

## **Empowering Women and Youth in Agriculture**

Side event exhibit on the margins of the second regular session of the Executive Board  
13–16 November 2023  
Red Foyer

**Launch: Tuesday, 14 November 2023, 08:30–09:30.** Coffee will be served after the launch by the pool.

### **Speakers:**

- Ms Cindy McCain, Executive Director
- Her Excellency Jackline Yonga –Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kenya
- Mr Mads Lofvall, Managing Director, Farm to Market Alliance

### **Context**

Farm to Market Alliance (FtMA) is a consortium of six organizations (AGRA, Bayer, Rabobank, Syngenta, WFP and Yara) with a joint vision to enable sustainable food systems through strengthened markets by empowering farmers to increase their yields, improve incomes, and strengthen their resilience, with an overall goal of improving African food security. Our programme currently operates in **Kenya, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania** and **Zambia** with a network of over 500,000 smallholder farmers who are supported through our unique last mile approach: the Farmer Service Centre (FSC).

Investing in the development of robust, sustainable and resilient local food systems is pivotal for achieving long-term food security and plays a central role in the pursuit of zero hunger. Collaborating with our Alliance members and other key stakeholders in both the public and private sector, the Farm to Market Alliance has become a programme that is well-acquainted with the primary challenges encountered by local food systems. Leveraging the expansive reach of our programme operations and the innovative FSC model, we possess significant potential to address the systemic issues that disrupt local food systems. In doing so, we contribute to poverty reduction, combat malnutrition and facilitate livelihood diversification for rural farming communities.

### **Women and youth**

The initiatives targeted by FtMA will help in creating and improving employment opportunities for women and youth in agricultural value chains. Young women and men have highlighted that raised and predictable income, duration of work, workload, contribution to the broader community welfare, enhanced skills, and broadened networks are critical parameters for their meaningful engagement in the food system. To achieve the key outcome of increasing dignified and fulfilling employment opportunities for young people, especially women, opportunities have been identified to engage young people in work within the agricultural value chains based on the value chain analysis undertaken and youth engagement forums held in July and August 2022. FtMA's programme will take a targeted approach to increase women's and youth's engagement with key intervention areas such as:

- strengthen young people's and especially young women's opportunities to inspire and become leaders to drive change within their communities;
- create business opportunities in value addition, aggregation, logistics, fabrication of equipment, and service provision;

- commercialize agriculture value chains to ensure the inclusion of women and youth in the economic growth of rural areas while increasing access to nutritious food;
- facilitate access to formal and informal financing mechanisms, and digital platforms.

### **Spotlight on WFP Kenya and FtMA collaboration**

In Kenya, FtMA and WFP have developed a close collaboration that could be a model for other countries to follow: FtMA provides a platform for WFP to reach farmers, and agri-preneurs, particularly women and youth; and WFP supports FtMA by providing training and capacity building to farmers as well as FtMA-supported FSCs.

This collaboration has several cross-cutting themes ranging from engaging under the local and regional food procurement policy which sees WFP source commodities from smallholder farmers and FtMA-supported FSCs, but also enables WFP to provide robust training on post-harvest management and food safety and quality with both farmers and FSCs; as well, FtMA and WFP are partnering with the World Health Organization to shift farmers from tobacco farming to farming high iron beans, for which WFP has catalysed the offtake market; and lastly, WFP's home-grown school meals programmes where, FtMA, through FSCs, supports the aggregation of locally-grown food to be consumed in local schools, further demonstrating the extent that FtMA can complement WFP programmes and enable WFP to have a greater impact on local food systems.

Together, WFP and FtMA in Kenya have succeeded in achieving the following:

- FtMA has actively established rural enterprises that bolster the productivity and income of smallholder farmers. Since 2019, FtMA has successfully initiated 1,219 such enterprises, known as FSCs, with 560 of them being led by women entrepreneurs.
- FtMA has facilitated the empowerment of 274,535 smallholder farmers by providing them with access to extension services, agricultural inputs, market opportunities, and organizing them into economically sustainable units based on the FSC model. Notably, 153,740 of these empowered farmers are women.
- As the support for smallholder farmers and the commercialization of agricultural value chains has grown, FtMA has actively contributed to job creation at various points within the value chain. To date, FtMA has fostered the creation of 1,865 jobs, with 1,020 of these opportunities being seized by women.

### **Objectives**

This photo exhibit is an opportunity for WFP's Executive Board members to be reintroduced to FtMA. Currently, FtMA is operational and working in tandem, or alongside WFP in four countries. The outcome of this photo exhibit would be to highlight FtMA's impact to Member States and Board members to generate interest and collaboration towards FtMA.

The exhibit will highlight:

- the activities FtMA undertakes to achieve greater impact for women and youth;
- the impact the programme has already achieved;
- programmatic complementarity that FtMA has with the WFP Kenya country office.