



3rd Dryland Agriculture and Food Systems in the Face of Climate Change

Diplomatic and Development Partner Dialogue on Dryland Agriculture & Food Systems

Framing Regional Investment & Policy Priorities for Dryland Resilience

Date: 23 April 2026 | Location: International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Type: Half-Day, High-Level Roundtable (By Invitation, ~35 Participants)

Context & Strategic Rationale

Drylands across Eastern Africa are central to regional stability, food security, climate resilience, and cross-border trade, supporting millions of pastoralists, smallholder farmers, and emerging youth-led agribusinesses.

Persistent structural challenges including chronic underinvestment, climate variability, land degradation, fragile rangeland governance systems, and recurring humanitarian pressures - threaten both livelihoods and ecosystem resilience. At the same time, drylands represent significant untapped economic potential in livestock systems, climate-smart agriculture, rangeland restoration, and emerging value chains.

2026 being the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, provides a timely opportunity to reposition drylands as a strategic investment and resilience agenda, rather than solely a vulnerability narrative.

This session will also feed into the 3rd Dryland Agriculture & Food Systems Conference (17-18 June 2026) and help shape the Dryland Policy & Investment Position Paper, which will inform UNCCD COP (August 2026) and related regional and global climate and development processes.

Anchoring, Conveners & Technical Support

1. Anchored within the Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, with involvement from:

- State Department for ASALs
- Ministry of Water, Sanitation & Irrigation
- Council of Governors

This ensures national ownership and alignment with government priorities on dryland development and climate resilience.

2. Technical authors and coordinators:

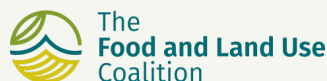
- Lukenya University
- Edsource Africa
- Strategic regional partners

3. Conveners of the Dialogue:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development
- International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)
- Lukenya University & Edsource Africa (technical and logistical support)
- Pan African Institute at Lukenya University: Addition of 12 African countries

4. Regional Dimension:

The Diplomatic Roundtable will serve as a strategic dialogue with regional institutions, development partners, and diplomatic missions, providing early inputs and perspectives on investment priorities, cross-border systems, and financing mechanisms.





Purpose of the Dialogue

The Diplomatic & Development Partner Dialogue aims to:

- Align regional priorities for dryland investment and resilience
- Identify catalytic opportunities to de-risk agriculture and pastoral enterprises
- Strengthen cross-border cooperation on rangeland governance and livestock systems
- Inform the agenda and partnerships for the June Conference
- Generate strategic inputs for the Dryland Policy & Investment Position Paper for UNCCD COP

This roundtable will introduce a draft framing of key investment and policy priorities, allowing participants to contribute insights that will be consolidated into the Position Paper to be formally presented during the June Conference.

Strategic Focus Areas

1. De-Risking Agriculture & Pastoral Investment

- Blended finance and first-loss guarantees
- Climate and livestock insurance systems
- Structured outgrower and aggregation models
- Digital livestock disease surveillance and traceability

2. Regional Coordination & Cross-Border Systems

- Harmonized livestock health and surveillance systems
- Cross-border rangeland governance mechanisms
- Regional rangeland restoration initiatives
- Alignment with IGAD, EAC, and continental policies

3. Enterprise Development, Jobs & Inclusive Growth

- Strengthening youth and women agribusiness ecosystems
- Catalytic capital, incubation, and enterprise support
- Market linkages and regional value chain integration
- Sustainable livelihoods and climate resilience in dryland communities

Format & Participants

- Closed-door, invitation-only (~35 participants)
- Strategic framing presentations followed by moderated discussion
- Participants include:
 - Diplomatic missions and embassies
 - Development partners and regional institutions
 - Government representatives (national & county levels)
 - Private sector actors and selected civil society organizations

Expected Outcomes

1. Priority Investment Areas – 3–5 catalytic policy and investment areas for elevation at the June Conference
2. Financing Gaps & Opportunities – Identification of areas for blended, catalytic, or private sector support
3. Early Partner Alignment – Indication of partners willing to co-convene sessions and support the Innovation Challenge
4. Draft Bullet Points for June Conference Communiqué – Strategic framing messages for broader dissemination
5. Strengthened Diplomatic & Development Partner Coordination – Ensuring regional perspectives inform national investment priorities



**3rd Dryland
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Diplomatic Dialogue Roundtable

Date: April 23rd 2026

Venue: International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)

Dialogue Moderator – Michael Victor, Head of Communications, Advocacy & Knowledge Management, ILRI

08.30 – 09.00	Arrival & Networking Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prof. Appolinaire Djikeng Director General, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) ● Mutheu Kasanga Director, Edsource Africa ● Dr. Judith Wafula Ag. Vice Chancellor, Lukenya University ● Eng. Laban Kiplagat Engineering Secretary, State Department for Agriculture ● Dr. Korir Sing’oei, PhD., C.B.S. Principal Secretary, State Department for Foreign Affairs ● H.E. Beyene Russom, Amb. State of Eritrea to Kenya, Dean of African Diplomatic Corps in Kenya ● Dr. Kipronoh Paul Ronoh, PhD, C.B.S Principal Secretary for Agriculture
09.00 – 09.30	Opening Remarks	
9.30 - 10.00	<p>Strategic Briefing Presentation “<i>Dryland Economies: Investment Gaps & Opportunities</i>” in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate & drought trends ▪ Livestock sector value ▪ Youth unemployment in ASALs ▪ Financing fragmentation 	<p>Dr. Virginia Mwanzia Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academics, Research and Students Affairs</p>
10:00 – 10.30 Coffee Break		
10.30 - 12.00	<p>Roundtable Session I: Investment Priorities: Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are the biggest underfunded opportunities? • Which interventions are too fragmented? • What regional cross-border issues require joint investment? <p>Roundtable Session II: Financing Instruments & Partnerships Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can DFIs and private sector collaborate for blended finance? • What risk-sharing mechanisms are needed? • Which catalytic initiatives are required for youth and women enterprises? 	<p>Moderator: Irene Nganga Research Officer, ILRI</p> <p>Panelists: Michael Onchabo Director, Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU) Bernard Owino - World Vision Victoria Mutuku - KCB Foundation Samuel Machari - Business Development Manager, ACRE Africa</p> <p>Moderator Michael Victor Head of Communications, Advocacy & Knowledge Management, ILRI</p> <p>Panelists: Tindi Muoka - Zep-Re Eunice Kimuyu - I & M Bank Diana Gichengo – The Institute for Social Accountability</p>
12.00 - 12.30	Alignment & Next Steps - Priscilla Kerebi , Managing Director, Edsource Africa	
1.00	<p>Closing & Networking Lunch Dr. Judith Wafula, Ag. Vice Chancellor, Lukenya University Prof. Appolinaire Djikeng – Director General, International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)</p>	

