Food Systems Solutions Webinar 2026

Women Leading in Food Systems Transformation

Focus on Africa: Advancing Leadership and Policy Influence

Tuesday, 22 September 2026, 14:00 – 15:30 (CEST) | Virtual

Background

During 2026, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub will host a series of Food Systems Solutions Webinars (FSS Webinars) open to the public, with the aim of fostering broader engagement on critical issues related to food systems transformation. Each webinar will focus on a different theme, addressing emerging challenges, innovative pathways, and actionable solutions that can accelerate the global food systems agenda across diverse contexts. The webinars build upon the global commitments and outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit (2021), the global Stocktakes in Rome (2023) and Addis Ababa (2025), including the UN Secretary General's Calls to Action and the Hub's 2025 country needs assessment survey. The webinars are part of the Hub's outreach activities with the public and interested food systems stakeholders and serve as a platform to increase public awareness about various food systems related topics.

Purpose of the Webinar

As 2026 marks the *International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF)*, this webinar organized by the Hub in collaboration with FAO's Office of Sustainable Development Goals, will spotlight the indispensable role women play across agrifood systems, as producers, processors, entrepreneurs, innovators and community leaders. The IYWF aims to raise awareness of the challenges women farmers face, while encouraging policies and investments that empower women in agrifood systems, and promoting greater synergies among international initiatives supporting them. Despite women's central roles across food systems, they remain among the most underrepresented in decision-making processes, with women-led workers' and trade union organizations reporting a persistent lack of meaningful structural influence on national food systems policies, as documented in the UNFSS+4 Independent Stakeholders' Report.

This webinar will also be draw on the recently launched *The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa*, which highlights the importance of advancing women's empowerment across agrifood systems. It also underscores the significant social and economic gains that can be achieved by addressing persistent gender inequalities and ensuring that women can fully participate in and benefit from food systems transformation. This is particularly critical in Sub-Saharan Africa where 76 percent of employed women worked in agrifood systems in 2022, the highest share of any region globally. Yet, despite their significant contributions at every stage of the food system, women farmers, particularly those in the informal economy, remain largely invisible and unregistered. The report identifies women's agency, leadership and collective action as key drivers of food systems transformation, calling for action to address structural inequalities and strengthen women's participation in decision-making. This is also reinforced by the *Guidelines for Measuring Gender Transformative Change*, which underlines that achieving gender equality requires addressing the underlying power relations, discriminatory norms and institutional barriers that shape women's opportunities and participation.

Therefore, this webinar will provide a platform to elevate the voices of women farmers and leaders as well as women-led organizations, examining the structural barriers that continue to limit their meaningful participation in food systems governance and decision-making. It will explore how women leaders can be more effectively engaged in the preparation, implementation, and monitoring of National Food Systems Transformation Pathways, while showcasing good practices, and multi-stakeholder partnerships that are advancing women's leadership across food systems. Drawing on the experiences of women leaders across Africa, the webinar will identify practical recommendations to strengthen women's representation, influence, and leadership in food systems transformation.

Agenda

Time	Session
5 min	**Welcoming remarks** • Ms **Lara BlancoRothe**, Deputy Director, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub
40 min	**Setting the Scene** • Ms **Hajnalka Petrics**, Programme Officer, FAO Office of Sustainable Development Goals **Panel of stakeholders** • Ms **Susan Kaaria**, Director, African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), Kenya • Ms **Editrudith Lukanga**, Founder and Executive Director, Environmental Management and Economic Development Organization (EMEDO), Tanzania • Ms **Thakane Mahase**, Young Entrepreneur and Leader, Lesotho on Youth Entrepreneurship and Women's Leadership • Ms **Paulina S. Addy**, Director, Women in Agricultural Development Directorate, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Moderator: Ms **Hajnalka Petrics**, Programme Officer, FAO Office of Sustainable Development Goals
30 min	**Q&A from audience**
10 min	**Reflecting remarks from panelists**
5 min	**Closing remarks**

	• Ms **Lara BlancoRothe**, Deputy Director, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub

Registration link: https://bit.ly/FSSW0922