

# Conference Report

## Preparatory Youth Conference for the 2<sup>nd</sup> UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4)

Bangkok, Thailand | 15-16 May 2025



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## Conference Summary

Young leaders from across the globe gathered in Bangkok to co-create bold solutions for a just, resilient, and sustainable future of food systems. Structured around the key objectives of the UNFSS+4, the conference elevated youth-led perspectives on food systems transformation, grounding discussions in lived experience, scientific insight, and political relevance. Over two days, more than 200 participants engaged in plenaries, foresight envisioning, and cross-regional collaboration, reaffirming the centrality of youth in driving systemic change. As part of the conference follow-up, a feedback survey was circulated to participants to collect information on demographics, participation modalities, and overall impressions. The survey received approximately 250 responses. The information below reports the data retrieved from this survey.

Participants represented a wide age spectrum, with 39.3 percent between the ages of 25 to 30 and 38.5 percent over the age of 30. Youth aged 18 to 24 accounted for 21.4 percent of respondents, while less than 1 percent were under 18. This distribution reflects the event's success in engaging both early-career and more experienced young leaders actively involved in food systems transformation. The hybrid format enabled broad participation, with approximately 35.5 percent of participants attending in person in Bangkok and 64.5 percent joining virtually throughout the two-day conference.

Following the conference, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub's social media platforms (X, LinkedIn, and Instagram) showed a strong overall performance, with consistent engagement and moderate follower growth. X registered the highest real-time interaction, with frequent reshares and effective use of hashtags such as #UNFSS4Youth, #FoodSystems, and #UNFSS2025, which helped amplify visibility across platforms. LinkedIn content reached over 18,000 impressions, with some posts generating over 800 clicks, indicating strong interest. On Instagram, engagement remained steady with a 4 percent rate and nearly 1,000 interactions recorded. Additionally, World Food Forum reported that their UNFSS-related content reached over 12,600 views and 620 engagements across platforms, and was featured in a newsletter viewed 16,000 times, leading to 480 clicks on the registration link.

Key themes emerging from the conference included the recognition of youth not simply as passive stakeholders but as active changemakers already shaping food systems policy, action, and governance. Youth emerged as architects of transformation, demanding governance rights, equitable access to land and finance, and recognition of traditional knowledge systems. Across sessions, participants underscored the critical need for inclusive finance, strengthened science-policy interfaces, and institutional support to sustain momentum. Gender inclusion also featured prominently, though the feedback survey revealed that 34 percent of respondents identified as female, pointing to both meaningful engagement and the need for further gender balance in future convenings.



Feedback from participants indicates a strong level of satisfaction with the conference. A large majority expressed that they were highly pleased with the overall experience, praising the relevance of the content, the quality of the discussions, and the opportunity for peer exchange. Most participants also affirmed that the conference themes strongly aligned with their interests and ongoing work. Nearly all respondents reported feeling more empowered to act in food systems transformation as a direct result of their participation, confirming the catalytic potential of youth-led convenings when designed as spaces for meaningful contribution, visibility, and mobilization.

Open-ended responses from the survey provided additional context on participants' experiences and priorities. Several respondents identified sessions on climate action, food security, gender, and youth-led innovation as particularly meaningful. Others highlighted the value of the foresight visioning exercise, which allowed them to articulate long-term aspirations and policy directions. Suggestions for future events included more opportunities for structured networking, regional breakouts, and practical guidance on project development and resource mobilization. Many respondents shared immediate actions they intend to take following the conference, such as initiating community-based initiatives, promoting food safety awareness, advancing local food production, and engaging in advocacy for inclusive food systems. These reflections illustrate how participants are translating the conference experience into context-specific follow-up activities.



## Introduction

The Preparatory Youth Conference for the 2nd UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 15 to 16 May 2025. Organized by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (the Hub) in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific FAORAP) and the World Food Forum (WFF), the conference gathered over 200 young leaders from all regions.

The conference aimed to align positions, refine the Youth Declaration Zero Draft, and set strategic priorities for the 2025 Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) scheduled to take place from 27-29 July 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Participants included alumni of the Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), civil society youth representatives, regional platform delegates, and members of global movements such as YOUNGO, GYBN, YPARD, ACT4Food, and the UNCCD Youth Caucus.

The event aimed to strengthen youth influence on food systems national pathways and promote inclusive governance, finance access, and accountability mechanisms. The resulting draft of the Youth Declaration calls for urgent policy reform, climate-resilient agriculture, food justice, and intergenerational equity. It is rooted in the lived realities of young people and informed by real-world cases—from Chad to the Philippines—demonstrating that youth are not waiting for change; they are leading it. Through this process, young delegates not only shared visionary proposals but also articulated the mechanisms needed to implement them, including institutional recognition, access to resources, and meaningful participation in decision-making platforms. The Bangkok Conference was not a moment—it was a mobilizing force.



## Day 1 – Thursday, 15 May 2025

### OFFICIAL OPENING

The conference started on Thursday, 15 May 2025. Dr Stefanos Fotiou, Director of the Hub, welcomed the young delegates by emphasizing the need to link youth action to national transformation processes and the global Stocktake process. He stressed the importance of connecting youth-led initiatives with national policy processes and urged participants to approach the conference as a political moment, not just a dialogue space.

In the opening ceremony, Mr Robert Simpson, Deputy Regional Representative of FAORAP, stressed the widespread unaffordability of healthy diets—averaging USD 4 per person per day—and the urgent need to address the systemic inequalities that keep nutritious food out of reach for many. Applauding youth for reimagining the purpose of food and changing how we think about food, he set the tone for intergenerational collaboration and urgent food systems reform.

Following Mr Simpson, Mr Kazuki Kitaoka, Director of FAO's Office of Youth and Women (OYM) underscored the vital role of evidence-based decision-making in advancing sustainable food systems. He challenged youth to be rigorous in their advocacy, to hold their governments accountable for their commitments, and to push for ambitious and inclusive approaches to food systems transformation. His message emphasized that youth engagement must not only be heard but must shape institutional action at every level. Adding a governance and policy perspective, Ms Ana Avilés Ramírez, Youth Policy Specialist from the OYM, cited the Youth Declaration as a youth-led advocacy tool shaped by diverse regional realities.

In closing, Dr Nicole de Paula, Technical Officer at the Hub and global coordinator of the Hub's Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), framed food systems transformation as a matter of human dignity, calling for a renewed social contract grounded in shared responsibility. She recalled the purpose of the conference, emphasizing the role of youth not just as future stakeholders, but as present-day actors shaping systemic reform.

### Setting Expectations – Youth Outlook

As part of the agenda, the facilitator of the conference, Dr de Paula, invited Elizabeth Mwende and Isaiah Thomas, Alumni of the Hub's Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), to reflect on youth engagement since 2021. They highlighted their ongoing role in national-level monitoring and contribution to pathway dialogues. Emphasizing a shift away from traditional advocacy to co-implementation, they called for a renewed Youth Declaration that aligns with grassroots priorities.

The ensuing discussion expressed the need for policy coherence between local action and global platforms, with delegates committing to ensure that the final Declaration would serve as both a blueprint and a tool for national accountability towards youth engagement in food systems decision-making.



## Keynote: Strengthening National Governance for Accelerating Food Systems Transformation

Dr Shenggen Fan, Co-Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to the Hub, emphasized the need for governments to lead food systems transformation by coordinating agriculture, health, trade, and finance through strategic frameworks. He urged youth to press their governments for transparent and unified action.

Participants contributed to the dialogue by identifying entry points for engagement in national processes, such as through policy consultations, budget tracking, and cross-sectoral dialogues. The discussion reinforced the value of national leadership while positioning youth as essential partners in holding systems accountable. Dr Fan stressed that "national governments have a unique convening power, and as youth, you must push them to come together."





## FORESIGHT WORKSHOP

### Visioning the Ideal Food System Landscape for Future Generations - Reimagining Resilient Food Systems of 2050

Facilitated by Dr Rathana Peou Norbert-Munns, Senior Agrifood System policy expert and Climate Foresight Planning Specialist at the Hub, this interactive session invited participants to examine three future-oriented dimensions shaping food systems: emerging shifts, structural drivers, and disruptive shocks. In the first segment, youth considered megatrends such as rapid urbanization, digital transformation, and shifting consumption patterns, recognizing the need to proactively adapt to demographic and lifestyle changes. The second segment explored structural drivers like land governance, trade policy, and infrastructure, highlighting the role of institutions and policy in shaping equitable systems. In the third and final segment, participants discussed "black swan" events, including climate extremes, pandemics, and geopolitical instability—and reflected on how food systems can be made more resilient to deep uncertainties.

Throughout the session, delegates emphasized the importance of balancing local realities with global foresight. Recurring priorities included inclusive governance, agroecological transition, food justice, and digital equity. The workshop concluded with a strong consensus that foresight thinking should be embedded in youth strategies for national and global food systems transformation. The session produced a set of shared practices, including inclusive governance, agroecology, digital equity, and food justice. It emphasized that foresight methodologies can equip young leaders to anticipate challenges and proactively shape resilient food systems.

The session closed with a reminder: "We cannot solve tomorrow's problems with the thinking that created them." A provocation to young foresight leaders not just to anticipate change, but to actively shape it.

## PLENARY

### Scaling Impact – Young Leaders Driving Change to Nourish People and Planet

Discussions during the roundtables focused on an important aspect of youth engagement in food systems transformation: converting youth engagement into institutional change. Dina Kebede, alumna of the Hub's Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), described how regional training programs have enabled youth to draft policy proposals and interface with ministries. Her contribution highlighted not just ways in which youth can make institutional changes but in turn, how institutional support can enhance youth-led initiatives in food systems.

Sean Counihan and Shanerisse Tamondong, representing the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network (SUN-CSN), described [a bottom-up "listening campaign" model that captures community-generated nutrition solutions](#). They explained that to date, over 100 dialogues have taken place, surfacing critical insights, including overlooked links between malnutrition and sexual exploitation, maternal stress, and inadequate access to essential services.

Reiterating the importance of grounded, community-driven knowledge, Hino Samuel Jose, Children and Youth Major Group of UNEP, emphasized the need for meaningful youth engagement and collaboration across local and global food systems initiatives. Previewing an upcoming youth-led conference in Brazil, he underscored the value of youth autonomy in defining nutrition based on local realities, spotlighting school meals, AI innovations, and Indigenous resilience strategies—from Viet Nam to Indonesia.

Celeste Mejía Flores, YLP Alumna, shared how Honduras is updating its national food systems pathway to include youth and fishers who have been previously excluded from policy discussions. She concluded the roundtable with a powerful message: “Transforming food systems is not a fantasy, but a necessity and it requires action, structure, and synergy.”

Jody Frank Brown, YLP Alum, highlighted tangible progress, citing the integration of youth in Honduras' revised national food systems pathway. He emphasized the strength of youth networks in shifting from fragmented efforts to coordinated transformation.

This conversation called for the transition from fragmented youth advocacy to structured, outcome-oriented participation, with delegates stressing the importance of reliable institutional platforms, sustained funding, and policy co-design processes.



## PLENARY

### Building Alliances and Implementing the National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation in Times of Poly-crisis

#### Youth Action in Food Systems Through Legally Binding Mechanisms: The Case of the Rio Conventions

This session explored how youth can influence global governance mechanisms. Elizabeth Mwende Mwendwa, YLP Alumna and SENA representative, moderated the event and mapped the alignment between food systems and the Rio Conventions.

Further to Ms Mwende's introduction, all speakers intervened online. Nicolas Domke, SENA representative, illustrated the networks' success in integrating youth perspectives into biodiversity strategies. He highlighted the presence of the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) in over 65 countries, supporting more than 600 youth delegates and demonstrating the network's effectiveness in mobilizing young people to influence environmental governance, advocate for intergenerational equity, and shape global biodiversity frameworks.

Later, Shaik Imran, Co-Contact Point of YOUNGO's Food and Agriculture Working Group, outlined youth engagement in food systems under the UNFCCC. He described YOUNGO's consensus-based structure and its role in shaping climate governance, highlighting advocacy on agroecology, smallholder farming, and biodiversity. Imran introduced the Food and Agriculture Academy, a capacity-building effort leading to COP30, and previewed the upcoming Global Youth Statement, designed to link youth priorities directly to negotiation texts.

Daniela Solis, speaking on behalf of the UNCCD Youth Caucus and as Coordinator of the Coalition of Action for Soil Health, described UNCCD's work on soil restoration, land degradation, and the creation of youth platforms for decision-making.

Opeyemi Elujulo, concluded the session by thanking all speakers and participants, emphasizing that the diverse youth-led discussions had been both insightful and impactful. He stressed that the voices shared during the consultation were heard and documented and will contribute to major position documents for the upcoming UNFSS+4 Stocktaking Moment.

The overall discussion underscored the importance of embedding youth advocacy within formal, legally binding multilateral processes. Through diverse interventions spanning the Rio Conventions, speakers demonstrated how food systems intersect with biodiversity, climate, and land agendas. Delegates emphasized that linking international commitments to national-level food systems transformation is essential for accountability and impact. The session reinforced that youth are critical actors advancing integrated, systems-based solutions.

## PARALLEL SESSION

### Play, Learn, Transform: Understanding Food Systems and Driving Action through Gamification

As a parallel session during the conference, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAORAP) hosted *"Play, Learn, Transform: Understanding Food Systems and Driving Action through Gamification."* This interactive event engaged youth through two breakout games designed to build systems thinking, strategic foresight, and collaborative problem-solving skills.

Participants played *AgroAdapt*, a role-based game simulating climate change responses in food systems, and the *SDG Action Card Game*, which encouraged cross-sectoral, locally adapted solutions for agrifood system transformation. Both games illustrated complex trade-offs, resilience strategies, and the interlinkages among the SDGs. The session demonstrated how gamification can make abstract challenges tangible, empowering youth to lead change within their communities.

### Entrepreneurship Space: Turning Ideas into Impact and the Role of the Private Sector

Expanding the discussion to the private sector, the session supported food systems innovation in financing. Nick Blumenthal, Stanford University Graduate and U.S. WFF National Chapter Lead, spoke on *"Entrepreneurship Space: Turning Ideas into Impact,"* drawing on recent fieldwork with young entrepreneurs in the rural mountains of Yunnan, China. He highlighted how youth-led ventures are already creating value and reshaping local economies. However, he underscored that these efforts remain constrained by limited access to capital, legitimacy, and integration into broader commercial ecosystems. Blumenthal called for a shift in mindset, urging both the private and development sectors to view youth not as beneficiaries but as co-creators.

Ms Charlotte Dufour, Practice Advisor to the Conscious Food Systems Alliance – UNDP, emphasized that transforming food systems requires more than technical fixes—it demands a fundamental reconnection with core human values such as care, solidarity, and ecological responsibility. She argued that current systems often reflect disconnection from land, people, and purpose, and that meaningful change must be rooted in ethical reflection and collective responsibility. Drawing on the work of the Conscious Food Systems Alliance, she further highlighted the role of inner transformation—cultivating mindfulness, empathy, and self-awareness—as essential to enabling leaders, including youth, to navigate complexity and foster truly systemic change.

The session concluded with calls for blended finance models and the integration of youth enterprises into national development strategies.





WORLD  
FOOD  
FORUM

GLOBAL  
YOUTH  
ACTION



## CLOSING DAY 1

### A Roadmap for Action: First Takeaways for the 2nd UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake 2025 (UNFSS+4)

Day 1 of the Preparatory Youth Conference for the UNFSS+4 convened young leaders from around the world to co-create solutions for transforming food systems amid overlapping global crises. Through keynotes, foresight visioning, and interactive sessions, youth asserted their role as changemakers, advancing action across food, climate, and biodiversity governance. Discussions emphasized the urgency of intergenerational collaboration, institutional support, and evidence-based advocacy. Far from passive observers, youth reaffirmed themselves as leaders driving transformation from the grassroots to global conventions.



## Day 2 – Friday, 16 May 2025

### INTERVIEW PANEL

#### Scaling Finance for Decent Jobs and Prosperity for Youth

On Friday morning, Panelists Ms Meeta Punjabi Metha, Senior Food Systems Officer at FAO, and Mr Jos Hazenbosch, Regional Analyst at Asia and the Pacific Division of IFAD, steered the conversation towards unlocking finance for youth in agrifood systems. Ms Punjabi Mehta highlighted the vital role of youth in Asia and Africa, where nearly 88 percent of the world's young population resides. She stressed the importance of shifting focus from traditional farming to the broader food systems, pointing to value chain opportunities such as food processing, storage, sustainable energy, and innovation. Ms Mehta emphasized the need for practical training to build youth capacity in food systems transformation and advocated for aligning local experiences with global frameworks. She encouraged youth to document and advocate for successful initiatives, building a strong case for policy influence.

Mr Hazenbosch echoed these points, expressing concern about the increasing disengagement of youth from agriculture amid growing food demand. He stressed the urgency of rethinking current financial systems to create inclusive budgets, youth-targeted loan schemes, and supportive regulatory environments. Mr Hazenbosch highlighted that access to capital remains a major barrier for young entrepreneurs and emphasized the need for innovative financial tools and education programs. He called for stronger partnerships between governments and the private sector to co-create sustainable employment solutions for youth and concluded by encouraging young leaders to champion advocacy efforts and ensure accountability in the implementation of youth-centered policies.

### DEEP DIVE

#### The Right to Food - Overcoming Conflict of Interests and Fostering Accountability

During the second day, the Director of the Hub, Dr Stefanos Fotiou, led a session examining the Right to Food from a governance perspective. He emphasized the notion of redefining people not merely as consumers but as food citizens with enforceable rights and the power to demand accountability. This session addressed the structural imbalances within global agrifood systems, emphasizing the economic marginalization of smallholder farmers and the growing consolidation of market power. Participants engaged with interactive data to explore the wide gap between production and income distribution, particularly in commodity value chains like coffee. Despite contributing significantly to the global food supply, smallholder farmers capture only a fraction of the final market value.

The discussion highlighted the increasing dominance of a few multinational corporations in critical sectors such as seeds and inputs, which limits competition and farmer autonomy. These market dynamics mirror broader trends in both developed and developing countries, where producers receive disproportionately low returns compared to the final retail price. The session also brought attention to the hidden societal and environmental costs embedded in current food systems, which are often not reflected in market transactions. These include biodiversity loss, climate impacts, and health externalities, collectively amounting to trillions of dollars annually.

A key message was the need to reframe the role of individuals within food systems from passive consumers to active citizens. This entails increased accountability, more equitable value distribution, and inclusive governance mechanisms that prioritize fairness, transparency, and sustainability across the entire food system.

### Collective Intelligence: Accelerating Solutions for Food Systems Change

In a dynamic impact panel, Ms Kae Mihara, Gender Officer at FAO, emphasized that empowering women in agrifood systems is both an ethical imperative and a strategic lever for systemic transformation. According to the latest FAO report ["The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems"](#), women contribute to approximately 43 percent of the agricultural labor force in developing regions, ranging from 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Yet they remain disproportionately disadvantaged in accessing land, credit, technology, and training.

The report also shows that, if female producers enjoyed the same access to productive resources as men, their yields could increase by 20–30 percent, boosting overall agricultural output in developing countries by an estimated 2.5 to 4 percent. Ms Mihara argued that closing these gender gaps is more than a moral duty: it is a catalyst for higher productivity, enhanced food security, and improved health outcomes across agrifood systems. She underscored that advancing gender-transformative policies such as equal land rights, financial inclusion, and targeted extension services is essential not only to redress inequities but to drive resilient and sustainable agricultural growth.

Turning the discussion to food waste, Mr Benjamin Lephilbert, CEO of LightBlue Environmental Consulting, addressed the environmental and economic urgency of food loss and waste, which accounts for nearly a third of global food production. He underscored the need for scalable solutions that integrate youth leadership, technology, and policy reform. Addressing food waste is essential not only to combat hunger but also to mitigate climate impacts linked to methane emissions and unsustainable resource use. In his intervention, he also expressed concern, citing Bangkok as a striking example where half of municipal waste consists of discarded food—an unacceptable figure in the face of persistent food insecurity. Both highlighted the importance of embedding social innovation into systemic change.

### Impact Talk: Bridging Science and Policy: Options for navigating complexity

Dr Preetmoninder Lidder, Technical Adviser in the Chief Scientist Office at FAO, delivered a clear and compelling overview of the current state and potential of Science–Policy Interfaces (SPIs) within agrifood systems. She highlighted the diversity of SPIs ranging from intergovernmental bodies like the IPCC, IPBES, and HLPE, to independent science initiatives such as EAT-Lancet and IPES-Food. Each plays a distinct role in shaping evidence-based policy, but the common challenge remains: bridging the gap between scientific uncertainty and the demand for clear, actionable decisions from policymakers.

Dr Lidder emphasized that while science often operates in probabilistic and iterative terms, political and financial systems demand rapid, definitive answers. This disconnect calls for SPIs to go beyond being information providers to become platforms for inclusive dialogue, conflict mediation, and cross-sector alignment. Co-creation of knowledge, combining scientific insights with traditional and local knowledge, was positioned as essential for legitimacy and context-sensitive solutions. She stressed that building trust and effectiveness in SPIs requires interdisciplinary capacity development, transparent governance, and sustained institutional investment.

Further, she argued that national-level SPIs must be customized to reflect specific socio-political and ecological realities while maintaining global connectivity. Their success depends on whole-of-government coordination, clear mandates, and operational resources that support adaptive policymaking, innovation, and resilience-building.

As part of the session, three YLP Alumni presented national-level case studies that exemplify the value of youth leadership in building strong SPIs.

YLP Alumn, Kaira Baké, representing Chad, outlined the country's experience in institutionalizing evidence-based policymaking through a youth-led strategic process. Mr Baké described a series of online workshops which culminated in Chad becoming the first country to formally establish the Science and Evidence-Based Solutions Initiative (SBSI), with endorsement from both the Presidency and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Rita Bonwi Njابه, YLP Alumna from Cameroon, emphasized the importance of bridging scientific and traditional knowledge to advance ecological transformation and food sovereignty. She described efforts to develop a national blueprint that aligns agriculture, climate, nutrition, and biodiversity policies, engaging multiple ministries and stakeholders in a coordinated approach. Ms Njابه highlighted concrete actions, including training women in fruit tree cultivation and promoting resilient local staples, as part of an import substitution strategy.



Musa Juwara, representing the Gambia, reflected on the challenges of accessing resources and translating global commitments into national-level action. He expressed that, despite barriers, youth engagement and cross-country learning were a critical driver of accountability and systemic change. Together with the experiences shared from Chad and Cameroon, his insights reflected the growing leadership of young professionals in shaping resilient, context-specific, and science-informed food systems.

Together, their interventions affirmed the need for participatory science-policy platforms that center youth, embed local realities, and scale up inclusive governance mechanisms. The session concluded with a collective call to action: reimagine food systems by 2050 through intergenerational collaboration, youth employment strategies, and investment in science-driven transformation.

### Regional Contributions to the Youth Declaration

In the afternoon, Youth participants collaborated to shape the Zero Draft of the Youth Declaration, a living document articulating the priorities, demands, and vision of young people across the globe.

Participants discussed the failures of current food systems in failing to meet basic human needs, exacerbating inequalities, and threatening intergenerational well-being. Drawing on the knowledge rooted in their communities and shaped by diverse lived experiences, young delegates reaffirmed their role not only as passive contributors but as co-architects of policy and action. There was broad consensus on the commitment to advancing solutions while underscoring that youth cannot act alone; decision-making power, voting rights, and structural support must happen to turn their ambition into action.

In keeping with the theme of food systems transformation as a globally connected yet contextually grounded process, the session turned toward defining regional priorities in the Youth Declaration.

## Regional Priorities

**AFRICA** — In regional discussions, African youth emphasized that transforming food systems requires tackling deep-rooted structural barriers—ranging from limited access to land and finance to the impacts of climate change and socio-economic inequality. Positioned at the intersection of demographic shifts, urbanization, and environmental stress, they called for a holistic approach grounded in planetary health, social equity, and Indigenous knowledge. Delegates called for formal youth representation in governance structures, supported by digital tools and “Youth Hubs” to bridge education and agrifood employment. Promoting climate-resilient agriculture emerged as a key priority, with proposals to integrate traditional knowledge with technology, develop early warning systems, and invest in digital extension services. Youth urged investment in value chains, peri-urban agroforestry, school feeding programs, and financial tools tailored to young agripreneurs. Moreover, gender equity was a cross-cutting theme, with calls for targeted leadership training, access to land and finance, and support for women-led agribusinesses.

**ASIA AND THE PACIFIC** — Youth from Asia and the Pacific identified climate change, food insecurity, and socio-economic inequalities as critical challenges facing their region. Emphasizing the need to promote sustainable production and consumption, there was a strong focus on integrating traditional ecological knowledge into modern food systems. Participants highlighted the role of Indigenous practices, such as seed saving and crop rotation, as essential to building resilience in the face of climate impacts. Youth called for enhanced climate action through targeted investments in adaptation technologies, including mangrove restoration, flood-resistant agriculture, and salt-tolerant crops. There was consensus on aligning national policies with agroecological principles and supporting Indigenous-led seed sovereignty networks. Solar-powered irrigation, rainwater harvesting, and farmer insurance schemes were identified as key measures to reduce vulnerability. The region’s youth prioritized nutrition-sensitive approaches, advocating for subsidized urban farmers’ markets, nutrition education in schools, and bans on ultra-processed food marketing to promote healthier diets. Building resilient infrastructure was underscored, including improved rural roads, cold storage, and digital tools for youth-led agri-enterprises to connect with markets directly. Meaningful youth participation emerged as a cross-cutting theme, with calls to establish youth advisory councils within agriculture ministries, embed youth delegates in relevant UN processes, and simplify funding mechanisms for youth-led initiatives. Ensuring fair labor practices, particularly women, and amplifying marginalized voices in food governance were also priorities.

**EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA** — The delegates from Europe and Central Asia highlighted climate change, socio-economic inequalities, and the need for sustainable food systems as key challenges. There was a call for improved access to nutritious, locally produced food, stronger protections for Indigenous seed varieties, and the integration of traditional farming practices into climate adaptation strategies. They urged policies to restrict unhealthy food marketing, implement taxes on ultra-processed foods, and subsidize local producers supplying public institutions. There was a collective emphasis on decent work conditions, especially for migrant farmworkers and women, alongside youth apprenticeships and cross-border mobility protections. Supporting young farmers through grants, training, and fair land access was prioritized, as was enhancing youth participation via digital tools and local food councils. Transparency measures to expose corporate subsidies and prevent land grabs were also recommended. Youth from the region advocate for resilient, equitable food systems grounded in sustainability, social justice, and youth empowerment.

**LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN** — Youth from Latin America and the Caribbean highlighted land rights, climate change, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic inequalities as urgent challenges. There were calls to prioritize advancing agroecology and securing formal land titles for Indigenous communities and rural youth, especially young women, to promote sustainable land use and food sovereignty. Participants emphasized integrating Indigenous knowledge into national food strategies, protecting biodiversity, and supporting Indigenous-led cooperatives to preserve cultural heritage and economic independence. Urban agriculture and decentralized food hubs were advocated to strengthen rural-urban linkages, alongside investments in infrastructure and youth training in finance and digital tools. Nutrition and education featured prominently, with calls to promote culturally appropriate diets in schools, reduce reliance on imported processed foods, and expand climate-smart agriculture literacy. Youth leadership in food governance was underscored through demands for formal youth representation, capacity-building, and intergenerational dialogue to co-design inclusive policies.

**NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA** — Youth delegates from the Near East and North Africa underscored water scarcity, land degradation, and socio-economic inequalities as critical challenges shaping food systems. They called for legally mandated youth representation, with gender quotas, in food governance at all levels, including refugee camps and crisis response bodies, framing youth participation as a fundamental human right. They also stressed the need to reform land tenure laws to secure land access for young women and expand funding and infrastructure support for youth-led agrifood enterprises, especially in fragile, post-conflict contexts. Emphasis was placed on localizing food systems through youth cooperatives and agribusiness incubators to foster sustainable livelihoods and reduce food loss. Moreover, there was a prioritization of climate- and crisis-resilient innovation, advocating for regional funds, accessible digital tools in local languages,

and training in emergency-responsive farming. They urged integration of youth-led priorities into national climate, peace, and humanitarian strategies and called for strengthened protections and social safety nets for young agricultural workers. Reclaiming youth's cultural and political role, participants advocated for supporting traditional knowledge, urban gardens, and food sovereignty initiatives, alongside safeguarding youth rights to organize and demand accountability from humanitarian actors and governments.

**NORTH AMERICA** — Youth from North America identified high consumption, food waste, and inequities as major challenges in their food systems. There was a call for accelerated support for regenerative agriculture, including financial aid for farmers transitioning to drought-resistant crops and water-efficient practices, alongside climate risk insurance tailored to smallholders. Participants emphasized advancing equitable food security through expanded nutrition programs targeting marginalized communities, reducing food deserts, and integrating nutrition education into healthcare and schools. Strengthening local food networks and supporting Indigenous food sovereignty—including land rights restoration, seed banks, and youth-led initiatives blending traditional knowledge with agroecology were key priorities. The delegates advocated for food systems literacy across education levels and public awareness campaigns to reduce waste and promote sustainability. There was emphasis on fostering circular economies through grants for startups focused on upcycling food waste and farm-to-institution programs, while improving infrastructure and market access for small-scale and Indigenous producers to ensure fair prices and reduce corporate dependence.





## Presenting the Draft Declaration and Next Steps – The Road to UNFSS+4 and Beyond

### PLENARY DISCUSSION

Collectively, youth delegates stressed urgent, transformative action to create equitable, sustainable food systems. Centering on advocacy, action, and empowerment, they called for policies that promote healthy diets, climate resilience, fair labor, and youth leadership with real decision-making power. They urge governments and stakeholders to embed youth in food governance with voting rights; invest in Indigenous knowledge, agroecology, and youth-led startups; ensure fair land access and sustainable resource management; promote climate-resilient and regenerative agriculture; and foster circular food economies that reduce waste and support local producers.

During feedback, Youth participants highlighted the need to address famine risk openly and stop using food as a weapon; include livestock and fisheries in the Declaration; scale youth-accessible financing beyond farming; strengthen capacity building and social protection with a social equity lens; prioritize nutrition access for marginalized groups, and incorporate water rights and management.

### CLOSING CEREMONY

In a video message, Dr Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs at UN Youth Office, thanked youth delegates for their participation. He called for moving beyond dialogue toward concrete action on the road to UNFSS+4, ensuring that youth contributions lead to meaningful transformation.

Following the video message by Dr Paullier, Mr Hans-Ulrich Südbeck, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy in Thailand, took to the stage to provide a speech. Mr Südbeck praised the outcomes of the first phase of the Youth Leadership Programme (YLP), especially in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, as well as in the Asia Pacific, where regional trainings were conducted. He also reaffirmed Germany's commitment to intergenerational equity and inclusive transformation, emphasizing that youth must be partners in implementation, not just advocates. He called for the integration of Indigenous knowledge, the empowerment of traditionally excluded groups, and stronger accountability frameworks. He concluded by reminding delegates that food connects us all—not just as a biological need, but as a reflection of dignity, justice, and equity—and called on them to walk forward together across generations toward shared transformation.

Conference facilitator and coordinator of the YLP, Dr Nicole de Paula, thanked all participants, congratulating them for refining a Youth Declaration for the UNFSS+4 in Ethiopia. She urged young leaders to hold their governments accountable to their national pathways for food systems transformation.

Dr Stefanos Fotiou, the Director of the Hub, closed the conference by expressing gratitude to all participants and partners, including the Office of Youth and Women, FAO, the Youth Policy Board of the World Food Forum, and the Stakeholder Engagement and Networking Advisory (SENA) group for their contributions to the youth consultations. He thanked the FAORAP for graciously hosting the conference in Bangkok.

## Outlook

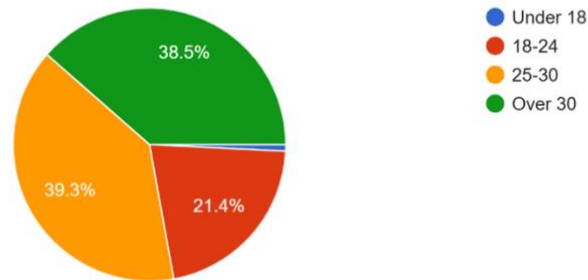
The Preparatory Youth Conference prepared youth delegates for meaningful participation in the food systems processes, as well as the 2<sup>nd</sup> UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4). By aligning regional insights with global frameworks, the conference laid the foundation for youth to influence food systems transformation not only through advocacy but through institutional engagement and co-governance.



## Annex 1

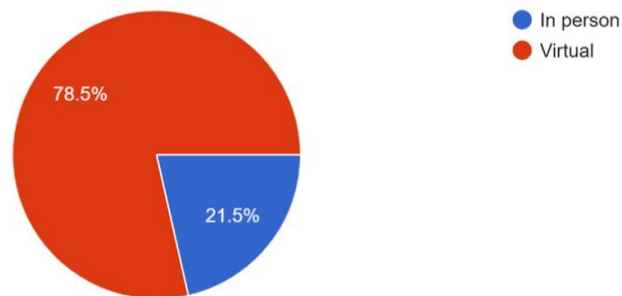
Data was collected via a survey to gather feedback on the conference.

Age Group



How did you attend the meeting?

247 responses



Gender

262 responses

