

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY




EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

REPORT OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE & GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
NAIROBI - KENYA

15 – 17 OCTOBER 2023

MÖVENPICK HOTEL & RESIDENCES, NAIROBI, KENYA

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ACRONYMS

EALA	East African Community
EAPA-FSN	Eastern Africa Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
REC	Regional Economic Communities
GAM	General Assembly Meeting
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
MP	Members of Parliament
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization for Food Security

1. INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Africa Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (EAPA-FSN) is an alliance of Members of Parliament from Eastern Africa, which aims to leverage the critical role of Parliamentarians to advance the food and nutrition agenda in the region. This is in the line with the increasing momentum globally for engaging Members toward achieving food security-related goals. This Alliance was launched on 15th April, 2019 in Arusha United Republic of Tanzania, to position food security and nutrition at the highest level of the political and legislative agenda to contribute to the achievement of the development objectives of the member countries and regional economic communities (RECs).

Every year, the Alliance organizes the General Assembly Meeting (GAM) to make the follow-up on the achievements made by the Alliance, challenges and lessons learnt and deliberate on future actions in the region to advance FSN agenda. This meeting also provides an opportunity to deliberate on technical theme usually facilitated by FAO experts and learn from a country's best practice through field visit.

So far the Alliance has held four GAM in four countries, namely United Republic of Tanzania in Arusha on April, 2019, Kampala Republic of Uganda on November 2019, Djibouti Republic of Djibouti March 2020 and Rwanda on December 2022. The next GAM planned to take place in Nairobi, Republic of Kenya in October 2023. The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) was represented by Hon. Francoise Uwumukiza, the Chairperson Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources, Hon. Machano Ali Machano Member of EALA from Zanzibar and Hon. Woda Jeremiah Odok the EAPA-FSN General Secretary who is also a Member of EALA. Other delegates to the meeting were Members of the Parliament from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and IGAD and the Staff/Clerks from the National Assembly. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations technically and financially supported this meeting.

2. Methodology

The EAPA-FSN General Assembly Meeting held in Nairobi Kenya at the Mövenpick Hotel & Residences, organized in collaboration with the Kenya National Parliament and the Food and Agriculture Organization for United Nations under the theme **"Fostering linkages between Climate Action and Food Systems Transformation."** This meeting had the tree agenda/activities, which are technical seminar, the statutory meeting of the EAPA-FSN and a field visit (as a commemorating the World Food Day 2023).

The technical seminar combined presentations from experts on climate action, food systems, and Nutrition, followed by the Members of Parliaments' discussion on the current legal and policy issues/gaps related to climate actions and food systems transformation in their respective countries, existing opportunities, and priority actions to better advance this agenda in the region.

The Meeting officially opened by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya, Hon. Moses Wetangula.

3. Objectives of the meeting

The 2023 Eastern Africa parliamentary dialogue explored legal issues and key parliamentary actions to foster linkages between climate action and food systems transformation in Eastern Africa.

The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

- Sensitize the Members of Parliament on the inter linkages between diets, food systems and climate change, and highlight the importance of addressing nutritional and environmental challenges through joint policy options to generate co-benefits for people and the planet.
- Discuss policy options and financing mechanism to accelerate climate smart-food systems transformation in Eastern Africa.
- Take stock of EAPA FSN and national alliances' achievements, successes, lessons learnt and challenges;
- Deliberate on the conduct of the affairs of the Alliance, including the performance, challenges, hosting agreement, partnership, resource mobilization, etc.

This GAM gave opportunity to Members of Parliaments and other participants for a field visit to learn about some initiatives and projects that may be scaled-up in their respective country as part of knowledge sharing.

4. Meeting proceedings

4.1. Technical Seminar - Climate change, agriculture and food and nutrition security. October 15th, 2023

The theme of this technical seminar was “Fostering linkages between Climate Action and Food Systems Transformation.” The discussions during this technical seminar heightened the unique role Parliaments play in fostering an enabling environment for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems, given their specific function in the areas of legislation, government programs oversight and voting the national budget. Some national laws that are relevant for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems already exist in various countries, in particular with respect to the realization of the right to adequate food. However, the situation differs across regions, and in most cases, their implementation is still deficient due to several factors. More specifically in the Eastern Region where climate change issues are more, serious compared to other regions.

Parliamentarians recognized through FAO report that there is a food crisis in East Africa. Climate-related droughts, combined with ongoing conflict, have left up to 20 million people hungry. East Africa has been facing a food crisis on and off since 2011, including most recently in 2020 and 2022(due to the COVID 19 impacts).

Given this fact, the Members of the Parliaments recalled that a proper understanding of this theme would equip them for championing food security and nutrition (FSN) in the region. As policy makers, they urged to think about future generations, their lives and make a region press release on best practices within member countries. As everyone are aware of the effects of Climate change on food security, MPs committed to advocate and create resources to support food systems, as it is said “Stunted children equal to stunt Economies.”

Climate change defined as long terms shifts in temperature and weather patterns and Parliamentarians realized that some effects of climate change are increased length of droughts, extreme rainfall and floods, longer heat waves that are more frequent, desert locus outbreaks, Malaria, rift valley fever, dengue and cholera. This resulted in rising number of climate change refugees in different countries.

As part of mitigation of climate change impact, Parliamentarians are to play their role for making a legal environment for more options for interventions for food systems transformation and improved nutrition. This based on different government commitments at all levels. As people representatives, they have to play a big role for financial mechanisms and opportunities including carbon markets and adaptation to

minimize loss and damage. In their oversight activities, parliamentarians have to urge their governments to embark on possible actions such as Sustainable Climate responsive agriculture, nature-based solutions, urban planning, energy transition, industry and transport and early warning systems.

4.2. Official Opening ceremony. October 16th, 2023

The opening ceremony was officiated by Right Hon. Moses Wetangula, Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya and other officials including Kenyan Minister of Agriculture, FAO Special Advisor to Acting Director General Africa Region and FAO Eastern Africa Representative.

In their opening remarks, they highlighted that 50% of 125 Million of Eastern Africa Population are facing hunger and it is a celebration of World Food Day, all partners and stakeholders have to lead a war of hunger, improve nutrition to mitigate the impact of Climate change on health, education, food and nutrition Security.

They recalled that Africa is 70 years old since the independence, while the fathers of independence committed to end Poverty, Ignorance and Diseases, we are still facing hunger and children are not going to schools in most part of our countries.

Africa has 65% of the world arable land, yet Ukraine that is smaller than Tanzania has destabilized the whole world food systems and many Africans are going to Israel to learn on how food is produced in a desert.

He gave a homework to the MPs who legislate, oversee government programs and represent people to make sure that they are leading Africa in the right direction. Because, even the rich Africans are African by skin and names and are not contributing to solve problems of Africa due to lack of enabling environment and uncertainties to invest in Africa. MPs have to engineer positive changes on the continent which take into consideration the linkages between food systems and climate change and mobilize people to not rely on only maize as the only food stuff but integrate other food stuffs for more alternatives in case there is issues which affect one crop. They also have to put in place mechanisms to bridge the gaps between those who have nothing to eat at all and those who don't know what to do with what they eat and sensitize Africans to consume more African produced food not importing expensive food stuff from Europe and Asia.

4.3. Adoption of the Country Alliances Reports, Conclusions and recommendations from the fourth General Assembly and founding document.

After presentation of EAPA-FSN country alliances reports that highlighted key achievements over the last year, the Chair of the session, Hon. Adan Haji Yussuf, Chairperson, EAPA FSN introduced the session and invited Hon. Dr. Woda J .O Jago the Secretary General EAPA FSN to present the EAPA-FSN Executive Committee report.

In her report, Hon. Dr Woda emphasized on the EAPA-FSN 4th General Assembly held in Kigali from December 6th through 9th, 2022 with the theme: "Investing in family for better food and nutrition resilience in Eastern Africa: what role for legislators?" She went on presenting achievements and challenges of EAPA-FSN, National Alliances achievements .Hon,Dr Woda concluded her presentation by highlighting the recommendations made in the last EAPA-FSN 4th General Assembly that were:

- i. Develop a Framework Law on family farming that can be used by countries to develop country specific legislation;
- ii. Support partner countries to develop Family Farming legislation or to support mainstreaming of Family Farming in agriculture related policies, legislation or strategies.
- iii. Induction of the new Members of EAPA FSN especially on the information concerning their roles such as Alliance vision and objective, rules and procedures EAPA FSN organs, responsibilities and partnership

After the presentation the EAPA-FSN Executive Committee Report and comments from Hon. Françoise Uwumukiza, EALA Member for some typing errors in the report, Hon. Agnes, MP from Uganda raised motion to adopt the report that seconded by Hon. Nadra, Hon. Uwumukiza Françoise and Hon. Laetitia.

The EAPA-FSN Executive Committee report adopted, proposed revisions/amendments of the Founding document and other documents also adopted, and the next EAPA-FSN General Assembly Meeting will be in October 2024, in Kampala Uganda.

4.4. Closing Remarks

All those who spoke during the closing session, expressed their gratitude and the opportunity to hear all the speakers' inspirational addresses during the meeting.

The MPs recommended the advances of Food Security and Nutrition issues in their region, and mitigate the effects of Climate Change, using technologies, involving academia, Civil Society Organizations and Private Sectors and raise awareness among consumers for food choices.

They appreciated the EAPA-FSN is maturing into a more responsible organization. Despite the challenges faced, there are also the opportunities. There was a call for action for MPs to push their Ministries of Finance to allocate more funds to the agriculture sector as only seven out of 55 African Countries met the target of Maputo Declaration to allocate 10% of the national budget to the agriculture. MPs urged to take the conversation forward and transform into real actions which impact new generation back home. FAO Representative committed the continued support to the EAPA-FSN for the sustainability of its actions.

5. EAPA-FSN Field Visit.

On the last day, participants to the EAPA-FSN General Assembly Meeting did a field visit to Kiambu County one of 47 counties of Kenya that is characteristic of fertile soils and plenty of rainfall. There are numerous high potential smallholder farms, which pack enough potential to not only feed the county, but also supply Nairobi, Kitui and Kajiado with dairy products, foodstuffs, green vegetables and fresh fruit. Kiambu's horticultural products, coffee and tea, contribute for a lot in Kenya's foreign earnings.

Before arriving to the final destination in Githunguri Constituency (around 40km from Nairobi), EAPA-FSN paid courtesy call to the Governor of Kiambu County, H.E Dr Kimani Wamatangi who briefed delegates about Kiambu County, which has 12 sub-counties from which 8 sub-counties are food secure and other four sub-counties with story of natural calamities. It has a population of 3.5 Million people and it is the seconded populated after Nairobi County.

The county is best example of how very small scale farmers can come together for food security. Its population is very resilient where on their small farms you can find cows, chicken and other livestock. Three quarter of their cows are zero graze with each milking cow producing more than 35 litres per day.

This cemented by the visit to Githunguri Dairy Farmers Cooperative Society Ltd, which has 1,500 employees at the plant and more than 4,000 employees in milk collection centers every day. This dairy has the capacity of processing 260,000 Litres per day from

35,000 Litres per day in 2004 when it started and it generates 4 Billion Kenya Shillings (32.5 Billion Rwanda Francs) per month.

Thereafter, delegates visited Wing Farm; a youth led organization on a mission to end hunger sustainably by empowering youths and communities. The organization supported by FAO and it made by 15 youth comprising of nine females and six males. The organization trained 747 farmers in indigenous vegetable farming and agripreurnership, trained more than 150 youth on BSF (Black Soldier Fly) and Azolla farming. They supported the establishment of 12 Azolla ponds and trained 258 poultry farmers on different modern farming techniques. They converted 7 tons of organic waste into organic fertilizer using black soldier fly larvae. Delegates have had opportunity to visit farms, workshops and screen houses where these youths operate and it was a showcase on how agribusiness in Africa has a potential to employ young people and prevent them from migrating to big cities, which do not have job opportunities to accommodate all of them. As their own testimony, before the project young people were idle but now they are helping their family managing their farms and make them more productive than before. They requested MPs not forget young people as all starts are challenging and they need more support to scale-up the project to other young people in other communities.

