



12 June 2024

Dear Prime Minister Meloni,

The Italian G7 Presidency's focus on food and climate is urgently needed. Across our continent, torrential rain and floods have destroyed thousands of acres of farmland in [East Africa](#), extreme drought has pushed millions of people into hunger and malnutrition across [Southern Africa](#) and the [Horn](#), and a deadly heatwave has damaged crops in [West Africa](#) leading to a surge in the price of cocoa on international markets.

The Apulia Food Systems Initiative's joined-up approach to food and climate is welcome. Climate change exacerbates the existing fragilities and inequalities in our global food system while the solutions required to build climate resilience - from diversifying production to creating stronger local markets - are also key to fixing our broken food system.

However, the G7 has a poor track record on food security. The three major G7 food initiatives launched in the last 15 years have had limited impact. Apulia must learn the lessons from past mistakes if it is to be a success:

- Engage family farmer organisations from the outset. Africa's small-holders produce up to [70%](#) of the food consumed on the continent and are critical for global supply chains of commodities such as coffee. Apulia has to deliver for these producers if it is to be a success yet African family farmers organisations have not been consulted. How can Apulia hope to understand or address the challenges farmers face - or the solutions we bring - without involving us? It is particularly important that the voices of women farmers are heard. Women make up [43%](#) of the agricultural workforce but produce up to [25% less](#) than men because of unequal access to land, resources and training.
- Get finance to where it will have the most impact: The Apulia Initiative's focus on mobilising new finance for food and agriculture is critical – it is estimated that climate finance spending on agrifood systems needs to be [at least seven times higher](#). Equally important is allocating funding to grassroots organisations where it will have the most impact. In 2021 just [3.6%](#) of international public climate finance spending in Africa went to small scale producers - approximately a quarter of spending on the agri food sector in Africa.
- Promote a transition towards more sustainable food systems: The latest science, and the generations of farming experience, tell us that [working with nature](#), [promoting diversity](#), building strong links to local markets and strengthening farm and forest

producers organisations is key to adaptation. To transform our food systems Apulia must support - and help fund - a shift away from industrialised agriculture and towards more sustainable, resilient and just approaches such as [agroecology](#).

- Increase transparency and accountability: Clear and transparent targets, timelines and reporting mechanisms - including on how much finance has been delivered and what proportion is reaching small-scale producers - is needed to build trust and confidence within Africa and G7 countries.

As family farmers organisations representing millions of small-scale producers in 45 countries across Africa we are desperate for the Apulia Food Systems Initiative to be a success. But common sense tells us that this will only happen if it is rooted in the experience of Africa's farmers.

We urge President Meloni - and G7 Development Ministers who will be working up the details of the Apulia Initiative over the next few months - to meet with us so that we can ensure that it meets the needs of Africa's farmers and capitalises on the solutions that they bring.

Yours sincerely,

Hakim Baliraine, Chairman of the Eastern and Southern Africa Small-Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) representing 5.5 million smallholder farmers in 17 countries across Eastern and Southern Africa

Elizabeth Nsimadala, President of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF), representing 25 million small-scale producers from 10 countries in Eastern Africa.

Rim Ferchichi, Secretary General, Maghrebian and North African Farmers Union (UMNAGRI) representing 7 national farmers' organisations in North Africa and the Maghreb.

Nga Celestin, Director of R&D Department of the Regional Platform of Farmers' Organizations in Central Africa (PROPAC) representing 3 million family farmers in 10 countries across Central Africa

Ibrahima Coulibaly, President, West African Network of Peasants and Agricultural Producers (ROPPA), representing national farmer organisations in 13 countries across West Africa

