

Speaking Points

CFS OEWG – 19 November 2021 – Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems

Here: GER position on the discussion of inputs to the Zero Draft

General remarks:

- GER thanks the CFS Secretariat and the Rapporteur for the preparations of the CFS convergence process on promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems.
- It pleases us very much that we can all agree that young people – in their role as agents of change - are a crucial player with regard to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- In that matter GER would like to highlight the following aspects:

1. Which priority issues and policy-relevant areas should be addressed through this CFS policy convergence process and included in the policy recommendations?

- The process of identifying priority issues and policy-relevant areas should involve young people, particularly from marginalized and disadvantaged groups and conflict areas, to determine the key issues.
- We should aim at all-encompassing involvement of young people in the political decision-making, especially when it comes to future related issues, as the youth will be affected by these decisions for the longest time.
- With view to the youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, it is important to create decent income perspectives. We need to remember here that social justice and development are strongly interlinked, which is particularly important in countries with a high proportion of young people. Moreover, it is essential to provide financial support, decent working conditions and certainty to the planning of future conditions.
- To address employment creation at scale specifically, we are in favour of a comprehensive and integrated approach targeting both skills development on the “supply side” of labor, as well as job creation through the promotion of SMEs and start-ups on the “demand side” of labor.
- Future policy recommendations should address all relevant actors in their respective roles and responsibilities, including government, civil society and youth representatives, and also including the private sector with its role in creating more and better employment opportunities at scale.

2. **Do you have any suggestions for CFS meaningfully engaging youth constituencies in the policy convergence process?**

- The youth participation should take place from the very beginning, already in the conception of the working process. We therefore welcome the fact that two representatives of the German rural youth organisations were given the opportunity to make a statement at the 49th CFS plenary session. We recommend to maintain this handling.
- Effective youth participation should meet the following criteria:
 - It should be done at eye level.
 - As many young people as possible should be addressed and involved, from all ethnic groups, regions and income brackets of society.
 - Participants should be informed about the further progress and the concrete effects of their input.
- Youth participation can take place in many different ways. The respective format should be adapted to the respective topic, occasion and/or voting process. The goal is to engage youth with all relevant stakeholders.
- Engagement should include existing networks, such as the CAADP Youth Network (CYN), the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD), etc. Furthermore, the UN Food Systems Summit and National Dialogues created some youth mobilization that could be capitalized on.
- Finally, one should always keep in mind the diverse nature of young people and fully recognize the differing contexts in which they find themselves and their differing opportunities and skills. Especially young people from the most disadvantaged parts of society should be heard as they are the ones most in need to improvements in the sector.