



World Food Day

**Thur, 16 Oct 2025
10:00–11:15 CEST**

“Youth Workstream Launch — Global Flagship for Food Security”



Introduction

The [Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security](#), launched at UNCCD COP16 in 2024, is a global coalition of nearly 80 development partners working to address urgent challenges of food insecurity, land degradation, climate vulnerability, and rural poverty, with an initial focus on the global south.

The [new Youth Workstream](#) brings young leaders directly into the Flagship's three action pillars — Collaborate Broadly, Mobilize the Private Sector, and Deliver Impact with Agility. It is designed to drive youth-led solutions across Policy, Advocacy, and Communication, bridging grassroots innovation with multilateral decision-making.

World Food Day 2025 marks a milestone moment to formally launch this Workstream and co-develop a shared roadmap toward April/May 2026, aligned with the Flagship's mission. The session will also outline pathways for collaboration under the three core pillars, highlighting opportunities for youth partners, institutions, and member organizations to engage in co-creation, knowledge exchange, and joint implementation.

By embedding youth leadership into the Flagship's governance and action framework, this initiative seeks to ensure that the next generation becomes a driving force for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems worldwide.



Vikrant Srivastava
Host/Moderator

Co-Chairs: Youth Workstream





Agenda

- Opening Remarks - Dr. Stefan Schmitz
- Keynote: Why a Youth Workstream - Dr. Conrad Rein
- From Promise to Delivery — Partner Perspectives
- Co-Developing Session (Breakouts) - Cataleya Han, Ruby Celia Weiling, Élitiz-Doris
- Wrap-up and conclusion



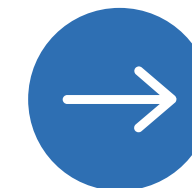


Dr. Stefan Schmitz

**Executive Director - Crop Trust,
Co- Chair Global Flagship Initiative for
Food Security**

Opening Remarks

Stefan Schmitz joined the Crop Trust as Executive Director in January 2020. He previously worked as Deputy Director-General and Commissioner for the “One World – No Hunger” Initiative at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). He also chaired the Steering Committee of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). For more than 10 years, Stefan was leading the food security, agriculture and rural development work at BMZ. From 2007 until 2009 he worked as senior advisor to the Secretariat of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris. Before joining the BMZ in 2001, Stefan held various posts in the German federal administration in the fields of geographical information systems, regional planning and international cooperation on urban issues. He received scholarships of the McCloy Fellowship of the American Council on Germany and of the German Academic Exchange Service. After studying in Bonn and St. Andrews, he graduated from Bonn University in geography and mathematics and received a doctorate in geosciences from the Free University of Berlin in 2000.



Keynote Speech: *Why a Youth Workstream*

Dr. Conrad Rein

**Secretary General of the Global
Flagship Initiative for Food Security**

Dr. Conrad Rein is the Secretary of the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security launched at the COP16 UN Desertification Conference in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in December 2024. The Secretariat is hosted by the Crop Trust. Previously, he was Director of the University of Chicago Innovation Commission for Climate Change, Food Security and Agriculture. He also served almost nine years in the European Commission, overseeing policy and governance issues and coordinating EU development cooperation on Sustainable Agri-Food systems and Fisheries with EU member states, the G7, G20, and more. He was also Chair of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development hosted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Conrad holds a PhD in Government from University College Cork and an MA and BA in African Studies from the University of Leipzig.



Key Components of Youth WorkStream

Youth Work Stream Presentation



Vikrant Srivastava
Host/Moderator

Co-Chairs: Youth Workstream



Ruby Celia Weiling

Co-Chairs: Youth Workstream



From Promise to Delivery Partner Perspectives

Panellists



Maurizio Navarra
Senior Partnership Officer,
Secretariat Coordinator,
Global Donor Platform For
Rural Development

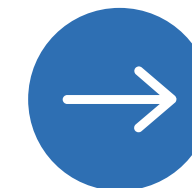


Robynne Anderson
President of Emerging ag



John McPhail
President & CEO at Partners of
the Americas



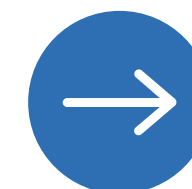


Members Keynote

Maurizio Navarra

**Senior Partnership Officer,
Secretariat Coordinator,
Global Donor Platform For Rural
Development**

Maurizio Navarra is a Senior Partnership Officer coordinating the Secretariat of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, a network of 40 international agencies focused on investments in food systems, agriculture and rural development. With more than 30 years of experience – 12 in the private sector and 21 in the UN system – he specialises in global engagement, multilateral relations, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, knowledge management and communications. He holds a Master's degree in Political Science and Macroeconomics from the University of Rome "La Sapienza."



Members Keynote

Robynne Anderson
President of Emerging ag

As a global thought leader on food and agriculture, with expertise in issues management and strategic development across the entire value chain, Robynne advises a broad range of clients from government leaders to business captains, farmers, food processors and researchers through her company Emerging ag. She often represents organizations at the United Nations, bringing the voice of agriculture, food and health in intergovernmental processes. Her savviness at international diplomacy brought topical issues to global prominence, such as the role of women in agriculture, governance of land tenure, responsible agricultural investments, importance of tackling food waste, and the urgency for global sustainability.

Prior to founding Emerging ag Inc, she established and ran for almost 20 years Issues Ink, a leading publishing company specializing in agriculture. She is also involved in her family farm in Dugald, Manitoba, Canada and is a founder of the Manyinga school project that supports orphans to learn agricultural skills through schools which in 2021 became Farmers Abroad Canada, a not-for-profit charitable organization focused on supporting agricultural education in African countries.

In 2017, Robynne became the youngest person inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame, one of the only 11 women in the Hall. She serves on a number of international boards and received the 2018 Demeter Award for Women in Agriculture.



Members Keynote

John McPhail

President & CEO at Partners of the Americas

Co-Chairs: Civil Society Workstream

John McPhail is the President & CEO of Partners of the Americas, leading the organization with over 30 years of experience in international community development and humanitarian relief. A dynamic and strategic servant leader, he is recognized for building impactful partnerships, fostering volunteerism, and advancing locally led solutions to address global challenges.

John's distinguished career includes senior leadership roles at Save the Children, World Vision, and Project Concern International, as well as over a decade as President & CEO of global nonprofits. Passionate about Latin America, he began as a Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador and later guided national and regional networks in health, water and sanitation, and food security. He has served on numerous nonprofit boards, strengthening operational and strategic growth. John holds a BSc from MIT and a Master's in Civil Engineering from the University of Illinois. Fluent in Spanish, with working knowledge of French and Portuguese, he champions collaborative, innovative leadership.

Breakout Rooms



Cataleya (Xinyue) Han

*Advisory Board Member of Universal Versatile Society,
Youth Leadership Program Alumna of UN Food
Systems Coordination Hub, and
World Bank Group MTE Climate Ambassador 2024*



Élitiz-Doris

Sustainability Communications Specialist



Ruby Celia Weiling

Co- Chair Youth Work Stream

Breakout Room 1 - Policy

Guiding question: How can youth-led policy inputs be better integrated into UN process and national food system dialogues?

Breakout Room 2 - Advocacy

Guiding question: What campaigns, narratives, or coalitions are needed to amplify youth voices in food security and climate action?

Breakout Room 3 - Communication

Guiding question: What digital tools, media platforms, and partnerships can showcase youth-led innovations globally? And what you would like to learn.

Thank You!

Get In Touch



<https://www.croptrust.org/who-we-are/about/global-flagship-initiative-for-food-security/>

