



YOUTH CALL FOR ACTION:

Empowering youth in forestry and agriculture



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International
FORESTRY
STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION



MEDITERRANEAN YOUTH
TASK FORCE





Youth call for action: Empowering youth in forestry and agriculture

We, the Youth, recognize the critical role of forests and agriculture in addressing global challenges such as climate change, food insecurity and biodiversity loss. As the largest generation in history, we are committed to driving innovation, sustainability and equity in the forestry and agriculture sectors. However, systemic barriers such as limited access to education, decent employment, funding and decision-making hinder our ability to contribute meaningfully. Building on the outcomes of the 2024 World Food Forum (WFF) Youth Assembly sessions and consultations, we present this call to action to governments, international organizations, private sector actors, academia and civil society. Together, we can unlock the potential of youth to transform forestry and agriculture for a sustainable future.

VISION

We envision a world where youth have equitable access to quality education, decent work and meaningful participation in decision-making processes within the forestry and agriculture sectors. By fostering innovation, inclusivity and intergenerational collaboration, we aim to build resilient, sustainable agrifood systems that serve both people and the planet.

MISSION

We, the Youth, are committed to driving transformative change in forestry and agriculture by:

- Advocating for inclusive policies and practices that empower youth;
- Leveraging modern technologies and Indigenous knowledge to advance sustainability;
- Promoting gender equality and the inclusion of marginalized groups; and
- Building partnerships across sectors to scale youth-led solutions.

Call to Action

1) ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Expand scholarships and capacity-building programmes: Increase scholarship funding, particularly in developing countries, and support targeted capacity-building initiatives that combine technical knowledge with socio-economic and political perspectives.
- Develop context-specific training programmes: Create vocational and technical education programmes that align with industry needs, integrating on-the-job training and mentorship opportunities.
- Promote intergenerational learning: Foster knowledge exchange between youth and experienced professionals to bridge gaps in skills and expertise.



2) CREATE DECENT WORK AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase investments in youth-led initiatives: Provide financial and technical support for youth entrepreneurship, small forestry businesses and agroforestry projects.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships: Collaborate with governments, private sector actors and academia to create internships, apprenticeships and employment opportunities for young professionals.
- Enhance market access: Support youth-led enterprises by improving access to markets, value chains and networking opportunities.

3) ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER YOUNG WOMEN

- Promote gender-inclusive practices: Ensure equitable recruitment, retention and leadership opportunities for young women in forestry and agriculture.
- Provide targeted training: Offer specialized programmes to address gender biases and empower young women with technical and leadership skills.
- Support young women-led initiatives: Establish funding mechanisms and mentorship networks to amplify the impact of young women-led projects.

4) ENSURE MEANINGFUL YOUTH REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

- Establish youth advisory boards: Integrate youth voices into global, regional and national forestry and agriculture governance structures.
- Avoid tokenization: Ensure youth participation is meaningful by including youth in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes.
- Enhance advocacy platforms: Create spaces for youth to engage with policymakers, share best practices, and influence policy agendas.

5) LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

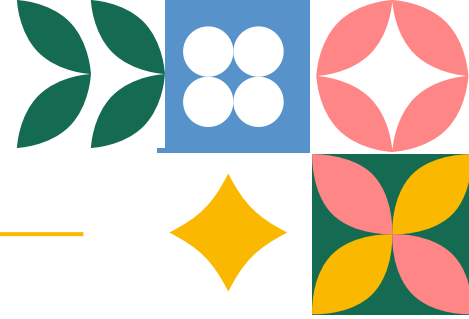
- Promote digital tools: Utilize platforms like Open Forests to enhance transparency, data accessibility and youth engagement in forest management.
- Integrate Indigenous practices: Recognize and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and rights into forestry and agriculture policies and practices.
- Foster innovation: Support youth-led research and development of nature-based solutions, agroforestry systems and sustainable practices.

6) ADDRESS SOCIAL STIGMA AND PROMOTE DIGNIFIED JOBS

- Shift perceptions: Launch awareness campaigns to highlight the value and dignity of careers in forestry and agriculture.
- Improve working conditions: Advocate for safer, better-paid and more attractive jobs for young workers, particularly in rural areas.
- Celebrate youth contributions: Showcase success stories of youth-led initiatives to inspire and attract more young people to the sector.

7) ENHANCE ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND FUNDING

- Simplify funding processes: Reduce bureaucratic barriers and establish youth-specific funding mechanisms to support innovative projects.
- Provide deed funding: Create grants and microfinance opportunities for youth-led startups and initiatives.
- Improve land access: Facilitate access to land and natural resources for young farmers and foresters.



8) FOSTER COLLABORATION ACROSS SECTORS

- Build multisectoral partnerships: Strengthen collaboration between governments, private sector actors, academia and civil society to address complex challenges.
- Promote knowledge exchange: Establish platforms for sharing best practices, experiences and innovative solutions across regions and sectors.
- Support youth networks: Strengthen global and regional youth networks to enhance collaboration, advocacy and capacity-building efforts.

Conclusion

The 2024 WFF Youth Assembly sessions and consultations have demonstrated the immense potential of youth to drive sustainable transformation in forestry and agriculture. By addressing systemic barriers and fostering inclusive, equitable and innovative solutions, we can unlock this potential and create a resilient future for all.

We call on all stakeholders to join us in this mission. Together, we can ensure that youth are heard and empowered to lead the way in building sustainable agrifood systems. The outcomes of these sessions and consultations will be integrated into the XV World Forestry Congress Youth Call to Action and the Committee on Forestry (COFO) Youth Roadmap, ensuring that youth-led solutions are institutionalized and scaled globally.

Let us work together to create a world where youth are at the forefront of sustainable forestry and agriculture, driving innovation, equity and resilience for future generations.