

Speaking points – Peter Wobst, Senior Economist

CFS 50, Session on Empowering youth in inclusive and sustainable food systems

12th October 2022

1. Thank you chairperson and good morning to all.
2. FAO would like to commend the Rapporteur, Ambassador Pio Wennubst, the CFS secretariat and all the CFS Members for their commitment and great efforts during the negotiation process of the *CFS Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in agriculture and food systems*.
3. Through our engagement in this process, we can testify to the overwhelming support to the youth agenda by all constituencies and the recognition that more needs to be done to support the engagement and continued participation of young people in sustainable agriculture and food systems.
4. The final version agreed by the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) in July this year covers a lot of ground, despite the text remaining concise and action-oriented. The document addresses multiple and interlinked key areas of intervention, from enabling environments and youth participation, to livelihoods and decent jobs, access to skills, education and resources, and last but not least innovation.
5. As already flagged in the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) report [*Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems*](#), which informed this entire process, youth are ALREADY on the front lines to build the agrifood systems of the future, but face significant risks from climate change, social and economic inequities, as well as political marginalization. While the exceptionally high number of youth represents an enormous potential for economic development, youth face multiple employment challenges, and are often overrepresented among the most vulnerable categories of workers and resource-poor groups.
6. **We trust that the Policy Recommendations will encourage the development of public policies and more programmatic efforts capable of tapping into the energy and skills of youth to improve and rejuvenate agriculture and food systems.**
7. **FAO is highly committed to support Member Countries in the implementation of these Policy Recommendations at country and regional level, while working with young people to position them at the centre of agrifood system development and rural transformation.**
8. In its 2022-31 Strategic Framework, **FAO has introduced “youth” as a cross-cutting theme**, along with gender and inclusion, to promote a more systematic mainstreaming of youth-related issues in all Programme Priority Areas of the Organization.
9. **Across its five pillars, FAO’s Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP) (2021-2025) already substantially aligns with the Policy Recommendations**, namely in terms of supporting youth participation, fostering youth employment, strengthening rural youth capacities for the use of innovative approaches and technologies; and promoting rural services for youth and agripreneurs.

10. **Since 2021, FAO facilitates the World Food Forum (WFF), an independent global network of partners,** created for and led by youth, to spark a global movement that empowers young people to actively shape our agrifood systems with the aim to achieve the SDGs and a better food future for all.
11. **Finally, the organization has engaged in the development of an array of tools, proven approaches and flagship programmes, across regions, which already contribute to these Policy Recommendation and will certainly be further strengthened by their endorsement.**
12. Examples include the *FAO Integrated Country Approach (ICA) programme for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agrifood system*, which is financially supported by Sweden and France, the joint *FAO-UNIDO Opportunities for Youth in Africa (OYA) Programme*, which is financially supported by Italy, the *Building resilience in the Sahel Region through job creation for youth* project financially supported by Germany or the *Green jobs for rural youth employment* project financially supported by Koika.
13. We are looking forward to continuing to work together with Member States to strengthen and expand this programmatic effort.
14. Thank you.