



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



**Joint Actions on Operationalization of the
Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA)**

WEBINAR No. 15:

**First Webinar to prepare for the Africa Conference on SAM (ACSAM):
Exploring the Africa Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization: Your Role in
Africa's Mechanization Journey**

Thursday, 23 October 2025, 12:00 - 14:00 hrs (GMT)

Moderator



Mark Kofi Fynn is the Regional Policy Officer at Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, FAO Regional Office for Africa. Before joining FAO, he spent about 5 years as the Agribusiness Advisor at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where he coordinated continental agribusiness-related interventions for the implementation of the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation within the CAADP. Mark also worked with the German Agency for International Development in Ghana for 9 years.

Speakers



H.E. Mr. Moses Vilakati, the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the African Union Commission, is a Swazi national with over 30 years' experience in development, environmental conversations, climate change, sustainable tourism. Prior to his election in 2025 as African Union Commissioner, H.E Vilakati has been Minister for 10 years in succession, in the ministry of Agriculture and Tourism and environmental affairs respectively During her tenure at the Ministry several policies and strategies were implemented during this period. The key strategies included the introduction of input subsidy to farmers, intensifying the dairy industry, expansion of high value agricultural production, particularly in rural areas. Some of the policies developed were Veterinary public health for safety of consumers as well as pesticides management for regulating the use of chemicals. H.E Vilakati has served serious boards, as non-executive Chairman and Board member



Abebe Haile-Gabriel is the Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO for Africa. A national of Ethiopia, Haile-Gabriel has more than 30 years of extensive experience in strategic leadership and management in complex environments at national, sub-regional and regional levels, focused on agricultural and rural development in Africa. Haile-Gabriel holds a Doctorate and a Masters' degree in Agricultural and Rural Development from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague, the Netherlands, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from the Alemaya (now Haramaya) University in Ethiopia.



Dr. Marco Silvestri is currently the Deputy Head of the Center for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), where he has worked since 2019, mainly on regional standards for testing of agricultural machinery, integrated management of crop residue, climate-smart mechanization solutions, gender mainstreaming and collaboration with other UN agencies in the UN Country Team in China, among others. Prior to CSAM, he also worked on sustainable development initiatives mainly on rural and urban development, climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Asia-Pacific region at the ESCAP headquarters, UN Environment Programme and ADB.



Andriamady Rondromalala, is a rural equipment engineer and expert in agricultural mechanization, serving as Director of Training in Mechanization and Higher Education in Rural Equipment at Madagascar's CFFAMMA Center under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock. Rondromalala is also the Vice Chair of the Interim Steering Committee of the Directors and Heads of Agricultural Mechanization and Engineering Services (HAMES). With nearly 20 years of experience, she has strengthened national technical capacity through training programs for engineers, technicians, and cooperatives. Since 2006, she has advanced technology transfer and sustainable mechanization, and in 2025 led the committee establishing Madagascar's national machinery standards. Holding a Master's in Environmental and Agronomic Sciences, she champions sustainable mechanization as key to Africa's food security and environmental resilience.



Geoffrey Mrema is a Professor of Agricultural Engineering at the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania. He also serves as a technical advisor to the African Conservation Tillage Network under the Africa-Mechanize Platform Secretariat. He retired from the FAO in April 2011 where he had been working as the Director of the Rural Infrastructure and Agro-industries Division at its headquarters in Rome Italy from 2001-2011 with two years [2005-06] serving as the FAO Representative in Eastern and Southern Africa based in Harare, Zimbabwe. Prior to joining FAO in 2001, he had served as the first CEO of ASARECA [1995-2001]. During 2016/18 he served as a senior adviser to FAO and AUC on developing the Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa [SAMA].



Mr Ishmael Sunga is the CEO of the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) a farmers' organisation representing the common interests of farmers in 12 countries in southern Africa. In this role, Ishmael has spearheaded the organisation's work in relation to digital solutions; climate change; the development of a new generation of farmers and farmers' organisations; multi-stakeholder platforms; systems thinking; and the governance of value chains. His wide-ranging experience and thought leadership have seen him serving a range of organisations, including the United Nations Food Systems Summit, the World Economic Forum, African Union/NEPAD, AGRA, Montpellier Malabo Panel of Experts, Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU), CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), Generation Africa and the Commission on Sustainable Agriculture Intensification.



Don White – Chief Executive Officer, Agventure Ltd and Chairman, Rhino Charge. Managing Director of Agventure since 2010. MSC in Tropical Agriculture and BA (Hons), and previous experience working for Finlays in fresh flower production logistics and exports. He is inspired by the vision that Mankind has an obligation to produce better food, more responsibly, with less waste and less environmental impact. It is possible with the right approach. He has spent over 20 years helping farmers, including members of the Agventure Group like the Madrugada Farm in Nakuru, to convert to Conservation Agriculture. This has required setting up multiple value chains, from end to end, to allow farmers to reintroduce rotation into their system, leading to healthier soils and better farm resilience.



Simeon Ehui is Regional Director, Continental Africa, CGIAR, and Director General of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Dr Simeon Ehui has over 30 years of experience in agriculture and sustainable development, building a wide-ranging network of scientific research organizations within the CGIAR system, multilateral organizations, regional bodies, and national governments in Africa and other continents. Before joining IITA, Dr Ehui was Regional Director for Sustainable Development for West and Central Africa at the World Bank. He previously served as Director of the World Bank's Food and Agriculture Global Practice. In addition, he was the Bank's Manager of agriculture and water in South Asia and Africa, as well as Lead Economist and Sector Leader for the Sustainable Development Network in Nigeria, covering a variety of sectors such as agriculture, environment, social, water, urban, transport, and energy. Before joining the World Bank, Dr Ehui worked for 15 years at CGIAR, managing multi-agricultural research development programs in Africa and Asia for both IITA and ILRI.



Nuhu Hatibu, Executive Chairman of AfricAcademy – Arusha Science Ltd, is a distinguished academic and leader in agricultural mechanization and sustainable development in Africa. He is the current Chairperson of the International Sustainable Advisory Panel for Africa (iSAMAP Africa). With over 30 years of experience, he has advanced the use of science, technology, and innovation to modernize smallholder farming. A former Professor and Principal at Sokoine University of Agriculture, he strengthened training and research in agricultural engineering. As Regional Head for AGRA in Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda, he led major programs promoting mechanization, agribusiness, and value chain integration. His visionary leadership continues to shape Africa's agricultural transformation, linking mechanization with food security and climate resilience.

Webinar 15 Organizing Committee



Josef Kienzle is currently leading the sustainable agricultural mechanization group in the Plant Production and Protection Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), based in Rome. Mr Kienzle's work emphasizes the crucial role of farm power, innovative and efficient mechanization solutions and the importance of appropriating them to the context of smallholder farmers in developing countries. His work also highlights the important role that the public and private sectors play in mechanization input supply chains and capacity building for mechanization service providers.



Joseph Mpagalile is an Agricultural Engineer and a member of the sustainable agricultural mechanization group in the Plant Production and Protection Division (NSP) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), based in Rome. He works on mechanization along the value chain (production, post-harvest handling, value addition, agro-processing and logistics). Until recently, he was out-posted at the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAF) in Accra. In the past, he worked as an Agro-Industry Officer (Value Addition and Logistics) in the then Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division of FAO.



Nomathemba Mhlanga-Akubia has been with FAO since 2008. She was first based in the FAO HQ in Rome, Italy and moved to the sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa (SFE) in 2016. In the sub-region, she leads the organization's normative and field programme on agribusiness/value chain development, that touches on youth in agriculture, post-harvest management, agro-processing and agricultural finance/investment. Before joining FAO, she worked as a Research Officer at ICRISAT's Socio-Economics and Policy Programme. Noma was the FAO lead technical officer for the development of the SAMA Framework.



Janet Edeme is a Nigerian agricultural scientist and plant biologist serving as Director of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture (DREA) at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa. She leads efforts to promote sustainable agriculture, rural development, and food security across Africa, including implementation of the AUC-FAO Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA). She holds an MSc in Agricultural Biology (Plant Pathology) and a PhD jointly awarded by the University of Ibadan, Texas A&M University, and IITA. A former lecturer at the University of Ibadan, she has conducted postdoctoral research at ILRI, Nairobi, and consulted for global institutions including FAO and UNAIDS, advancing agricultural science and policy in Africa.



Afeikhena Jerome has over two decades' experience working on policy issues in Africa. He is currently Special Advisor to the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as well as Visiting Professor of Economics at Igbinedion University, Okada, Nigeria. He has held several distinguished positions including Visiting Scholar, International Monetary Fund; Visiting Fellow, the World Bank; and Senior Associate Member, St. Anthony's College, Oxford University. He has consulted extensively for the World Bank, African Development Bank, FAO, UNIDO, Brookings Institute and ACBF.



Saidi Mkomwa is the Executive Director of the African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT). As CEO of ACT, Saidi has efficiently managed development projects supporting smallholders in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe with development partners including AGRA, CFGB, COMESA, European Union, FAO, IFAD and NORAD. Previously, Saidi worked with the Ministry of Agriculture in Tanzania as Senior Agricultural Engineering Researcher. He is the coordinator of the Africa-Mechanize Platform Secretariat supporting knowledge management, capacity building and Networking in operationalization of the Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA).



Karim Houmy is an Agricultural Engineer and works as an international consultant. He has worked for more than 30 years as a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Engineering at the Hassan II Institute of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine, Rabat, Morocco. He has been involved in several FAO projects, particularly in formulating agricultural mechanization strategies for African countries and has participated in events related to the operationalization of the Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA). He has a PhD in Agricultural Engineering, from Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, Belgium.



ElHassan Bourarach is a technical advisor of the African Conservation Tillage Network serving in the Africa-Mechanize Platform Secretariat supporting knowledge management, capacity building and networking in operationalization of the Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA). He is a former teacher and researcher at the Agronomic and Veterinary Institute Hassan II (Dr. Ing.) (1980-2019). He is honorary vice president of the International Commission of Rural Engineering (CIGR), founding member of the Moroccan Association for Conservation Agriculture (AMAC) and the International Academy of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering (iAABE).