

PRELIMINARY OUTCOME DOCUMENT

# BIODIVERSITY



## Introduction

The World Food Forum (WFF) Youth Assembly, in collaboration with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) and the International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) and with the support of the WFF Young Scientists Group, hosted a capacity development session on biodiversity for food and nutrition. Held virtually on 21 July 2025, the event brought together more than 250 young farmers, environmentalists, nutritionists and students to explore the critical links between biodiversity, food and nutrition within agrifood systems.

The session introduced participants to the cross-cutting initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is leading the development of a global action plan for the implementation of the initiative, as agreed by the CBD membership at Conference of the Parties (COP) 16.2 in February 2025. The initiative highlighted four core elements: (1) developing and documenting knowledge; (2) integrating biodiversity, food and nutrition issues into research and policy instruments; (3) conserving and promoting the wider use of biodiversity for food and nutrition; and (4) enhancing public awareness.

Expert insights from FAO alongside youth perspectives from GYBN and IFSA provided conceptual grounding and real-world examples of how biodiversity sustains resilient diets and ecosystems. By situating biodiversity at the heart of agrifood systems transformation, the event emphasized its role in preventing biodiversity loss, improving nutrition and food security and ensuring sustainable food futures.

## The consultative process

The session was structured as an **interactive capacity development dialogue**, blending technical presentations, youth-led experiences, interactive tools and focused breakout group discussions. It began with an icebreaker using Mentimeter, inviting participants to reflect on their understanding of biodiversity's role in food and nutrition, while fostering a collaborative atmosphere.

Experts from FAO's Food and Nutrition division provided a technical overview of the Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition, followed by case study presentations from GYBN and IFSA that illustrated community-driven and grassroots efforts to preserve and promote biodiversity in agrifood systems. These inputs offered participants both scientific grounding and lived examples of youth engagement in biodiversity action.



The core of the consultative process was the breakout discussions, structured around the initiative's four elements. Each group, facilitated by members of the WFF Youth Policy Board and the Young Scientists Group, examined one element in depth—identifying opportunities, challenges and youth-driven recommendations to support its implementation. Mentimeter polls were integrated into the discussion, enabling participants to provide real-time input and collectively prioritize barriers and solutions.

Following the group work, rapporteurs presented key insights in plenary, ensuring transparency and collective synthesis. The session closed with a reflection on how youth recommendations will feed into FAO's work under the CBD, shape the WFF Youth Assembly's biodiversity roadmap, including advocacy tools to integrate biodiversity into agrifood systems and contribute to upcoming global biodiversity dialogues.

This consultative approach ensured that participants not only built knowledge but also co-created practical, youth-informed recommendations—helping anchor biodiversity, food and nutrition at the center of both policy processes and community-level action.

## Key recommendations identified by youth

### 1. Knowledge and research

Strengthen research on the drivers of biodiversity–nutrition linkages, with a particular focus on consumer behavior and its influence on farming practices. Invest in ecosystem-level studies that capture the role of soils, plants, animals and aquatic resources in sustaining dietary diversity. Broaden the research scope beyond plant genetic resources to include animal and aquatic species. Develop standardized concepts, terminology and indicators to harmonize research across contexts and enable comparisons.

### 2. Policy integration

Promote coherence across agricultural, nutrition and biodiversity policies by drawing on existing instruments such as national dietary guidelines, agroecological roadmaps, school feeding programmes and global voluntary guidelines. Strengthen accountability in food programmes, address corruption and inefficiencies, and ensure policies support community-led biodiversity initiatives. Increase recognition of youth and marginalized groups in decision-making, while aligning international and local frameworks to promote biodiversity-rich diets.



### 3.Conservation and use

Document and protect traditional knowledge and native species while creating more sustainable opportunities across the agrifood value chain. Encourage diversified farming systems that reduce reliance on monocropping and expand the use of neglected and underutilized species. Safeguard seed diversity and promote sustainable scaling strategies to avoid over-commercialization risks. Provide viable livelihoods linked to biodiversity conservation, particularly for youth and rural communities.

### 4.Awareness and engagement

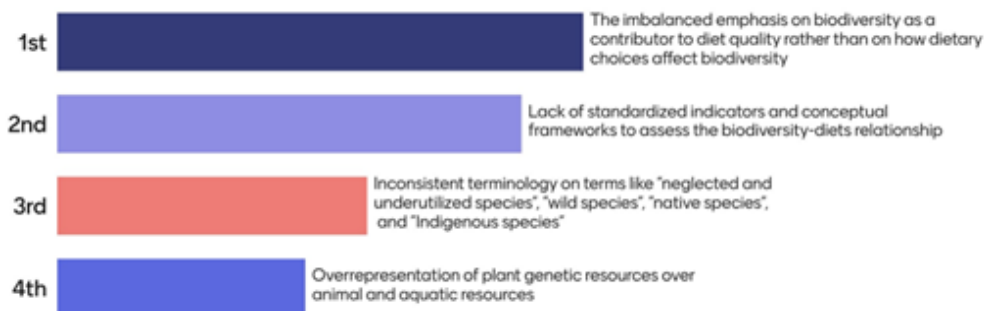
Prioritize education as the foundation for awareness, integrating biodiversity–nutrition linkages into formal curricula and informal training. Use social media, storytelling and digital tools to make biodiversity visible and relatable, while mitigating misinformation and access gaps. Strengthen community dialogue platforms that foster ownership, collective action and intergenerational exchange. Focus awareness on consumer choices, showing how daily decisions directly shape biodiversity and nutrition outcomes.

## Youth recommendations on the cross-cutting initiative

### Breakout 1 (developing and documenting knowledge):

- Youth emphasized that understanding consumer behavior is the top priority for advancing the biodiversity–nutrition agenda. They think that choices around eating habits and preferences strongly influence what farmers cultivate, which in turn shapes biodiversity outcomes;
- Youth also see ecosystem-level research as equally vital, since healthy soils, plants and animals underpin diverse and resilient agrifood systems;
- Youth identified the limited attention to how dietary choices affect biodiversity, compared to the stronger focus on biodiversity as a driver of diet quality; and
- Recommendations included investing Youth recommended greater investment in research on consumer choices, the development of shared concepts and frameworks and broadening biodiversity research to include multiple scientific fields.





## Breakout 2 (integrating biodiversity, food and nutrition issues into research and policy instruments):

- Youth prioritized the food environment as the level needing the most attention to strengthen the biodiversity–nutrition link, highlighting that accessibility, availability and quality of food directly influence dietary diversity and biodiversity outcomes;
- Youth highlighted examples of national and regional frameworks such as Ghana's Food-Based Dietary Guidelines, the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Nepal's National Agroecological Roadmap, which aim to align agriculture and nutrition with sustainability goals;
- Youth highlighted global instruments, including the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition and REDD+ policies, especially where they affect Indigenous peoples and ecosystem services;
- Youth identified school feeding programmes as key entry points for linking nutrition with biodiversity, alongside policies promoting farmer cooperatives, integrated pest management and reducing food waste and pesticide use; and
- Youth noted a lack of awareness of concrete policies in their local contexts, underlining the gap between policy frameworks and community-level recognition or empowerment of women, Indigenous and marginalized groups.

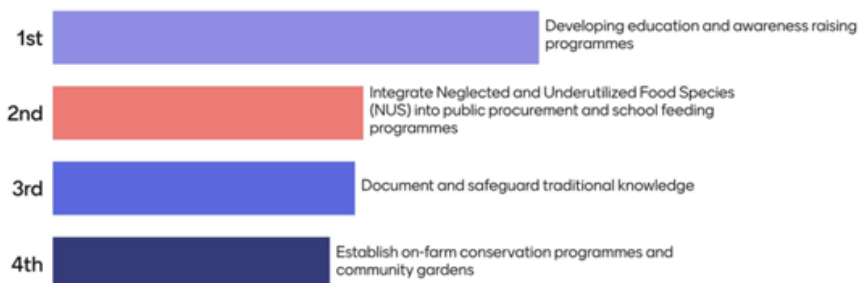


### **Breakout 3 (conserve and promote the wider use of biodiversity for food and nutrition):**

- Youth revealed diverse country perspectives on conserving and promoting biodiversity for food and nutrition.
- In the Philippines, efforts are in early stages, focusing on native fruit trees with limited projects.
- In Nepal subsistence farming dominates, with biodiversity's nutritional role underrecognized; youth emphasized the need for education before conservation can succeed.
- In Zambia, advocacy against monocropping and NGO-led diversification is growing, yet youth remain partially excluded from policymaking.
- Zimbabwe shows success in adding value to indigenous fruits, driving demand, but risks over-commercialization, which is now being addressed through innovations.
- Kenya showed strong community interest, particularly through integrating neglected and underutilized species (NUS) into school meals, though funding and policy remain weak.
- Peru is putting effort on the preservation of native seeds but youth face challenges;
- Youth agreed that young people are motivated and innovative, but they lack recognition, policy support and viable livelihood opportunities. Education was seen as the first critical step to enabling conservation, while stronger policies and investment are needed to sustain community-driven solutions;
- Youth highlighted that nearly 76 percent of participants believe biodiversity promotion for food and nutrition is only moderate in their communities, indicating early-stage or limited efforts. These results highlight the need for stronger education, policy support and youth involvement to effectively advance biodiversity in agrifood systems; and



- Youth ranked the development of education and awareness-raising programmes as the top priority action to conserve biodiversity for food and nutrition, based on BFN projects presented in Brazil, Kenya, Türkiye and Sri Lanka, emphasizing knowledge and engagement as the foundation for effective action.



#### Breakout 4 (public awareness):

- Youth agreed that awareness is key to shape consumer choices, since what people eat directly affect biodiversity outcomes. The supply chain was also seen as important but harder for the public to understand, requiring better storytelling. The ecosystem dimension was recognized, but participants felt it was harder to translate into individual-level actions;
- Youth emphasized education as the top priority – both in schools and through informal training. Social media and digital platforms were seen as powerful channels to engage diverse groups, though risks of misinformation and unequal access were noted; and
- Youth highlighted the importance of community dialogue and participatory spaces to build ownership and foster collective action. Many agreed that combining approaches, rather than relying on a single channel, would be most effective in driving behavior change.

