



**THE 15<sup>TH</sup> AFRICA DAY FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY (ADFNS) COMMEMORATION  
AND 20<sup>TH</sup> COMPREHENSIVE AFRICA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (CAADP)  
PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM  
20<sup>th</sup> CAADP PP & 15 ADFNS, SUB-THEME 1 PROFILE**

<b>SUB-THEME 3:</b>	<b>Engaging Research and Innovation to build digital and climate-resilient agrifood systems</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Day 3, Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>11:00 hrs to 13:00hrs</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Rainbow Towers Hotel and Conference Centre, Harare, Zimbabwe</b>
<b>Convener:</b> <b>Co-conveners:</b>	<b>FARA</b> <b>AU SAFGRAD, FAO, CBED, HIVOS</b>
<b>Contact person:</b>	Dr. Irene Annor-Frempong, FARA, email: <a href="mailto:ifrempong@faraafrica.org">ifrempong@faraafrica.org</a>
<b>Moderator (2min)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FARA, <b>Dr Irene Annor-Frempong</b> Objectives and expected outcomes of the sub-theme</li> </ul>
<b>Opening Remarks- (8min)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board Chair, FARA, <b>Ms Bongiwe Njobe</b></li> <li>President, Agrinatura, <b>Dr Stephen Onakuse</b></li> <li>Special Adviser to the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, FAO, <b>Dr David Phiri</b></li> </ul>
<b>Keynote Speaker (10min)</b>	<p><b>AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) in the context of building resilient Food systems transformation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European Commission, Science Counsellor- Directorate-General Research &amp; Innovation, <b>Laurent Bocheureau</b></li> </ul>
<b>Presentations (30 mins)</b>	<p><b>The FNSSA Roadmap Review and the International Research Consortium (IRC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CIRAD, Senior Scientist, <b>Bernard Mallet</b></li> <li>RUFORUM, Executive Secretary, <b>Dr Patrick Okori</b></li> <li>FARA, Lead-AU-EU IRC on FNSSA, <b>Dr. Irene Annor-Frempong</b></li> <li>Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, <b>Prof. Ioannis Dimitriou</b></li> </ul>
<b>Policy Round Table Discussion (50 min)</b>	
<b>Moderators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAO, Special Adviser to the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, <b>Dr David Phiri</b>,</li> <li>FARA, Cluster Lead, Policy, Research and Investments, <b>Dr Kwaku Antwi</b></li> </ul>
<b>Panellists</b>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUC/ESTI, Thematic Expert, <b>Dr Taibou Bâ</b></li> <li>• EC/DG-AGRI, Policy Officer, <b>Antonio Malta-Reis</b></li> <li>• AUC Senior CAADP Advisor, <b>Ms Elago Panduleni</b></li> <li>• CCARDESA, Executive Director, <b>Prof. Cliff Dlamini</b></li> <li>• FAO/Regional Office for Africa, Senior Policy Officer <b>Koffi Amegbeto</b></li> </ul>
<b>Q&amp;A (10 min)</b>	<b>Interactive session</b> – questions and answers
<b>Closure (10min)</b>	<b>Key takeaways, action points for the future &amp; Closing Remarks –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FARA, Executive Director and Head of Mission, <b>Dr Aggrey Agumya</b></li> </ul>
<b>Session Rapporteurs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RUFORUM, Head of Partnerships, <b>Dr Sokona Dagnoko</b></li> <li>• University of Helsinki, Project Coordinator / Doctoral Researcher, <b>Antti Autio</b></li> </ul>

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**Description  
of the  
Session**

**1. Background**

Africa and Europe share a profound and historically rooted connection characterized by diverse cultures, geographical proximity, and a commitment to a common future. Their commitment to a common future is grounded in mutual values such as respect for human rights, freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, the rule of law, and democracy—principles enshrined in the foundational texts of both the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU). This partnership has been strengthened through a series of Africa-EU Summits, including key meetings in Cairo (2000), Lisbon (2007), Tripoli (2010), and Brussels (2014). Notably, the Lisbon Summit produced the "Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Action Plan" (JAES), which established priorities for collaboration, particularly in Science, Information Society, and Space.

In 2014, the partnership's priorities were restructured during Senior Officials' meetings (SOM), which identified Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) as a top focus within the science, technology, and innovation framework of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD). Furthermore, the AU-EU Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) adopted a ten-year (2016–2026) roadmap in 2016 for establishing a Research and Innovation (R&I) partnership on FNSSA. The FNSSA roadmap was primarily shaped by the EU strategy and the CAADP, outlining the common R&I priorities for the AU and the EU within the FNSSA domain.

Since then, new technological advances have been made. Digitalization in agriculture in particular, is making significant strides, and various African countries are adopting digital tools to enhance agricultural productivity and resilience. Technologies such as mobile apps, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), drones, and digital finance platforms are increasingly being used to support farmers with weather information, market access, and precision farming techniques. However, only 5% of African smallholder farmers are consistently benefiting from digitalization, according to recent research. The sector is weakly leveraging these technologies to achieve the USD 1 trillion potential of the African agriculture sector by 2030.

The Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation (CEA-FIRST) is a pioneering initiative aimed at operationalizing the AU-EU International Research Consortium (IRC) on FNSSA. Addressing the challenge of fragmented research and innovation efforts whilst taken new scientific and technological successes on board. The CEA-FIRST project seeks to enhance coordination, increase the impact of investments, and drive food system transformation across Africa and Europe. It aims to strengthen AU-EU collaboration by establishing a robust governance structure and innovative funding mechanisms within the IRC. Through a public knowledge platform, a learning environment, and coordinated working groups, CEA-FIRST will ensure that research outputs are effectively used to inform policy implementation and promote sustainable agricultural practices.

Engaging research and innovation to build digital and climate-resilient agrifood systems involves fostering a robust research ecosystem that innovates on how digital tools can be better leveraged to strengthen a climate-resilient food system. Key challenges of research on digital agriculture in Africa include a lack of digital research capacity, insufficient digital research infrastructure, limited investment in tailored solutions, weak inclusion of digitalization in research programs, the need for context-specific technologies that address diverse farming practices, and low digital literacy.

	<p>Some of the key issues that research on digital agriculture may address, especially in Africa include: effective methods to improve digital literacy; how precision agriculture and early warning systems can better solve extreme weather issues; how to implement effective policies and frameworks for agricultural data; how to better leverage e-commerce platforms and mobile-based financial services to achieve the objectives of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); how digital agriculture innovations and youth entrepreneurship can be scaled to ensure long-term impact, sustainability and boost employment; and how solar energy and tele-irrigation can be better harnessed.</p> <p>Through the CEA-FIRST Coordination Support Action, funded under Horizon Europe, digital IRC Knowledge Management tools are being developed to enhance processes of policymaking and R and I implementation. The ultimate goal of CEA-FIRST is to create a functional, sustainable platform aligned with key EU and AU priorities, such as the European Green Deal, the post-Malabo Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and the AfCFTA while addressing global challenges of climate change and food security.</p> <p>This session therefore aims at fostering a pointed dialogue among African and European policymakers to channel new thoughts on the on-going process of updating the 2016–2026 AU-EU FNSSA roadmap towards defining the content and priorities of the new 2027-2036 AU-EU FNSSA Roadmap.</p>
<p><b>Session Agenda</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome and Introduction- By Moderator- Dr Irene Annor-Frempong</b></p> <p>Session's objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enhance R&amp;I collaboration between Africa and Europe on FNSSA.</li> <li>• To support building a strategy to translate research and innovation into actionable policies.</li> <li>• To promote the AU-EU IRC on FNSSA and increase visibility of the AU-EU FNSSA WG in the driving the FNSSA Roadmap.</li> </ul> <p><b>Expected Outcomes</b></p> <p>By the end of this session, participants should have a better understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and Innovation cooperation between the African Union and the European Union.</li> <li>• Potential of AU-EU International Research Consortium on Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (IRC) to reduce fragmentation in the research and innovation ecosystem.</li> <li>• Concrete knowledge management tools of the IRC in supporting policymaking.</li> </ul>

- Alignment of the AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) FNSSA Roadmap 2027-2037 with the CAADP goals.

**Opening remarks by the convener(s)- 8 minutes):**

- Board Chair, FARA, **Ms Bongiwe Ngobe (3 min)**
- President, Agrinatura, **Dr Stephen Onakuse (3 min)**
- Special Adviser to the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, FAO, **Dr David Phiri (3 min)**

**Keynote Address (10 minutes):**

Science Counsellor- Directorate-General Research & Innovation, European Commission, **Laurent Bochereau** – Speaker presents insights on the African Union – European Union research and innovation collaboration. This includes the political creation of the partnership, the implementation of the cooperation and its linkages to the policy programmes of EU and AU, and the future scenarios of the collaboration.

**Presentations on the AU-EU FNSSA Roadmap & the IRC– 30 minutes**

- Pointers from the Analysis and Review of the implementation of the 2016-2026 AU-EU FNSSA Roadmap towards future research and innovation priorities and funding on FNSSA – CIRAD, Senior Scientist, **Bernard Mallet**, RUFORUM, Executive Secretary **Dr Patrick Okori**
- The role of the AU-EU IRC on FNSSA and the AU-EU FNSSA WG in the driving the FNSSA Roadmap. FARA, Lead-AU-EU IRC on FNSSA, Coordinator-CEA-FIRST, co-Chair-AU-EU HLPD Working Group on FNSSA, **Dr. Irene Annor-Frempong**
- Digital IRC Knowledge Management Tools to enhance policymaking and R & I implementation processes– **Professor Ioannis Dimitriou**, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

**Policy round table Discussion (50 minutes):**

- **F2F moderator**, FAO, Special Adviser to the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, **Dr David Phiri** and
- **Online moderator**, FARA, Cluster Lead, Research, Policies and Investments, **Dr Kwaku Antwi**

Panellists share their experiences, insights, and success stories and policy implications related to AU-EU Research and Innovation collaboration related to Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture. Panellists discuss policy changes taking place to ensure the longevity of the collaboration in relation to the AU-EU International Research Consortium on FNSSA.

**Dr Taibou Bâ - AUC/ESTI, Thematic Expert**

How the African Union Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI) coordinates the AU-EU initiatives and participates to the high-level policy dialogue on research and innovation between the two regions.

**Mr Antonio Malta-Reis – EC/DG-AGRI**

The perspective of the European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) in supporting and promoting a knowledge and evidence-based green and digital transition towards a sustainable, competitive, and resilient agriculture, rural areas and food systems.

**MS Elago Panduleni, AUC, Senior CAADP Advisor**

	<p>To discuss linkages and alignment between CAADP and the FNSSA Roadmap to help African countries eliminate hunger and reduce poverty by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development.</p> <p><b>Dr Cliff Dlamini, CCARDESA, Executive Director</b> The IRC from the entry point for agricultural research initiatives in Africa designed to have a continental reach spanning more all sub-regions and countries.</p> <p><b>Koffi Amegbeto</b>, Senior Policy Officer, FAO/Regional Office for Africa, Global perspectives on the International Research and Innovation for Food systems transformation</p> <p><b>Q &amp;A Session (15 min)</b></p> <p><b>(10 minutes) - Key Takeaways &amp; Closing Remarks –</b></p> <p>Action points for the future - Executive Director and Head of Mission, FARA, <b>Dr Aggrey Agumya</b></p>
<b>Session language</b>	English and French.
<b>Expected participants</b>	All the participants
<b>Required logistics and services</b>	Organiser
<b>Working Documents</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Manuscript – The AU-EU International Research Consortium on Food Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture</li> <li>2. AU-EU FNSSA 2016-2026 Road map</li> </ol>