2025 Johannesburg Conference Report

“The African Edition: Shaping the Future of Fresh Produce Markets through Sustainability, Innovation and Inclusivity”

Johannesburg, South Africa
14–16 May 2025

Foreword

It is my honour to present this report following the WUWM 2025 International Conference held in Johannesburg. Our return to the African continent after more than twenty years marks a significant milestone for our organisation and for the WUWM network. Johannesburg offered an exceptional setting to reaffirm the essential role of wholesale markets in building resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems.

Over three days, more than 450 delegates from over twenty-two (22) countries came together to reflect on the future of fresh-produce markets in a world facing unprecedented climate, economic and geopolitical challenges. The discussions highlighted Africa's growing influence, its capacity for innovation and its essential contribution to shaping tomorrow's food systems. Joburg Market, one of the largest and most advanced wholesale markets in the world, demonstrated how modern infrastructure can support economic resilience, strengthen local communities and promote fair, and transparent trade.

I warmly thank our South African hosts for their remarkable commitment and hospitality, as well as all the experts, partners and delegates whose contributions enriched this conference. The momentum generated in Johannesburg will guide our collective action as we work to modernise infrastructure, strengthen cooperation and promote innovation across all regions. I look forward to continuing this effort together at our next global gathering in Brussels in November 2025.

Stéphane Layani

Chairman, World Union of Wholesale Markets

Executive Summary

The World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM) held its 2025 International Conference in Johannesburg from 14 to 16 May, bringing together more than 450 delegates from over 22 countries. Returning to Africa for the first time in more than two decades, the event marked a pivotal moment in global food system discussions. Far from being framed as a secondary player, Africa emerged as a central force shaping the future of agriculture, fresh-produce distribution and sustainable development.

Hosted by the City of Johannesburg and Joburg Market under the theme **"The African Edition: Shaping the Future of Fresh Produce Markets through Sustainability, Innovation, and Inclusivity,"** the conference reinforced a clear consensus: modern wholesale markets are among the most effective instruments to secure food systems, stabilise prices, support farmers and protect vulnerable communities. Johannesburg, described by speakers as a "city on the move", offered a compelling example of how a well-governed market system can anchor food affordability, integrate informal traders and stimulate economic resilience.

Across the four technical sessions, speakers presented converging evidence of a rapidly changing environment. Climate shocks are intensifying, with Southern Africa warming twice as fast as the global average. Geopolitical tensions, tariff barriers and logistics disruptions are reshaping global agri-food flows. Digital technologies and AI are transforming the way farmers, traders and consumers interact. And structural inequalities across South Africa limit equitable access to fresh produce, particularly in municipalities lacking wholesale infrastructure.

Faced with these pressures, delegates highlighted concrete solutions: scaling climate-smart agriculture, expanding regional trade corridors, strengthening compliance and cold-chain systems, and accelerating digital platforms that enhance traceability, reduce waste and bring new market opportunities to smallholders and youth.

> **“Wholesale Markets are the most effective infrastructures for stabilising prices, reducing inequalities and securing access to fresh produce for millions of people.”**

A consistent message emerged across the discussions: wholesale markets are not peripheral infrastructures – they are central levers for climate resilience, economic stability, trade integration and social inclusion. Their role in aggregating supply, ensuring transparent price formation, supporting informal traders, facilitating cross-border flows and maintaining stable access to fresh produce therefore positions them as strategic assets for governments seeking to build future-ready food systems.

Johannesburg demonstrated that when modern infrastructure, innovation and inclusive governance converge, wholesale markets become powerful engines for national development. The momentum generated at this conference will shape WUWM's global agenda and support Africa's growing leadership in international food system transformation.

Key Figures – WUWM 2025 Johannesburg

Global Participation

- 450+ delegates
- 22+ countries represented
- First WUWM conference in Africa in over 20 years.

Joburg Market – Continental Leader

- 64 hectares of operational surface
- 80,000 trades per week
- Two-thirds of all transactions involve the informal sector
- Ranked among the top 5 largest Wholesale Markets worldwide.

Trade & Logistics

- 4.3 million tonnes of South African fruits exported in 2024
- 213,000+ inspections conducted by PPECB (Perishable Products Export Control Board).

Agriculture & Climate

- Southern Africa warming twice as fast as the global average
- Up to 80% loss in maize production during the 2023–2024 drought
- Drone technology reduces labour from 16 hours to 5 minutes per hectare (Jool International)

Technology & Innovation

- Adoption of AI-based e-commerce, real-time traceability, drone monitoring and digital contracting
- The sector enters a “major decade of technological transition” (digital agritech platform as AgrigateOne).

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Welcome Ceremony

The welcome ceremony of the WUWM 2025 International Conference in Johannesburg was led by Ms. Nomoya Mnisi, Member of the Mayoral Committee for Economic Development, Mr. Stéphane Layani, Chairman of WUWM, Mr. Sello Dada Morero, Executive Mayor of Johannesburg and Mr. Parks Tau, South Africa's Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition.

Councillor Nomoya Mnisi, Member of the Mayoral Committee for Economic Development, welcomed delegates on behalf of the City of Johannesburg. She described Johannesburg as *"a pearl of Africa, a melting pot of ambition and resilience,"* and underscored its unique position as home to the largest wholesale market on the continent and one of the top five globally by volume. She emphasised that the challenges of climate change, food insecurity and rising inequality require decisive and coordinated action. In her view, wholesale markets can and must become engines of industrial development, job creation and climate resilience. She called for national and city-level alignment to modernise infrastructure, incentivise sustainable cold-chain logistics and establish special economic zones dedicated to agri-trade and processing.

> **"Johannesburg is ready to welcome global leaders. The future of agrifood does not lie in fragmented systems but in bold partnerships."**
>
> **Councillor Nomoya Mnisi**

Stéphane Layani, Chairman of the World Union of Wholesale Markets and CEO of the Marché International de Rungis, extended his gratitude to the South African authorities and to Joburg Market for hosting a conference of such scale and symbolic importance. He reminded participants that it had been more than twenty years since the last WUWM conference in African, and that this return carried a powerful message: Africa is now a central actor in the global transformation of food systems. He noted that wholesale markets play a vital role in ensuring access to food, maintaining price stability, supporting small farmers and reducing food losses. Layani also emphasised the alignment of WUWM's work with the upcoming G20 Summit hosted by South Africa, particularly regarding food system resilience, innovation and sustainable infrastructure. He invited delegates to contribute bold and concrete ideas to strengthen international cooperation, concluding that sustainability, innovation and inclusivity are not optional principles but core responsibilities for the global wholesale community.

Councillor Sello Dada Morero, Executive Mayor of Johannesburg, echoed these messages by describing his city as a place *"where innovation meets inequality, where ambition must be matched with systemic solutions."* He explained that Johannesburg views its food system not as a peripheral concern but as a strategic pillar of economic resilience, public health and climate adaptation. Wholesale markets, he noted, are living spaces where formal and informal economies converge, shaping livelihoods and creating opportunities every day. The Mayor stressed that strengthening food systems is essential to unlocking inclusive growth, supporting small farmers and empowering informal traders – groups that are crucial to the functioning of African city economies.

> **"Wholesale markets are vital instruments of sustainability, inclusivity and economic development. They are the backbone of resilient food systems."**
>
> **Mr. Stéphane Layani**

> “Africa is becoming a powerhouse of intercontinental trade. The future of wholesale markets lies in innovation and digital technology.”
>
> **Minister Parks Tau**

Minister Parks Tau, South Africa’s Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, delivered a national perspective on the role of agriculture in economic development. He celebrated the decision to host the WUWM conference in Johannesburg and recognised wholesale markets as essential elements of global food chains. He warned, however, that rising costs of inputs, logistical disruptions and climate-related shocks threaten both production and trade.

He insisted that phytosanitary standards must not be used as disguised trade barriers against developing countries and reaffirmed South Africa’s commitment to expanding export channels through compliance, investment in modern cold chain systems and public–private partnerships. With 64% of South Africa’s fruit and vegetable exports destined for African markets, the Minister emphasised that the continent is rapidly emerging as a powerhouse for intra-African trade. He highlighted ongoing negotiations with Asia and the Middle East, and described how modern infrastructure, digital platforms and climate-smart production are central to South Africa’s trade strategy.

Collectively, the opening addresses set the tone for the entire conference: **a call to action to modernise wholesale markets, strengthen international cooperation, reinforce digital and technological innovation.**

Working Sessions

Session 1. Global agri-food value chains & climate change

Speakers: Dr. Yolandi Ernst (Global Change Institute), **Dr. Babagana Ahmadu** (FAO), **Ms. Phelisa Nkomo** (OXFAM) and **H.E. Oluseyi Makinde**, Governor of Oyo State (Nigeria).

This panel highlighted an urgent reality: **climate change is already reshaping Africa's agrifood systems**, with Southern Africa warming twice as fast as the global average and facing more intense droughts, heatwaves and extreme rainfall. **Dr. Yolandi Ernst** (Global Change Institute) illustrated this through the 2023–2024 drought, which destroyed much of the maize crop and exposed the fragility of regional food supply chains.

> "There is always hope. If we know what is coming, we can act."
>
> **Dr. Yolandi Ernst**

Speakers stressed that responding to this new climate era requires decisive investment in **climate-smart agriculture.** Dr. Ernst emphasised the need for irrigation expansion, resilient crop varieties and improved climate services, while **Dr. Babagana Ahmadu** (FAO) called for stronger agro-processing, better access to climate information and long-term adaptation finance.

Ms. Phelisa Nkomo (OXFAM) highlighted the inequity of global value chains, noting that countries contributing the least to emissions face the harshest impacts. She urged greater support for **women farmers**, whose role remains essential yet undervalued.

> "Global food systems must cooperate with local systems to ensure food security."
>
> **Ms. Phelisa Nkomo**

From a government perspective, **H.E. Oluseyi Makinde**, Governor of Oyo State (Nigeria), described how climate volatility is already affecting crops, livestock and local economies, and emphasised the need for regional cooperation and integration through frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Throughout the session, speakers converged on one conclusion: **wholesale markets are vital infrastructures for climate resilience.** Their ability to stabilise prices, reduce losses, ensure transparency and maintain regular supply, even during climate shocks, makes them indispensable for protecting consumers and supporting farmers. Modern wholesale systems were repeatedly identified as central levers for safeguarding food security in an era of rising climate unpredictability.

In conclusion, this session affirmed that building resilient agrifood value chains depends on **strategic investment, inclusive policies and strong wholesale markets** capable of absorbing shocks and sustaining access to affordable fresh produce. Building on discussions around climate change and agricultural production, the conference then examined the geopolitical and economic dynamics shaping international agri-food trade.

Session 2. Agri-food import /export & geopolitics

Speakers: Ms. Lucinda Jordaan (PPECB, South Africa), **Mr. Mzukisi Ramasala** (Joburg Market), **Mr. Thierry Febvay**, representing international wholesale market development initiatives and **Ms. Eunice Loisel Kiniffo** (Director of Anagem – Benin wholesale market)

This panel highlighted another urgent reality: **global trade disruptions, geopolitical tensions and regulatory barriers are increasingly shaping Africa's agrifood flows**, with direct implications for food security, export performance and regional integration. Speakers emphasised that the global trading environment is becoming more volatile, and that African markets must strengthen resilience to ensure stable access to both domestic and international supply chains.

Opening the discussion, **Ms. Lucinda Jordaan** (PPECB, South Africa) detailed the scale and rigour of South Africa's export system, noting that the country exported **4.3 million tonnes of fruit in 2024**, with PPECB conducting over **213,000 export inspections.** She warned that rising costs, port inefficiencies and climate-related disruptions increasingly threaten trade flows, insisting: *"Compliance, infrastructure and technology are not optional – they are the gateway to global markets."*

Mr. Mzukisi Ramasala (Joburg Market) reinforced this point by explaining how global price volatility and logistics disruptions affect African producers. He stressed that modern wholesale markets help mitigate these pressures by offering transparent pricing and diversified sourcing: *"In a world of rising uncertainty, markets are stabilisers. They keep food moving."*

The panel also examined the **geopolitical dimension** of agrifood trade. **Mr. Thierry Febvay,** representing international wholesale market development initiatives, shared the example of the **SEMMARIS–Benin partnership**, which built a modern logistics platform and upgraded **35 retail markets.** This project demonstrated how wholesale-led infrastructure can reduce reliance on imports, expand regional trade and strengthen national food systems. He emphasised that: *"Wholesale markets are instruments of economic transformation and territorial development."*

Ms. Eunice Loisel Kiniffo (Director of Anagem – Benin wholesale market) added a governance perspective, warning that geopolitical tensions, tariffs and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures often *"become de facto trade barriers,"* disproportionately affecting developing countries. She called for greater continental coordination and for Africa to secure its place in global negotiations: *"Africa cannot remain on the margins of trade reforms – it must shape the rules."*

Across all contributions, a common message emerged: **strong wholesale networks are essential to navigating trade uncertainty.** By providing structured exchanges, advanced cold chains, transparent documentation and diversified sourcing channels, wholesale markets strengthen national and regional resilience in the face of geopolitical and logistical shocks.

> **"Wholesale markets are instruments of economic development, social equity and territorial transformation."**
>
> **Ms. Eunice Loisel Kiniffo**

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A concrete example of international cooperation in wholesale market development is the project carried out in Benin with the support of Semmaris, the operator of the Rungis International Market.

Following an audit conducted in 2017, the Beninese government launched an ambitious programme to modernise its food distribution infrastructure. The project includes the development of 35 urban and regional markets as well as the creation of the Grand Nokoué agro-logistics hub, a 168-hectare site equipped with eight temperature-controlled warehouses of 10,000 m^2 each.

The investment, estimated at €170 million, aims to structure food distribution, improve sanitary conditions and strengthen connections between producers, traders and consumers.

In conclusion, the panel agreed that Africa's ability to thrive in an unstable global trading environment will depend on **modern infrastructure, harmonised standards, investment in logistics, and wholesale markets capable of supporting cross-border flows.** Strengthened wholesale systems were identified as one of the most effective levers to secure food availability, open export opportunities and reinforce Africa's position within global agrifood value chains.

Building on discussions about international agri-food trade and geopolitical dynamics, the conference then turned to the role of technological innovation in transforming wholesale markets and agricultural supply chains. Speakers explored how artificial intelligence, digital platforms and new logistics tools are reshaping the way fresh produce is produced, traded and distributed across global markets.

Session 3. Smart technology, AI & digital transformation

Speakers: Ms. Zhang Qin (Xishang Group, China), **Mr. Greg Whitaker** (AgrigateOne), **Mr. Joao Tiago Carapau** (SIMAB, Portugal), **Dr. Justy Ranger** (FreshMark Systems) and **Mr. Joseph-Olivier Biley** (Jool International, Côte d'Ivoire).

> "AI-based e-commerce lifts barriers between growers and consumers and promotes cross-border supply chains."
>
> **Ms. Zhang Qin**

This panel highlighted a transformative reality: **digital technologies, artificial intelligence and data-driven systems are reshaping the global fresh-produce sector**, redefining the relationship between growers, markets and consumers. Speakers demonstrated how smart tools are no longer optional innovations but essential drivers of competitiveness, transparency and inclusive growth.

Opening the discussion, **Ms. Zhang Qian** (Xishang Group, China) described how AI-powered platforms have revolutionised fresh-produce trade in Asia. She explained that algorithms used by applications such as Douyin/TikTok match growers directly with consumers at unprecedented scale – *"Over 17.45 million daily orders,"* she noted – as a sign of how digital tools can break geographical barriers and expand international market access. She concluded: *"AI-based e-commerce lifts barriers between growers and consumers and promotes cross-border supply chains."*

This model illustrates how digital platforms are reshaping agricultural marketing channels. By integrating logistics, payment systems and real-time demand analysis, these platforms allow farmers to reach national and international consumers directly, while providing faster price discovery and more transparent supply chains.

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In China, large-scale wholesale market platforms are also integrating digital technologies and artificial intelligence to optimise supply chains.

The Xishang Group 's developed an AI-supported platform managing a nationwide cold-chain distribution system linking producers, traders and consumers. These digital tools allow real-time monitoring of supply flows, improved logistics coordination and faster transactions between market actors.

> "An omnichannel strategy, supported by smart technology, is the right approach to promote trade and food values."

Mr. Joao Tiago Carapau

Building on this, **Mr. Greg Whitaker** (AgrigateOne) presented the impact of the OneSwitch digital ecosystem, which integrates data collection, real-time communication, contracting and logistics coordination. He emphasised that the future lies in fully automated, transparent and waste-free trade flows, stating: *"We are entering the greatest decade of technology transition, from manual tools to smart systems."* Whitaker stressed that successful digitalisation requires strong partnerships and shared platforms to connect farmers with global markets.

> "We are entering the greatest decade of technology transition."

Mr. Greg Whitaker

A broader systems perspective was offered by **Mr. Joao Tiago Carapau** (SIMAB, Portugal), who showcased an omnichannel strategy combining wholesale infrastructure with digital retail solutions. Through initiatives such as lovemymarket.pt, SIMAB links producers, wholesalers and municipalities while promoting local products and price transparency. He argued that: *"An omnichannel strategy, supported by smart technology, is the right approach to promote trade and food values."*

From a South African perspective, **Dr. Justy Ranger** (FreshMark Systems) highlighted how digital infrastructure underpins daily market operations across the country. Managing payments, cold-chain data, traceability and multi-stakeholder transactions, FreshMark processes **tens of thousands of daily operations**, demonstrating the scale of tech-enabled market management. She cautioned, however, that technology must be adapted to real market behaviour: *"Bringing disruptive technology without understanding the system creates chaos, not efficiency."*

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The digital transformation of wholesale markets is already underway in several regions. FreshMark Systems, for example, currently manages digital platforms for 22 physical markets, covering 198 cold storage rooms and 258 ripening chambers, with more than 1,200 registered users.

Every day, the system processes around 35,000 commercial transactions and more than 3,000 cold storage operations, improving price transparency, logistics coordination and product traceability.

This third session concluded with a powerful demonstration of African-led innovation. **Mr. Joseph-Olivier Biley** (Jool International, Côte d'Ivoire) presented drone and Artificial Intelligence technologies used to monitor crops, detect diseases early and reduce labour from **16 hours to 5 minutes per hectare**. Beyond efficiency, he argued that digital tools attract youth and unlock Africa's agronomic potential, stating: *"Drones and AI generate environmental, productive and financial gains – and make agriculture exciting for young people."*

> **"Drones and AI can make agriculture exciting for young Africans."**
>
> **Mr. Joseph-Olivier Biley**

Across the panel, speakers converged on a shared conclusion: **digital transformation strengthens, rather than replaces, wholesale markets**. By providing traceability, reducing waste, improving decision-making and connecting farmers to broader opportunities, technology enhances the role of markets as transparent, efficient and inclusive hubs of the food system. This session affirmed that the future of fresh- produce trade will depend **on smart infrastructure, integrated data platforms and wholesale markets ready to embrace AI-driven transformation.** While technological innovation is rapidly transforming food supply chains worldwide, the conference also highlighted the importance of strong physical market infrastructures. The final session therefore focused on the South African food system, examining how wholesale markets operate in practice and how they contribute to food security, economic inclusion and the functioning of fresh produce value chains at national level.

Session 4. Wholesale & retail value chain functionality in South Africa

Speakers: Mr. Thando Mpulu (South African Union of Food Markets), **Mr. Quinton Naidoo** (Kagiso Trust), **Ms. Molebogeng Dibate** (City of Johannesburg) and **Mr. Parks Tau** (Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition).

This session explored the complex reality of South Africa's wholesale and retail food systems, highlighting both their national importance and the structural constraints that limit equitable access to fresh produce. Speakers drew a clear picture: **modern wholesale markets are essential to addressing inequality, strengthening food security and supporting the informal economy,** yet much remains to be done to expand and modernise the national network.

Opening the debate, **Mr. Thando Mpulu** (South African Union of Food Markets) emphasised the central role of municipal wholesale markets in ensuring affordable food access. He noted that only 5% of South African municipalities have a wholesale market – an imbalance that contributes directly to unequal pricing, limited product availability and geographic disparities in nutrition. He described wholesale markets as *"the cornerstone of low-cost access, transparent pricing and stable supply."*

> "Wholesale markets are the cornerstone of low-cost access, transparent pricing and stable supply."
>
> **Mr. Thando Mpulu, SAUFM**

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The economic importance of South African wholesale markets is illustrated by the activity of the country's 14 municipal fresh produce markets, which distribute approximately 3.5 million tonnes of fresh produce every year and record around 80,000 commercial transactions each week.

Informal traders play a central role in this ecosystem, representing roughly two-thirds of the buyers operating in these markets. Overall, fresh produce transactions through wholesale markets represent approximately 21 billion rand, accounting for about 40% of the national fresh produce distribution, with the remaining 60% handled by large retail chains.

Mr. Quinton Naidoo (Kagiso Trust) expanded on the socio-economic dimensions, underlining that South Africa's high inequality—reflected in a Gini coefficient of 0.67 – is visible within food systems. He insisted that markets must actively integrate small farmers, informal traders and township communities, stating: *"Wholesale markets are inclusive by definition – if we modernise them, we lift communities with us."*

> **"Wholesale markets are inclusive by definition – if we modernise them, we lift communities with us."**
>
> **Mr. Quinton Naidoo**

> **"By empowering our farmers, we create value and jobs – and we make sure no one is left behind."**
>
> **Mr. Parks Tau**

From an operational perspective, **Ms. Molebogeng Dibate** (City of Johannesburg) highlighted the scale and importance of Joburg Market, which handles millions of tonnes of fresh produce annually and facilitates **80,000 trades per week**, two-thirds of which involve the informal sector. She explained how modern infrastructure, logistics coordination and food safety protocols sustain market efficiency and provide reliable income for thousands of traders.

Complementing this view, **Mr. Parks Tau** (Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition) reiterated the national priority of reinforcing food system resilience. He stressed that public–private investment is needed to develop cold chains, transport networks, digital platforms and compliance systems that support both large producers and small-scale farmers. He reminded delegates that: *"By empowering our farmers, we create value and jobs – and we make sure no one is left behind."*

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A practical example of this approach can be seen in private-sector initiatives aimed at integrating smallholder farmers into formal supply chains. In South Africa, the SPAR Group has developed a "Hub Model" programme designed to support emerging farmers through a combination of agronomic guidance, access to inputs, post-harvest infrastructure and guaranteed market outlets.

Through this initiative, several participating farms have already achieved GLOBALG.A.P certification, enabling them to supply major retail networks while improving product quality and traceability. The programme aims to support up to 60 farmers and develop around 1,000 hectares of vegetable production in the coming years, illustrating how partnerships between retailers and producers can strengthen inclusive food systems.

Speakers also emphasised the critical need to expand market access beyond major cities. Rural and peri-urban areas remain underserved, limiting smallholder participation and raising consumer prices. **Strengthening local markets, upgrading infrastructure and harmonising municipal governance were identified as essential steps to improve affordability and foster rural economic development.**

Across all interventions, a consistent message emerged: **wholesale markets are South Africa's most effective tool for linking farmers to consumers, supporting informal traders and stabilising food availability across regions.** Their ability to aggregate supply, form transparent prices, reduce waste and connect diverse communities makes them indispensable in addressing both economic and nutritional inequalities.

Session 4 concluded that building a more equitable and efficient food system will require **substantial investment, governance reform and expanded wholesale market infrastructure,** ensuring that all South Africans – across cities, townships and rural communities – benefit from affordable, reliable access to fresh produce. Johannesburg confirmed that wholesale markets remain one of the most effective infrastructures for linking farmers, traders and consumers in an increasingly complex global food system.

Conclusion

The Johannesburg conference concluded with a shared conviction: wholesale markets must be placed at the centre of national and international food strategies. In an era defined by climate volatility, geopolitical fragmentation and rapid technological change, markets remain among the most powerful tools for stabilising supply, supporting farmers, integrating informal traders and ensuring access to affordable fresh produce for all communities.

Looking ahead, WUWM will anchor its work around three strategic priorities:

→ Strengthening global food system resilience

WUWM will intensify collaboration with governments, cities, FAO, regional blocs and financing institutions to modernise wholesale infrastructure, expand cold-chain systems and promote climate-smart models. As Africa hosts the G20 in 2025, wholesale markets will feature prominently as instruments of food system stability.

→ Accelerating innovation and digital transformation

The organisation will support members in adopting AI-based platforms, digital contracting, traceability tools, and data-driven market management systems. The goal is to ensure that technology enhances, not replaces, the fundamental inclusivity of wholesale markets.

→ Advancing inclusive economic and territorial development

WUWM will continue promoting governance models that integrate informal traders, empower women and youth, and link rural production zones with urban centres.

Johannesburg sent a clear message to the world: **modern wholesale markets are not only part of the solution, but they are also indispensable to shaping the future of global food systems.** The Johannesburg conference confirmed that wholesale markets remain one of the most effective infrastructures for connecting farmers, traders and consumers in an increasingly complex global food environment.

As climate pressures, geopolitical tensions and rapid technological change reshape food systems worldwide, strengthening wholesale market networks will be essential to ensure resilient supply chains, fair market access and affordable food for growing urban populations.

Speakers, Sponsors & Partners







Councillor Nomoya Mnisi
Member of the Mayoral Committee for Economic Development

Mr. Stéphane Layani
Chairman of the World Union of Wholesale Markets and CEO of the Marché International de Rungis

Councillor Sello Dada Morero
Executive Mayor of Johannesburg

Minister Parks Tau
South Africa's Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition

Dr. Yolandi Ernst
Global Change Institute

Dr. Babagana Ahmadu
(FAO)

Ms. Phelisa Nkomo
(OXFAM)

H.E. Oluseyi Makinde
Governor of Oyo State (Nigeria)

Ms. Lucinda Jordaan
PPECB, South Africa

Mr. Mzukisi Ramasala
Joburg Market

Mr. Thierry Febvay
Representing International Wholesale Market Development Initiatives

Ms. Eunice Loisel Kiniffo
Director of Anagem – Benin wholesale market

Ms. Zhang Qin
Xishang Group, China

Mr. Greg Whitaker
AgrigateOne

Mr. Joao Tiago Carapau
SIMAB, Portugal

Dr. Justy Ranger
FreshMark Systems

Mr. Joseph-Olivier Biley
Jool International, Côte d'Ivoire

Mr. Thando Mpulu
South African Union of Food Markets

Mr. Quinton Naidoo
Kagiso Trust

Ms. Molebogeng Dibate
City of Johannesburg

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Partners

Director of publication: **Stéphane Layani**

This report has been written by:
Valérie Vion, WUWM General Secretary
Hermine de Nantois, WUWM Policy Advisor & Executive Assistant

Designed by **Xavier Catherinet**