

This document contains the Summary and Recommendations of the 16th report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) “Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems”.

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FOREWORD

It is commonplace to say that youth are the future of humankind. Indeed, as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)¹ acknowledged in its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2020–2023, young people are one of the keys to achieving sustainable development, particularly in developing countries, where the vast majority of them reside, often in rural areas. Applied to agriculture and food systems, this easy observation must be coupled with vigilance, since the employment and engagement of young people in these sectors are also crucial for the future of our food.

There is a large, untapped reservoir of employment opportunities in the agri-food sector. Yet today's youth live in a world facing a confluence of crises, including climate and environmental change and global inequalities in food security, nutrition, employment and human well-being. These existing trends have been highlighted and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, so the need for a radical transformation of global and local food systems has never been more pressing while, in many countries, despite the great diversity of contexts, the observation is the same: it is urgent to strengthen the appeal of agriculture and food systems to young people in order to secure the future. The potential returns of investing in young people are boundless in terms of food security, poverty reduction, employment generation, as well as peace and political stability.

¹ The Committee on World Food Security is, at the global level, the foremost inclusive and evidence-based international and intergovernmental platform for food security and nutrition. Lessons derived from the food crisis of 2007–2008 and the economic crisis of 2009 led to the reform of the CFS and the formation of the High Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition so that decisions and the work of CFS are based on hard evidence of state-of-the-art knowledge.

Poor access to land, natural resources, infrastructure, finance, technology and knowledge and low remuneration for workers and producers turn youth away from food systems. As a result, many feel that their best option is to migrate, either to urban areas or abroad. Actions are needed to make the agri-food sector more attractive to young people and to promote their capacities to generate incomes.

Youth engagement and leadership are intrinsically linked to countless aspects of achieving food security and good nutrition for all. Among these aspects, interlinkages with gender equality and women’s empowerment, the rural–urban continuum, and innovative practices and technologies, including new uses of data and knowledge-sharing platforms, are particularly relevant.

The CFS calls for the development of systems, policies and programmes that engage more youth in agriculture and agricultural professions. Their development will constitute a workstream that will strengthen recognition of youth agency, autonomy and diversity in relation to food security and nutrition.

To inform this important workstream, the CFS MYPoW for 2020–2023 requested the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE)² of the CFS to prepare a report that would (1) review the opportunities for and constraining factors to youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, (2) examine aspects related to employment, salaries and working conditions, (3) review rules, regulations and policy approaches, including territorial approaches, aimed at addressing the complexity of structural economic, cultural, social and spatial transformations currently taking place globally, and (4) explore the potential of food systems and enhanced rural–urban linkages to provide more and better jobs for women and youth.

² The High Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) is the science–policy interface of the CFS. HLPE reports serve as a common, evidence-based starting point for the multi-stakeholder process of policy convergence in the CFS.

This report offers some important take-home messages:

- Youth are on the front lines to build the food systems of the future, while also bearing significant risks from climate change, social and economic inequities, and political marginalization.
- Food systems provide a wide spectrum of opportunities for the engagement and employment of young people across diverse global contexts, but do not always provide decent and meaningful jobs, nor adequate livelihoods.
- In response, policies and initiatives to protect and strengthen youth engagement and employment in food systems need to be based on the pillars of rights, equity, agency and recognition. The redistribution of resources, knowledge and opportunities for youth innovation and engagement in the development of context-specific employment and labour policies can not only contribute to creating jobs for youth, but can also directly support transitions to sustainable food systems.

I would like to acknowledge the engagement and commitment of all HLPE experts who worked on the elaboration of this report, especially the HLPE Project Team Leader, Hannah Wittman (Canada), assisted by Evan Bowness (University of British Columbia), and Project Team Members: Indika Arulingam (Sri Lanka), Jim Leandro Cano (Philippines), Catherine Mungai (Kenya), Mariaelena Huambachano (Peru and New Zealand), Anna Korzenszky (Hungary), Paola Termine (Italy) and Ben White (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

It is equally fair to acknowledge the huge contribution that all HLPE Steering Committee members have made over the last decade to improve our understanding of food security and nutrition and to provide evidence-based advice to the CFS and other actors in the global food security community.

I would like to commend and thank the HLPE Secretariat for its precious support to the work of the HLPE. The global pandemic meant that all of the Steering Committee's meetings and deliberations had to be virtual, and this presented additional challenges and work from the Secretariat to ensure that progress on the report was maintained. This report also benefited greatly from the suggestions of external peer reviewers and from the comments provided by an even larger-than-usual number of experts and institutions, both on the scope and on the first draft of the report.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank those partners who provide effective and continuous financial support to the work of the HLPE and thus contribute to keeping the impartiality, objectivity and widely recognized quality of its proceedings and reports.

The COVID-19 pandemic serves as a timely reminder of the fragility of our global food systems and of the importance and urgency of the work that we do to foster international coordination of a global strategic framework for food security and nutrition to end hunger. One of the main components of this global framework is to promote youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems.

I wish you a pleasant discovery and reading of this report!

Martin Cole

Chairperson, Steering Committee
of the CFS HLPE, June 2021



SUMMARY

Unemployment rates for youth are three times higher than for adults in all world regions, and a vast majority of unemployed youth are young women. Among people who do have jobs, youth have a higher incidence of working poverty and vulnerable employment than adults. Youth also face serious barriers in accessing land, credit and other productive assets for establishing their own livelihoods, and many young people lack the right to representation in workers' unions or producers' organizations.

At the same time, today's young people are on the front lines of the transformation of agriculture and food systems. They are coping with the effects of environmental and climate change, which are likely to accelerate and intensify during their lifetimes. These problems have been exacerbated by the social and economic impacts of COVID-19, which has put lives, jobs and livelihoods at risk and is having serious effects on both food supplies and demand worldwide.

Already prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, young people were growing up in a world not on track to achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to food security, a world where a third of the population is affected by at least one form of malnutrition. Global inequalities persist and grow, and there is increasing concern over the crisis of youth employment within and beyond agriculture and food systems, henceforth referred to simply as "food systems". This fragility presents profound consequences for the realization of the human right to food, to employment, to a healthy environment and to overall well-being, not only for youth but for all generations.

In October 2019, at its 46th session, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) to prepare a report to review the opportunities for and constraints to youth engagement and employment in sustainable food systems. This report articulates a conceptual framework to understand the role of youth as agents of change in the transformation

of food systems. The report analyses specific policy themes, such as employment, resources, knowledge and innovations, to articulate recommendations to enhance youth's role in food systems and contribute to meeting SDG 2 targets and the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The report assesses the opportunities and challenges for youth engagement and employment in food systems to be part of an urgent readjustment of social and economic life towards an *economy of well-being*. This approach envisions re-balancing relations between human and living nature – especially in the face of climate and health crises – towards upholding the right to food, dignified and rewarding livelihoods, and relationships based on cooperation and solidarity. The goal of “living well” requires a *holistic* perspective, challenging business-as-usual approaches to economic growth and acknowledging that youth transitions and their engagement in food systems are shaped by the intersections of multiple factors and structural constraints.

This report provides a synthesis of policy recommendations for promoting the engagement and employment of young people in food systems. The recommended actions will require that **states, civil society, farmers' and workers' organizations, the private sector, social movements, and youth themselves** work together with the aim to realize a fundamental transformation of food systems towards sustainability, well-being and food sovereignty. This report summarizes the range of institutions, approaches, policies and actions that can promote young people's inclusive, equitable, productive and rewarding engagement in renewing food systems.

KEY MESSAGES

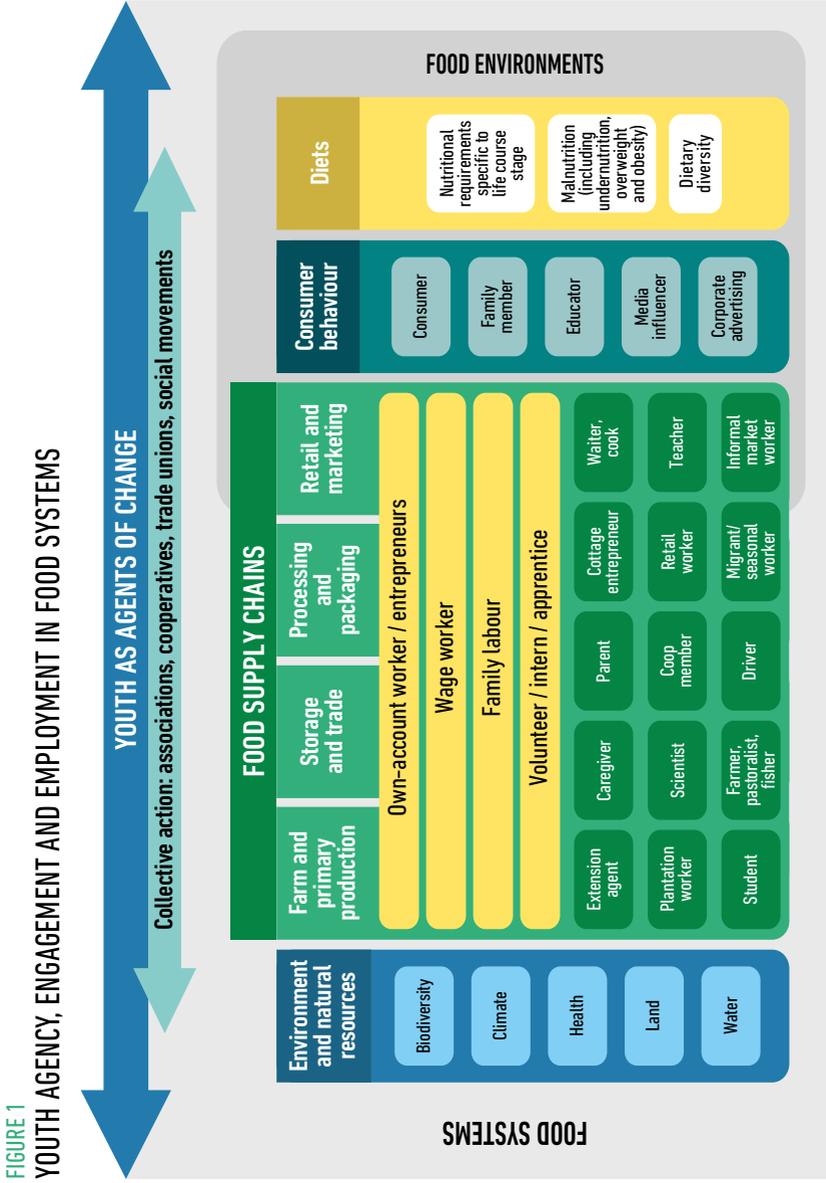
- Food systems are **the largest employer of young people**, particularly in the Global South, yet they often **do not provide decent and meaningful work or adequate livelihood opportunities**, nor maintain a balance between the needs and rights of different generations.
- Approaches and policies to strengthen youth engagement and employment in food systems need to be based on the pillars of **rights, equity, agency and recognition**.
- **Youth require support, including redistributive and mediated market policies**, to access land, water, forests, labour, knowledge, information, agricultural extension, finance, credit, markets, technology and supporting institutions for sustainable food systems transformation.

- Context-specific **employment and labour market policies** at global, national and local levels not only can contribute to creating jobs for youth but **can also directly support transitions to sustainable food systems** by restoring the natural resource base, strengthening social and physical infrastructure, and contributing to territorial markets and food security.
- Youth-centred innovation for sustainable food systems involves developing assemblages of old and new systems of knowledge and practice, with more democratic and inclusive governance and organizational models. **Digital technologies have the potential to “expand knowledge democracy”, but ongoing digital divides must be overcome** so that these benefits are not concentrated on only those youth with access to high levels of financial capital.

RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE IN FOOD SYSTEMS

As shown in the report, youth are active in many roles and spaces across food systems (**Figure 1**).

Across these spaces, the world’s young people seek economically rewarding, intellectually stimulating and meaningful careers, and creating opportunities for young people will require a significant redistribution of resources towards sustainable, inclusive, healthy and climate-resilient food systems. This includes important changes to the structure of landholdings, technologies and their use, to capabilities and opportunities for diverse populations, and to the distribution and dynamics of the population and labour force. Such a transformation will generate multiple benefits, including improved education, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, increased incomes for small-scale farmers, and empowerment of women and youth. These benefits will translate to transformed and thriving livelihoods and communities.



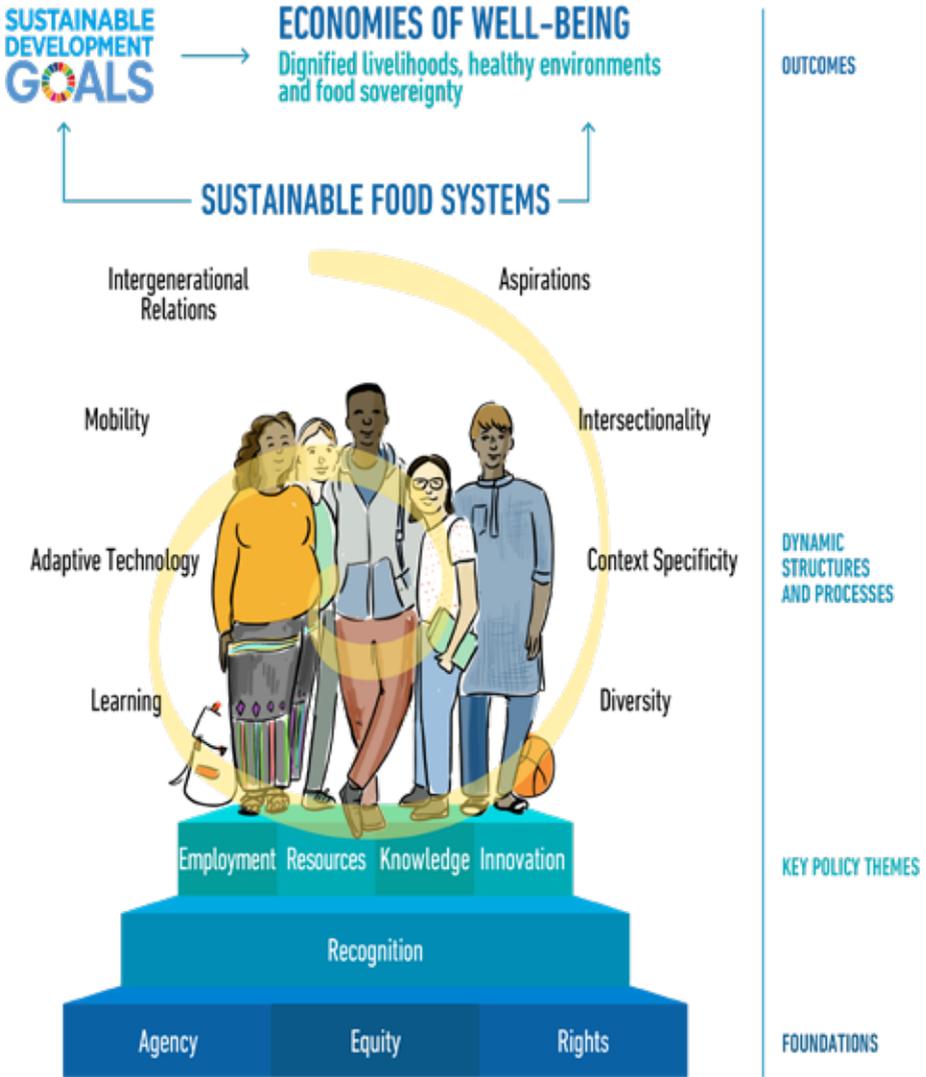
SOURCE: ELABORATED BY AUTHORS BASED ON HLPE (2017, 2020a).

The latest HLPE report (HLPE, 2020a) both recognizes the need for a radical transformation of food systems and notes that solutions to food security and nutrition challenges must be context specific and be built on a diverse set of enabling governance conditions. This report takes the next step – to show that the realization of the transformation required for sustainable food systems in the next generation must be built on a foundation of agency, rights, equity and recognition of the role of **youth as agents of change across all dimensions of food systems**. For many countries currently experiencing high levels of youth unemployment and disenfranchisement, investments in resources, knowledge and skills targeted to address the structural challenges facing young people represent the best hope of achieving the SDGs and the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Yet, effectively harnessing youth skills and energies for sustainable food systems will require significant efforts for the redistribution of power needed to transform existing social, political and economic relationships and conditions within and across countries, as barriers in access to resources, education and dignified work are often the results of inadequate legal frameworks and insufficient domestic and international resource mobilization and commitment.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO FULLY ENGAGE YOUTH IN FOOD SYSTEMS

The report’s policy recommendations build on a conceptual framework that illustrates the importance of **recognizing** young people’s rights, equity and agency as essential foundations for building sustainable food systems of the future. Policies to support youth employment and engagement in food systems must recognize the diversity, intersectionality, and context specificity of youth aspirations and experience across the globe; revitalize diverse knowledge and action pathways, including through intergenerational relations and adaptive technology; facilitate youth mobility and innovation; and address structural inequality.

FIGURE 2
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO FULLY ENGAGE YOUTH IN FOOD SYSTEMS



SOURCE: ELABORATED BY AUTHORS WITH ILLUSTRATION BY SAM BRADD.

Youth engagement and employment in sustainable food systems is thus simultaneously *a goal to be realized* and a *means* for the radical transformation of food systems, the achievement of SDGs and economies of well-being. Here, the report underlines the need to uphold the central role of **human rights** – including rights to protection, to non-discrimination, to participation, to food, to education, and to decent work – as central principles of an enabling policy environment for youth.

Equity considerations are particularly important in implementing the redistributive policies needed to building resilience in food systems. The equity pillar reminds us that *all* redistributive measures need to ensure that every marginalized and resource-poor group, including youth, is included. Targeting youth in food systems transformation means redressing imbalances of resources and power between older and younger generations.

The **agency** pillar reminds us that positive transformative change must recognise youth as active citizens (agents) interested and fully capable to drive urgently needed political and economic renewal. Young people, through both individual and collective action, should also be recognized for their potential as advocates for sustainable consumption, and as important actors in political movements for food justice and ecological sustainability. The multiple voices, participation and leadership of young people in sustainable food systems transformation need to be recognized, facilitated and legitimized.

Furthermore, it is important to recognize the **intersectionality** of youth, acknowledging and nurturing their heterogeneity and diversity when planning or implementing any youth engagement and employment programmes, initiatives, or policies. Initiatives towards sustainable food systems transformation should adopt a **relational approach** recognizing the intergenerational relations between young and old, which also influence the developmental cycle of the agrarian and urban households in which they reside. With such an approach, an enabling environment can reconstruct “the balance” between young and old – according to the socially constructed understanding of different age groups.

This proposed framework depicts how youth can exercise agency in achieving SDGs and economies of well-being by accessing supportive pathways for authentic engagement and meaningful employment in sustainable food systems.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In each chapter, the report highlights specific policy areas where interventions can drive youth engagement and employment towards radical food systems transformations. Policy actions across the rural-urban continuum are needed to ensure the basic right to employment; access to natural and productive resources, knowledge, and education; and support for youth to set up and operate their own or collective initiatives. These recommendations are fundamental to recognize and enhance youth rights, equity, agency and engagement in food systems, to trigger positive and long-term effects in territorial development, and to develop and maintain sustainable relations between urban and rural spaces. Recognizing the urgency of inter-sectoral collaboration and using a food systems approach, the recommendations are structured across the following cross-cutting areas:

- providing an enabling environment for youth as agents of change
- securing dignified and rewarding livelihoods
- increasing equity and rights to resources
- enhancing knowledge, education and skills
- fostering sustainable innovation.

Recognition of **youth voices** is fundamental in normative, legislative and institutional frameworks of international (intergovernmental) agencies, governments and state actors, civil society organizations and institutions, and their organized youth articulations. Policy implementation processes can be continuously improved by working with and providing participation spaces for youth and by incorporating the experiences, diverse and place-based needs, and aspirations of young people in policy development and evaluation.

A wide range of global instruments and initiatives already exist that can support policy processes to improve youth engagement and employment in food systems. Often, these global policy instruments include youth among the main target groups.

Yet, state engagement with and implementation of these global frameworks – whether binding UN conventions or voluntary UN declarations and guidelines – are often far from adequate. States and other levels of institutional governance need to be challenged to take responsibility for their roles as duty-bearers for the realization of rights. This will support the delivery of policies and the implementation of programmes that are better attuned to the rights-based, intersectional, intergenerational and context-specific challenges of regional food systems and youth positioning in political and economic landscapes. Young people today are also interested both in engaging in formal policy making processes and in exploring policy spaces outside the formal political sphere. Actions should encourage social and cultural life to flourish through strengthened intragenerational and intergenerational collaboration, supporting youth participation and leadership in rural, urban and rural-urban organizations.

Policies targeting youth often define their beneficiaries based on a specific age cohort. Better support for youth in food systems requires an understanding of youth involving not only age, but also other features of young people’s positioning in cross-cutting (intersecting) relationships and hierarchies of generation, gender, class, culture, ethnicity, and different forms of knowledge and learning. The report also highlights that the age category and social positioning of young people are temporary conditions. Youth-targeted policies for education, engagement and employment in food systems should be regularly reviewed and renewed, building on the results and lessons learned from earlier interventions. At the same time, youth-targeted policies, including those that provide infrastructure and social protection, require a clear connection and pathway to policies and programmes for those who have grown out of youth into adulthood. Finally, considering youth as a relational category, young people should be targeted by policies both as an independent group and in relation to other older or younger citizens.

In sum, youth agency, equity and rights can be supported by policies and programmes that encourage the civic and political engagement of younger generations from an early age, take seriously their challenges to current policy agendas, and provide the structural conditions for them to be able to participate. This is an important requirement for the creation of enabling environments for youth engagement and for processes in which policies, programmes and other initiatives are made not *for* youth but negotiated *together with* youth in horizontal modes of intergenerational collaboration based on sharing power.

1. PROVIDE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Rights

- a. Ensure the **realization of the human right to food and the right to work in safe and healthy working conditions** for all young people and ensure freedom from discrimination based on origin, nationality, race, colour, descent, sex, sexual orientation, language, culture, marital status, property, disability, age, political or other opinion, religion, birth, or economic, social or other status.
- b. Implement existing **global policy instruments**, engage with ongoing initiatives which support policy **processes that explicitly include youth** as a locus of action related to well-being, food security, land rights and food systems development, and **create accountability mechanisms** in legislation for all of the above.

Participation and governance

- c. Support youth **participation and leadership in rural, urban and rural-urban organizations** (including workers, farmers, fishers, cooperatives and women's organizations), incentivize union affiliation for young people, and remove barriers to participation for effective social dialogue on holistic food systems interventions.
- d. Recognize the **multiple and diverse voices** that young people can bring to sustainable food systems transformations; **guarantee and encourage equal, non-discriminatory and active participation of youth in formal governance mechanisms** on food security and nutrition and in other decision-making fora at all levels (e.g. civil society, private sector, CFS, national and local policy making spaces).

Policy instruments and regulations

- e. Ensure **youth-oriented policies take cross-cutting (intersectional) relationships and hierarchies** into account, providing additional supports to improve equity and resources across generation, gender, class, culture, ethnicity and citizenship status.
- f. Strengthen **labour monitoring and statistics together with appropriate metrics** for more accurate reporting on **young people’s employment and wage patterns**, going beyond recording a single labour-force status and only primary occupations to incorporate school-work combinations, informal and migrant work, and multiple occupations.
- g. Improve **the documentation of different forms of youth participation in food systems**, including through involving young people in research on adequate and healthy diets and in policy and governance spaces, to inform proactive policy development on youth engagement.
- h. National and regional governments, civil society and private sector mechanisms should **regularly review and renew youth-targeted policies** for **education, engagement and employment** in food systems, building on the results and lessons learned from improved data sources and earlier interventions.
- i. Support youth participation in environmental monitoring and regulation, agroecology transitions, and other actions to **preserve the natural resource base** (land, forests, water) for coming generations, based on a systematic **review of the social, economic and environmental consequences of existing land-use practices**.

Infrastructure and social protection

- j. Enhance **standards of living** and **reduce vulnerability** for youth through human rights-based **social protection and safety nets** in an equitable approach that includes gender and social inclusion.
- k. Ensure youth have access to **basic infrastructure and services** (sanitation, formal and informal education, health services, infrastructure, energy, information and communication technology and broadband access, extension services) **in the rural-urban continuum to guarantee good standards of living for themselves and their children**.
- l. Meet the **specific food and nutrition needs of children and adolescents**, including through school-feeding, public nutrition and nutrition-sensitive agriculture combined with food literacy education.

2. SECURING DIGNIFIED AND REWARDING LIVELIHOODS

Labour market policies

- a. Ensure that employment and labour market policies and labour demand interventions, including **public employment programmes, explicitly target young people**. These policies not only can contribute to creating jobs for youth but can also directly support transitions to sustainable food systems **by restoring the natural resource base, strengthening social and physical infrastructure**, and contributing to **territorial markets and food security**.
- b. Implement comprehensive **active labour market policies to increase youth employability and enhance their employment outcomes** in food systems through a combination of interventions such as job search assistance, employment services, training and skills development, job matching, entrepreneurship coaching and incubators, in conjunction with demand-side measures to create employment opportunities.
- c. Facilitate the **transition from school to work** and labour-market entry, in collaborations between the private and public sectors, including, for example, youth-targeted wage subsidy programmes in the private (formal) sector, and ensure equitable access to these programmes across gender, ethnicity and citizenship status.

Employment legislation and governance

- d. Improve **labour law and regulations** to establish **thresholds and explicit protection for living wages and working conditions** in all types of economic activities in food systems, taking into account informal work and the gig economy, as well as young migrant workers. This includes reducing hazardous exposures and supporting occupational health, provision of personal protective equipment, safe hours, and unemployment insurance. **End the exemption of agricultural and fisheries workers from existing labour laws and protections**.
- e. Develop **social protection programmes that recognize and compensate young people's unpaid contributions to food systems** through their engagement in reproductive work and in volunteer and community development activities. Consider ways to legitimize and value care work, especially that performed by young women in the context of food systems (e.g. through the provision of public childcare, parental leave subsidies and other paid community service programming).

- f. Strengthen **labour governance to make it more youth-friendly**, through support to labour inspection systems in sectors and occupations where young people are prevalent, such as temporary, apprenticeship and entry-level occupations. Support **community-level monitoring and other forms of ensuring compliance to labour legislation** and respect of labour rights, including through awareness, training and education campaigns and support for union affiliation.

Incentives and social finance

- g. Recognize and create an **enabling environment for youth pluriactivity in food systems**. Provide holistic opportunities for dignified engagement and decent work in collectives and as individuals, whether as entrepreneurs, wage labourers, or autonomous or own-account workers.
- h. Support **youth entrepreneurship in both individual and collective enterprises through innovative social finance and resource distribution**, including through the provision of mentorship, land and infrastructure sharing opportunities, and granting programmes.
- i. Use **incentives** to promote agroecological and other innovative practices in food systems technologies, practices and organizational modalities **with the explicit intent to generate new, decent jobs** and enhance the quality of existing jobs for youth.

3. INCREASING EQUITY AND RIGHTS TO RESOURCES

Access to natural and productive resources

- a. Promote the development, review and implementation of programmes and policies to support the **rights of rural youth to access, conserve and protect land, seeds and biodiversity, fisheries, and forests** by applying guidance provided in international instruments. Ensure the **recognition of their legitimate tenure rights**, especially for Indigenous and customary collective land ownership, including through agrarian reform.
- b. Provide supportive **legal measures and regulation to facilitate the intergenerational transfer** of natural and productive resources and other food systems-related enterprises (e.g., processing, retail, distribution, food literacy and nutrition education) by supporting succession and start-ups.

- c. Incentivize the **establishment and functioning of cooperatives and other organizations** to facilitate young farmers' **access to productive assets** such as tools, machinery, farming and fishing equipment, storage and cooling facilities, processing and post-harvest equipment, and new, adaptable technologies.

Access to finance

- d. Promote the development and availability of **affordable and inclusive financial services** (direct funds, favourable interest rates, cash transfers, targeted subsidies, microcredit and other credit programmes, start-up capital, insurance) and advisory services (extension, training) tailored to the needs of young farmers and other own-account workers in food systems.
- e. Create a **supportive policy environment for youth-led start-up initiatives** (e.g. tax breaks, facilitated access to financial instruments and emerging technologies, incubation hubs that help youth build their capacity to better engage markets and value-added activities of different types).
- f. Provide support and insurance for **community-based collective impact investment** and cooperative and flexible financing programmes to support youth-led enterprises.

Access to markets

- g. Improve **shared public infrastructure** (irrigation, processing and packaging facilities, food safety measures, physical and virtual market spaces, supportive zoning and regulation, roads that link urban and rural markets, and start-up funds) **for informal, newly emerging and alternative markets that promote short food supply chains** to improve income and lower barriers to entry for youth producers, entrepreneurs and traders.
- h. Support the development of **incubators, digital tools and market niches**, as well as **certification and price premium programmes** for agroecological, fair trade, organic, denomination of origin, and other ecological and animal welfare-oriented programmes to enable youth entry and engagement with sustainable food supply chains.
- i. Enhance **public procurement and other forms of structured and mediated markets**, such as farm-to-school and public nutrition programmes, **for sustainable and youth-led enterprises**, using fair and transparent prices.

4. ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

- a. Promote updated **training programmes for professions and creation of jobs in food systems that require a wide range of skills** (including digital), such as nutritionists, food educators, extension and advisory service providers and agricultural coaches, while ensuring that technological innovations do not eliminate jobs on a large scale.
- b. Engage youth in **research** related to sustainable food systems and resource conservation, and strengthen opportunities for youth to participate in **community-based research partnerships** through the development of methodologies that integrate diverse ways of knowing and communicating.
- c. Support educational **curriculum development and reform in primary and secondary schools** on needs and practices for transforming food systems, including **agroecology, food literacy, food systems and health**.
- d. Reform **vocational training curricula** to develop community-education-business partnerships based on collaborative assessments of local community needs, focusing on the **entry points of most interest to youth, such as agroecological production, nutrition and dietetics, food value chains, marketing, and food systems education**.
- e. Promote the **intergenerational and intragenerational exchange of information, knowledge and practices** (including direct exchange of experiences) through **mentorship, role models and peer-to-peer engagement** in a complementary role to formal education programmes.
- f. Encourage youth to practice **agroecology and other sustainable innovations** by connecting knowledge that is locally specific (traditional and intergenerational) with horizontal and formal training and education programmes, as well as advisory and extension services, to improve the **resilience of agriculture, farming systems and food systems** to environmental and social shocks.

5. FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

- a. Provide opportunities for **social innovation that recognizes and shares intergenerational and indigenous knowledge** and that stimulates research and documentation related to sustainable food systems.

- b. Support the provision of youth-sensitive and youth-specific **rural and urban advisory and extension services** including through new information-sharing platforms.
- c. Develop the **digital skills and capacities of young workers**, as well as of those transitioning from school to work, in sustainable and innovative approaches for urban, peri-urban and rural agriculture.
- d. Invest in **digital infrastructure and complementary nondigital infrastructure** in rural and remote areas to ensure rural connectivity; digitize the activities of public agricultural bodies; and build the digital skills of public sector workers to support change.

This report, prepared at the request of the Committee on World Food Security, explores the trends, constraints and prospects of young people's engagement and employment in agriculture and sustainable food systems. Today's youth live in a world facing a confluence of crises, including climate and environmental change and global inequalities in food security, nutrition, employment and human well-being, vulnerabilities further heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for a radical transformation of global and local food systems has never been more pressing. This report assesses the status of current youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems to identify the primary constraints and challenges that limit the ability of young people to contribute to shaping food systems and to derive dignified livelihoods from them. Focusing on access to resources, knowledge and employment and on support for social innovation, this report proposes a global youth agenda which constructs young people, both as individuals and collectively, as active agents of change in agriculture and food systems. The report offers a paradigm shift to understand youth engagement and employment in food systems as simultaneously a goal to be realized and a means to sustainably transform food systems and achieve resilient economies of well being. Approaches and policies towards this goal must be based on a foundation of agency, rights, equity and recognition of the role of youth as agents of change across all dimensions of food systems.