

## **CFS Side Event 11: Youth leadership for a better food future: The World Food Forum (WFF) as a movement by youth and for youth to transform agri-food systems**

**October 13<sup>th</sup> 2021**

The World Food Forum (WFF), the Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger (Youth Alliance) and the Major Group for Children and Youth organised an event on "Youth leadership for a better food future, which shared the outcomes of the first WFF flagship event. The event highlighted the way forward for their actions towards a better food future, including the next steps of the HLPE Report on "Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems".

WFF Champion Rachel V. Brown, the Every Mickle Foundation Executive Director, moderated the event with passionate and inspiring interventions by six young leaders. An interactive exchange with the audience followed the interventions.

FAO Chief Economist, Maximo Torero, opened the event by saying that "Youth is not only a priority group for development interventions, but they are also key agents of change with enormous innovation potential." Quoting the CFS HLPE Report 2021, he stressed the importance of giving youth a seat at the table and removing barriers to youth leadership. He commented that the WFF Flagship event, which featured 65 sessions over five days and registered more than 23,000 participants, is a testament that youth are already raising their voice and have a crucial role in transforming our agri-food systems and food future.

Jim Leandro Cano, Chair of the Youth Alliance, highlighted the recent increase in alliances striving towards youth engagement in agri-food systems. He emphasised that the CFS policy products, youth engagements at the WFF, and UN Food Systems Summit discussions would create an enabling environment and policy incentives to push for supportive markets and ensure fair livelihoods. Khoushou Singh Sewraj echoed Cano's voice on behalf of young farmers worldwide: "We must build youth inclusive agri-food systems" where governments create enabling environments for youth to be motivated to engage in farming. Pramisha Thapaliya and Jessica Vega Ortega spoke of the importance to engage with youth on the ground, especially in processes, discussions, and actionable solutions at the local level to protect our *Earth*. "We need commitment," affirmed Jessica, "Food needs to be a Human Right". "Youth is willing to work together", she added, completing Pramisha's words on the opportunity for youth constituencies to engage with the CFS and the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism.

To round off the discussion, Carolina Pulido Ariza and Alina Gerke (WFF) gave insights into the work of the WFF Innovation and Education Tracks. "There is no lack of youth ideas across borders and genders," said Carolina. The WFF Innovation challenges fostered intergenerational synergies and partnerships to boost innovation and transform ideas into concrete solutions. Alina stressed the critical role of education in driving awareness, changing behaviours, and generating actual change in society. The Education Track guides people to make the transition to a more sustainable lifestyle.

Kazuki Kitaoka, the WFF Coordinator, affirmed the power of youth and youth as a right-holder to create a better food future for everyone, everywhere. He invited everyone to this open forum that embraces diverse youth and constructive dialogue for pragmatic and concrete solutions.

(500 Words)