



#YOUTH2030

6th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum CONCEPT NOTE

Thematic Breakout Session

“End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”

30 January 2017
CONFERENCE Room 11

2:30 – 4:30 pm

United Nations Headquarters, New York

FOCUS ON:

- Sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty
- Decent employment for youth in the agriculture sector(s)
- Youth in the rural economy and in food systems
- Secure and equal access to land
- Emerging issues in hunger, food security and nutrition

1. Background and Context

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that we can no longer look at food, livelihoods, jobs and the management of natural resources separately. A focus on rural development and investment in agriculture - crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture and related services - are powerful tools to end poverty and hunger, increase employment opportunities and bring about sustainable development.

What do we mean with agriculture?

The term agriculture encompasses the farming, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry and livestock (sub) sectors and also connected agro-industries and services.

(FAO terminology)

There is enough food for everyone on the planet today, yet almost 800 million people suffer hunger¹. Tackling hunger and malnutrition is not only about boosting

¹ FAO, IFAD, WFP 2015: The State of Food Insecurity (SOFI) in the World <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4646e.pdf>



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food production, but also to do with increasing incomes, employment opportunities in the agricultural sector, securing land rights, creating resilient food systems and strengthening markets so that people can access safe and nutritious food even if a crisis prevents them from growing enough themselves.

There is a bit of SDG2 - *End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture* - in virtually every goal of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Indeed, all 17 SDGs are very much interconnected, and **ties between SDG1** (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), **SDG8** (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all) and **SDG2 are particularly strong.**

Almost 80 percent of the world's poor live in rural areas, where people depend directly or indirectly on agriculture, fisheries or forestry as a source of income and food. We also know that agricultural growth in low-income and agrarian economies is twice as effective in reducing hunger and poverty as growth in other sectors. And to right a common misconception, hunger today is not caused by a lack of supply but because hundreds of millions of people simply cannot afford to buy enough food. That is exactly why rural poverty reduction has a central role to play in the fight against hunger. People who are well nourished live, learn and work longer, and contribute to achieving their societies' aspirations for inclusive economic growth, human development, environmental health and innovation. **Reaching zero hunger by 2030 will therefore mean that we achieve many targets of various SDGs.**

What is food security?

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, economic and social access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The four key dimensions of food security are availability, access, utilization and stability. The nutritional dimension is integral to the concept of food security.

(World Food Summit, 1996)

Most food producers in developing countries are smallholder farmers, with limited access to finance, markets, technologies and infrastructure. Low productivity and incomes and poor working conditions in agriculture are one major cause of persistent poverty. Furthermore, existing farmers are ageing, and youth are usually not attracted to the sector. The majority of rural youth are also (mostly) employed in the informal economy as contributing family workers, subsistence farmers, home-based micro-entrepreneurs or unskilled workers. They typically earn low wages, are employed under casual or seasonal work arrangements and face unsafe, often exploitive working conditions that compel many to migrate to urban areas.



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Moreover, as highlighted in the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*², the **lack of secure land rights is one of the root cause of poverty and food insecurity for many**, including in particular indigenous peoples who continue to experience displacement and dispossession from their lands and territories often due to large-scale development and extractive sector projects undertaken without their free, prior and informed consent. Securing land rights, including land demarcation, land titling and protection from displacement and encroachment is therefore essential to ensure sustainable development and livelihoods.

Re-engaging youth in agriculture can be a double-win: it is vital for the sustainability of the food systems and it can help addressing the issues of youth unemployment, poverty and migration.

Further, agriculture needs to be sustainable. As agriculture depends largely on the services provided by the ecosystems, sustainable agriculture must minimize negative impacts on the environment while optimizing production by protecting, conserving and enhancing natural resources and using them efficiently. Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge can provide inspiration in this regards by contributing to food security and sustainable livelihoods and consumption patterns. It must also strike a balance between protecting agro-ecosystems and meeting society's growing needs by offering decent and resilient livelihoods for rural populations.

Achieving sustainable agriculture requires, therefore, the development of strategies that make wise choices in order to reach those multiple objectives.

The main challenges faced by young people while trying to access the sector, though, are daunting: limited access to productive and gainful employment in the agricultural sector; limited access to education and training; lack of curricular tailored to the labour market's needs; limited access to land; financial services; green jobs. Youth need an enabling environment that addresses their specific aspirations and challenges, and to achieve this they need to be heard. Addressing the prevailing skills mismatches and improving the labour market information systems, tailoring financial and businesses development services specifically to the needs of youth, specifically to the agricultural sector is key. This needs to be done in collaboration with the related private sector while

What is sustainable agriculture?

The management and conservation of the natural resource base, and the orientation of technological change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment of continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations. Sustainable agriculture conserves land, water, and plant and animal genetic resources, and is environmentally non-degrading, technically appropriate, economically viable and socially acceptable.

(FAO, 1988)

² FAO, CFS 2012 Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security

also addressing the severe gender inequalities that still affect rural labour markets. Moreover, rural-urban linkages, which is an aspect touched upon also by SDG11, can promote integrated territorial development and help bring greater attention to the needs of rural areas and non-urban settlements.

Moreover, in the transition to a **green economy**, rural youth can be particularly disadvantaged because first, they cannot afford vocational or tertiary training programmes - so are more likely to be laid off, and second, they are highly dependent on natural resources (e.g. working in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries), the very resources that are threatened by climate change. Furthermore, green investments do not necessarily guarantee decent work for youth, nor to services and key resources that might help them compete for these job opportunities³. Therefore, **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** should be always implemented in order to address environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm processes, which results in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for a green economy

- Maintain and increase farm productivity and profitability while ensuring the provision of food on a sustainable basis
- Reduce negative externalities and gradually lead to positive ones
- Rebuild ecological resources (i.e. soil, water, air and biodiversity “natural capital” assets) by reducing pollution and using resources more efficiently

(FAO COAG 2003)

Youth are also highly mobile and represent the main share of migrants moving worldwide. In 2015, there were 244 million international migrants⁴, including 150 million migrant workers⁵. Migrants forced to flee from conflicts, violence and persecutions grew remarkably in the last five years. The number of internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers reached nearly 60 million in 2014, with an average length of displacement owed to war and persecution of 17 years. In addition, an estimated 107.3 million people were affected by disasters caused by natural hazards⁶. Labour migration makes a substantial contribution to growth and development in both source and destination countries (e.g. through workers’ remittances). However, it is often distress migration, undertaken because the individual and/or the family perceive that there are no options for them to survive with dignity, except to migrate. Furthermore, many rural-urban youth migrants end up in urban peripheries of economic systems characterized by jobless growth and the proliferation of slums.

³ UNDP, 2013. [Green Jobs for Women and Youth – What Can Local Governments Do?](#)

⁴ UNDESA, 2015. [Trend in International migration 2015. Population Facts](#)

⁵ ILO, 2015. [Global estimates on migrant workers. Results and methodology. Special focus on migrant domestic workers](#)

⁶ UN, 2016. [One humanity: shared responsibility. Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit](#). United Nations General Assembly. A/70/709.



The agriculture sector can provide solutions to issues related to poverty and food insecurity and there is a largely untapped reservoir of employment opportunities in it. The demand for food is increasing due to growing population, urbanization and rising household income. At the same time, in order to increase global food production by 60 percent by 2050, the agricultural sector needs to promote gender equality and harness the untapped productivity potential of rural women, as well as to rejuvenate and engage the youth. Investing in decent employment for these categories is therefore a win-win solution to the manifold interlinked development challenges. Even though the agricultural sector is dominated by informal sector activities – with often vulnerable and low quality employment, with low productivity and low wages – it presents plenty of job potential opportunities for young people, given its heterogeneity, including pockets of high productivity and high income activities. It is in recognition of this that - *Youth in the Rural Economy* - has been included as one of the main thematic areas of the **Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth**. Under the leadership of ILO, the Initiative, is the first-ever, comprehensive United Nations system-wide effort for the promotion of youth employment worldwide and brings together the vast global resources and convening power of the UN and other global key partners to maximize the effectiveness of youth employment investments and assist Member States in delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Therefore, re-engaging youth in agriculture is essential to rejuvenate the sector and harness young people’s energy, ambitions and their capacity to innovate. However, it requires addressing the numerous constraints that they face when trying to earn a livelihood. Developing an enabling environment in which young women and men can thrive and seize current and future decent rural employment opportunities is crucial in addressing youth unemployment and underemployment. Identification of constraints facing rural youth in accessing decent work and designing and implementing strategies that more effectively target rural youth are key areas of action which include, inter alia, improvement of skills through educational and vocational training, facilitating access to land, credit and business development services, as well as improving conditions of employment in the agricultural and rural sectors. Furthermore as highlighted in the *Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems*, **dedicated**

Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems

Principle 4

Engage and empower youth

Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems engages and empowers youth by: i) Advancing their access to productive land, natural resources, inputs, productive tools, extension, advisory, and financial services, education, training, markets, information, and inclusion in decision-making; ii) Providing appropriate training, education, and mentorship programs for youth to increase their capacity and/or access to decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities, and foster their contribution to local development; iii) Promoting development and access to innovation and new technologies, combined with traditional knowledge, to attract and enable youth to be drivers of improvement in agriculture and food systems.



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investments for youth in agriculture to foster their appropriate inclusion in the sector are essential.

Besides small-scale activities to promote youth employment in sustainable agriculture, what is needed is a coherent approach bringing together knowledge, innovation and capacity to develop and implement effective policies and scalable and sustainable programmes.

Wiping the scourge of hunger from the planet, defeating the menace of malnutrition, doubling the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, and helping the poorest of the poor to escape poverty is a formidable ambition. Nevertheless, with coherent policies and their implementation to adequately address the youth employment challenge and at the same time programmes and investments to rejuvenate the agricultural sector, it can be done and **youth' support could be key in the delivery of SDG2 and beyond.**

2. Objectives of the session

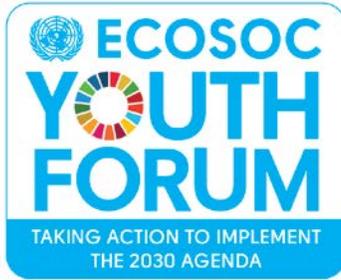
- To inform about the most essential priority challenges in need of action to ensure sustainable agriculture as reflected in SDG2 and youth inclusion in the sector for reunification and decent employment creation
- To discuss and identify potential roles of youth in the international efforts in these subjects, discuss the way youth can contribute to these efforts and in the implementation of SDG2 and foster a youth engagement plan towards it
- Serve as an input to the ECOSOC's High-level Segment, including the High-level Political Forum (HLPF)
- Identify emerging issues in hunger, food security and nutrition and how they relate to youth

3. Proposed structure of the session (2 hours)

Organization: The session will be coordinated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with support and active engagement of other interested entities and youth organizations, including the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), etc.

Secretariat:

- UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- UN Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)



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Agenda

14:30 Welcome

Moderators:
Ms Francesca Dalla Valle
UN Food and Agriculture Organization
Ms Julia Raavad
UN Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

14:32 SDG 2 and Youth: A double-win

Ms Carla Mucavi
Director of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Liaison Office to the UN

Mr Mattia Prayer Galletti
Lead Technical Specialist and Youth Focal Point, IFAD HQ

14:35 Key messages from youth on youth participation and innovative ideas related to SDG 2

Mr Alpha Sennon
Farmerpreneur and Founder and Executive Director of WHYFARM (We Help You-th Farm),
Trinidad and Tobago

Ms Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim
Coordinator of the Indigenous Women and Peoples Association of Chad

Ms Carolina Medina
Co-Founder of Agruppa
Colombia

15:00 Interactive discussion with participants on priority issues to be tackled, role of youth and key recommendations of youth representatives for SDG 2 implementation

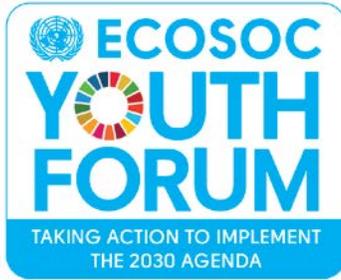
16:20 Wrap up and summary
Moderators (5-10 mins)

One rapporteur will need to be identified prior to the event. This role can be fulfilled by one of the MGCY/ICMYO Global Focal Points.

4. Questions for the audience

Potential questions for the participants during the interactive discussion:

- How to rebrand agriculture and address emerging issues?
- How to boost youth employment in the agricultural sector?



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- How to facilitate youth inclusion in the rural economy, food sovereignty and food systems?
- How to advocate for secure and equal access to land for all, including youth?

5. Proposed reading and related websites

- FAO 2016. Food and Agriculture: Key to Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/d569c955-8237-42bf-813e-5adf0c4241b9/>
- CFS 2014. Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems. Available at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1314/rai/CFS_Principles_Oct_2014_EN.pdf
- FAO, CFS 2012. Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2801e/i2801e.pdf>
- UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2016). Substantive Inputs to the High Level Political Forum. Available at: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/Docs-updates/INPUTS_2016_HLPF_eng.pdf
- Oxfam International, International Land Coalition and Rights and Resources Initiative 2016. *Common Ground: Securing Land Rights and Saving the Earth*. Available at: https://landrightsnow.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/GCA_REPORT_EN_FINAL.pdf
- Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ed_emp_msu/documents/publication/wcms_488464.pdf
- FAO and the SDGs <http://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/goals/goal-1/en/>
- Decent Rural Employment <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/en/>
- IFAD and youth <https://www.ifad.org/topic/overview/tags/youth>