

SAGCOT Green Print: A Model for Food Systems Transformation in Tanzania



Mr Thomas Chali

Assistant Director of Environment at Vice President`s Office

During the Inception and Consultation Workshop for the Global Environment Facility (GEF-8) Child Project Concept recently, Mr Thomas Chali, the Assistant Director of Environment at the Vice President’s Office, commended the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) Green Print for its significant role in transforming food systems. The FAO-organized workshop focused on rice and aquaculture value chains in Usangu Landscape, Mbarali, and Zanzibar, underscoring the project’s potential impact on sustainable agriculture.

A Transformative Approach: Mr. Chali highlighted the three pillars of the SAGCOT Green Print, which have been instrumental in advancing the agricultural sector:

Business Sustainability: Mr Chali stressed the importance of transitioning from subsistence farming to sustainable agribusiness models that ensure continuous productivity and profitability. “When we talk about agriculture, it must transform from hand-to-mouth farming to a business that sustains itself. This is about liberating the farmer to commercialise their agriculture,” he stated. This shift is crucial for enhancing farmers’ livelihoods and ensuring a stable food supply.

Inclusivity: Inclusivity is another cornerstone of the SAGCOT Green Print. The initiative successfully engages both large investors and smallholder farmers, fostering a collaborative environment through mentorship, training, and market support. Mr. Chali noted, “Our colleagues at SAGCOT have successfully involved investors and small farmers. They have created a mentorship system, training, and market support to ensure that produce doesn’t rot in the fields. This inclusivity approach assures market and community growth.”

Environmental Sustainability: The emphasis on environmental sustainability ensures that agricultural practices do not compromise the ecosystem's health. Mr. Chali emphasised, "Producers in the corridor use approaches that ensure their production does not harm the environment. We must emulate and ensure that our agricultural production chain is sustainable. This will help our nation grow economically without causing environmental damage."

Emulating the SAGCOT Model: Mr Chali called for the broader adoption of the SAGCOT model to achieve sustainable agricultural production across Tanzania. He warned against short-sighted linear economy approaches prioritising immediate gains over long-term environmental health and food security. "We must borrow and emulate and ensure the entire agricultural production chain is sustainable. This will help our nation grow economically without causing environmental damage."

The Role of AGCOT: In his speech, Mr Chali acknowledged the shift from SAGCOT to AGCOT (Agricultural Growth Corridors of Tanzania), highlighting the expanded focus on agricultural development beyond the southern regions. "I am happy we have a colleague from SAGCOT (transitioning into AGCOT). Our colleagues at AGCOT have something called the Green Print, which deals with three important aspects: business sustainability, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability."

Workshop Highlights: The FAO workshop provided a platform for discussing critical issues related to food systems transformation in the Usangu Landscape. Participants focused on the rice and aquaculture value chains, addressing the need for increased productivity while ensuring environmental sustainability and social inclusivity.

- **SAGCOT Green Print:** A model for integrating business sustainability, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship in agriculture.
- **FAO Workshop:** Focused on transforming food systems in the Usangu Landscape, emphasizing rice and aquaculture.
- **SAGCOT's Role:** Highlighted for its successful public-private partnership approach and positive outcomes.
- **Policy and Governance:** Workshop participants addressed issues related to increasing productivity while ensuring environmental sustainability and social inclusivity.

Call to Action

- **Adopt the SAGCOT model** for sustainable agricultural practices across Tanzania.
- **Prioritize long-term environmental health and food security** over short-term gains.
- **Foster inclusive agricultural practices** that benefit both large investors and smallholder farmers.

Embracing the SAGCOT Green Print, Tanzania is building a more sustainable, inclusive, and environmentally responsible agricultural sector, ensuring food security and economic growth for future generations. Mr Chali's call to action is a clarion call for stakeholders to recognise and adopt practices that enhance productivity, protect the environment, and uplift communities.