

## Draft Summary of the Special Event on Youth

CFS 46th Plenary Session – 18 October 2019

Youths are raising up in a time where the world is at critical crossroads. The CFS, as the foremost inclusive platform on food security and nutrition, aiming at the progressive realization of human's right to adequate food, offers a unique opportunity to mark a change in direction by meaningfully involving youth perspectives and demands in its policy decision-making processes. Youth participants reminded CFS stakeholders that the number of people affected by hunger and malnutrition has increased despite the objective of achieving zero hunger. Through the same actions we cannot expect different results. For new results to be achieved, youth most affected by poverty and food insecurity and malnutrition should be put at the center and prioritized in policies. They should not be seen as recipients or targets only, but as fundamental contributors towards the identification of new solutions and its consequent implementation. Tangible plan of actions and recognition of youth agency by member states and UN institutions is therefore critical to ensure youth involvement in policy decision-making at local, national and global level and to ensure a better future for all.

During the CFS Special Event on Youth, the CFS Chair, Ambassador Arvelo, opened the session reminding CFS stakeholders that this special event is not a one-off event but rather the beginning of a process which aims at effectively mainstreaming youth into the work of the CFS. His welcoming remarks stressed that the event is not about youth but an event of Youth. He also highlighted that the Committee is calling on youth to take an ever more active role within the CFS and encouraged country delegations to progressively involve youth at national and global level, as there is no possibility to achieve the Agenda 2030 goals without the leadership and contributions of the youth

The CFS special event was a result of a joint effort made by the youth constituencies within the CSM and PSM in collaboration with the CFS Secretariat. It focused on three main themes identified by youth participants as crucial:

1. The first one offered a space to share feedbacks and impressions about the CFS 46th Plenary Session and its contribution towards the achievement of SDG 2;
2. The second theme highlighted youth expectations towards the upcoming CFS policy workstream on youth included in the MYPoW 2020-2023, endorsed by CFS 46th Plenary Session; and,
3. The third session intended to stimulate a discussion with member states and RBAs in the room on how to facilitate and coordinate: a) youth engagement in policy-making at the country and regional levels, b) youth involvement in RBAs' work, as well as, c) exploring which role youth could have in fostering and monitoring the use and application of CFS policy outcomes at country level.

### *Part 1: Feedback on CFS 46 Plenary Sessions and Side Events*

Youth representatives expressed their appreciation to CFS for the possibility of having this self-managed space of discussion within the CFS Plenary week. Youth participants assessed very positively the fact that CFS is able to address a wide range of relevant topics in the FSN agenda and the fact that multiple voices of different stakeholders, are listened to. Nevertheless, youth participants expressed the expectation to see increased opportunities for youth participation in CFS spaces in the future and more support for youth representatives among country delegations. Youth also stated the need to be recognized as a valuable resource also for the RBAs work.

It was raised from the event that there is a need to foster more discussions within CFS on fisheries and aquaculture as well as the importance to recognize the key role of small-scale food producers to achieve zero-hunger. The youth representatives agreed that we are facing a climate crisis which demands an urgent change in our food systems and not to proceed with business-as-usual. Other elements raised during the event put the accent on the need to design and implement public policies to support youth retainment in rural areas, by improving social services, access to health, housing, infrastructure, primary education, land and natural resources, just and fair local markets, social enterprises, agroecological approaches, innovations and technology, funding and credit, but also sports and recreational activities.

### *Part 2: Youth expectations towards the MYPoW 2020-2023 youth workstream*

Young people are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but even today as they are already making big changes in the world currently. Young people have an acute sense of justice, they are eager to get involved in joining the search for long term solutions. They speak for themselves and should not become spokespersons for others' agendas. Going forward, youth should be involved at all stages of the CFS policy cycle, from the agenda setting, define their own agenda and be able to have self-determination over the definition of their pathways for the future. Youth work is collective and collaborative, but should not shy away from its divergences and perspectives.

The upcoming MYPoW workstream on youth offers a unique opportunity to contribute to the realization of youths' dreams, aspirations and demands. Nevertheless, youth is not a monolithic and passive actor, is a diverse, proactive and intersectional actor with a plurality of cultures, knowledge, experience, capacity, education and identities. Youth is not a constituency but a lived and alive experience.

Youth participants highlighted how the climate crisis should be emphasized more in the upcoming youth workstream, how public and peer to peer education is fundamental to retain youth in rural areas, how youth from both urban and rural areas deserve policy attention, how forced migration from rural areas could significantly be diminished by investing in youth within their territories and communities.

A call was made to member states and RBAs to support financially the possibility to hold regional consultations of the youth in the drafting stages of the HLPE Report on this topic, which is expected to be launched by CFS 48th Plenary Session. This HLPE Report should be fully curated and drafted by youth themselves in line with the HLPE principles and inclusiveness of different type of knowledges.

The upcoming workstream should also look to the structural barriers for youth involvement and participation in all elements of the food systems, both productive and political, such as violence, conflicts, protracted crisis and gender inequalities. It was stressed the importance to integrate a strong gender perspective and human rights approach within the upcoming CFS youth workstream.

### *Part 3: Youth and CFS Policy work*

The need to complement the engagement of youth in rural areas and communities at the grassroots level with the use of digital platforms was mentioned as a useful means of inclusiveness as it can foster connection, information flow, youth exchange and gathering of many perspectives around the world. The role of technology in overcoming the climate crisis was also raised as well as its communitarian use and the interface among youth and scientific world. Participants also mentioned the importance to include youth perspectives within the workstream on data collection and analysis, ensuring at the same time transparency and clarity concerning who owns the data, who collects it and for which purpose.

Youth rights to decent work and dignity was also stressed together with the need to see youth as pivotal members of communities and territories, as food producers, with particular mention of the role of indigenous peoples' youth.

CFS, RBAs and Member States should foster the generation of cooperation spaces where youth are the center of development programmes, in particular marginalized youth. Governments took the floor welcoming this space of debate with youth, recognizing their crucial role and committing to ensure that CFS becomes an enabling environment for youth voices to be included and heard. The idea of establishing an informal Youth Council for the RBAs open to all constituencies and youth actors willing to engage was welcomed and should be consulted with all of them. Governments also stated that effort will be made next year to ensure a growing number of youth participants within country delegations to CFS. IFAD informed that by 2021, its country strategies will have a youth focus. 50% of all IFAD's new projects will be youth sensitive and will foresee a bigger support for youth engagement and consultation. Governments also stressed the importance of involving youth within the UN Decade on Family Farming and the Agenda 2030 programmes.

It was also recalled that CFS endorsed ToR for monitoring events at regional and national level, that embody a strong framework for inclusivity, allowing all CFS actors, to be involved in the planning and participation of the monitoring events. In light of the upcoming monitoring exercise on the Framework for Action for FSN in protracted crises, youth could play a strong role. Youth have a huge potential to bring Rome home. As youth participation in the CFS goes forward, youth expects member states and participants to reflect in their practice the values and commitments for a stronger inclusion and participation of youth expressed and acknowledged in this Special Event.