



PHOTO CREDIT

YOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS

AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS AND NDCS 3.0



WORLD
FOOD
FORUM



GLOBAL
YOUTH
ACTION



Youth
ASSEMBLY



Table of Contents

Introduction	01
Consultative process	02
Aknowledgments	03
Overarching message.....	04
Key messages	04
01 Capacity development and education	05
02 Climate finance	07
03 Mitigation	08
04 Adaptation and resilience	09
05 Gender equality and inclusive participation	10
Call to action	11



INTRODUCTION

This outcome document presents the consolidated findings of a global youth consultation process on integrating agrifood systems into the third generation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs 3.0). With the 2025 update cycle as a critical juncture for enhancing climate ambition, this process was initiated to gather youth perspectives, innovative solutions and concrete recommendations for shaping sustainable agrifood systems within national climate strategies.

Youth face higher risks from the impacts of climate change, in part due to limited access to information, resources and decision-making processes. This holds true for youth driving change towards more sustainable and resilient agrifood systems, particularly rural and marginalized youth, including young women, who often experience exclusion from institutional platforms.

Youth are not just future leaders; they are essential, active partners in crafting climate solutions today. This is evidenced through a total of 88 percent of NDCs in this cycle including a stronger commitment to the meaningful inclusion of youth in NDC development and implementation, a growth from 60 percent in previous NDCs.

In an effort to ensure that youth voices are forefront in climate policy discussions, the findings herein reflect the collective voice of young people from diverse regions and backgrounds, aiming to inform policymakers and stakeholders on the road to the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) and beyond.



CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

This outcome document is the product of a comprehensive, multi-modal youth consultation led by the [World Food Forum \(WFF\) Youth Assembly](#) and its partner organizations. The process was designed to ensure broad and inclusive participation.

The initial phase consisted of a global online consultation that brought together more than 200 young leaders, policymakers and experts. Through expert inputs and interactive breakout group discussions on key themes, this session provided a foundational understanding of NDCs 3.0 and generated initial youth insights.

Building on this momentum, a follow-up hybrid consultation was held during the WFF flagship event at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy. This session deepened the dialogue, allowing for in-person and virtual interactions. It featured focused breakout group discussions that enabled detailed exploration of capacity building, finance, mitigation and adaptation, enriching the initial findings with deep on-the-ground perspectives.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This consultative process and outcome document were made possible through the collaborative efforts and dedicated contributions of many individuals and organizations. We extend our sincere gratitude to:

- The [WFF Youth Policy Board](#) (YPB) members for their leadership and vision.
- Our core Partner Organizations: [YOUNGO](#) Food and Agriculture Working Group, the [NAM Youth Organization](#) (NAMO), the [International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences](#) (IAAS), and [ProVeg International](#) for their invaluable collaboration and outreach.
- The members of the [WFF Young Scientist Group](#) for their valuable feedback to the consultations.
- The FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment for its essential technical support and guidance throughout the process.

Finally, we thank every young participant who shared their insights and commitment to shaping a sustainable future for our global agrifood systems.



OVERARCHING MESSAGE

To ensure the agrifood systems transformation envisioned in NDCs 3.0 is ambitious, inclusive and just, youth must be engaged as key partners in its design and implementation. They bring innovation, demand accountability and are uniquely positioned to bridge the gap between high-level policy and grassroots action. Integrating their perspectives on capacity development, finance, mitigation and adaptation is not optional; it is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable and resilient agrifood systems on the road to COP30 and beyond.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Capacity development and education: Current systems often fail to equip youth with the practical skills, resources and inclusive platforms needed for agrifood climate action. A radical shift from top-down to co-created, experiential learning is required to build a capable and motivated generation.

2. Climate finance: Youth-led agrifood systems initiatives are affected by inaccessible funding mechanisms, complex application processes and a pervasive perception of risk. Unlocking youth potential requires targeted, simplified and trust-based finance, including blended models and micro-funding.

3. Mitigation: While dietary shifts and food waste reduction are recognized, a significant implementation gap persists. NDCs 3.0 must move beyond food production-focused mitigation to embrace a holistic and systemic approach that values innovation while respecting cultural contexts and traditional knowledge.

4. Adaptation and resilience: Building climate-resilient agrifood systems necessitates integrating Indigenous knowledge with scientific innovation. Youth call for strengthened extension services, climate-resilient resources and policies that are informed by local realities and co-designed with communities.

5. Gender equality and inclusive participation: Meaningful youth engagement must be foundational, not tokenistic. This requires dismantling barriers to participation for young women and marginalized groups, ensuring their representation in decision-making and embedding gender-transformative approaches in all climate policies.



01. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Key findings:

1. A significant gap exists between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Youth consistently reported that education systems are heavy on theory but lack hands-on, experiential learning opportunities. This gap leaves them unprepared to implement projects on the ground, from managing initiatives to applying climate-smart agricultural techniques. As noted in consultations,

"For a young person who wants to create positive change, theoretical knowledge alone is not enough, without practical experience, it is difficult to apply what is learned in books to real-world challenges".

2. Top-down policy and educational approaches are often ineffective and exclusionary.

Youth emphasized that policies are often developed without their input, leading to initiatives that do not address their real needs. Tokenistic inclusion was strongly rejected in favor of working with youth, not just talking to them.

3. Agriculture suffers from a critical image problem and lack of viable career pathways.

In many regions, agriculture is perceived as an outdated sector, often associated with poverty and hardship. Changing this narrative is essential to attract young talent to agriculture and rural areas. Furthermore, even interested youth face barriers such as a lack of access to markets, funding and clear, attractive career pathways, causing many to abandon their efforts.

4. Digital and financial barriers limit access to existing capacity development tools.

While free digital platforms and online courses were highlighted as valuable resources, their accessibility is hampered by limited awareness and the fundamental costs of devices and internet connectivity. Additionally, youth noted that a lack of project management and resource mobilization skills directly impede their ability to launch and sustain initiatives.



5. Leveraging and reforming existing systems is key to scalable impact.

Youth identified concrete opportunities for reform, including:

- Revamping education: Incorporating practical field trips that encourage dialogue and exchange, rather than passive observation.
- University leadership: Empowering universities to act as hubs for innovation and community engagement.
- Incentive models: Applying government incentives to attract youth to revitalize rural areas and agriculture, similar to models used in other sectors.
- Community partnerships: Building trust with rural communities through long-term, collaborative partnerships to co-develop solutions.



02. CLIMATE FINANCE

Key findings:

1. Complex application and reporting processes often discourage youth-led organizations.

Youth often lack the capacity and knowledge to navigate complex application forms and meet demanding reporting requirements. They called for practical toolkits and technical assistance sessions to support them from application to implementation and reporting.

2. The perceived high risk of youth initiatives limits access to capital.

Financial institutions and donors often view youth-led projects as risky investments. Youth proposed solutions such as blended finance models to de-risk investments for the private sector, tax facilitations for young farmers and entrepreneurs and fiscal advantages to make youth engagement more attractive to businesses.

3. Innovative funding mechanisms are crucial for grassroots action.

Youth highlighted several underutilized models that could be scaled:

- Microfinancing and community micro-grants: Providing low-interest, collateral-free loans, especially for women and small-scale farmers.
- Insurance systems: Helping farmers manage climate-related risks and avoiding total loss.
- Public-private partnerships: Fostering partnerships with the banking systems to simplify currency transfers and credit access.

4. Bureaucracy and lack of connections create significant barriers.

Overly bureaucratic processes for accessing fiscal benefits are costly in terms of both time and money. Furthermore, youth often lack the connections to directly pitch their ideas to decision-makers and boards, hindering their ability to establish credibility and secure funding.

5. Support must extend beyond production to include value addition and market access.

Finance is needed not only for building the resilience of agrifood systems but also for overcoming market barriers. Youth pointed out that small farmers often struggle to sell their goods, while larger players dominate market access. Financial instruments should support entire value chains, with tailored support for innovative sectors like hydroponics and aquaponics.



03.MITIGATION

Key findings:

1. Food waste reduction is a primary, actionable mitigation opportunity with cross-cutting benefits.

Youth from various countries identified reducing food loss and waste as a highly impactful and tangible solution. Initiatives like creating food banks, advocating for supportive local policies and raising community awareness were highlighted as successful entry points for youth-led action.

2. Sustainable diets are recognized but require culturally sensitive and accessible advocacy.

Youth acknowledged the mitigation benefits of shifting towards plant-based diets but stressed the importance of context. Factors like cultural traditions, allergies and health considerations must be central. The focus should be on reduction and awareness rather than a one-size-fits-all prescription, allowing individuals to adapt their diets purposefully.

3. Resistance to innovation and technology hinders the adoption of efficient practices.

In some regions, a strong reliance on traditional methods limits the adoption of innovations such as hydroponics, precision agriculture and water-efficient technologies. Youth called for better advocacy and demonstration to show how innovation can coexist with and enhance traditional practices for quality and sustainability.

4. NDCs rarely adopt a systems approach, focusing narrowly on production.

Youth reported that their countries' climate strategies are predominantly focused on making agricultural production more sustainable, while largely ignoring significant emission sources and mitigation opportunities in transportation, processing, packaging and consumption. A more comprehensive systems approach is needed.

5. Data collection and communication are foundational for effective mitigation.

Youth see a critical role for themselves in community-based data collection and using digital platforms to improve monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) systems. Better data is essential for setting accurate indicators, tracking progress and informing effective mitigation policies.



04. ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Key findings:

1. Indigenous and traditional knowledge is an undervalued resource for adaptation.

Youth emphasized that practices such as intercropping, crop rotation and using Indigenous knowledge for early warnings (e.g., observing bird migration) are proven, cost-effective adaptation strategies. They called for these practices to be recognized, documented and up-scaled through national policies and support systems.

2. Limited access to climate-resilient seeds and robust extension services are critical barriers.

Youth identified a severe lack of access to climate-resilient seeds and weak agricultural extension services as major vulnerabilities. Strengthening these services and ensuring legal recognition and access to adapted seed varieties, including those developed through both scientific and traditional means, is essential for smallholder farmers.

3. Agroecology and nature-based solutions are preferred pathways for building resilience.

Youth consistently advocated for approaches including regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and diversified cropping systems. These methods not only enhance ecosystem health and carbon sequestration but also build systemic resilience to climate shocks by promoting biodiversity and soil health.

4. Adaptation plans must be context-specific and reflect local realities.

Youth stressed that national adaptation strategies are often too generic. Effective adaptation must be tailored to specific climate hazards (droughts, floods), local ecosystems and the particular vulnerabilities of smallholder farmers, including issues of land tenure security. Policies designed without this grassroots perspective risk being ineffective or even maladaptive.

5. Youth can be powerful agents in monitoring and data-driven adaptation.

Youth expressed strong desire to contribute to MRV systems through community-based data collection, digital tools and storytelling. However, they face barriers such as limited technical training, gaps in digital infrastructure and limited institutional trust in youth-generated data. Building capacity in this area is a key opportunity.



05. GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

Key findings:

1. Women and marginalized groups in agrifood systems face disproportionate climate impacts.

Youth underlined that climate commitments often overlook the specific gender dimensions of agrifood systems. Barriers include the limited representation of women in decision-making, inadequate recognition of unpaid care work and a lack of sex-disaggregated data, which masks unequal impacts and needs.

2. Inclusive participation requires engagement at every stage of the process.

For participation to be inclusive, marginalized groups must be integrated at every stage of the NDC process. From participation in vulnerability and GHG assessments, to development, implementation, and MRV processes. Inclusion from the beginning ensures collective ownership of the NDC and that their specific needs and ideas are reflected in the outcomes. As summarized by a young person in the consultations: "We must avoid merely talking to youth and marginalized groups; instead, we should work with them".

3. Targeted financial and capacity development support for women is essential.

Participants highlighted the effectiveness of mechanisms like microfinancing for women without collateral requirements. They also called for support for community-driven, women-led adaptation projects to ensure that finance and resources reach those who are most active and vulnerable on the frontlines.

4. Enabling environments must address structural inequalities.

Beyond project-level inclusion, youth emphasized the need for systemic change, including integrating gender-transformative approaches into NDCs. This involves ensuring equal participation of young women in national consultations, addressing land tenure security and creating policies that actively remove structural barriers to their empowerment in agrifood systems.



CALL TO ACTION

This outcome, produced from diverse youth voices across global consultations, affirms the non-negotiable role of youth in shaping the agrifood systems of tomorrow through NDCs 3.0. We are ready to be partners in implementation, not just beneficiaries of policy.

We call on:

Governments and policymakers to:

- Co-design NDCs 3.0 with youth, ensuring our inputs are meaningfully integrated into mitigation, adaptation, finance and capacity-building plans.
- Reform education and extension systems to be practical, inclusive and accessible to rural youth.

International organizations and climate funds to:

- Establish accessible and flexible finance mechanisms with streamlined application processes tailored for youth and community-led organizations.
- Prioritize capacity-building programmes that bridge the gap between theory and practice, focusing on project management, leadership and resource mobilization.
- Institutionalize youth participation in official MRV systems and climate reporting frameworks.

Civil society and academia to:

- Expand platforms for peer-to-peer learning, mentorship and the exchange of traditional and innovative knowledge.
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues that connect youth with policymakers and private sector actors.

Private sector and food industry to:

- Develop partnerships with youth-led enterprises, providing not just funding but also mentorship and market access.
- Adopt transparent reporting on supply chain emissions and actively support a just transition for smallholder farmers.

Youth worldwide to:

- Continue mobilizing, leveraging advocacy, data-driven initiatives and local consultations to hold leaders accountable.
- Take initiative, build skills and seek to participate in the spaces where decisions about our future are being made.