



CFS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROMOTING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Comments on the Zero Draft by the [Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment](#) of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)

The Global Donor Platform's Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment (TWG-RYE) is a donor-catalyzed working group with significant youth participation. Its role is to advise donors, governments and civil society organizations on the most effective ways to support and empower youth, enabling them to contribute to and benefit from sustainable rural livelihoods and food value chain systems.

The TWG-RYE acknowledges and appreciates that the CFS has taken up the issue of youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems in their programme of work and the inclusive and participatory policy convergence process for developing the CFS's policy recommendations. For further developing the Zero Draft the TWG-RYE suggests the following:

- 1. The rationale and structure of the recommendations should be more consistent.**
The recommendations should be consistently referring to (global) sustainable food system transformation to deliver healthy food and productive employment and decent jobs within planetary boundaries, while at the same time acknowledging both global similarities and regional specifications.
- 2. Differentiate more between youth inclusive and youth specific measures.**
Effective rural youth policy and investment depends on the degree of structural and rural transformation. In countries undergoing structural transformation and with limited overall rural opportunities, policies and investments should focus on promoting a broad-based rural transformation and be youth inclusive. With advanced transformation and broader opportunities, the policy and investment balance should incline towards rural youth-specific interventions (compare [IFAD RDR 2019](#)).
- 3. Include stakeholder specific recommendations.**
Promotion of meaningful youth engagement and employment needs concerted actions by many different stakeholders, not just governments. Like the CFS RAI principles, the recommendations would gain significantly by acknowledging and addressing those different roles and responsibilities, especially of the private sector, but also those of young people themselves as active agents of change.

4. **Address implementation at different levels: local, regional, national and global.**
Different actions need to be taken at various levels of implementation. To be more action-oriented, the recommendations should therefore differentiate between implementation at these different levels. Diverse or limited implementation capacity should also be acknowledged and in-built recommendations provided to address it (e.g., capacity development efforts).
5. **Put a higher emphasis on green, decent, inclusive jobs for youth in more sustainable agri-food systems.**
Link inclusion of youth with sustainable food systems and environmental sustainability so that it ultimately favors a just transition where young people in the rural economy can access decent work while fostering environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.
6. **The diversity of youth should be more emphasised.**
Youth are a heterogeneous group; socio-economically differentiated according to race, class, age, sex, religion, geographical location, etc., and this differentiation has implications for promoting meaningful youth engagement in food systems. A particular focus should be on vulnerable groups, including young women, young persons with disabilities, and those aged 15–17 who are particularly susceptible to hazardous occupations and lack of occupational safety and health in agriculture and food systems. More attention should be paid to gender differences and gender-transformative approaches.
7. **Address different youth aspirations and trajectories.**
The agri-food sector needs to modernize to attract young people to the sector. It should not only be presented as a source of income for the youth; young people want to identify and define themselves with their jobs. This entails promoting interventions that encourage young people to engage in livelihood opportunities that are in line with their life and work objectives, and contribute to the realization of their rights. The recommendations should ensure youth participation in the agro-food systems as entrepreneurs, employers and employees. And in this context, also bearing in mind the future transformations in the world of work, the recommendations should consider the transitions and trajectories of young people in the labour market, including from and to wage and self-employment, the school to work transition, or even transitions from conflict or disasters into employment.
8. **The document needs a conclusion and outlook.**
The document would benefit greatly from providing an outlook on future use and next steps. In addition, youth are a demographic group that is always in a process of transition. The perspective of how to accommodate the future youth and well-related inter-generational equity elements should be considered in the current recommendations.