



Concept note

Virtual Youth Consultation on Ocean Sustainability

Background

The World Food Forum (WFF)'s Global Youth Action Initiative aims to empower youth to drive agrifood systems transformation through year-round thematic programmes. Central to this work is the Youth Assembly, a platform where young people, through consultations and action, shape solutions for sustainable agrifood systems.

Fisheries and aquaculture have become a key focus of the Youth Assembly, leading to the creation of a global Youth Constituency that gathers diverse perspectives and supports youth-led innovations in sustainable aquatic food systems.

In the lead-up to the 2026 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Committee on Fisheries (COFI37), The Youth Assembly will soon launch a series of consultations to ensure voices of young fishers, fish farmers and fish workers across the value chain are included in critical discussions on sector challenges and solutions.

The first consultation will take place on 20 May 2025, marking the beginning of the consultation process. The outcomes will contribute to shaping key messages and outputs for the side event organized by FAO at the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference: *"From legacy to leadership: Youth-led solutions for ocean sustainability"*.

This event, celebrating FAO's 80th anniversary, will contribute to elevating and strengthening the voice of youth in decision-making processes related to the sector.

The virtual consultation and the event will be the first of several steps towards COFI37, forming a roadmap designed to strengthen youth participation in shaping the future of sustainable, productive and resilient aquatic food systems.

Throughout this process, the Youth Constituency on Fisheries and Aquaculture will play a central role in mobilizing young stakeholders, collecting regional inputs and co-developing policy recommendations.

Proposal and objectives

The virtual consultation will convene youth and young professionals working in fisheries and aquaculture to shape collective positions, solutions and recommendations. These outcomes will inform the side event at the UN Ocean Conference.

Key objectives include:

- **Identify youth-driven priorities, challenges and solutions** within the following thematic areas:
 - Data and science;
 - Capacity development; and
 - Effective management.
- **Co-develop actionable recommendations** that will inform the youth-led outcome statement for the side event, contributing to the broader Youth Assembly process.
- **Strengthen youth networks** and engagement mechanisms, ensuring sustained momentum and coordinated efforts across different youth-led realities in fisheries and aquaculture

Format and structure

Date: 20 May 2025, First session at 9:30 AM CEST;

Duration: One hour

To accommodate participants across different time zones, the consultation will be held twice at different times, following the same format and content.

- **Session 1:** 09:30–10:30 CET
- **Session 2:** 15:30–16:30 CET

Format: Virtual (Zoom) with breakout sessions

Participants:

- Young fishers, fish farmers, fish workers and professionals as well as students in fisheries, aquaculture, marine science and environmental policy.
- Youth Assembly Stakeholders (Youth Policy Board, Partner Organizations, Youth Representatives, Young Scientist Group and WFF National Youth Chapters).
- Representatives from youth organizations (e.g., Youth Water Forum, World Youth Parliament for Water).

Draft agenda

Section	Topic
Opening and introduction	Welcome and opening; context of the consultation; overview of objectives and methodology.
Thematic breakout sessions	Challenges & solutions for: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Data, science and research</i>;2. <i>Capacity development</i>; and3. <i>Effective management</i> in fisheries and aquaculture.
Discussion about and presentation of key insights from each breakout group.	
Outcomes, next steps in the lead-up to the UN Ocean Conference and an invitation to remain engaged.	

Expected outcomes

- **Shared vision:** A clear outcome statement developed by youth to guide engagement through COFI and beyond. This will highlight core themes and action points identified across all breakout sessions.
- **Stronger youth coalition:** A commitment to strengthening collaboration, coordination and youth engagement through the constituency.

Are you a young fisher, fish farmer, student or professional passionate about the future of our ocean and aquatic food systems? This is your chance to make your voice heard and drive change.