What are the challenges for rural young men and women regarding agricultural entrepreneurship and employment in Africa? How do these challenges influence decent job creation for rural youth? What is the role of governments and donors, and which interventions are necessary?

The Rural Youth Thematic Working Group of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development hosted a side event titled "Rural youth and decent jobs creation in food systems" which was held on Tuesday, 19 November at the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The side event was organised back-to-back to the Youth Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment (YES!) Forum 2019 along the side-lines of the World Export Development Forum (WEDF) and the Africa Industrialisation Week (18 – 22 November) also held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The side event was funded by the generous financial support of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

The topic of rural youth employment is an important topic that is gaining a lot of attention with many practitioners running different interventions to facilitate the creation of decent jobs for youth. To make sure these interventions fit and avoid blind programming, young people need to be engaged in different discussions to make sure that their aspirations and ideas are put into the development process. The side-event offered a special opportunity for interaction and learning between donors, practitioners and with young agro-entrepreneurs sponsored from different parts of Africa. The half-day interactive event provided a forum for deep exchange with different stakeholders to find out what is necessary for young people to see rural areas.
The discussions provided insights into different areas affecting decent job creation for Rural youth. By having eye-level discussions with the youth representatives, participants gained first-hand insights on different country situations and what kind of interventions could fit in these situations. Participants talked about equipping youth with skills and reported that there is a big difference between education systems and youth interests, aspiration, there was a consensus that Youth also need to develop personal and business skills and not production skills.

The conversation around youth and access to land also brought to light differences in challenges for access to land in different areas; in Nigeria, it was reported that youth tend to sell their land for development and don’t utilise it for farming because they don’t believe that you can earn a decent income from farming, While in Chad women are disempowered and disadvantaged and won’t have access to land as it belongs to men. In some parts of Kenya, the entrepreneurs reported that it is easy to lease land but once you have worked to make it productive, the owner will take it back after realising its productive potential.

The event was attended by representatives from the Embassy of Finland, AgriProFocus, ICCO-cooperation, IFAD, United Nations World Food Program, the Digital Rogue society Experiment group, NIRAS AgroBlg, World Vision, Plan International, ASDA, the French Embassy in Ethiopia, MEAE France and UN-Habitat. Also, in attendance where young agripreneurs, who were sponsored from different countries, i.e. Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Niger, Chad, Zambia, Botswana and Cameroon.
KEYNOTE | EMMANUEL BESNIER, EMBASSY OF FRANCE IN ETHIOPIA

The keynote address was given by Emmanuel Besnier, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of France in Ethiopia. He acknowledged the need for creating decent jobs for youth in rural areas as a key intervention to address the multiple challenges that Sub Sahara Africa is confronted with. In his remarks, he noted that the number of people who are severely food insecure has been rising again for three years to the current 820 million which is in addition to 1.3 billion moderately food-insecure people which brings the total figure to more than 2 billion people - 26 per cent of the world's population. Although poverty in rural areas is greatly linked with low labour productivity particularly in the agricultural sector, the lack of decent job opportunities is another major driver of poverty, he said. It is estimated that 440 million young people will enter the labour market by 2030 in Africa, and according to Besnier it is widely accepted that a central element of the response to these challenges lies in the creation of decent rural jobs that are attractive to young people. He called for practitioners to work together to strengthen sustainable agriculture, family farming and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) downstream and upstream agricultural.

Besnier reported that France is committed to sharing in the mobilization to fight against hunger, poverty and decent employment for young people in rural areas. He added that on October 22, France launched its new International Strategy for Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainable Agriculture which sets the guidelines for all of France’s international development actions on these themes, for the period 2019-2024. He added that the side event as fully in line with the fourth objective of this new French strategy for food security, which aims to support the structuring of sustainable agro-food chains in order to promote the creation of decent jobs in rural areas, especially for young people. He noted that the agricultural and rural sector often represents the core of the socio-economic activity of developing countries and a significant source of jobs that should be supported. In this context, the inclusion of family farms, producing wealth and jobs, in agricultural sectors is a key issue

In addition, he reported that France has also highlighted rural youth themes during G7 presidency. The G7 Development Ministers who met in Paris on 4 July, in the presence of their G5-Sahel counterparts, adopted the "G7 Framework for Decent Work Creation for Rural Youth in the Sahel".

He affirmed the importance of education and training of young people to empower them with the knowledge and skills needed for the labour market and society. France has considerably increased its official development aid for the training of young people in recent years. The G7
Development Ministers and Education Ministers, who met on 5 July, also in Paris, adopted a "G7 Charter of Commitments on Cooperation in Education and Training" technical and professional with developing countries ".

He also informed the audience about the pledge of the G7 countries to support the AFAWA Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa initiative of the African Development Bank to the tune of 250 million dollars. This initiative supports African women entrepreneurs who face multiple barriers to accessing finance, with an estimated $ 42 billion in deficit across all value chains - including $ 15.6 billion in the sector alone.

**PRESENTATIONS AROUND DECENT JOB CREATION FOR RURAL YOUTH**

The event also featured different presentations about decent job creation that offered participants insights into decent job creation in food systems from various perspectives.

**Introduction to the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development and its thematic Working Group on Rural Youth**
> Oliver Hanschke, Platform Secretariat

The presentations were opened by Oliver Hanschke, the Communications Advisor at the Secretariat of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development with an introduction to the Platform. His presentation covered the background, mission and function of the Platform, and he also talked about the different themes that Platform members focus on and discuss. He went on to specifically talk about the Rural Youth Thematic Working Group and introduce the group’s core objectives and the activities carried out since the inception of the group in October 2018.

**The G7 framework on Decent Job Creation for Rural Youth in the Sahel**
> Oriane Barthélemy, MEAE France

Oriane Barthélemy gave a presentation on the recently released G7 framework for on decent job creation in the Sahel which was endorsed by Ministers of Development on the 4 July in Paris. This G7 framework is a way to reaffirm G7 mobilization for youth, for rural areas and agricultural and livestock value-chain development.

In her presentation, she re-echoed that 440 million young people will enter the labour market by 2030 in Africa and although this population has the enormous potential most of them live in rural areas and have constraints on access to production resources' making it difficult for them to seize opportunities.
Noting the driving force of the food economy in Africa and its role in inclusive rural development, the G7 decided to concentrate their efforts on decent job creation for rural youth through all upstream and downstream activities.

The framework was built upon previous G7 commitments and other ongoing initiatives like Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, the G20 Initiative for Rural Youth Employment (2017) the Africa Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs (2019) and IFAD’s Annual Rural Development Report (2019). It was drawn on two meetings held in Paris and Ouagadougou to include representatives from the G5 countries and based on a paper from the three Rome Based Agencies (FAO, IFAD World Food Programme (WFP) on promoting rural youth employment in the Sahel.

The framework brings to light two new paradigms, first, it promotes adopting sustainable food systems approaches to agri-food policies and investments makes it possible to seek economic, environmental and social sustainability simultaneously. Secondly, it talks about territorial approaches which are concerned with supporting and enabling governments and local authorities as well as local civil society to design together policies that are tailored to specific territorial challenges.

The G7 framework will focus on supporting opportunities and strengthening rural youth capabilities for decent jobs. The G7 will support opportunities for decent jobs creation to respond to the entrance of the youth bulge into the labour market. The G7 will take on different actions to boost opportunities that could include securing land tenure (VGGT), supporting access to financial services, advisory services, markets and ICT for family farmers, agripreneurs and MSMEs and promoting diversification of livelihoods (on-farm and off-farm).

The G7 countries will strengthen rural youth capabilities to amplify there is great potential to contribute to development, poverty eradication and food security. The capabilities will be strengthened through education both agricultural and rural training, promoting nutrition and Women's empowerment and gender equality.

Recalling the importance of country ownership, alignment with partner’s strategies and harmonized action by donors, the G7 has identified coordination and alignment with G5 Sahel countries’ policies as overarching principles.

In her closing remarks, Barthélemy reminded the audience that decent jobs creation for rural youth must address the twin challenges of food insecurity and poverty while providing new economic opportunities for young people.
Peter Wobst, who was not able to attend the side, had shared a video presentation that focused on practical tools and approaches that can be applied in the G7 framework and linkages can exist between food systems and rural youth employment. The presentation talked about FAO’s mandate to tackle different challenges faced by young rural people which include education, skills, access to productive resources and importantly the inclusion of young people in policy dialogue. About it also the challenges that youth face in rural areas that hinder the access to lucrative jobs, and this causes migration of people in the rural areas.

According to Wobst, particularly in the Sahel 2/3rds of the youth live in rural areas and food systems can provide ample opportunities for job creation but the need to have interventions to achieve this potential and these interventions are in three critical areas including; technical cooperation, scaling of approaches and the regulatory framework to create an enabling environment for interventions

The G7 framework will take these areas and will focus on creating an enabling environment for rural youth based on evidence and youth inclusion in policy dialogue. This coincides with FAO’s mission and strategic focus; thus, FAO welcomes the initiative and will support the G7 countries in the implementation of the framework. FAO has done work on decent rural employment for over two decades and currently is supporting 40 countries around the world on both guidance materials and through providing concrete approaches and tools.

FAO has developed an integrated approach that is also currently applied to rural youth employment. At country level, FAO supports countries in developing strategies and policies and programs. As part of this information is generated on the current situation considering different aspects e.g. the availability of institutions or capacity development with both public and private stakeholders.

FAO also works on the regulatory environment at different levels and looks at policy coherence between the different agricultural sectors and youth employment promotion.

Wobst reported that the Integrated Country Approach, like the G7 framework, addresses the demand and supply side of employment creation by promoting an enabling environment to create employment opportunities for young people in rural areas and enhancing the capabilities of young people in the food systems with approaches adapted in the different country contexts.

He reported about FAO’s cooperation with other G7 member countries including
Germany, France, Japan and Italy. Together they have run a range of initiatives on youth employment from studies to building resilience and empowering youth to participate in policy dialogue. He added that the topic of youth employment and migration is receiving growing attention, and FAO has a new resource mobilization instrument called the Business Development Portfolio where migration and youth employment are two of the themes being covered and another theme, collaboration is boosting job creation for youth in the Sahel, is proposed.

Youth and Land Responsiveness Criteria
> Isidora Markicevic, UN Habitat

Isidora Markicevic gave an introduction on the youth and land responsiveness criteria developed by UN Habitat. She started the presentation by talking about the paradigm shift with an increasingly urban population from 1970 to date which is rising from 37% to 56% and which is coupled with the increasing youth bulge. She added that the increasing number of youth represents a challenge and an untapped potential to achieve different development targets and youth are increasingly mobile, social and creative in a rapidly transforming world.

She submitted that youth, as the largest demographic groups, is inclusive of numerous vulnerable groups whose needs also require consideration. She talked about different issues that affect young people and highlighted that unequal opportunities undermine youth development, and, in the long term, intergenerational inequity deprives youth of their political, economic, social and cultural rights.

She went on to talk about youth and land and reported that land as a limited and valued commodity has more than a material or utilitarian aspect for youth. The relationship of youth to land is intertwined with their pursuit of identity, community and cultural expression. For youth, land has different meanings and thus can be grouped in different categories, e.g. economic, social, cultural and civil and political categories.

Land policies responsive to youth will tackle different aspects including mobility and displacement, public spaces, tenure security, land ownership, inheritance. Over all, the Youth and Land Responsiveness Criteria is a simple and practical method to assess the capacity of land-related assumptions, policies, frameworks and projects to respond to the needs and concerns of youth regarding land. It has five main categories of questions (themes): (1) youth recognition, (2) land information, (3) land governance and participation, (4) inclusive land policies, as well as 5) land use and access.

The tool can be used in different cases including to collect and analyse youth and land data at local, national and regional levels for specific youth and land-related projects. It can also be used as a planning
and implementation tool for projects and programs at the problem identification stage of planning before an intervention is designed and can finally help assess the impact that a land-related project or program may have on youth. Based on this it helps make recommendations to policy makers with respect to improving youth responsiveness in the land sector. The presentation was concluded by insights into how the tool can be applied to either work with all the thematic categories or use specific sections which are more relevant to the focus on a project. She added that the analysis that follows the use of the tool is key to achieving results and that it is important that the participants’ inputs are concretised into action to be taken.

**PANEL DISCUSSION**

The side event had a panel discussion that brought together different panellists from different backgrounds including youth representatives and development partners and practitioners. The panellists were:

- Sarah Assefa of AgroProFocus, Ethiopia
- Oriane Barthelemy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs –France
- Fatime Africa of Youth in Agriculture Association from Chad
- Justus Muli from Kibwezi Hortipreneurs Youth Group from Kenya.

Fatime Africa shared information on her youth network specifically the network’s Youth in Agribusiness Boot Camp (AYA). The Youth in Agribusiness Boot Camp aims to train innovators, who are dedicated to overcoming the employment challenge and create jobs for themselves in the agricultural value chain. AYA BOOT CAMP brings together young people to innovate and create a business in the agricultural sector. She called on to policymakers to promote the development of more learning platforms in agriculture and the use of role models to influence perceptions positively around farming and agriculture value chain. The key steps should include change of policies to allow women to own land.
Sarah Assefa of AgriProFocus, Ethiopia shared the work of AgriProFocus and youth engagement. AgriProFocus is an international multi-stakeholder platform focusing on development in the agriculture sector. The group works on different themes including inclusive agriculture, climate resilient agriculture, circular economy and nutrition sensitive agriculture through creating linkages across partners, learning from best practices and advocacy based on lessons learned.

She went on to introduce different programs that AgriProFocus has run with youth in agriculture and related businesses. In her contribution, she highlighted that there is little research done on youth in Ethiopia and that there is a need for experiential learning. She highlighted that rural and urban youth have very different lives and young women are specifically less employed and when employed, their jobs are more informal than those taken by men She added that youth in Ethiopia are particularly risk-averse with only 6% aspiring to be entrepreneurs and hence investing in only entrepreneurship is not the best for most youth.

She went on to talk about different interventions and programs AgriProFocus has run, e.g. the Youth Caravan initiative which provides a great opportunity to learn from agricultural business in practice. According to Assefa it is also important for youth to have a cohort of others who see opportunity in the sector.

Justus Muli from Kibwezi Hortipreneurs Youth Group from Kenya shared the story of their initiative. The group is an offshoot of IITA’s Agripreneurs Initiative and has over the years evolved to a self-sustaining group currently involved in horticultural enterprises including, greenhouse vegetable production, fish farming and the manufacture of sweet potato-based snack food. In his remarks, he called for the development of policies that encourage farming and provision of capital for youth. Investing in youth-led agribusiness will provide room for expansion and scale of interventions and facilitate job creation.

Oriane Barthélemy noted that the agriculture and agri-food sectors can offer attractive opportunities in developing countries and it is crucial to support the creation of decent jobs at all levels of the value chain. She reported that this is fully in line with France’s new international
strategy for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture and more particularly its forth objective of supporting the structuring of sustainable agri-food sectors to promote the creation of decent jobs in rural areas, particularly for youth.

Ms Barthélemy reported that the actions of France's actions are based on 4 main complementary levers; (1) Short-term responses to vulnerable situations in fragile areas that combine strengthening human capital and supporting social cohesion (2) Improving the attractiveness of rural areas through local development projects enabling improvement in access to basic services in rural areas and enhancing natural resource management projects at the territorial level. (3) Developing employment opportunities through the promotion of economic activities by supporting supply chains and lastly (4) Strengthen agricultural and rural training and supporting the professional integration of young people in rural areas.
BREAKOUT SESSION

The participants then broke out into four groups to have round table discussions on different issues concerning decent employment creation in food systems. The discussions focused on four topics and the participants tried to generate solutions to different challenges faced by the young people as below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies to meaningfully engage youth in the development process - project implementation and design</th>
<th>Overcoming skill constraints faced by rural youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Practitioners should employ incentives to promote engagement of young people in development, e.g. recognizing champions.</td>
<td>• Efforts could focus on addressing the causes of skill gap which include but not limited to, theoretical training with limited avenues to practice, mismatch of market needs and training, poor or linear thinking and approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practitioners should develop bottom-up and not up the bottom when engaging young people</td>
<td>• Creating awareness of the value Agriculture is to change mindset and perception around it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understand diversity within the youth and focus initially on the young people interested.</td>
<td>• Facilitation of Develop opportunities for an apprenticeship, mentorship, farm visits and working groups to give youth practical experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There should be investment in building skills of young people to given them skills to engage in the development process.</td>
<td>• Conducting regular labour market assessment to find out the needs of the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ICT could be leveraged to create platforms for continuously engaging youth.</td>
<td>• Leveraging business incubation centers to design skills development programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The stakeholders should trust youth more and equip them with platforms to give contributions.</td>
<td>• Matching training with local resources available to avoid equipping young people with “idle Skills”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policy makers should facilitate youth-led organizations and build their capacity.</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stake holders should follow up with young people on engagement interventions</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facilitation of access and ownership of land as a production resource for rural youth

- Land policy should be made more inclusive of all aspects including gender and youth.
- Need for more concrete and comprehensive data relating to young people and access to land
- Need to promote access to information to match idle land with potential users
- To promote access to land, practitioners specifically need to address social-cultural challenges
- Interventions could encourage communal ownership of land joint use of land
- Vertical farming practices should be encouraged
- Promotion of access to finance can promote access to land though leasing and purchasing.

Connecting young family farmers to markets and upstream and downstream Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

- Practitioners could facilitate platforms for traders and farmers to meet, engage and match their expectations.
- ITC could be leveraged to connect farmers and provide market information
- Development of infrastructure to support transportation of products and link young farmers to markets
- Tailored training and skills for producers to meet production standards
- Practitioners could facilitate contract farming between young farmers and traders
- Promotion of joint farmer interventions like farmer groups, cooperatives and associations to encourage joint production.

Report by James Kyewalabye on behalf of the Secretariat of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development in cooperation with the Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth

Bonn, Germany | December 2019

For more information: www.donorplatform.org