



YOUTH FOR AFRICA

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Empowering Youth to effect changes in their Nations

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

2021
TRANSFORMING
FOOD SYSTEMS

CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

The International Youth Day (IYD) is an annual and United Nations supported celebration of the role of young people as partners in change and an opportunity to raise awareness of challenges and problems facing youth, recognizing youth across the globe and empowering the world's youth to make positive contributions to their communities and nations.

The Youth engagement Forum (YEF) is a multistakeholder engagement group for policy dialogue on issues of youth engagement. It brings together all stakeholders in a youth engagement debate, whether they represent governments, the private sector or civil society, including the technical and academic community, on an equal basis and through an open and inclusive process.

Youth for Africa is a youth-led non-Profit making organisation aimed at refocusing the minds and ideologies of young people towards finding solutions to existing problems and challenges within their societies and nations.

It is against this background that we are excited to announce that Youth for Africa, organizes a one day Youth Engagement Forum conference every year in collaboration with the other actors and partners in the ecosystem. With due approval from the United Nations, We'll be now offering the YEF Conference every year on 12th August and consider it as our primary day.

Thematic theory

Global theme: *“Transforming Food Systems: Youth innovation for human and planetary health”*

Forum theme: *“Climate Action and other complimentary SDGs: synergies for healthier foods for a better planet”*

Youth engagement is key to the transformation of food systems, and as such, has been incorporated into all Summit work streams and structures. The success of such a global effort will not be achieved without the meaningful participation of young people. Consumption patterns that impact one's personal health and that of the planet are instilled early in life.

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Today, global agriculture is facing major challenges, including feeding a growing world population, the need to address rural poverty, and the management of ecosystem goods and services in light of global environmental changes, evident through climate change.

Food systems include not only the basic elements of how we get food from farms to the table, but also all of the processes and infrastructure involved in feeding a population, and the negative externalities that can be generated during the process, such as air and ocean pollution as well as desertification. Population health is also key in addressing food systems challenges, especially as nutrition-related chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and some forms of cancer are major contributors to the global burden of disease.

There is also the risk of zoonotic diseases that can result from unsustainable farming practices and the climate crisis. This has been even more evident during the pandemic that has highlighted those with such chronic diseases are at a higher risk for negative outcomes from COVID-19. Furthermore, the number of people affected by hunger and malnutrition has increased despite the objective of achieving **zero hunger** which also must be addressed within this context. In addition, hunger drives forced displacement and conversely forced displacement can have a devastating impact on agricultural production.

Youth have stressed that concrete actions, are needed, particularly with regard to the work done around fisheries and aquaculture, as well as the key role of youth employment and entrepreneurship in small-scale farms and in rural areas. Today, COVID-19 is adding to the strains on our food systems, disrupting markets and supply chains for small-scale farmers around the world,

Forum Objectives

It has been acknowledged that there is a need for inclusive support mechanisms that ensure youth continue to amplify efforts collectively and individually to restore the planet and protect life, while integrating biodiversity in the transformation of food systems. With the world's population expected to increase by 2 billion people in the next 30 years, it has become recognized by numerous stakeholders that simply producing a larger volume of healthier food more sustainably will not ensure human and planetary wellbeing. Other crucial challenges must also be addressed, such as the inter-linkages embodied by the 2030 Agenda including poverty reduction; social inclusion; health care; biodiversity conservation; and climate change mitigation

During the 2021 **ECOSOC Youth Forum (EYF)**, the issues and priorities highlighted by young participants included the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly related to its effect on human health, the environment, and food systems. As part of the official outcome recommendations of the EYF, young participants stressed the importance of working towards more equitable food systems. In addition, they highlighted the need for youth to make informed decisions on food choices through increasing global education on the healthiest and most sustainable options for both individuals and the environment. There were also recommendations on providing adequate capacity development with respect to the resilience of food systems, in particular during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic and in its aftermath.

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Through youth education, engagement, innovation and entrepreneurial solutions, this year's International Youth Day aims to provide a platform for young people to continue the momentum from the EYF in the lead up to the high-level Food Systems Summit. This year, YEF will be virtually convened by Youth for Africa in partnership with the various Food and Agriculture organisations and academic institutions in East Africa, United Nations Associations and so many other initiatives.

The **Youth Engagement Forum (YEF)** will expose participants to a broader discussion on how to transform Food Systems through Youth innovation and how best they can strategize to create a healthier planet. This experience will create awareness, foster capacity building, empower the next generation of leaders, and increase the effective participation of young leaders in national, regional and global youth engagement processes and the different topics of discussion shall be derived from this detailed forum objective

Date and Venue

Venue: Due to the mass challenges brought by the covid-19 pandemic, all sessions of the event shall be entirely online

Tentative date: 12TH August 2021

Participants

Target participants are young people who are passionate about Climate Change and who wish to contribute to the Youth space through inclusion, engagement and Policy issues.

Program Format

The Youth Engagement Forum anticipates running an online campaign prior to the international youth day on different media platforms and offering a half day productive discussion on the above theme to selected participants by experts from the various stakeholder groups. The program will include moderated sessions, panel discussions, and participant's engagement activities such as question and answer sessions, networking, and an open forum etc.

Collaboration Plan