

UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake

SESSION REPORT

All session recordings will be available after the conclusion of the session. Please send the report of your session to your focal point at the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub.

Type (click one):

- ☐ Plenary
- ☐ Ministerial Roundtable
- ☐ High-level Panels
- ☐ Featured Event
- ☐ Investment Dialogue
- ☒ Stakeholder Action Session

Youth-led Session: From Bangkok to Addis Ababa

28 July | 16:30 - 18:00

Name of note-taker: UN Food Systems Coordination Hub YLP

Session lead/co-lead: co-led by the Hub YLP and the Youth UNFSS+4 Task Force

E-mail of note-taker: N/A

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. Dr Nicole de Paula, Technical Officer (Science for Food Systems), UN Food Systems Coordination Hub	Moderator (Opening, leading panel session on Reactions from various stakeholders (Science, Policy, National Convenors) and closing	Dr. Nicole de Paula delivered a welcoming address on behalf of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub. She began by thanking the UNFSS+4 Youth Task Force, the German Government, the SENA Group, and global youth contributors for their partnership and commitment to youth inclusion. She emphasized that the session was not just another meeting, but part of a global movement

		<p>for meaningful youth engagement and stronger civil society participation in food systems transformation.</p> <p>Without youth, she warned, food systems transformation is bound to fail. She called for dedicated financing for youth-led initiatives, the creation of green jobs, promotion of lifelong learning, and fostering of intergenerational leadership. She also proudly reaffirmed the Coordination Hub's continued commitment to youth leadership, particularly through the Youth Leadership Program (YLP).</p> <p>In the second half of the session, Dr. Nicole de Paula moderated a high-level panel discussion featuring voices from science, policy, and national convenors. She guided the discussion to ensure a multi-stakeholder reaction, drawing attention to how youth perspectives are critical for shaping effective, inclusive, and science-based food system policies. She encouraged stakeholders to actively support the youth demands and align their actions with the declaration's priorities.</p>
2. David Giles, World Food Forum Global Youth Action Initiative	Moderator (Opening, youth panel session and introducing the youth declaration session)	<p>Mr. David Giles opened the session with a compelling message on the critical role of youth in food systems transformation. He emphasized that youth engagement must be meaningful, strategic, and sustained not symbolic. Stressing the importance of intergenerational collaboration, he framed the session as a collective space to elevate youth voices in global food systems governance.</p> <p>David walked participants through the process and structure behind the Youth Declaration, highlighting how it was informed by regional assessments, multi-stakeholder consultations,</p>

		<p>and the direct input of over 3,000 youth globally. He explained how the Youth Policy Board, the UNFSS+4 Youth Task Force (SENA Group), and the Youth Leadership Program (YLP) alumni consolidated the inputs into a unified call to action.</p> <p>He also introduced the World Food Forum (WFF) and its Youth Assembly as key global platforms to amplify youth-led initiatives and support inclusive food systems governance.</p> <p>Throughout the session, David played a central facilitation role, moderating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presentation of the Youth Declaration, delivered by three youth representatives from the Youth Leadership Program, Youth Policy Board, and SENA Group. • The panel discussion on youth perspectives, where youth leaders shared reflections on their engagement in the UNFSS process and identified key priorities for future action.
3. Mr Opeyemi Elujulo, SDG2 Global Focal Point, MGCY	Welcoming remarks from the UNFSS+4 Youth Task Force	<p>Mr. Opeyemi Elujulo opened the session with a warm welcome, introducing himself as a representative of both the SENA Group and the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY). He emphasized the historic significance of the session, as it marked a moment of reflection and accountability on four years of youth engagement since the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.</p> <p>Speaking from an African perspective, he highlighted the vulnerability of youth in the Global South and the vital role they play in leading food systems transformation, especially in regions disproportionately impacted by climate change and food insecurity.</p>

		<p>He introduced the session as a platform for amplifying youth voices, underscoring its purpose in showcasing youth-led progress tracking, advocacy, and the evolution of intergenerational collaboration since the original Summit. Opeyemi outlined the session's structure, including the presentation of the Youth Call to Action Declaration, a document shaped by over 3,000 young people across the globe. He credited the Youth Policy Board, the SENA Group, and alumni of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub's Youth Leadership Program for consolidating and finalizing the declaration.</p> <p>His remarks positioned the youth declaration not just as a policy document, but as a symbol of collective action, accountability, and commitment. He reaffirmed that this session was a strategic milestone in sustaining youth momentum within the UNFSS follow-up processes and ensuring that youth voices continue to influence global food governance.</p>
4. Ms Dina Kebede - Youth Leadership Programme	<p>Presentation of the renewed Youth Declaration:</p> <p>key messages</p>	<p>Opened the presentation of the renewed Youth Declaration by introducing its foundation on three pillars: Advocacy, Action, and Empowerment. She emphasized that youth are not passive beneficiaries but co-authors of food systems transformation. Under Advocacy, she called for the centrality of food sovereignty, agroecology, and Indigenous knowledge in food systems and broader global agendas, such as climate, health, and education. Under Action, she urged the reform of food governance by embedding youth in policymaking, redirecting subsidies to support smallholder and community-based systems, and promoting low-waste, circular economies. Under Empowerment, she highlighted the need to meet the differentiated needs of marginalized youth, particularly Indigenous, rural youth, and young women, through secure access to land, finance, and fair labor protections. She closed by affirming</p>

		that these pillars are not abstract ideals but a call to action, and she encouraged all stakeholders to support youth in leading the transformation we urgently need.
5. Mr Zack Ahmed - World Food Forum Youth Policy Board	Presentation of the renewed Youth Declaration: key messages	Mr. Zack Ahmed followed by demonstrating how the Declaration's three pillars are reflected across regions, starting with Africa, where youth call for dedicated representation in governance, integration of climate-smart agriculture that blends ancestral wisdom with modern technologies, and gender-responsive nutrition and shock-response systems. In the Arab Region, he emphasized the need for institutionalized youth councils, equitable access to land, microgrants, and digital tools, and investment in drought-resilient innovations. For Asia and the Pacific, he highlighted advocacy for healthy, culturally rooted diets, the protection of Indigenous knowledge through FPIC, and the development of rural infrastructure and climate finance to support youth entrepreneurs. Across these regions, Zack underlined the common demands for structural change, not symbolic inclusion, and showcased how the youth vision is already shaping real, localized solutions.
6. Mr Nicolás Domke - SENA Group Youth Representative	Presentation of the renewed Youth Declaration: key messages	Mr. Nicolás Domke delivered youth priorities from Europe & Central Asia, North America, and Latin America & the Caribbean. In Europe & Central Asia, he called for incentives for local, nutritious food systems, protection of heirloom seeds, regenerative farming practices, and transboundary water cooperation. He also highlighted the need for digital democracy tools and transparent governance mechanisms to hold institutions accountable. In North America, he addressed overconsumption, food deserts, and agribusiness monopolies, urging a shift toward regenerative agriculture, restoration of Indigenous land rights, and food literacy programs linked to healthcare. In Latin America & the Caribbean, Nicolás emphasized feminist

		agroecology, secure land rights, and the protection of Indigenous sovereignty through enforceable FPIC. He also called for school meal reforms, youth quotas in leadership, and protections for civic space. His message reinforced that youth are custodians, innovators, and rights-holders driving change from the grassroots to global platforms.
7. Mr Musa Juwara, YLP Alumn from the Gambia / WFF Gambia Chapter Lead	Panel Speaker - Youth perspectives on engagement in UNFSS processes	Mr. Musa Juwara, shared insights from his experience working at the interface of science and policy, emphasizing the need to close the gap between the two sectors. He spoke about the importance of bringing youth from diverse backgrounds into food system processes, beyond just agriculture or science. Musa highlighted his journey after participating in the Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), including his role in establishing and leading the WFF Gambia National Chapter. He reflected on how this platform has enabled him to engage with civil society organizations (CSOs) and foster inclusive youth participation in national food systems dialogues.
8. Mr Rino Dominic Cabungcal, YLP	Panel Speaker - Youth perspectives on engagement in UNFSS processes	Mr. Rino Dominic spoke about how his participation in the YLP deepened his engagement with policy processes and research in food systems. Prior to joining the program, he had a theoretical interest in policymaking, but the YLP provided him with the tools and perspective to enter decision-making spaces with evidence-based contributions. He emphasized the role of youth at the science-policy-society interface and highlighted how the program gave him clarity on addressing food insecurity through systemic engagement. Rino credited the YLP with connecting him to a global network of food system leaders and building his commitment to serve people and lead change in his country.
9. Ms Elizabeth Mwende Mwendwa - SENA Group Youth Representative	Panel Speaker - Youth perspectives on	Ms. Elizabeth Mwende spoke as a representative of the SENA Youth Group, which works in partnership with the Major Group for Children

	engagement in UNFSS processes	and Youth (MGCY) to amplify youth voices at national, regional, and global levels. She explained how SENA advocates for youth participation across climate action, agriculture, biodiversity, and food systems. Elizabeth shared her involvement with the World Food Forum (WFF) Kenya Chapter and her contribution as a YLP alumna in supporting youth engagement in Kenya's national food systems processes. She also highlighted the group's regional engagement in Latin America and the Caribbean, including dialogues and working sessions that bring youth together across continents. She reflected on SENA's active participation in global youth conferences like the one in Bangkok, where youth voices were meaningfully integrated into discussions.
10. Mr Mathews Vichr Lopes, YLP and Brazil representative	Panel Speaker - Youth perspectives on engagement in UNFSS processes	Mr. Mathews Vichr Lopes reflected on how the YLP has transformed his role in government and public policy. He described the program as a life-changing experience that equipped him with the skills, leadership mindset, and social responsibility to influence national policy. As a government advisor in Brazil, he is actively involved in creating youth-inclusive policies, particularly focused on access to land and technical assistance for young people in agriculture. Mathews underscored the challenges facing youth in Brazil, where many are in low-skilled jobs and fewer are entering farming. He called for youth empowerment through public policy, stating that young people are pragmatic and well-positioned to transform the country's food systems if given the right tools and opportunities.
11. Prof Nitya Rao Swaminathan, Professor of Gender and Development at the University of East Anglia, Director of the Norwich	Panel Speaker - Reactions from various stakeholders (Science, Policy, National Convenors)	Prof. Nitya Rao emphasized the power and critical role of youth in food systems transformation, congratulating all speakers and highlighting the value of the Youth Declaration. She stressed that equity, inclusion, and recognition of youth voices are essential pillars. Youth often remain

Institute for Sustainable Development - SAC Member		underrepresented and taken for granted in decision-making, which demands urgent action. She pointed out the importance of decentralized policies linked with resource support including land, finance, knowledge, and innovation to truly empower youth leadership. Furthermore, she urged youth leaders to embed intersectional approaches by ensuring inclusivity of rural women, indigenous knowledge holders, and climate-affected communities in food systems advocacy and policymaking.
12. Dr Inaya Ezzeddine, Chairperson of the Leb, National Convenor Lebanon	Panel Speaker - Reactions from various stakeholders (Science, Policy, National Convenors)	Dr. Inaya spoke from the perspective of Lebanon, where despite ongoing conflict, the government views youth as co-creators of food system transformation rather than mere beneficiaries. She highlighted youth engagement across sectors and shared how young people bring life-saving solutions during crises. Dr. Inaya described a food system project started amid war, focusing on agroecology, education, economy, and food sovereignty. As a legislator, she emphasized the importance of institutionalizing youth participation in decision-making beyond consultations and scaling their role in national policy. She noted that Lebanon's parliament is already working on women's inclusion and youth agenda plans, aiming for both national and global impact.
13. Mrs Paulina Addy, Food Systems National Co-Convenor / Director, Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD)	Panel Speaker - Reactions from various stakeholders (Science, Policy, National Convenors)	Mrs. Paulina shared her experience as a Ghanaian youth convener and YLP alumna, emphasizing the energy, potential, and power of African youth in food systems. She stressed the importance of government engagement, particularly the Ministry of Food and Agriculture's focus on youth participation through targeted provisions such as inputs for micro-level poultry and small-scale agriculture. Paulina called for greater visibility, inclusivity, and quotas for youth in the sector, advocating that youth must be front and center in shaping agriculture. She underscored the need to

		make agriculture attractive and accessible to young people as a viable and inspiring livelihood.
14. Dr Andreas Schaumayer, Head of Division for Food Security and Fisheries, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development	Closing Reflections	Dr. Schaumayer recognized the passion and impatience of young people as a strong foundation for transforming food systems. He emphasized that the German government's support goes beyond just amplifying youth voices; it is about linking youth engagement at country levels with national convenors and ensuring effective follow-up. Transparency and accountability are key priorities for BMZ in supporting youth engagement in developing countries. He expressed pride in the Youth Leadership Program projects and ideas, highlighting their importance in fostering leadership, responsibility, and meaningful impact in food systems transformation.

Interventions from the floor

SPEAKER	QUESTION OR KEY POINT OF INTERVENTION
1. Melaku, Ethiopia	Melaku asked about mechanisms to achieve the key priorities in the Youth Declaration. He inquired how the youth programs and partnerships plan to move forward with monitoring and evaluation to ensure accountability and track progress.
2. Tsegamlak Alemayehu, Addis Ababa University	Tsegamlak raised questions on the role of youth in agricultural technology, agribusiness campaigns, and utilization. He stressed the importance of engaging youth in conflict and war-affected regions, addressing their survival and participation challenges. He also highlighted the need to consider financial constraints that hinder youth from starting agribusiness ventures and how to support them effectively to succeed under such constraints.
3. Lauren M. Phillips, Deputy Director - Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality, United Nations FAO	The FAO representative emphasized the need to challenge FAO to better amplify the voices and opportunities for young people within agricultural food systems. She called for stronger youth inclusion in shaping policies and programs that affect their futures, while sharing the findings of a new report on Youth published by FAO (2025).

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

The session brought together diverse youth leaders, experts, and policymakers to discuss the critical role of youth in transforming food systems globally. Speakers shared experiences from various regions The Gambia, Kenya, Philippines, Brazil, Lebanon, Ghana, and Ethiopia highlighting how the Hub's Youth Leadership Programs (YLP) empower young people to engage in science, policy, agriculture, and governance. Key themes included youth inclusion, intersectionality, and the importance of linking indigenous knowledge, climate action, and gender equity to food system transformation.

Panelists emphasized the need for meaningful youth representation beyond consultation youth must be co-creators in decision-making processes, supported by resources such as finance, land access, and innovation opportunities. Challenges faced by youth in conflict zones and low-resource settings were acknowledged, alongside the imperative to strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and accountability mechanisms to track progress against youth-led declarations.

Closing remarks by the German Federal Ministry underscored youth passion as a driving force and stressed the importance of sustained support linking grassroots efforts to national and global platforms.

Recommended Actions:

1. Institutionalize youth participation in policy and program design at all levels, with clear mandates and resource allocation.
2. Promote intersectional approaches ensuring inclusion of rural women, Indigenous groups, and marginalized communities.
3. Enhance youth capacity through leadership training, financial support, and access to technology.
4. Develop robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to measure impact and accountability.
5. Foster multi-stakeholder partnerships bridging science, policy, and civil society to amplify youth voices and solutions.

This session marked a pivotal step in recognizing youth as essential agents of change for sustainable and equitable food systems.