatives.



AFSA Advances Policy Advocacy for Farmer Managed Seed Systems Across Africa



The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) has intensified its engagement in continental seed policy processes to ensure that Farmer Managed Seed Systems (FMSS) are recognised and integrated into Africa’s agricultural frameworks. During the last four meetings of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBPP), AFSA delegates played a leading role in placing FMSS at the centre of the discussions. The process, which began in late 2023, has now produced a draft policy framework for FMSS that could be incorporated into the upcoming CAADP 2026–2035 agenda — a significant step toward continental policy recognition of farmers’ seed sovereignty.

To strengthen this process, AFSA implemented a robust policy advocacy strategy designed to ensure the finalisation and adoption of the FMSS policy framework. Legal and genetic experts

To strengthen this process, AFSA implemented a robust policy advocacy strategy designed to ensure the finalisation and adoption of the FMSS policy framework.

conducted an in-depth review of the draft strategy and provided key recommendations for improvement. Building on this analysis, a policy communication expert developed five critical policy demands to guide the African Union Commission in finalising the FMSS policy strategy. These demands are published in [AFSA's Voices for Seed Sovereignty: A Civil Society Guide to Policy Engagement](#) available download.

As part of the advocacy rollout, AFSA organised two virtual training sessions for more than 20 representatives of civil society organisations across the five Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The sessions aimed to equip participants with the FMSS Policy Advocacy Toolkit and foster a unified continental position on seed sovereignty.

In addition, AFSA sponsored 12 seed festivals across Africa, encouraging organisers to integrate messages from the FMSS advocacy toolkit into their communication and outreach activities. This initiative links community mobilisation with high-level policy advocacy, ensuring that farmers’ voices shape the future of seed governance. Through these coordinated actions, AFSA continues to position FMSS as a cornerstone of Africa’s food sovereignty and resilience.

AFSA Builds Youth Leadership for Seed Sovereignty Across Africa

... critical knowledge on restrictive seed laws, agroecological principles, and strategies to defend traditional seed systems.

Nakuru, Kenya — August 2025 — The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA), through its Seed Working Group and Youth in Agroecology Working Group, in collaboration with Seed Savers Network–Kenya, successfully convened a five-day youth capacity-building training from 8 to 12 August 2025. The training brought together 40 youth leaders from over 20 African countries with the aim of strengthening their advocacy for farmer-managed seed systems and advancing seed sovereignty across the continent.

The workshop equipped young participants with critical knowledge on

restrictive seed laws, agroecological principles, and strategies to defend traditional seed systems. Through interactive sessions and peer learning, participants deepened their understanding of how policy, biodiversity, and community action intersect in the fight for seed justice. The training emphasised that youth engagement is vital to the future of Africa's food systems, ensuring continuity of indigenous knowledge and agroecological practices.

A key outcome of the training was the launch of a continental youth advocacy strategy focused on amplifying youth voices in regional and global policy

spaces. The strategy includes monthly advocacy campaigns, intergenerational knowledge documentation initiatives, and a strengthened coordination platform for young leaders working on seed and food sovereignty issues.

The event also saw the formation of a team of youth negotiators mandated to engage directly with the African Union's new framework on Farmer-Managed Seed Systems (FMSS). This milestone represents a growing movement of young advocates determined to shape Africa's agricultural policies through a lens of justice, culture, and ecological sustainability.

African Journalists Reframe Narratives on Food Systems and Agroecology

Dakar, Senegal — August 2025 — The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) and the Pan-African Institute for Citizenship, Consumers and Development (CICODEV Africa), with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through the Transforming the African Food System to Sustainability (TAFS) Project, co-organised the African Journalists Workshop on African Food Systems Narratives from 28 to 29 August 2025. The workshop brought together 17 journalists from nine West and North African countries, representing print, radio, television, and digital media. Its goal was to strengthen the capacity of African

... food system reporting, the relevance of agroecology to sustainability, and the importance of people-centred journalism.

journalists to challenge dominant narratives of dependency and crisis and instead promote stories that celebrate African agency, indigenous knowledge, and agroecological

innovation.

Over two days, participants engaged in interactive sessions that combined theoretical reflection with practical storytelling. The training explored narrative framing in food system reporting, the relevance of agroecology to sustainability, and the importance of people-centred journalism. Journalists participated in peer-led story clinics and developed story pitches and drafts on themes including seed sovereignty, climate resilience, women in food systems, and community-led markets. By shifting focus from problems to solutions, participants deepened their understanding of how powerful narratives can shape both public

perception and policy action.

The workshop produced tangible outcomes. Journalists created a portfolio of agroecology-focused stories ready for publication, laid the foundation for a regional media network, and committed to amplifying the voices of farmers, women, youth, and community innovators. They acknowledged ongoing challenges such as editorial pressure, lack of funding, and language barriers, and called for sustained mentorship, bilingual tools, and future training opportunities. The workshop marked a step forward in building a continental media movement that repositions African food systems as stories of strength, resilience, and sovereignty.



AFSA Land Working Group Charts New Strategic Direction for Land Justice in Africa

From 28 to 29 August 2025, the AFSA Land Working Group (LWG) held a two-day strategy meeting at Country Lake Resort in Garuga, Uganda. The gathering brought together LWG members, AFSA Secretariat staff, and key resource persons from other working groups to assess the group's progress and reimagine its role in defending land rights, promoting agroecology,

“Defend our land, restore our soil”

and confronting the drivers of land injustice. Participants examined global dynamics affecting land governance, including ocean and land grabs, industrial agriculture, and geopolitical pressures, and reflected on how to

position the LWG within AFSA's broader food sovereignty movement.

Opening the meeting, LWG Chair Marianne Bassey encouraged participants to contribute with openness and unity, while AFSA Board Chair Hakim Baliraine described the meeting as a blessing and highlighted the inextricable link between land and agroecology. A performance

review presented by Michael Farrelly highlighted achievements such as the Healthy Soil Healthy Food project and policy advocacy at continental platforms, while identifying persistent gaps in resources, integration, and protection against land grabs. AFSA General Coordinator Dr. Million Belay placed the continent's land struggles in historical context, tying them to colonial legacies, weak governance, and foreign investments. He underscored that the battle for agroecology is a battle for African independence.

The group adopted a new campaign slogan and goal — “Defend our land, restore our soil” — to align with its strategic shift. Participants agreed to integrate land rights and soil health into a unified agenda while ensuring financial flows and AU–EU engagement are mainstreamed across all working groups under a new steering committee. The revised goals include better land policies, wider adoption of agroecological practices, and increased access to land and resources for women, youth, and vulnerable communities. With renewed energy and clarity of purpose, the revitalised Land Working Group is set to play a central role in AFSA's collective action toward just, sustainable land governance in Africa.



Kampala, Uganda — August 2025 — The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) has launched a groundbreaking podcast titled ["The Battle for African Agriculture."](#) hosted by AFSA General Coordinator Dr. Million Belay. The series explores the enduring legacies of colonialism in Africa's food systems, challenges corporate-driven narratives, and uplifts agroecological solutions rooted in justice, biodiversity, and

AFSA Launches New Podcast: "The Battle for African Agriculture"

food sovereignty. The podcast aims to create a space for dialogue and reflection at a time when industrial agriculture continues to dominate policy, media, and markets, with severe consequences for communities, culture, and climate.

Each episode features critical conversations with scientists, civil society leaders, and activists working at the intersection of food, power, and ecology. "I dream of an Africa where our food systems reflect the diversity of our cultures, our ecologies, and our indigenous knowledge," said Dr. Million Belay. "We are in the middle of a war over narratives: Who defines what good agriculture is? Who gets to decide the future of our food? I started this podcast to challenge

the colonial mindset that still shapes our food systems and to elevate the voices of those building something better—an agriculture of dignity, of ecology, of African knowledge."

Through rigorous analysis and compelling storytelling, The Battle for African Agriculture exposes how seed laws, trade policies, and climate adaptation strategies are often captured by corporate interests. At the same time, it celebrates farmers, movements, and communities leading the agroecological transition through indigenous wisdom and sustainable practices. The podcast connects local struggles to broader global debates about justice and sovereignty in food systems.

AFSA Chairperson Mr.

Hakim Baliraine underscored the podcast's role in strengthening AFSA's advocacy and outreach. "This platform allows us to engage thought leaders and grassroots voices from around the world. It's about connecting the dots between biodiversity loss, the climate crisis, and the industrial food model, and spotlighting agroecology as the path forward," he said. "The podcast strengthens AFSA's mission to inform, mobilize, and inspire."

AFSA invites partners, journalists, scholars, and allies across Africa and beyond to tune in to The Battle for African Agriculture Podcast, now streaming on all major podcast platforms and on AFSA's official YouTube channel.

AFSA Launches Policy Brief on Farmer Managed Seed Systems



The Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) has released a new policy brief urging African leaders to recognise and strengthen [Farmer Managed Seed Systems \(FMSS\) as a foundation for food sovereignty, climate resilience, and sustainable food systems](#). The policy brief officially launched at the Africa Food Systems Forum that took place in Senegal from 31 August to 5 September 2025, where ministers, donors, and policymakers are meeting to shape the continent's agricultural future.

According to AFSA, between 80 and 95 percent of seeds planted by smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa come from farmer-managed systems. These systems, deeply rooted in ancestral agroecological knowledge, preserve biodiversity and strengthen community resilience in the face of climate change. Women and youth remain at the heart of FMSS, with women alone safeguarding up to 90 percent of traditional seed knowledge. Despite this vital contribution, FMSS continue to face neglect

AFSA affirms that FMSS are not remnants of the past but living systems central to Africa's food future. They are strategic tools for protecting Africa's genetic heritage, fostering community innovation,

and marginalisation due to restrictive seed laws and corporate policies that prioritise industrial seeds.

The policy brief warns that ignoring FMSS will accelerate biodiversity loss, weaken climate adaptation, and deepen food insecurity. By contrast, recognising and investing in farmer-managed systems offers what AFSA describes as a "Made-in-Africa" solution to the food crisis. Such investment would reduce dependence on imported seeds, empower women, create sustainable livelihoods for youth, and secure nutritious food for millions of Africans.

AFSA affirms that FMSS are not remnants of the past but living systems central to Africa's food future. They are strategic tools for protecting Africa's genetic heritage, fostering community innovation, and ensuring that agricultural development is led by African farmers themselves. The brief calls for greater public investment, policy support, and protection of these indigenous systems as a pathway toward resilient and sovereign African food systems.