



"Youth at the Forefront: Leveraging Science and Social Inclusion for Sustainable Development"

SIDE EVENT AT THE 2025 ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM

‘Leveraging SDGs as enablers of sustainable agrifood systems transformation: Youth and women's leadership from policy to action’

Organized by: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and World Food Forum (WFF) Global Youth Action Initiative

Co-organizers: Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations, UN Women, United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UN MGCY)

Tuesday, 15 April 2025, 1:15 – 2:45pm EST

1. Background

To effectively review progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is essential to consider their interlinkages. This is especially true for SDG5 (Gender Equality), which is under review at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and influences many other SDGs. Women are essential to agrifood systems, yet equality between men and women remains unachieved. Moving forward on SDG5 is key to achieving SDG2 (Zero Hunger) and also highlights the importance of SDG4 (Quality Education) and SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) as key drivers of sustainable agrifood systems.

Young people worldwide have emphasized the need to prioritize these accelerators, as reflected in the Beijing+30 Declaration, where Quality Education and Training (Priority Area No. 2) and Economic Justice and Rights (Priority Area No. 6) emerged as key focus areas. These priorities highlight the critical role of education, skills development and economic opportunities in empowering young women in agrifood systems, reinforcing the connection between SDGs 4, 5 and 8.

The World Food Forum (WFF) Global Youth Action Initiative (Youth Initiative), a youth-led global network of partners hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is dedicated to

advancing all SDGs through integrated, youth-driven agrifood systems transformation. Building on this commitment, the WFF Youth Initiative actively mobilizes young people and their allies to drive holistic, strategic and scalable change in agrifood systems.

With the in-depth review of SDG5, the Beijing+30 Declaration and the International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026, the 2025-2026 biennium presents a pivotal opportunity to advance gender equality in agrifood systems. In this context, the WFF Youth Assembly, in collaboration with the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY), will lead a year-long consultation in 2025 to gather youth perspectives on SDG5 within agrifood systems. This process will culminate in a 'Youth Recommendations Paper,' to be presented at HLPF 2025, outlining key calls to action for accelerating progress at the intersection of SDGs 4, 5, and 8, with SDG2 serving as the operational framework.

This consultation process will serve as an important youth positioning moment in the build-up to the International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026, which seeks to highlight the crucial role that women, and in particular, young women, play in agrifood systems, with their contributions to food security, nutrition and poverty eradication. Within this process, this ECOSOC Youth Forum side event will provide a platform for intergenerational learning, best practice sharing, and the development of youth recommendations aimed at recognizing and empowering young women in sustainable agrifood systems. These recommendations will play a vital role in mobilizing local action for transforming our agrifood systems, leaving no one behind.

2. Objectives of the side event, including relation with the SDGs identified in the Guidelines

- Continue the year-long process of knowledge exchange, consultations and collaboration among youth, experts and policymakers to analyze SDG5 in relation to other SDGs and development challenges.
- Highlight interconnections between the SDGs, fostering a youth-led discussion focusing on the relevance of SDG4 and 8 for young women in agrifood systems.
- Bring together diverse organizations and technical experts to address the most pressing issues concerning youth, especially young women, education and employment.
- Provide opportunities for youth eager to actively participate in transforming agrifood systems to connect with technical experts to gain insights on issues related to women, decent rural employment, education and training within agrifood systems, and receive support in shaping youth priorities on these various topics.
- Collection of inputs on the interlinkages between SDGs 2, 4, 5 and 8 to inform the development of a youth recommendations paper for presentation at the HLPF 2025.

3. Programme and names of speakers/panelists

Time	Activity	Speaker
5 min	<p>Welcoming remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reflections on the need for an integrated approach to assessing the SDGs.</i> 	Angélica Jácome, Director of the FAO Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York (FAOLON)
5 min	<p>Opening remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Setting the context for the discussions on the importance of youth-led policymaking spaces and how youth advocacy can contribute to the review and advancement of the SDGs,</i> <i>Reflection on the intersection of SDG5 and agrifood systems within the national context.</i> 	H.E. Lok Bahadur Thapa, Permanent Representative of Nepal to the UN
5 min	<p>Spotlight presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Key takeaways from 'Global Youth and Adolescents Recommendations: Young feminist priorities for Beijing +30', particularly as they relate to agrifood systems.</i> 	Ishaan Shah, Beijing+30 Youth Steering Committee)
5 min	<p>Overview of Year-Long Consultation Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Highlight the Youth Assembly consultation process so far and how it is addressing SDG 4,5 and 8 in the context of agrifood systems,</i> <i>Provide an overview of the first outcomes of the ongoing consultation process so far and on the localization-implementation plan.</i> 	Daniel Valdovinos, WFF Youth Policy Board
35 min	<p>Youth perspectives panel on the theme: 'Adopting a nexus approach, SDG 4 and 8 as accelerators of gender equality in agrifood systems'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sharing of best practices at local, national and global levels,</i> 	<p>Panel members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucy Fagan, Social Affairs Policy Officer, MGCY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflections on barriers and opportunities for youth leadership in accelerating progress towards the SDGs,</i> • <i>Insights on the need for an intersectional approach to agrifood system transformation.</i> • <i>Calls to action for the Youth Recommendations paper to be presented at HLPF 2025.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naomi Jubitane, AKURI Foundation Suriname • Nada Zamel, WFF Youth Policy Board • Kapwani Kavenuke, UN Youth Delegate Tanzania
25 min	<p>Q&A and Open Floor Session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Audience members are encouraged to ask questions, share reflections on the panel and may present brief interventions on behalf of their organization (for a maximum of 2 minutes).</i> <p><i>To be added to the speakers list, kindly email david.giles@fao.org</i></p>	
4 min	<p>Presentation of next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Summary of session outcomes, highlighting key points on education, decent work and sustainable agrifood systems transformation.</i> • <i>Outline of the next steps in the consultation process to inform the youth recommendation paper to be presented at HLPF 2025.</i> • <i>Inviting all to engage with WFF Youth Assembly, including at the Flagship event in October 2025.</i> 	<p>Moderation by:</p> <p>David Giles, Youth Policy Specialist, FAO</p>
5 min	<p>Closing Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reinforcing the importance of youth advocacy in shaping policies on gender equality in agrifood systems.</i> • <i>Insight into the relevance of this nexus in the national context.</i> • <i>Reflections on the perspectives shared by the panelists and audience over the course of the side event.</i> 	<p>H.E. Fergal Mythen, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN</p>

4. Guiding Questions for discussion/s

- What successful policies, programmes, or community-led initiatives have effectively advanced gender equality and women's empowerment in agrifood systems? How can these best practices be scaled and adapted to different contexts to drive systemic transformation?

- What are the key challenges young people—particularly young women—face in accessing decent work and leadership roles within agrifood systems? How can youth-led organizations and multi-stakeholder collaborations overcome these barriers to enhance youth participation in decision-making to bring policy to action?
- What concrete policy recommendations or innovative solutions should be prioritized to enhance SDG4, 5 and/or 8 within agrifood systems? How can youth advocacy efforts influence national and global policy commitments leading up to the 2026 International Year of the Woman Farmer

5. Venue Address (if in-person) and/or Platform to be used for virtual side events including Registration link

- **Venue:** The side event will take place in conference room 12, UNHQ with webcast on UN WebTV.
- **Languages:** This side event will be conducted in English.
- **Contact point:** Kindly communicate with Mr David Giles, Youth Policy Specialist, FAO (David.Giles@fao.org) regarding any queries.