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# YOUTH CALL TO ACTION ADVANCING ONE HEALTH IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

Agrifood systems sit at the intersection of some of the most pressing challenges facing our generation. The health of people depends on safe and nutritious food. Food production depends on healthy animals, plants, soils and ecosystems. Climate change, biodiversity loss, antimicrobial resistance, emerging pests and diseases, and inequalities further demonstrate that these challenges cannot be addressed separately.

**One Health offers a way to connect them. We, the youth, can help turn that connection into action.**

Young people are farmers, food producers, researchers, animal, plant and human health professionals, entrepreneurs, students, community leaders and advocates. Across these roles, we can connect disciplines, institutions and communities that do not always work together. We can also help translate One Health from a global concept into locally relevant action.

Yet the potential of youth remains underused. Young people are frequently invited to participate in dialogues; however, they have fewer opportunities to shape programmes, contribute to implementation or access the resources and knowledge needed to lead action themselves. These barriers are even greater for youth in rural, pastoralist, Indigenous and underserved communities.

Through this Global Youth Forum on One Health in Agrifood Systems, young professionals representing organizations across sectors identified a shared priority: moving from participation in conversations to sustained participation in action.

We therefore call for an approach that equips young people to contribute, creates meaningful pathways for their participation and connects youth-led local action with national, regional and global One Health efforts.

# 1. WORK WITH US TO

## 1. Make youth participation part of how One Health decisions are made

Youth engagement should be embedded early in the process of One Health governance rather than organised only around individual events or consultations. We call for clear and inclusive mechanisms through which young people, especially young rural women and other underrepresented groups, can contribute to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of One Health policies and programmes in agrifood systems. These mechanisms should reflect the diversity of youth and create opportunities for rural, pastoralist, Indigenous, marginalised and other underrepresented young people to participate.

## 2. Enable youth to turn ideas into action

Participation should be accompanied by opportunities and resources to act. Young people need greater access to financing, mentorship, technical expertise, research opportunities, technology and institutional support to develop and implement One Health solutions. Support should enable young people to respond to challenges in the places where they study, work and live and to generate evidence about approaches that can be adapted or scaled.

## 3. Give young people the knowledge and tools to advance One Health

Young people need opportunities to understand One Health across disciplines and the practical skills to apply it. We call for interdisciplinary learning and capacity development that connects human, animal, plant and environmental health with agrifood systems. Young people should be equipped to collaborate across sectors, communicate science, engage communities, work with evidence and participate effectively in policy and implementation processes. We call for sustained spaces through which young people can access practical tools, expertise, learning opportunities and networks and adapt them for use in their communities, academic institutions and professional environments.

#### 4. Connect One Health ambitions with local realities

The value of One Health will ultimately be demonstrated through change on the ground. One Health policies and programmes should involve young people and communities in identifying priorities and designing, implementing and assessing interventions. Young people can contribute to awareness raising, pest and disease prevention, food safety, responsible antimicrobial use, environmental stewardship and resilient agrifood systems, while helping connect scientific evidence with local and intergenerational knowledge.

#### 5. Create continuity for youth collaboration through a global youth platform

Youth engagement cannot end when a forum, consultation or project concludes. We call for a sustained, youth-driven platform connecting young professionals working across One Health and agrifood systems. It should enable knowledge exchange, collaboration and access to opportunities and technical resources, while creating a two-way connection between youth-led action and the institutions responsible for One Health policies and programmes.

## 2. FROM CALLS TO COLLABORATIVE ACTION

In consideration of the calls above, we, the youth, propose the following actions that we can help develop and advance in collaboration with governments, international and regional institutions, academia, research, employers and the private sector. These actions recognize the distinct responsibilities and capacities of each stakeholder while positioning young people as active partners in their design, implementation and follow-up. These actions should be operationalized in accordance with the Core Principles for Meaningful Youth Participation.

### Governments and national policymakers

- Institutionalize youth participation through formal engagement mechanisms and dedicated indicators within ministries and government bodies, enabling young people to contribute to the development, implementation, and monitoring of One Health and agrifood policies.
- Create youth employment pathways, by integrating One Health careers into national workforce strategies and linking them to scholarships, training, public-sector recruitment and entrepreneurship programmes.
- Secure dedicated financing for youth engagement, by allocating a proportionate share of relevant ministry and programme budgets to youth participation, capacity development and youth-led One Health action.

### FAO and other international and regional institutions

- Make One Health knowledge globally available and accessible, by translating evidence and institutional processes into youth-friendly, locally relevant resources, disseminated through digital and offline channels.
- Build youth capacities and institutional connections, by providing mentorships, traineeships, internships and intergenerational exchanges that connect young people with One Health experts and institutions.
- Enable youth collaboration, by creating regional platforms that connect young people across sectors and disciplines and provide access to technical expertise and implementation opportunities.

## Academia, research institutions, employers and the private sector

- Expand access to One Health data and research, by making data more accessible, standardizing data collection and involving young researchers in generating evidence across diverse contexts.
- Create an enabling environment for research to inform practical solutions, by creating partnerships between academia, industry and employers that involve young people across stages of implementation of One Health innovations.
- Build One Health skills and career opportunities, by embedding One Health learning in relevant curricula and providing young people with research placements, internships and early-career opportunities.

## Youth networks and youth-led organizations

- Ensure collaboration across youth networks by connecting farmers, students and community leaders across disciplines and geographies and maintaining regular exchange beyond individual events and projects.
- Translate knowledge into local action, by adapting One Health information to local contexts, sharing it through accessible channels, promoting awareness and community activities.
- Bring youth and community perspectives into One Health processes, by gathering experiences and local and Indigenous knowledge from youth networks and communicating them through existing national, regional and global engagement channels.
- Strengthen engagement and partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous youth, to support their leadership and meaningful participation as environmental stewards and agents of sustainable change, while promoting the recognition and sharing of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge in One Health spaces.

# 3. FROM PARTICIPATION TO ACTION

Our ask is not simply for more opportunities to participate. We call for the conditions that enable youth participation to translate into sustained action: knowledge and skills, resources, institutional pathways, collaboration, and meaningful roles in implementation and decision-making.

This Forum should be a starting point, not an endpoint. We call on FAO and other international and regional institutions to work with youth to establish a sustained Global Youth Platform for One Health in Agrifood Systems, creating a space for young One Health professionals across regions, agencies, disciplines and sectors to connect beyond individual events and initiatives. The platform should enable young people to exchange knowledge and experience, build professional networks, coordinate and develop collaborative action, connect local initiatives with regional and global processes, and collectively contribute to policy dialogue and advocacy for One Health in agrifood systems.

The platform should build on and connect existing youth networks rather than duplicate them, creating a bridge between young people working on the ground and the institutions shaping One Health policies and programmes. Through this mechanism, youth can bring local realities, emerging evidence and diverse perspectives into institutional processes, while gaining access to the knowledge, partnerships and opportunities needed to translate ideas into action.

We, as young people, are ready to help build and sustain this platform. We are prepared to mobilize our networks, share knowledge, connect disciplines and generations, engage our communities, develop and implement solutions, and bring youth and community perspectives into One Health processes.

Advancing One Health requires more than inviting youth into the conversation. It requires creating the structures through which we can work together over time. We invite FAO and its partners to build this platform with us, turning this Forum into sustained collaboration, youth participation into partnership and partnership into action.