



How the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation became a climate policy influencer

Our inaugural ‘partner perspective’ story is the first in a new series which shares insights from the point of view of AICCRA’s national and regional partners.

These stories highlight game-changing approaches to delivering innovations at scale, shifting dialogue, or shaping policy.



First up is Stephen Muchiri, the Chief Executive Officer of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation ([EAFF](#)). He recounts how EAFF have become an influential voice in UNFCCC climate negotiations thanks to continued support of AICCRA.

Agriculture is key to the economies of East Africa.

[The agriculture and food sector accounts for 25-40% of the GDP of countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, with about 60% of the region’s population employed in agriculture.](#)

It also plays a key role in helping communities across Africa adapt to climate change.

So, it’s important to not only identify the most powerful innovations and interventions that supports the resilience of smallholder farming communities to climate change; but it is also vital that we support farmers to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to advocate for their own needs with global policymakers.

Farmers—and the organizations that support them—can strengthen the voice and participation of farmers in decision making bodies like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

I am proud to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Eastern Africa Farmers’ Federation (EAFF), an umbrella organization of 24 farmer organizations in 10 countries across the Eastern Africa region, which altogether represent some 25 million smallholder farmers.

Our mandate is to empower farmers to achieve their food security and improve their livelihoods. This can only be achieved through mutually benefitting partnerships with governments, research organizations, universities, civil society organizations, private sector and development partners to help represent, advocate and lobby for the interests of Eastern Africa farmers and to build their capacities.

Under our recent strategic plan (2022-2028), the EAFF is prioritizing engagement in the climate policy discourse as a key focus and cross-cutting thematic area. Strengthening this aspect of our work will help farmers to represent their needs in national, continental and global debates and contribute towards policymaking, ultimately influencing their long-term resilience.

EAFF has made several achievements in recent years, having joined major climate policy networks and formed more strategic alliances for a stronger voice at the world's stage.

EAFF is now being recognized as an important stakeholder in the climate space, which has led to new partnerships and funding opportunities.

Ahead of both the UN's COP27 and COP28 climate summits, EAFF was thrilled to co-organize with the Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) preparatory workshops for our member organizations.

AICCRA's role was pivotal, sharing policy engagement tools, research and innovation led by CGIAR, the world's largest publicly funded research partnership for food security.

They also invited influential stakeholders from across their networks, who provided a broad range of perspectives on the challenges that we at EAFF want to address with our members, including on accessing climate finance and developing stronger relationships with the private sector.

Through AICCRA's contribution, these EAFF workshops were informed by the technical expertise that EAFF needed to write a compelling *call-to-action* for global leaders. That 'call-to-action' was a huge milestone for EAFF and its role in climate action in East Africa, and is a testament to EAFF's strengthened capacity to engage in the complex and fast-moving arenas of climate policy.

For instance, our COP27 call to action demanded increased support for developing locally-led climate action interventions for small-scale farming systems.

And our COP28 call to action was even more ambitious, calling for the Loss and Damage Fund to provide adequate and direct support to small-scale farmers and pastoralists and ensuring that financial pledges are fulfilled and forthcoming.

THE CALL TO ACTION

ABOUT THE STATEMENT

The **Eastern Africa Farmer's Federation (EAFF)**, comprising of 34 farmer organisations from 10 countries, has signed a shared call-to-action to enhance the role of farmers in climate policy. The EAFF's members represent apex farmer associations, co-operatives and commodity associations, representing over 25 million farmers across East Africa. Despite the unique national priorities and processes within each member country, this call serves as a common request for support to enhance farmer-led climate change intervention processes at the national and regional level. **This collective statement includes key messages from farmer organisations, as well as contributions from the EAFF Secretariat in support of their members.**

It is important to note, from the outset, that the EAFF acknowledges the vital role that agriculture and food systems play in mitigating and adapting to climate change. In addition, it highlights the enormous threat that climate change poses to farmers across the East Africa region and the requisite support needed to adapt to its impacts. This statement calls for a fair and socially just outcome for African farmers at COP27, wherein farmers are recognised for their strategic importance as partners that represent vital climate constituencies.

This call requests policy makers in the region to acknowledge the key messages of this call-to-action and to use their positions and influence to amplify the voices of farmers at COP27 and in other climate policy processes. The **six priority areas** of this joint statement highlight where governments should strengthen their support for farmer organisations to enhance their policy capacity, representation and financial resources needed to engage effectively in climate policy processes, at COP27 and beyond.

- Increase financing to support climate actions of small-holder farmers
- Support for developing on-the-ground action in small-scale farming systems
- Strengthen farmer engagement in international climate negotiations
- Develop relevant intervention and engagement opportunities for farmers
- Support policy and advocacy development of farmers in East Africa
- Push for concrete progress on adaptation and loss and damage at COP27

[EAFF Call to Action for COP27](#)

THE CALL TO ACTION

ABOUT THE STATEMENT

The **Eastern Africa Farmer's Federation (EAFF)**, which comprises of 24 farmer organisations from 10 countries, has signed a shared call-to-action to enhance the role of farmers in climate policy and within the international climate negotiations. The EAFF's members farmer associations, co-operatives and commodity associations, representing over 25 million farmers across East Africa. Despite the unique national priorities and processes within each member country, this statement serves as a common request for support to enhance farmer-led climate change adaptation and intervention processes at the national and regional level. **This collective statement includes key messages from farmer organisations, as well as contributions from the EAFF Secretariat in support of their members.**

It is important to note, from the outset, that the EAFF acknowledges the vital role that agriculture and food systems play in adapting to and mitigating climate change. Agriculture is truly a global climate solution. In addition, it highlights the enormous threat that climate change poses to farmers across the East Africa region and the requisite support needed to adapt to its impacts. This statement calls for a fair and socially just outcome for African farmers at the upcoming COP28 negotiations, wherein farmers are recognised for their strategic importance as partners that represent vital climate constituencies.

[EAFF Call to Action for COP28](#)

But writing a call to action is not enough.

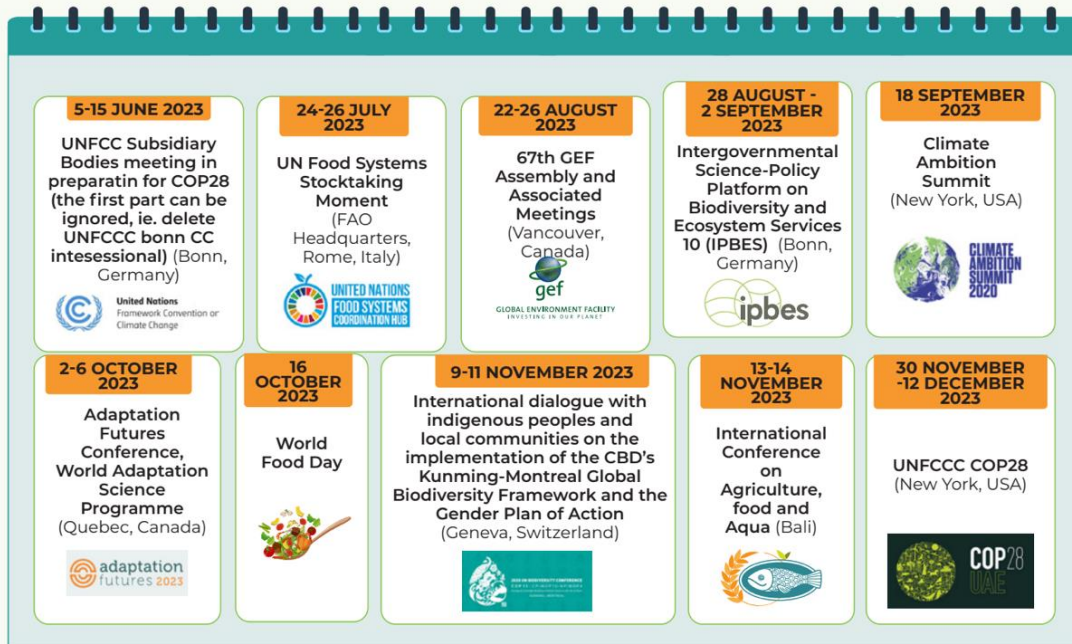
Thanks to the connections EAFF made through our partnership with AICCRA, we now enjoy fruitful dialogue with Africa's leading climate negotiators, such as Dr. George Wamukoya (PhD) from the African Group of Negotiators Expert Support (AGNES).

EAFF are now regular contributors to AGNES meetings ahead of key climate negotiations, for which we enjoy technical and scientific support from our CGIAR collaborators thanks to AICCRA's targeted matchmaking, based on our members' needs.

Mr. Stephen Muwaya, Uganda's former Climate change negotiator, authored a [report](#) on the role of agriculture in the last five COP summits. This report was instrumental in giving a genesis on the inclusion of agriculture in the negotiations, the reports that were done (Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture) and the adoption of the Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security. This report has been key in awareness creation for the EAFF members. AICCRA contributed a policy calendar and a policy timeline to the report that have helped us coordinate better and strengthen the engagement of farmers in important climate change dialogues.



GLOBAL POLICY WINDOWS AND ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



One of the policy calendars from the report commissioned by EAFF

This improved coordination has led to more strategic planning and opportunities to advocate on behalf of our members at high profile events, including the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi.

It has also provided us opportunities to get 'in the room' and become not only a visible advocate for our members, but an influential one too.



EAFF President Elizabeth Nsimadala directly addressed the negotiators on the Sharm El-Sheikh Joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security at COP28 in Dubai. That work is part of the official [UNFCCC negotiations](#) which “recognizes the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change.”

Our partnership with AICCRA is growing and it's mutually beneficial; we are able to engage more and access a broader audience while AICCRA is able to reach its target audience of farmers and ensure their work is grassroots and farmer-relevant.

Stephen Muchiri is Executive Director of The Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation (EAFF)

Further reading:

- AICCRA Report: [Policy and advocacy development workshop: Enhancing the role of farmers in climate change policy in East Africa](#)
- AICCRA Presentation: [Enhancing Farmer Engagement in Climate Policy](#)
- EAFF Report: [African climate processes, actors and institutions: What this means for farmers](#)
- EAFF Blog: [EAFF Climate change development workshop](#)

Social media quotes for cards

“The fact that you’re being invited to speak on matters of climate change as far as farmers are concerned for me is a big step, it’s a big thing. And in fact that within our Pan-African institution we can now say that we are better acquainted in this space than our colleagues.”
Stephen Muchiri, EAFF CEO

“The fact that someone can recognize you as an important stakeholder and they actually want to hear your views (...) speaks volumes in itself”
Stephen Muchiri, EAFF CEO