

CFS53 side event – Harnessing Data for Policy Making: Advancing Food Security and Decent Jobs in Agrifood Systems (SE34)

Date and time: Friday, 24 October, from 13:30 to 14:45 CET

Location: Austria Room, FAO HQ, Rome + Zoom link:

<https://fao.zoom.us/meeting/register/Cawx1jg9RrGtIAQgw5VDLg#/registration>

Lead Organizers:

- French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD)
- International Labour Organization
- CARE International
- International Fund for Agricultural Development

Concept Note

Transforming food systems to end poverty and hunger requires both innovative, evidence-driven policymaking and human rights-based approaches that ensure fair working conditions, living incomes, and economic equity. Building agency and effectively addressing the decent work deficits for the 4.5 billion people who depend on food systems is key to advancing equitable livelihoods.

This side event will showcase initiatives supporting inclusive, sustainable agri-food systems in Africa to boost food security and decent work. The findings from JobAgri's pilot project in Ghana, for example, highlight the knowledge gap and how data is key for effective policy making.

Building on the momentum from CFS52's focus on "Promoting decent work in agriculture and food systems," and aligned with the 2025 CFS Plenary theme on "Strengthening responsible investment and financing for food security and nutrition," the event showcases how innovative methodologies, robust evidence, and integrated policy dialogues help identify agricultural and employment policy gaps and synergies for targeted interventions to foster decent work in inclusive food systems.

By amplifying the voices of policymakers, partners, researchers, and sector experts, and addressing the demographic challenge and the need to boost decent jobs creation in agri-food systems in Africa, the event will offer practical insights and data from real-world experiences. Finally, it aims at guiding governments and stakeholders in advancing better employment opportunities and inclusive sustainable food systems across Africa and beyond.

Objectives of the session

This event aims to provide a multi-stakeholder discussion about how promoting equitable livelihoods and decent work as well as access to social protection is needed for agri-food systems sustainability. To advance this agenda, we must mobilize all stakeholders to create a shared vision, ambition, and identification of common ground. The event will showcase projects that aims to strengthen the ability of agrifood value chains to create numerous decent jobs, improve agriculture productivity and contribute to food security with better evidence and policy dialogue.

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This event will provide an understanding of:

- How to strengthen partnerships for accelerated action towards more and better jobs for youth and those in agri-food systems.
- Explore the role of regional and global collaboration and capacity strengthening in institutionalizing data-driven decision-making.
- Share case studies where evidence has directly influenced policy shifts on food security or decent jobs in agri-food systems.
- Identify opportunities for investment and partnership to scale up evidence-based policymaking in Africa and beyond.

This event will showcase current gap analysis, work plans and implementation successes of actors driving more equitable livelihoods for young people and vulnerable communities. The event will also establish new connections and entry points for related initiatives to expand their reach, aligned with the work of the Decent Work for Equitable Food Systems Coalition efforts to accelerate action at member state level and implementation processes to advance equitable livelihoods and decent work.

Relevance to the CFS work:

This side event directly aligns with the CFS Strategic Objectives and its mandate on policy convergence and coherence for enhanced food security. The distinctive value adds of both the Decent Work for Equitable Food Systems Coalition and its various projects lies in their explicit focus on the link between food security and decent work, a dimension frequently overlooked or inadequately quantified in food security discussions.

With this value add, this event is also directly in line with the key issue focuses that emerged out of CFS 52 which focused on promoting decent work in agriculture and food systems. Our organizations continue to make these linkages that are often discussed in siloes and carry the work forward of CFS 52.

By introducing innovative, data-driven methodologies, JobAgri provides concrete evidence on employment impacts linked to agri-food policy choices, enabling more informed, targeted, and effective interventions. Utilizing a multistakeholder approach, the event amplifies voices often missing from policy dialogues, particularly those directly impacted by employment and food security outcomes. Bringing together policymakers, researchers, sectoral representatives, and development partners, this event will facilitate practical exchanges grounded in empirical evidence.

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