



The Farmers Digest

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EAF CALLS FOR INNOVATION, LEADERSHIP, AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AT THE CAADP SUMMIT IN KAMPALA



Africa leaders at the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) held at Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort.

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EAFF CALLS FOR INNOVATION, LEADERSHIP, AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AT THE CAADP SUMMIT IN KAMPALA



EAFF President, Ms. Elizabeth Nsimadala gives her remarks during the Summit

The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) joined African leaders, policymakers, and development partners at the three-day Extraordinary Summit of the African Union (AU) in Kampala, Uganda, from January 9–11, 2025. The summit aimed to reshape the continent's agricultural future by advancing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which was established in 2003 to enhance food security, create jobs, and promote rural development. AU member states have committed to allocating at least 10% of their national budgets to agriculture in alignment with CAADP goals.

The summit culminated in the adoption of the Kampala Declaration and a landmark ten-year strategy and action plan to accelerate the implementation of the Malabo Declaration on Agricultural Growth and Transformation, adopted in 2014. The CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035), developed over the past ten months under directives from African Heads of State and Government, will provide a roadmap for strengthening Africa's agri-food systems.

The strategy was crafted with input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including Regional Economic Communities, African experts and researchers, farmers' organizations, development partners, parliamentarians, private sector groups, women in agriculture, and youth groups. It underwent rigorous review, including evaluations by the AU's Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environment (ARDWE). Aligning with the 2021 African Common Position to the United Nations Food Systems Summit, the strategy aims to advance sustainable agricultural practices across Africa.

The CAADP Strategy and Action Plan seeks to leverage resources to drive economic growth, enhance food security, and improve livelihoods while addressing climate change. It emphasizes stimulating investment, fostering partnerships, and empowering smallholder farmers. Furthermore, the strategy aligns with the AU's Agenda 2063, which envisions a prosperous Africa driven by inclusive growth and sustainable development. This includes achieving food security, transforming agriculture into a leading economic driver, and reducing reliance on food imports.

Africa's food security remains a pressing challenge, exacerbated by climate change, conflicts, rapid population growth, and economic disruptions. Currently, over 280 million Africans suffer from chronic hunger, while food systems struggle to meet rising demands. The CAADP Strategy and Action Plan addresses these challenges by promoting climate-resilient agriculture, improving infrastructure, reducing food waste, and enhancing regional trade in agricultural goods to ensure Africa's self-sufficiency.

The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation was prominently represented by its President, Ms. Elizabeth Nsimadala, who spoke at two side events organized by AGRA on 'The Road from Maputo to Kampala' and RUFORUM's event on 'Human Capital Development for Agricultural Transformation.'

Ms. Nsimadala emphasized the critical role of digital transformation, leadership development, and innovation in reshaping Africa's agricultural landscape. She highlighted the untapped potential of virtual learning, stressing the need for investment in digital literacy to ensure farmers effectively utilize available technologies.



EAFF President, Ms. Elizabeth Nsimadala during her participation on the RuForum panel during the Summit

She advocated for structured leadership development programs to ensure strong representation at national, continental, and global levels.

Regarding agricultural technology and innovation, she emphasized the importance of coherence in agricultural initiatives and defining clear success factors to drive meaningful and measurable outcomes. Ms. Nsimadala reaffirmed EAFF's commitment to working with regional and global partners to achieve the goals set in the newly adopted Kampala CAADP Declaration and Ten-Year Strategy (2026–2035), which aims to double agricultural productivity, reduce postharvest losses by 50%, and triple intra-African agrifood trade.

H.E. Ambassador Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission, highlighted the significance of the CAADP strategy, stating that it aims to boost food production, expand value addition, increase intra-African trade, create jobs for youth and women, and build inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems. She also emphasized the need for evidence-based decision-making, accountability, and inclusivity to ensure marginalized groups have access to resources and opportunities in the agrifood sector.

H.E. Dr. Girma Amente, Minister of Agriculture of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, emphasized Ethiopia's commitment to CAADP through its National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP). He noted Ethiopia's increased agricultural budget allocations, which have contributed to consistent improvements in annual agricultural production and resilience against climate change.

EAAF CALLS FOR INNOVATION, LEADERSHIP, AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AT THE CAADP SUMMIT IN KAMPALA

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Hon. Frank Tumwebaze, Uganda's Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries and Chair of the AU's Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environment, called for immediate implementation of the strategy. He emphasized the urgency of moving from planning to execution to make a tangible impact on the continent's agricultural sector. He highlighted the importance of technological research, climate-resilient agricultural systems, and agro-industrialization in achieving the strategy's objectives.

The summit concluded with the adoption of the Kampala CAADP Declaration and the ten-year strategy (2026–2035), which focuses on doubling agricultural productivity, reducing postharvest losses by 50%, and tripling intra-African agrifood trade.

About CAADP

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) is the AU's Agenda 2063 flagship initiative. It aims to raise agricultural productivity, increase public investment in agriculture, and stimulate economic growth through agriculture-led development, ultimately eliminating hunger and reducing poverty. Launched in 2003 through the Maputo Declaration and reaffirmed in 2014 through the Malabo Declaration, CAADP focuses on improving food security, nutrition, and income generation in Africa's farming economies. As the most ambitious agricultural reform effort ever undertaken in Africa, CAADP is the cornerstone framework for driving agricultural transformation, with full ownership and leadership from African governments.



EAAF President, Ms. Elizabeth Nsimadala engages with a participant at the Summit

INGABO SYNDICATE CASSAVA FARMERS TO BENEFIT FROM \$2.1 MILLION IFAD-FUNDED PROJECT

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Ms. Cesarie Kantarama, president of Ingabo Syndicate farmers, with IFAD representative and country director East and Southern Africa Division, Habte-Selassie Dagnawi

Cassava smallholder farmers under the Ingabo Syndicate umbrella across 10 districts in Rwanda are set to benefit from a USD 2.1 million grant through the Score Rwanda project. This initiative aims to strengthen smallholder farmers' resilience against food insecurity and climate change, ultimately improving livelihoods in rural areas.

The four-year project's financing agreement was signed at the IFAD headquarters in Kigali by the IFAD Country Director and the President of the Ingabo Syndicate Farmers. The allocated funds will support efforts to enhance cassava farming quality, improve irrigation schemes, build farmers' capacities, boost cassava productivity, and tackle post-harvest challenges.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Rwanda's economy, employing 64.5 percent of the workforce and contributing about 25 per cent to GDP. It stands out as one of the most strategic sectors in Rwanda's development.

INGABO SYNDICATE CASSAVA FARMERS TO BENEFIT FROM \$2.1 MILLION IFAD-FUNDED PROJECT

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“The Score Rwanda project is designed to increase smallholder farmers’ incomes, enhance cassava production, provide training on smart farming techniques, and improve resilience against climate-related challenges such as drought and floods,” said Habte-Selassie Dagmawi, IFAD Representative and Country Director for the East and Southern Africa Division.

Implemented by the Ingabo Farmers Syndicate, the project is expected to benefit over 250,000 smallholder farmers. Of these, 46.3 percent are men, 53.6 percent are women, and 19 percent are youth. “This initiative will enhance our ability to combat climate change, improve cassava production, and equip smallholder farmers with essential skills for smart cassava farming.

Currently, we produce 14 tonnes per acre, but with this project’s support, we anticipate increasing yields to 50 tonnes per acre,” stated Cesarie Kantarama, President of the Ingabo Farmers Syndicate. She further highlighted that the adoption of smart farming techniques and climate-resilient cassava seeds will enable farmers to boost both their yields and incomes.

The four-year project will be implemented across ten districts in three provinces: Kamonyi, Gisagara, Nyanza, Ruhango, and Muhanga in the Southern Province; Rusizi and Nyamasheke in the Western Province; and Bugesera, Gatsibo, and Kayonza in the Eastern Province.

Agriculture remains a crucial pillar of Rwanda’s economy, employing 64.5 percent of the workforce and contributing approximately 25 percent to the national GDP.

As one of Rwanda’s most strategic sectors, it plays a vital role in the country’s development agenda.

Founded in 2005, the Ingabo Syndicate is a cooperative of smallholder cassava farmers with a broad membership across Rwanda.

For the past 42 years, IFAD has been actively investing in rural communities in Rwanda, empowering them to reduce poverty, enhance food security, improve nutrition, and build resilience against economic and environmental challenges.



Ingabo Farmers Syndicate officials with IFAD officials during the agreement signing at IFAD Offices in Rwanda

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EAFF Delegation with FAO officials pose for a group photo after the courtesy meeting

As part of its strategic vision for a prosperous and cohesive farming community, the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) recently conducted a high-level visit to Ethiopia. This initiative aligned with EAFF's commitment to transforming smallholder agriculture into a profitable and sustainable investment opportunity.

During the visit, the EAFF delegation engaged with key stakeholders in Ethiopia to strengthen collaborations and explore joint initiatives aimed at empowering Ethiopian farmers. These meetings not only reinforced EAFF's presence in Ethiopia but also set a precedent for broader regional cooperation with other farmer organizations.

In addition to engaging with local farmer organizations, such as the Oromia Coffee Farmers' Co-operative Union (OCFCU) and the Ethiopian Horticulture Producers and Exporters Association (EHPEA), the EAFF team, led by CEO Stephen Muchiri, paid courtesy visits to key development partners in Ethiopia.

These partners play a crucial role in supporting the Federation's mission to enhance agricultural livelihoods across Eastern Africa. Among them, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) stood out as a significant ally.

Recognizing FAO's invaluable contributions to Ethiopian agriculture and its support for smallholder farming, EAFF held a high-level meeting with Ms. Farayi Zimudzi, FAO Ethiopia Representative. The discussion focused on deepening collaboration to enhance support for farming communities across Eastern Africa and addressing the current challenges and needs of Ethiopian smallholder farmers.

Speaking during the meeting, EAFF CEO Mr. Stephen Muchiri highlighted FAO's instrumental role in advancing EAFF's objectives through joint initiatives such as the Catalyzing Competitive Agricultural Women and Youth Enterprises in Kenya and Tanzania program.

“FAO played a vital role in training and empowering young and female farmers. Such partnerships have driven meaningful impact, reinforcing our shared commitment to building a resilient and thriving agricultural sector in the region,” he said.

Mr. Muchiri further emphasized EAFF's desire to expand its collaboration with FAO and other development partners in Ethiopia to accelerate farmer-led agricultural transformation in Eastern Africa.

On her part, Ms. Farayi Zimudzi reaffirmed FAO's commitment to supporting Ethiopia's agricultural sector through policy development, post-harvest loss management, and capacity building for smallholder farmers. “Our collaboration has been pivotal in shaping the policy environment for agriculture and rural development,” she noted.

She further stressed the need for cooperation with organizations like EAFF to translate policy discussions into concrete investments that promote climate-smart practices and employment generation for rural communities.

The engagement between EAFF and FAO Ethiopia underscores the power of strategic partnerships in driving agricultural transformation. By working together, both organizations are set to create sustainable solutions that enhance productivity, resilience, and economic opportunities for farmers across Eastern Africa.



From L-R, EAFF Ltd Chairman, Mr. Philip Kiri, presents documents to FAO Ethiopia Representative Ms. Farayi Zimudzi. Looking on is EAFF CEO, Mr. Stephen Muchiri

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Seed Delight Ltd founder & CEO, Mr. Steve Chege, *takes participants through the seed multiplication processes.*

Njoro, Nakuru County, Kenya– January 17, 2025 – The Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) led a one-day farm field visit to Seed Delight in Njoro, Nakuru County, as part of the Farmers' Organizations for African, Caribbean, and Pacific Countries (FO4ACP) program. The visit aimed to promote knowledge exchange and enhance economic services for farmers, focusing on market access, financial products, insurance, and mechanization solutions.

Bringing together 35 participants, including farmer representatives, agricultural experts, and key stakeholders from across the region, the visit focused on potato seed multiplication practices. This crucial aspect of farming has the potential to significantly improve productivity and profitability within the potato value chain.

During the visit, participants engaged with experts from Seed Delight, gaining practical insights into best practices in seed multiplication, seedling management, and disease control strategies. These lessons are expected to help farmers enhance crop production, leading to improved yields and higher incomes.

Seed Delight: A Success Story

Located six kilometers off the Njoro-Mau Narok highway at Gachuhi shopping center, Seed Delight Ltd is a thriving seedlings propagation farm serving smallholder farmers in Nakuru, Laikipia, Baringo, and Narok counties.

Spread across eight acres in Lare, Njoro sub-county, the farm specializes in propagating high-quality, certified seedlings, including tomatoes, spinach, cabbage, capsicum, onions, collard greens (sukuma wiki), managu, and saget. Additionally, it grows potato and avocado seedlings in open fields.

Seed Delight Ltd was founded in 2018 by Steve Chege, who transitioned from his role as a consultant at Centum, an investment firm, to focus fully on agriculture. Initially a small-scale vegetable farmer, Chege struggled to access certified seedlings, which he had to source from Naivasha at high costs. Recognizing a business opportunity, he invested Ksh 5 million from his savings and soft loans to expand operations. His investment funded the construction of additional greenhouses, water tanks, germination chambers, and the procurement of high-quality seeds.



Seed Delight employs a meticulous, science-backed process for propagating seeds. The farm uses cocopeat a growing medium derived from coconut fibers to germinate seeds. This involves washing the cocopeat for two days to remove dissolved salts before mixing it with vermiculite, a fine ash from rocks found in Uganda and Kenya's Eastern counties. This combination ensures optimal water retention and seed germination.

The seeds are sown in plastic trays, covered with vermiculite, and watered before being transferred to a temperature-controlled germination chamber. The chamber, capable of holding 800,000 seedlings, accelerates sprouting under ideal humidity and darkness. Seedlings such as cabbage remain in the chamber for three days, while tomatoes take five to six days before being moved to a greenhouse nursery and later to a hardening area that mimics outdoor conditions.

Ensuring Quality and Traceability

Inside the greenhouses, blue and yellow sticky traps help control thrips and whiteflies, reducing pest infestation. Additionally, Seed Delight maintains a traceability system for all seedlings. Each tray is tagged with details such as seed variety, client name, batch code, planting date, and the number of trays, ensuring that farmers receive the correct orders.

Beyond seedling production, the farm offers training to farmers on best agricultural practices. “We currently don't charge for training because we want to popularize good farming techniques,” said Chege.

Overcoming Challenges in the Seedling Business

Despite its success, Seed Delight faces several challenges, including:

High import costs of cocopeat – Imported from India, Sri Lanka, and Estonia, the increasing freight charges and currency fluctuations pose financial constraints.

Seasonal seedling demand – Many smallholder farmers rely on rain-fed agriculture, making demand unpredictable.

Rising fertilizer prices – The high cost of fertilizers affects farmers' purchasing power, impacting overall sales.

Starting with just three employees, Chege has grown his team to over 11 permanent staff and over 20 casual workers, underscoring the farm's steady expansion.



EAFF MEMBERS VISIT SEED DELIGHT IN KENYA TO ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND MARKET ACCESS

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EAFF CEO, Mr. Stephen Muchiri addresses the EAFF members during the farm field visit

EAFF's Commitment to Farmer Empowerment.

The farm visit underscored EAFF's commitment to equipping farmers with technical expertise and access to innovative agricultural solutions. By fostering partnerships with organizations like Seed Delight, EAFF continues to champion initiatives that empower farmers with knowledge, technology, and market linkages.

“Access to high-quality seeds is a game-changer for farmers. Learning from industry leaders like Seed Delight helps our members improve their productivity and resilience in agriculture,” emphasized EAFF CEO Stephen Muchiri.

Through such initiatives, EAFF remains dedicated to advancing sustainable farming practices and enhancing economic opportunities for farmers across Eastern Africa.



EAFF Ltd Chairman, Mr. Philip Kiriro, addressing participants during a field visit



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المنظمة الإفريقية للفلاحين

YOUTH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Call for Young agricultural producer

Are you a young agricultural producer in Africa looking to scale your agribusiness, improve your skills, and connect with industry experts?

The FAO-PAFO Youth Mentorship Program is designed **to empower and equip young African farmers** with the knowledge, tools, and networks they need to thrive in the agrifood sector.

BENEFITS

- One-on-one mentorship from experienced agricultural professionals
- Practical training in agribusiness, leadership, access to finance, marketing, digital innovation, and more
- Networking opportunities with industry leaders and fellow young agripreneurs
- A certificate of completion from FAO & PAFO

REQUIREMENTS

- Young agricultural producers or agripreneurs from across Africa
- Passionate about agriculture and eager to grow their business
- Willing to commit to mentorship sessions and capacity-building workshops
- Program Duration: March – September 2025 (virtual mentorship & training)

Deadline
3rd March 2025

APPLY NOW

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Why Apply for the FAO-PAFO Youth Mentorship Program?

The mentorship program offers a unique opportunity for young professionals to gain expert guidance and industry knowledge while expanding their professional networks. Participants will be paired with experienced mentors who will provide one-on-one coaching, helping mentees navigate industry challenges, build expertise, and unlock new opportunities in agribusiness and sustainable farming.

Key Benefits of the Program

- ✓ Expert Guidance: Learn from seasoned professionals in agribusiness, finance, leadership, and innovation.
- ✓ Industry Insights: Gain exclusive knowledge and practical skills to succeed in the agricultural sector.
- ✓ Networking Opportunities: Connect with agricultural professionals, investors, and global organizations.
- ✓ Recognition: Receive a prestigious FAO-PAFO certification upon successful completion of the program.

Who Should Apply?

This program is ideal for:

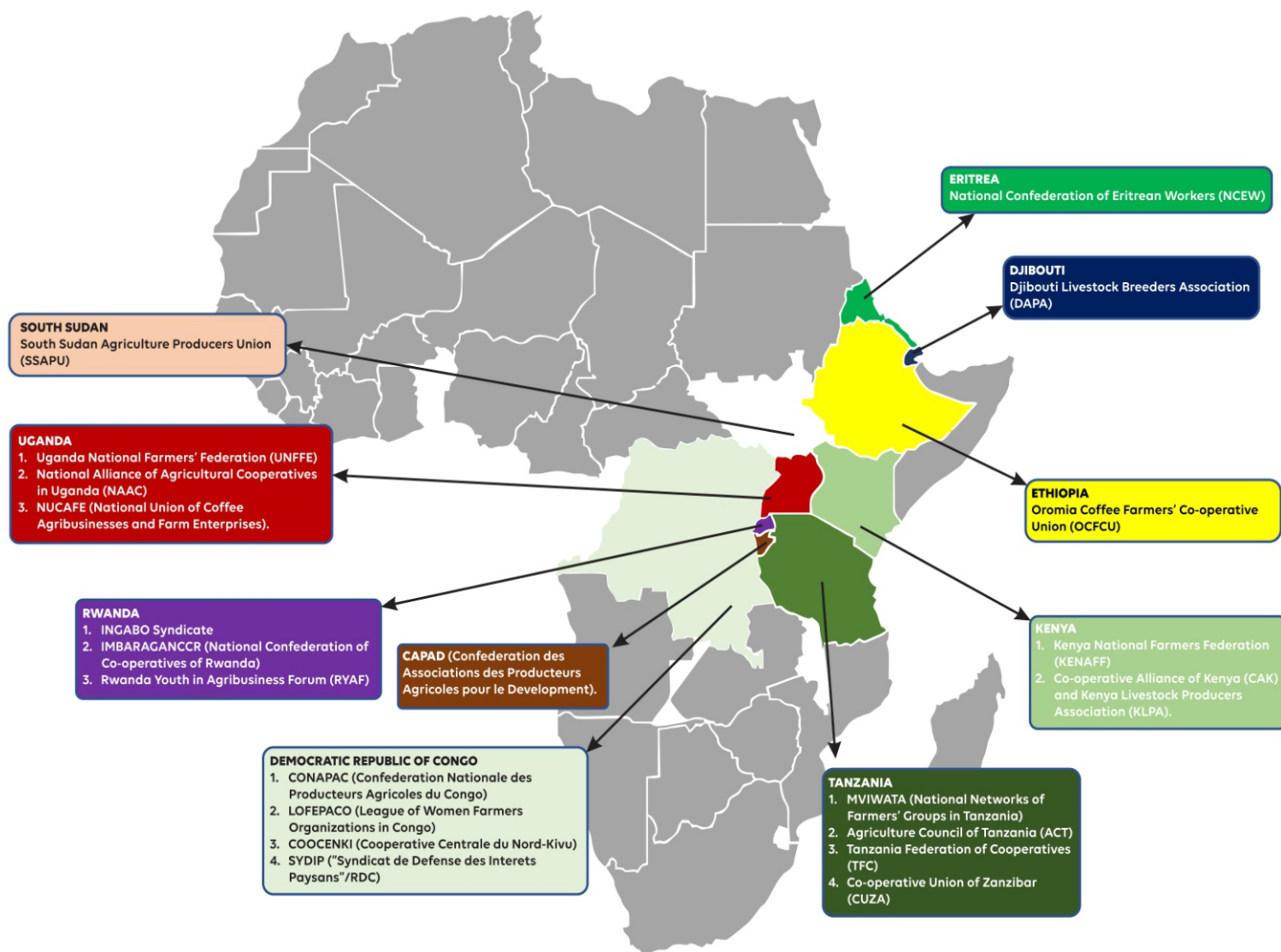
- Young professionals actively engaged in agriculture, agribusiness, or rural development.
- Passionate individuals eager to drive change and innovation in the sector.
- Those willing to commit to mentorship and professional growth.

To apply, submit your application through this link: <https://lnkd.in/dVUgRdJu>. Additionally, send a motivational letter and CV to ceo@pafo-africa.org or info@pafo-africa.org.

Join a growing community of young changemakers who are shaping the future of African agriculture. Seize this opportunity to elevate your career, broaden your impact, and contribute to a thriving and sustainable agricultural landscape in Africa!

Application Deadline: 3rd March 2





We believe that farmers are the backbone of Africa's economy and that empowering them is key to food security, economic growth, and sustainable development. At the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF), we are committed to championing the rights, interests, and prosperity of farmers by advocating for policies that support inclusive agricultural transformation, access to markets, and value addition.



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