

8<sup>th</sup> African Agribusiness and Science week (AASW 8)

**Parallel Session**

**Improving Climate Resilience and Sustainability of Farming and Food Systems: Exploring  
the Contribution of Agroecology**

6<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 11:00-13:00 SAST  
Durban, South Africa

**Biodata**

**Dr Carlo FADDA, Research Director, Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT – Kenya**



Carlo Fadda joined Bioversity International in 2004 in Vietnam, where he spent almost three years as part of a project to manage agrobiodiversity in situ. Carlo has managed projects in China, Ecuador, Morocco, Kenya, Ethiopia, Papua New Guinea, Uganda, and Tanzania, among others. In 2015, Carlo moved to Ethiopia to establish Bioversity's office in the country. From 2016, he represented all Bioversity's country offices on the Senior Management Team. For the last six years, he led the 'Seeds for Needs' research team, which matches genetic diversity to farmers' needs and brings material from genebanks back into production systems. His work centres on the understanding that conservation and use of genetic resources cannot be decoupled from rural development, livelihoods, and economics. He has a PhD in evolutionary biology and zoology from the Sapienza University of Rome. Carlo is also an adjunct researcher at Scuola S. Anna Pisa in Italy. He is based in Nairobi.

**Mamadou GOÏTA, Executive Director, Institute for Research and Promotion of Alternatives in  
Development (IRPAD) – Mali**



Mamadou Goita is a development socio-economist and an engineer in the management of education and training systems. He worked successively with UNICEF in Mali, UNDP, Oxfam Solidarité Belgique, the World Social Forum and ACORD before becoming joining IRPAD and becoming the Executive Director. He has also been Executive Secretary of ROPPA (West Africa Farmers and Producers Organization). He is a founding member of COPAGEN (the Coalition to Protect African Genetic Heritage) and AFSA (Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa). He is a researcher and teaches at the University of Ouaga II and at the ENEA in Dakar. His field of research includes, among others, agriculture and food, conflict prevention and management, market issues, particularly territorial markets in recent years, issues of extractive industries, migration, etc. He has worked on several studies and research in different fields on all continents of the world and is a member of several Boards of Directors. He is a member of the IPES Food panel, founding member of AFSA and sits on numerous international boards (USC Canada, Afrique Verte International, More & Better network, Global Green Grants) and is a member of multiple African networks (Pan-African Network in the Defence of Migrants' Rights (PANiDMR), African Development Bank's CSOs coalition, AIMES, POSCAO).

**Afantchawo KOUDASSE, President, Youth College ROPPA – Togo**

Afantchawo Koudasse, a Togolese national, is the President of the consultation framework (college) of young farmers within the Network of Farmers' Organisations and Agricultural Producers of West Africa (ROPPA). He is also the president of the national college of young farmers of the Togolese Coordination of Farmers' Organisations of Agricultural Producers (CTOP), as well as the secretary general of the Network of Young Producers and Agricultural Professionals of Togo (REJEPPAT). Each year, 15 agroecological farms promoted by young farmers who are members of REJEPPAT/CTOP, are identified throughout Togo as part of a ROPPA initiative that provides practical training to youth practicing agroecology in a forest landscape. The training centres and agroecological farms combine classroom and field work settings dedicated to teaching agroecological practices for plant and livestock production and to encouraging farmer-to-farmer learning. Afantchawo is the promoter of the Terre Bénie farming school that supports capacity building in agroecology and forest landscape restoration. He grows vegetables, maize, soya and cassava and processes palm and palm nuts into oil. He also raises snails.

**Christophe LAROSE, Head of Sector, Sustainable Agri-Food systems and Fisheries, DG INTPA, European Commission – Belgium**



Christophe Larose holds a Master degree in Development Economics from Auvergne University, France. He has been a consultant and works for the European Commission as an administrator since 2003. He has been posted in several EU Delegations: Mauritius (with responsibilities over Seychelles, Comoros and Indian Ocean), Madagascar and South Africa. He came back to the Directorate-General for Development and International Cooperation (EuropeAid) of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, in September 2016. He is heading the sector in charge of sustainable agriculture which includes innovation, research and digitalisation in agriculture.

**Samuel RIGU, Co-founder & CEO, SAFI Organics Ltd – Kenya**



Samuel Rigu is an Environmental-Conscious Agribusiness Manager, Social Entrepreneur, and Innovator. As a visionary leader, Samuel Rigu is on a mission to transform the agribusiness industry in Kenya and beyond. Samuel's passion for environmental conservation, coupled with his entrepreneurial spirit, has led him to develop innovative solutions that address critical issues faced by rural farmers. Growing up in rural Kenya, Samuel witnessed firsthand the struggles of farmers, including his grandmother and neighbors, to access affordable, high-yield fertilizers. He resolved to solve this problem by founding Safi Organics in 2015, a technology-driven company that converts farmers' crop waste into high-quality organic fertilizers. Today, Samuel serves as the CEO of Safi Organics, working full-time to manage the company's operations and expand its customer base. With over 12 years of hands-on experience in management and entrepreneurship, Samuel brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the table, including a deep understanding of the African entrepreneurial ecosystem. In addition to founding Safi Organics, Samuel previously co-founded a successful company that sold over one million mosquito coils to a large distributor in Kenya. He also worked as the Country Director for Takachar and implemented

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various organic practices at the Turning Point Trust Farm, turning its finances from loss to profit in just six months.

**Sara SAVASTANO, Director, Research & Impact Assessment Division IFAD – Italy**



Sara Savastano is the Director of Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) Division of the Strategy and Knowledge Department at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Before joining IFAD, she was Senior Economist with the World Bank's Development Economic Research Group and was professor of economics at the University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy. She also served as economist at the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance. She is Board member of the International Association on Applied Bioeconomy Research and the Italian Association of Development Economists. She has published in peer reviewed journals on issues related to land markets and agricultural productivity, as well as the intensification of farming systems, investment and technology for rural and structural transformation. Savastano

holds a PhD in economics from the University of Rome Tor Vergata.

**Lini WOLLENBERG, Flagship Leader, Low Emissions Development, CGIAR – United States**

Lini is a Food and Climate Specialist at the Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT and Research Professor at the Gund Institute for Environment, University of Vermont. Previously Lini led the Low-Emissions Development theme for the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS) (2009-2021) and worked on forest governance and livelihoods at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) (1994–2005), where she was based in Indonesia. Her current work focuses on scaling up climate change and agroecological practices through digital tools, finance and policy.