

Sub Theme 1: Cultivating Sustainable Production: Harnessing Banana-Based Systems in the Tropics

Background: The tropical region is challenged with the continuing trend of food and nutrition insecurity, which results from inefficient agricultural production systems. More concerning still, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in jeopardy due to ongoing climate change and the world's expanding population, which confounds efforts to achieve food security. Therefore, urgent efforts are required to ensure that food systems in the tropical region become more diverse, productive, and resilient to environmental stressors. It is particularly crucial to address food and nutrition insecurity, and climate risk in smallholder farming settings, where land and natural resources are increasingly limited and degraded.

Objective: This session seeks to provide a neutral forum for the discussion of creative and innovative ideas that focus on enhancing the implementation of the FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31 to transform into more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, improved nutrition, a healthier environment and a better life, leaving no one behind. This should contribute to achieving the SDGs, especially SDGs 1, 2, and 12. Optimization of the existing banana production technologies in the tropical region will improve land productivity and profitability, without exerting further pressure on the environment, thus sustaining the production systems, food systems and livelihoods. Sustainable crop production systems must also promote greater resilience to climate change and protect biodiversity through integrated approaches (such as agroecology). We are, therefore, inviting scientific papers and presentations around the following areas:

- banana seed systems
- banana improvement/breeding
- natural resource (soil, water and nutrient) management in banana-based fields
- management of insect pests and diseases in banana-based fields
- bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides utilization in banana production
- mechanization in banana production
- digital agriculture
- climate-smart banana-based farming systems
- banana processing and value addition
- banana distribution and marketing systems
- management of banana-related residues and wastes

Keywords: banana, sustainable food systems, climate change, agroecology, tropical agriculture, tropical region

Invited Keynote speaker: **Prof. Rony Swennen**