

## **Pre-UN Food Systems Summit Dialogue**

### **Youth as food systems actors and transformers: Global voices for inclusion**

#### *Youth Dialogue on Food System*

**Date: 1 June 2021**

**Time:** 1700-2000 East African Standard Time

**Registration Link:** <https://bit.ly/3xzhQPz>

Moderator: A student from EARTH University, Costa Rica

#### **Background**

Globally, youth represent an important demographic in development in many respects. Firstly, today's youthful population is the largest in history, and secondly, the global population of young people is concentrated in low- and middle-income countries most of which are in the South and East Asia and Africa<sup>1</sup>. This youthful population is now shaping and reshaping the global priorities because their needs are diverse and rapidly evolving, their expectations for employment, decent work and meaningful livelihoods as well as healthy and fulfilling life are generally higher. The youth are equally closely connected with the advancement of technology, smart phone technology as well as other platforms but there also remains a large proportion of youth in the rural areas in the global south whose pace of integration to the global space is minimal. Most of these youth are part of the farming households either as family farmers and/or laborers of some kind. They equally demand for better and progressive livelihoods with a runner away intentions from agriculture shifting towards commerce especially agribusiness and other non-farm based activities.

Owing to predominance of agriculture in the economies of the global south, food systems will have to play a bigger role in expanding meaningful opportunities for the youth including providing fulfilling job opportunities. As the food systems in the global south especially in Africa are experiencing progressive transformation and the relative fast growth in the downstream of the food systems provides an effective opportunity that not only helps to reshape the poverty narrative but help to address the agriculture based poverty that has been endemic in most of the rural areas. In this regard, investing in the food systems is a logical undertaking that not only creates jobs for the youth but also helps to address the concentration of global rural poverty and a movement towards inclusive growth. Evidence available from continental studies in Africa have shown that there is a diversity of African youth and there is need for caution on how easily young people can participate and benefit from the food systems. This is particularly because young people are not always in the vanguard of transformation and are excluded or benefit less than adults from economic growth<sup>2</sup>. This calls for moving beyond generalizations to ensuring that there is a sound understanding of youth and policy options to guide their full participation and increase on the net gains from their transformation taking place in the food systems.

Recognising the changing food systems of the world and the urgent need to chart a new course of actions towards fulfilling the global commitments in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations Secretary General, will convene a Food Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The Summit will launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17

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<sup>1</sup> IFAD (2019). Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth: 2019 Rural Development Report. Rome: International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

<sup>2</sup> Mueller, V., Rosenbach, G., & Thurlow, J. (2020). Youth: Including Africa's young people in food systems. IFPRI book chapters, 202028-202035.

SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems<sup>3</sup>. Within the summit arrangements, the youth empowerment has gained traction as an important facet in the food systems transformation that it has been placed into all Summit work streams and structures. To this end, young leaders have also been included among the vice-chairs for the Action Tracks, while youth empowerment is a common theme across four “levers of change” identified by Summit organisers as among the most influential factors for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030<sup>4</sup>. This recognition remains vital in keeping youth as part of the decision makers and change drivers in a world that is rapidly evolving.

### **United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021<sup>5</sup>**

The United Nations is under advanced stages in convening the 2021 Food Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Summit will launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems. The Summit will awaken the world to the fact that we all must work together to transform the way the world produces, and consumes thinks about food. And importantly, develop resilience to the vagaries associated with climate change and natural resource degradation. It is a Summit for everyone everywhere: a people’s Summit. It is also a solutions Summit that will require everyone to take action to transform the world’s food systems.

The Summit brings together key players from the worlds of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, as well as farmers, indigenous people, youth organizations, consumer groups, environmental activists, and other key stakeholders. Before, during and after the Summit, these actors will come together to agree on key actions to bring about tangible, positive changes to the world’s food systems.

The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit seeks to deliver the following outcomes:

1. Generate significant action and measurable progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by identifying solutions and leaders, and issuing a call for action at all levels of the food system, including national and local governments, companies and citizens.
2. Raise awareness and elevate public discussion about how reforming our food systems can help us all to achieve the SDGs by implementing reforms that are good for people and planet.
3. Develop principles to guide governments and other stakeholders looking to leverage their food systems to support the SDGs. These principles will set an optimistic and encouraging vision in which food systems play a central role in building a fairer, more sustainable world. Principles of engagement
4. Create a system of follow-up and review to ensure that the Summit’s outcomes continue to drive new actions and progress. This system will allow for the sharing of experiences, lessons and knowledge; it will also measure and analyse the Summit’s impact.

### **Youth Food Systems Dialogue**

Youth represent critical agents for change. Countries seeking to attain the SDGs with the commitment of leaving no one behind ought to engage youth from diverse backgrounds at various levels of planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions. This is particularly because youth are critical thinkers, change makers, innovators, communicators, and leaders of today and tomorrow. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) a network of 130 universities

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/about>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.southworld.net/youth-movement-and-un-food-systems-summit/>

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from the Food Systems Summit website: <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/about>

from 38 African countries is a youth engaged institution that engages with youth at various levels from rural communities to university level. RUFORUM engages youth in human capital development, delivery of science solutions for development of food systems, and enterprise development for job creation and expanding employment opportunities. In this 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, RUFORUM seeks to mobilise global youth voices for inclusion in the food systems summit declaration. In this regard, RUFORUM has organised this “youth as food systems actors and transformers; global voices for inclusion” webinar as part of this ideation and voices harvesting.

### **Draft Programme**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Session/Topic</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>
	<b>Opening Session</b>	
1700-1705	Welcome Remarks by Session Moderator	Ms. Victoria Akwamaa Yeboah, EARTH University, Costa Rica
1705-1715	Background to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and the National and Regional dialogues	Prof Adipala Ekwamu, RUFORUM Executive Secretary
1715-1725	Guest address to the session	Dr. Peter Materu, Chief Program Officer, Mastercard Foundation
1725-1730	Questions and comments	
1730-1755	<b>Context, opportunities and place of the youth</b>	<b>Session Moderator</b>
	Youth and the food systems in Africa: the context for opportunities	Ms. Michelle Marais, University of Free State, South Africa
	Youth in active service for marginalised in fragile societies: Lessons from AUB interventions with Refugee communities	Ms. Lea Salameh, American University of Beirut, Lebanon
	Young Professionals reshaping the progressive food system: the case of building resilient food systems	Mr. Ntiokam Divine, Managing Director, Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN), Yaounde Cameroon
	Building a business dream by gaps in food System: Case of poultry deficit in Nigeria	Anthony Owei Ebitimi, CEO Takvor Resources, Nigeria
	How young people are helping smallholder farmers in Kenya grow their enterprises	Ann Kamande, MSc. Fellow Egerton University, Kenya
	<b>Plenary reflections</b>	
1800-1830	<b>Building convergence for action</b>	<b>Session moderator</b>
	Innovations needed for delivering food across Africa	Mr. Marius Affonfere, National University of Agriculture, Benin
	Learning from Greece: an integrative education for transforming food systems	Ms Androniki Christaki, American Farm School, Greece
	Lessons from China on avoiding environmental harm from agriculture and restoring affected ecosystems	Mr. Wang Yuzhi, China Agricultural University
	Ensuring security using indigenous food systems approach: Lessons from Canada	Ms. Shelby Gagnon, Indigenous Food Circle, Thunder Bay-Canada
1830-1850	Open Discussion	All
1850-1910	Wrap up of Emerging Issues and next Steps	Ms. Ayado Eyinyu, Director of Africa Careers Network, African Leadership Academy