

UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake

SESSION REPORT

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The Implementation of the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan: Interactive dialogue between African Youth Agri-Food Entrepreneurs and African Leaders

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Name of note-taker: Alessandro Pastore

Session lead/co-lead: convened by the AU and AUDA-NEPAD with support from IFAD, AGRA/AFS and AKADEMIYA2063

E-mail of note-taker: a.pastore@ifad.org

List of speakers, in all segments, and key messages

NAME AND TITLE OF SPEAKER	SEGMENT (opening, panel, closing, etc.)	KEY MESSAGES OR/AND RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
1. H.E. Kashim Shettima, Vice President of Nigeria	Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa's youth are the continent's greatest asset: With a median age of 16.9 in Nigeria and over 70% of the population

		<p>under 30, empowering youth through leadership roles, finance, and skills development is essential to transforming food systems and governance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa must turn its agricultural potential into prosperity: Strategic investments in value chains, infrastructure, and institutions—paired with bold national action—can turn the continent’s demographic boom and natural resources into food security and economic strength. • Collaboration and leadership are critical to drive food systems transformation: Nigeria is aligning national efforts with the Kampala Declaration through strong coordination and institutional reform, calling on the AU and UN to support inclusive, youth-led policy frameworks across Africa.
2. Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The urgent need for intergenerational dialogue and inclusive leadership: With Africa’s population being about 70% youth, it’s crucial to blend the wisdom and experience of older leaders with the energy and innovation of young people. This collaboration is vital to drive sustainable development and achieve the SDGs, ensuring that youth play an active role in shaping the continent’s future. • Tackling complex challenges through youth engagement and stronger institutions: Africa faces serious issues such as ongoing conflicts, fragile democracies, and failing public institutions, which lead to youth disenfranchisement and mistrust in leadership. Young people must actively reject poor leadership, participate in voting and governance, and work to restore integrity and accountability in

		<p>political systems to create a more stable and democratic society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building climate-resilient food systems through innovation and partnerships: The continent's rapid urbanization and climate crisis demand forward-looking adaptation strategies. Investing in renewable energy-powered, technology-enabled food systems, leveraging AI and digital tools, and fostering genuine, multi-level partnerships—locally, regionally, and globally—along with innovative financial mechanisms, will empower youth-led agribusinesses and transform Africa's food security landscape.
3. H.E. Moses Vilakati, AU Commissioner		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa has one of the youngest populations in the world, with 60% of its people under 25 years old, offering vast potential for growth. The African Union has made youth empowerment central to its agenda through frameworks like Agenda 2063's, which envisions a people-driven Africa that harnesses the full potential of youth and women. The AU also launched the "1 Million Next Level" initiative in 2023 to create opportunities for 300 million young people across education, employment, entrepreneurship, engagement, and well-being, highlighting the importance of youth in Africa's development. • The AU's Kampala Declaration for 2026–2035 outlines a clear roadmap to promote inclusivity and equitable livelihoods in Africa's food systems. It commits African governments to empower at least 30% of actors in the food system by 2035, focusing on youth and women at the center of this transformation. The strategy emphasizes investing in innovation, accountability, and sustainable, resilient approaches to ensure food security and to

		<p>turn Africa's agricultural potential into tangible progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Vilakati stressed that African youth are not just the future but are actively shaping food systems today with their energy, creativity, and resilience. The AU's role is to support this by combining youth ambition with bold policies, providing resources and platforms, and ensuring youth have meaningful voice and decision-making power in policy dialogues at all levels. The Commission is committed to monitoring progress and maintaining accountability to guarantee continuous improvement and impactful youth engagement.
4. Nardos Bekele, CEO AUDA-NEPAD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The youth are not just the future but the present energy and driving force behind Africa's wealth and prosperity. They want to be actively involved in making policies that affect them, rather than having decisions made on their behalf. This means they seek real integration into public sector roles where they can influence and create meaningful change. Young people emphasize the need for support programs that are well-designed, substantial, and tailored to their actual needs. They want innovation hubs, accelerator programs, and empowerment initiatives to have clear standards and deliver real value. Financial support should be part of a comprehensive package that includes skills training, mentoring, and an enabling environment, allowing youth businesses to grow sustainably and solve local problems with homegrown solutions. AUDA-NEPAD is actively supporting youth through practical initiatives like "Energize Africa," which focuses on skilling youth

		<p>and including them in policy-making processes. The agency also provides funding for innovative solutions to societal challenges through the Presidential Innovation Fund. Additionally, they developed the Achilles AI platform to offer accessible coaching and business training in African languages, reaching youth even in rural areas by leveraging digital technology. This reflects a commitment to listening to young people and co-creating programs that empower them to thrive and lead Africa's transformation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The African Union Development Agency has committed to establishing a Youth Advisory Panel to ensure that youth are not only consulted but actively engaged in the co-creation of programs and policies, particularly within agri-food market ecosystems. This marks a shift from consultation to co-creation, with youth fully integrated into value chains and development processes—ensuring accountability and inclusion in the domestication of the CAADP process.
5. Charles Oyamo, NextGen African Agri-food entrepreneur, Founder Rethread Africa		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smallholder farmers in Africa have historically been among the poorest despite their hard work and resilience, a cycle that has repeated across generations. However, there is great untapped potential to transform their livelihoods by innovating with agricultural waste, turning what was once considered mere leftovers into valuable products that increase farmers' income by about 30%. • Rethread Africa transforms sugarcane waste into bio-materials that can be used in industries such as food packaging and fashion. This innovation not only adds value to agricultural by-products but also connects local smallholder farmers to

		<p>global markets, including partnerships with major international fashion brands. This illustrates how African ingenuity and resources can reach global platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite technological breakthroughs supported by academic institutions and patented innovations, regulatory and financial challenges pose significant barriers to scaling such enterprises. Small startups like Rethread Africa face heavy taxation and regulatory costs even during early research and development phases when they are not yet profitable, highlighting the urgent need for supportive policies, tax incentives, and government backing to foster innovation and commercial viability in African small businesses.
6. Arristine Mendes, NextGen African Agri-food entrepreneur ; Founder and CEO Shadai Aquaculture		<p>Young women entrepreneurs like Arristine Mendes face significant barriers to scaling innovative agricultural solutions due to lack of access to trustful financing and tailored support, underscoring the urgent need for inclusive financial systems that empower youth-led businesses in Africa.</p>
7. Dr. Iddi Mohammad Farted, NextGen African Agri-food entrepreneur; CEO of Kodu Technology		<p>Youth-led startups like Kuru Technology are turning agricultural waste—such as banana and plantain byproducts—into affordable, eco-friendly sanitary products that help tackle critical social challenges, including menstrual hygiene management and girls’ school attendance. These innovations not only create new income streams for farmers by using waste that was previously discarded but also empower young girls to stay in school and improve their health. However, despite their social and environmental impact, these startups face significant financial challenges, particularly heavy taxation and limited access to funding. There is an urgent need for governments across Africa to ease tax burdens and provide stronger support to</p>

		youth-led enterprises, enabling them to scale their solutions and contribute more effectively to sustainable development and social progress.
8. Digne Nedjea Mpoh Itoua, NextGen African Agri-food entrepreneur, Founding president ED Biens et Services		To ensure the success of businesses and empower young entrepreneurs, we need ecosystems that are deeply rooted in local cultures and strengthened by science and youth-led innovation. Building these ecosystems around key strategic value chains, combined with strong political commitment, can create resilient, self-sufficient, and sustainable economies. Recognizing and valuing traditional knowledge and local resources is essential for fostering prosperity and long-term independence.
9. Giscard Katala, NextGen African Agri-food entrepreneur ; CEO KTL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Africans are the driving force behind the transformation of inclusive, resilient, and prosperous agri-food systems essential to meet the continent's rapidly growing food demand, which will increase significantly as Africa's population reaches 2.5 billion by 2050. With over 35% of the population under 35, this emerging generation of agro-entrepreneurs is not only the primary beneficiaries of sustainable food systems but also the leaders and innovators who must actively shape their future. We cannot wait for change — we must be the agents of change. • To empower this dynamic generation, it is critical that governments, development partners, financial institutions, and all relevant stakeholders take urgent and coordinated action. This includes establishing favorable financing mechanisms that provide accessible, affordable, and youth-specific credit tailored to the realities and ambitions of young entrepreneurs. Financial products must be designed to stimulate innovation

		<p>and entrepreneurial spirit in agriculture, unlocking the full potential of young Africans who are ready and willing to build a prosperous and food-secure continent. Only through these concerted efforts can we achieve a thriving agricultural sector that feeds Africa sustainably and inclusively.</p>
<p>10. Mwaka Namukonda, Executive Coordinator Consortium of African Youth in Agriculture and Climate Change (CAYACC)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young African agri-entrepreneurs demand meaningful and active participation—not just consultation—in the design, implementation, and monitoring of Africa’s food systems agenda at all levels: local, national, regional, and continental. Governments are called upon to establish youth advisory panels in every country to annually assess progress on empowering youth agri-entrepreneurs and expanding economic opportunities for them. • Policymakers should create and implement supportive policies that enhance young entrepreneurs’ access to regional and international markets, enabling them to scale agri-food businesses and compete globally. The African Continental Free Trade Area presents an unprecedented opportunity, with the potential to unlock \$1 trillion in agribusiness by 2030, and Africa’s urban food market alone projected to reach \$150 billion—positioning the continent as a pivotal player in global food systems transformation. • Young agripreneurs are driving inclusive economic growth, food security, job creation, and climate resilience across Africa. Their voices, ideas, and leadership are vital for lasting transformation. Leaders and stakeholders are urged to invest in young entrepreneurs who hold the future of Africa’s agri-food systems. With proper support, a prosperous,

resilient, and food-secure Africa can be achieved.

Interventions from the floor

SPEAKER	QUESTION OR KEY POINT OF INTERVENTION
1. Mawunyo Mila Aziabile, Minister for Water and Sanitation in Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young entrepreneurs and innovators are already driving change by taking risks and building businesses, but their role must extend far beyond production and processing. Their active involvement in strategy-making, governance, and policy formulation is essential to create food systems that are efficient, inclusive, and truly reflective of their needs and aspirations. Building these systems without youth participation will not achieve the Africa we envision—one that is resilient, sustainable, and equitable. It is vital for young people to be bold and intentional in making their presence felt at all levels of decision-making. They must consistently show up, raise their voices, and advocate for policies that support their growth and the communities they serve. This engagement is not just for the present but is crucial for shaping a food system that benefits current and future generations. Young people's leadership and participation are indispensable to crafting solutions that will sustain Africa's future.

Overall session summary, conclusions and recommended actions (max 250 words)

The FSS+4 African session convened by the AU and AUDA-NEPAD,

FSS+4 Africa session—convened by the African Union Commission (AUC) and AUDA-NEPAD, with support from IFAD, AGRA/AFS, and AKADEMIYA2063—brought together over 150 young agri-food entrepreneurs from more than 30 African countries to engage with African leaders, including the Vice President of Nigeria, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, the AU Commissioner, the NEPAD CEO, and Ministers from across the continent.

Under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, Africa's agriculture sector is projected to generate **US\$1 trillion** in agribusiness by 2030. Across the continent, a bold new generation of tech-savvy, business-minded youth agri-entrepreneurs is emerging—demanding better financing, tailored support, and a fair opportunity to claim their share of this growing market. They are creating jobs, strengthening communities, and reshaping the narrative of African food systems.

The **CAADP Kampala Declaration 2026–2035**, signed by African Heads of State in January 2025, sets an ambitious agenda to empower youth across agrifood value chains through a comprehensive set of youth-focused interventions.

This high-energy session spotlighted Africa's next-generation agri-entrepreneurs—providing them with a platform to engage directly with African leaders. They shared their successes and challenges, and called for bold financial and policy solutions to scale their businesses and lead Africa's food systems transformation.

The Youth-led call highlighted the following requests:

- Develop accessible, affordable, and youth-friendly credit and financing facilities tailored to the realities and ambitions of young agri-entrepreneurs.
- Fully engage youth in the design, implementation, and review of food systems policies and programs at national and regional levels, moving from consultation to active co-creation.
- Set up Youth Advisory Panels in each country to annually assess the level of youth empowerment, including the quality and reach of economic opportunities created for and with young people.
- Implement trade policies that facilitate young entrepreneurs' access to regional and international markets, enabling them to scale up and compete globally.
- Prioritize investment in youth innovation, entrepreneurship, and climate-smart agri-food solutions that promote inclusive growth, food security, job creation, and climate resilience.