Reflection on My Participation in the Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ACSAM 2026)

By: Eng. Dirie Abdi Mohamed

Director, Department of Agricultural Technology and Innovation

Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation

Federal Republic of Somalia

Email: mti.dept@moa.gov.so

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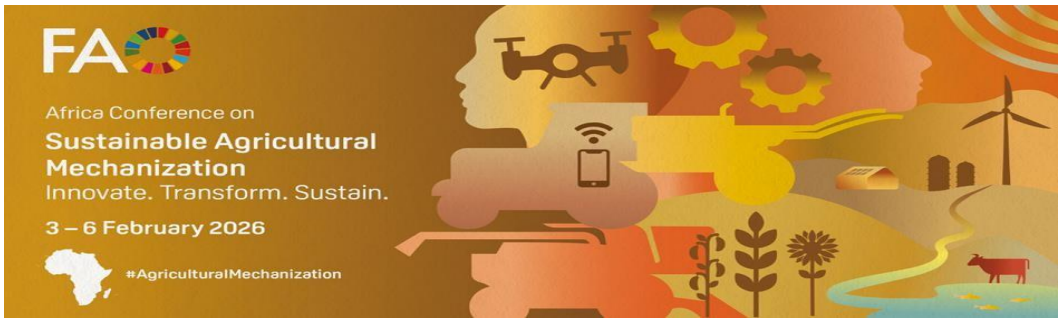

1. Introduction

From 3–6 February 2026, I was honoured to represent the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of the Federal Republic of Somalia at the Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ACSAM)**,** held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, and organized by FAO in collaboration with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania. The conference marked the first regional African conference on sustainable agricultural mechanization and served as a follow-up to the Global Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization held in Rome in 2023.

The conference served as a high-level continental platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange on advancing inclusive, climate-smart, and sustainable agricultural mechanization across Africa. It brought together policymakers, technical experts, development partners, research institutions, financial institutions, and private sector stakeholders to share experiences, best practices, and innovative approaches for transforming African agriculture through mechanization.

The conference was attended by more than 600 in-person participants and over 1,000 participants who joined virtually from across the continent and beyond, reflecting the strong regional and global interest in sustainable agricultural mechanization. Discussions focused on key thematic areas, including agricultural mechanization supply chains, research, innovation, and knowledge exchange; precision and conservation agriculture, stakeholder mapping and capacity development needs; innovative technical and business solutions; strengthening partnerships to accelerate mechanization, investment and financing mechanisms, and the digital transformation of agricultural mechanization.

2. Objectives of the Conference

The Conference aims to accelerate the adoption of SAM by small-scale farmers in Africa by:

1. Facilitating knowledge exchange on best practices, approaches and lessons learned from ongoing and prior initiatives.
2. Fostering partnerships among a broad spectrum of relevant stakeholders including through the establishment of a regional SAM Centre.
3. Identifying policies and initiatives to strengthen institutional and human capacities for the establishment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) focused on SAM.

3. **Outcomes of the Conference**

One Key Message from the Conference: Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization is not only about providing machines, it requires a complete ecosystem that includes appropriate technologies, skilled operators and technicians, access to financing, reliable supply chains, after-sales service and maintenance systems, quality standards and regulation, and strong institutional support. Without this integrated approach, mechanization investments are unlikely to be sustainable or impactful.

1. Enhanced integration of Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) into regional and national agricultural development policies and strategies.
2. Strengthened regional collaboration on SAM, aligned with the Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA) and the Global Agricultural Mechanization Conference (GAMC) Call to Action.
3. Actionable recommendations and capacity development programmes identified to support the scaling of SAM across Africa.
4. A shared vision among financing institutions and key stakeholders to advance enabling policies and scalable business models that stimulate investment in sustainable agricultural mechanization

4. **Key Achievements – Somalia's Participation in the African Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ACSAM 2026)**

- Somalia joined the network of Directors of Agricultural Mechanization and Engineering Services in Africa, enhancing peer learning, coordination, and policy exchange.
- JICA indicated that Somalia will be considered among the countries to join the African Field Innovation Centre for Agricultural Technology (AFICAT), creating opportunities for innovation, training, and South–South learning.
- Somalia was effectively represented at the Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ACSAM 2026), strengthening the country's visibility and engagement in regional and continental dialogue on sustainable agricultural mechanization.
- Somalia advanced engagement in FAO-facilitated South–South and Triangular Cooperation, opening opportunities for knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and institutional capacity development.
- Ten (10) trainees from the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the private sector, and farmer cooperatives will participate in a virtual capacity-building programme on sustainable agricultural mechanization, facilitated through FAO South–South

Cooperation and commencing on 11 March 2026, contributing to national skills development and institutional capacity strengthening.

- Somalia benefited from exposure to regional and international best practices in mechanization policy, service delivery models, financing mechanisms, digitalization, and climate-smart mechanization.
- High-level engagements with FAO, JICA, ACT and other partners reinforced collaboration on mechanization policy implementation, capacity building, and pilot initiatives.
- Somalia's contributions positioned the country as a committed and forward-looking partner in advancing inclusive, sustainable, and climate-smart agricultural mechanization in Africa.

5. Conference Opening Ceremony and Technical Sessions

5.1 **Opening Ceremony**

The Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ACSAM) was officially opened by His Excellency Dr. Mwigulu Nchemba, Prime Minister of the United Republic of Tanzania. In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister underscored the critical role of sustainable agricultural mechanization in transforming Africa's food systems, enhancing productivity, creating jobs for youth and women, and strengthening climate resilience.

He reaffirmed Tanzania's strong political commitment to advancing agricultural mechanization as a cornerstone of national development and regional food security. As part of the opening ceremony, Tanzania's National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy (2026–2036) was officially launched, marking a major milestone in the country's efforts to modernize its agricultural sector. The Prime Minister called on African governments, development partners, the private sector, and farmers' organizations to strengthen collaboration, investment, and innovation to accelerate sustainable mechanization across the continent.

6. Technical Sessions of the Conference

6.1 **Day 1: Technical Sessions**

- Regional and Country Perspectives on Agricultural Mechanization
- High-Level Panel Discussion on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa
- Role of Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Agrifood Systems Transformation in Africa
- Framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (F-SAMA) and Its Implementation

6.2 **Day 2: Parallel Technical Sessions**

- Supply Chains for Agricultural Mechanization
- Research, Innovation, and Knowledge Exchange for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization
- Precision and Conservation Agriculture
- Stakeholder Landscape and Capacity Development Needs for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization
- Innovative Technical and Business Solutions for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa
- Strengthening Partnerships to Accelerate Mechanization in Africa
- Investment and Financing Mechanisms for Agricultural Mechanization Transformation
- Digital Transformation of Agricultural Mechanization

Youth-Focused Sessions

- Mechanization Services as Job Opportunities for Youth
- Mechanization Hire Services as a Business (Youth Masterclass)

6.3 **Plenary Sessions – Day Three**

- Institutional Modalities and Ownership for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa: Establishment of a Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM)
- Readiness for Action and Way Forward
- High-Level Closing Ceremony

6.4 Field Visit– Day Four

- International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA/CGIAR) Youth Incubation Centre, Ubungo Municipalities Dar Es Salaam
- Chauru Ruvu - Rice Mechanization Cooperative

7. My Contribution to the Conference

7.1 **Session1.2: Regional and Country Perspectives**

During Session1.2 on Regional and Country Perspectives, I contributed to the discussion by highlighting Somalia's perspective on agricultural mechanization and articulating the country's key national agricultural mechanization policy priorities.

In my comments, I underscored that agricultural mechanization is a key driver of productivity growth, value chain development, employment creation, and enhanced food security and livelihoods across Africa including Somalia. I explained that Somalia's mechanization efforts will be guided by the National Agricultural Mechanization Policy, which is aligned with the National Transformation Plan (NTP) and the 10 Elements of the Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) Framework jointly developed by FAO and the African Union (AU).

I highlighted that the policy prioritizes expanding smallholder farmers' access to affordable mechanization services through hybrid private and public service models**.** I further outlined key priority policy areas, including strengthening institutional coordination and governance; developing technical and vocational skills for machinery operation, maintenance, and repair; improving machinery standards and quality assurance systems, promoting climate-smart and environmentally sustainable mechanization practices; and leveraging digital technologies to enhance efficiency, transparency, and service delivery.

My contribution reaffirmed Somalia's strong commitment to advancing a structured, inclusive, and sustainable agricultural mechanization agenda, aligned with regional and continental frameworks. I also noted that Somalia will develop a National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy in the coming month**s** to operationalize the policy and implement its priority commitments.

7.2 Session 2.6: Strengthening Partnerships to Accelerate Mechanization in Africa

During the session on Strengthening Partnerships to Accelerate Mechanization in Africa, I actively contributed to the panel discussion by underscoring Somalia's strong commitment to expanding strategic international partnerships to advance its national agricultural mechanization agenda.

In my intervention, I highlighted that sustainable agricultural mechanization in Somalia requires strengthened South–South and Triangular Cooperation, particularly through collaboration with countries that have successfully developed structured mechanization systems. I emphasized the importance of knowledge exchange, technical training, institutional capacity development, and technology transfer to accelerate progress.

I further expressed Somalia's interest in building partnerships that support:

- Capacity-building programmes for engineers, operators, and policymakers
- Adaptation of mechanization technologies for smallholder farming systems
- Private sector engagement and mechanization service delivery models
- Digital innovation and data-driven mechanization solutions

Overall, my contribution positioned Somalia as a proactive and partnership-oriented country, committed to leveraging regional and international collaboration to scale sustainable, inclusive, and climate-smart agricultural mechanization.

8. **Side Meeting and Networking**

8.1 **Side Meeting with Deputy Director General of FAO**

I held a side meeting with senior **FAO leadership**, including **Ms. Beth Bechdol**, Deputy Director-General of FAO, **Dr. Abebe Haile-Gabriel**, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, **Dr. Yurdi Yasmi**, Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division, and **Eng. Josef Kienzle**, FAO Lead on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization.

During the meeting, I provided an update on the status and progress of agricultural mechanization in Somalia**,** highlighting ongoing efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to strengthen policy, institutions, and service delivery models. I informed the FAO leadership that Somalia's National Agricultural Mechanization Policy**,** developed with the support of FAO Somalia**,** was successfully validated in January 2026**,** marking a major milestone for the country's mechanization agenda.

I expressed my sincere appreciation to FAO for its continued technical support, partnership, and collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The discussion reaffirmed the strong working relationship between FAO and the Government of Somalia and underscored the importance of sustained cooperation to advance sustainable, inclusive, and climate-smart agricultural mechanization in the country.

8.2 **Side Meeting with the Vice President of JICA**

I held a bilateral meeting with Mr. **Yamaguchi**, **Hiroyuki**, Vice President of the **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**. The discussion focused on opportunities to strengthen JICA's support to Somalia in the area of agricultural mechanization**.**

During the meeting, we explored potential areas of collaboration, including technical assistance, capacity-building and training programmes, and support for sustainable mechanization service delivery models, with particular emphasis on pilot projects. The discussion highlighted the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, advancing skills development, and promoting the adoption of appropriate mechanization technologies suited to smallholder farming systems.

The meeting also examined prospects for private sector partnerships between Somalia and Japan, especially in machinery supply, technology transfer, training, and the establishment of effective after-sales service and maintenance systems.

In addition, I expressed Somalia's strong interest in joining and actively engaging with the African Field Innovation Centre for Agricultural Technology, established by JICA in 2019, supports knowledge exchange, innovation, and South–South and Triangular Cooperation in five African countries: Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Mr. Yamaguchi welcomed the discussion and acknowledged Somalia's strong interest in deepening cooperation with JICA. He noted that upon his return to Tokyo, he would follow up on the identified areas of collaboration with relevant teams. He also highlighted that the African Field Innovation Centre for Agricultural Technology (AFICAT) is in the process of expanding its country operations, and confirmed that Somalia would be considered as part of this expansion.

8.3 **Side Meeting with Officials from Asian Countries**

I also held side meetings with officials from several Asian countries, including Vietnam, India, the Philippines, and China. The discussions focused on strengthening South–South Cooperation and exploring practical opportunities to support Somalia's agricultural mechanization agenda.

In these meetings, I expressed Somalia's strong interest in knowledge transfer and exchange, as well as in capacity-

building and training programs that could be implemented through FAO-facilitated South–South Triangular Cooperation mechanisms. Key areas of interest included appropriate mechanization technologies for smallholder farmers, institutional development, technical skills training, and lessons from Asian countries' successful mechanization pathways.

The discussions were constructive and highlighted the potential for future collaboration, study tours, expert exchanges, and pilot initiatives to support sustainable, inclusive, and climate-smart agricultural mechanization in Somalia.

8.9 **Side Meeting with Private Sector (Lovol – China & Mzuri – Poland)**

I participated in a high-level networking side meeting with private sector agricultural machinery manufacturers, including **Lovol (China)** and **Mzuri (Poland)**. The meeting was attended by Directors of Mechanization and Technology Departments from African countries and focused on exploring agricultural mechanization market opportunities across Africa.

The discussion highlighted Africa's growing demand for agricultural machinery, with private companies expressing strong interest in machinery supply, distribution, after-sales services, and partnerships with governments to better understand national priorities**,** establish local dealership arrangement and respond effectively to market demand.

During the meeting, I emphasized that Somalia presents significant and emerging opportunities for agricultural mechanization, driven by increasing demand for cost-effective machinery, mechanization service provision, and private-sector engagement. I highlighted the strong potential for:

- Affordable and appropriate machinery supply
- Local assembly and servicing facilities
- Spare parts distribution and maintenance services

I noted that Somalia is open and ready for private sector investment and partnerships, particularly in areas that enhance access, affordability, and sustainability of mechanization services for smallholder farmers, youth, and agribusinesses.

9. **Field Visit to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Youth Hub**

On Day 4 of the conference, I participated in a field visit to the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Youth Hub in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. The visit provided practical insights into youth-led agribusiness innovation and locally driven mechanization solutions.

During the visit, I observed locally manufactured agricultural machinery designed and developed by Intermech Engineering Services**,** a local manufacturer, as well as youth-led cassava processing enterprises established to support smallholder farmers and agro-processors.

Intermech Engineering Services demonstrated how local fabrication can effectively meet domestic demand for agricultural machinery and adapt technologies to local agro-ecological conditions in Africa. The experience highlighted the importance of promoting local manufacturing capacity to ensure affordability, suitability, and sustainability of mechanization solutions.

10. Action Areas of the Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization

1. Policy alignment and institutional coordination for sustainable agricultural mechanization
2. Financing and investment in sustainable agricultural mechanization
3. Mechanization service provision, supply chains, and market systems
4. Research, innovation, digitalization, and knowledge exchange for sustainable agricultural mechanization
5. Inclusive youth and women participation in agricultural mechanization

11. Key Lesson Learned for Somalia from the Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization

- **Policy alignment is critical:** Effective agricultural mechanization requires strong alignment between national policies, development plans, and continental frameworks. Somalia's National Agricultural Mechanization Policy is well aligned with the National Transformation Plan (NTP) and the FAO–AU Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) Framework; however, it requires a clear operational strategy for effective implementation.
- **Need for a National Mechanization Strategy:** The conference underscored the importance of translating policy commitments into action. Somalia should prioritize the development of a National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy to operationalize policy priorities and guide coordinated implementation.
- **Training must accompany machinery distribution:** The conference highlighted that distributing agricultural machinery without adequate training leads to low utilization, frequent breakdowns, and unsustainable outcomes. Comprehensive training programs for operators, mechanics, and service providers should be implemented alongside machinery distribution.
- **Financing remains a key constraint:** Limited access to affordable finance continues to be a major barrier to mechanization. Tailored financial instruments such as leasing, hire-purchase, blended finance, and risk-sharing mechanisms are essential to support farmers, cooperatives, and mechanization service providers.
- **Skills and institutional capacity are essential:** Sustainable mechanization depends on skilled operators, mechanics, and technicians, as well as strong institutional coordination. Increased investment in TVET, certification systems, and institutional strengthening is critical.
- **Digitalization enhances efficiency and transparency:** Digital tools for mechanization planning, service delivery, monitoring, and data management improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability and should be systematically integrated into Somalia's mechanization systems.
- **Climate-smart mechanization must be prioritized:** Mechanization should promote environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient practices, including conservation agriculture and efficient use of energy and resources, to reduce environmental impacts and enhance resilience.
- **Partnerships accelerate progress:** South–South and Triangular Cooperation, together with engagement from development partners and the private sector, are key

enablers for technology transfer, knowledge exchange, and scaling sustainable mechanization.

- **Youth and women inclusion strengthens sustainability:** Mechanization creates significant opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship. Targeted inclusion of women and youth in training, financing, and service provision is essential for long-term sustainability and equity.
- Local manufacturing of machinery adapted to local conditions is essential for affordability, sustainability, and long-term mechanization development.

12. **Way Forward for Somalia**

Overall, the lessons from the Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ACSAM) confirm that Somalia is on the right policy path, while also highlighting the need to:

- Conduct a National Assessment of Agricultural Mechanization needs and appropriate technologies to inform evidence-based planning and investment decisions.
- Develop and implement a National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy to operationalize the National Agricultural Mechanization Policy and guide coordinated action at federal and Federal Member State levels.
- Strengthen access to finance, skills development, and institutional coordination**,** including tailored financial instruments and strengthened governance mechanisms for mechanization.
- Organize a National Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization
- Develop National Training Manuals on machinery operation, maintenance, and repair to support capacity building for operators, mechanics, and service providers.
- Leverage digital and climate-smart mechanization technologies to improve efficiency, resilience, transparency, and environmental sustainability.
- Deepen regional, continental, and international partnerships, including South–South and Triangular Cooperation, to facilitate knowledge exchange, technology transfer, and investment.
- Expand youth-focused TVET and certification programs in agricultural mechanization to build skilled operators, mechanics, and service providers and create employment opportunities.
- Establish public–private research and development (R&D) partnerships to develop, test, adapt, and scale appropriate, affordable, and climate-smart agricultural mechanization technologies tailored to Somalia’s diverse farming systems and smallholder needs.
- Support local workshops and manufacturing enterprises to design, produce, and maintain agricultural machinery and equipment adapted to Somalia’s agro-ecological conditions.

13. **Conclusion**

My participation in the Africa Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (ACSAM 2026) provided valuable strategic, technical, and partnership-oriented insights that will directly inform Somalia's agricultural mechanization agenda. The conference reaffirmed that sustainable agricultural mechanization is not only a driver of increased productivity and food security but also a catalyst for job creation, climate resilience, youth empowerment, and agri-food systems transformation. The discussions, technical sessions, and high-level engagements confirmed that Somalia is on the right path with the validation of its National Agricultural Mechanization Policy, which is aligned with the National Transformation Plan (NTP) and the FAO–AU Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (SAM) Framework. However, the conference also underscored the urgent need to operationalize policy commitments through a structured National Agricultural Mechanization Strategy supported by strong institutional coordination, financing mechanisms, skills development, digital innovation, and climate-smart technologies.

The networking engagements with FAO, JICA, ACT Asian partners, African peers, and private sector manufacturers opened practical opportunities for South–South and Triangular Cooperation, capacity development, technology transfer, and potential investment partnerships. Somalia's active participation strengthened its regional positioning and reinforced its commitment to inclusive, sustainable, and locally adapted mechanization solutions. Overall, the conference provided a clear roadmap for accelerating mechanization in Somalia through policy implementation, partnership expansion, youth engagement, local manufacturing development, and innovation-driven approaches. The knowledge gained and partnerships initiated will contribute significantly to advancing a resilient, productive, and modern agricultural sector in Somalia.