

## *Summary of Side Event*

### **World Food Forum, FAO: Youth Innovation – Bolstering climate action through agrifood systems transformation in the context of COVID-19 recovery**

2 May 2023, 10:00-11:30 EDT / 16:00-17:30 CEST

#### **Background on the event**

The World Food Forum (WFF) was created by the youth committee of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in 2021, to empower youth to transform our agrifood systems and achieve the SDGs. The objective of this side event was to highlight the importance of engaging global youth in science, technology, and innovation, as well as identifying and nurturing innovative solutions to accelerate agrifood systems transformation in the overall context of COVID-19 recovery, to boost climate action and achieve the 2030 Agenda goals. The WFF gathered senior leaders from FAO, along with the winners of the WFF's Transformative Research Challenge (TRC) and Startup Innovation Awards powered by Extreme Tech Challenge (XTC), and members of the WFF Young Scientists Group (YSG) and the newly launched Youth Food Lab (YFL) incubator, in an intergenerational dialogue highlighting the importance of engaging global youth in science, technology and innovation.

#### **Key Issues discussed**

- Opening remarks by FAO Chief Economist, highlighting the opportunities for youth to make a difference through new ideas and innovation; and how science, technology, and innovation are at the heart of every activity of the World Food Forum
- Launch of the first WFF Young Scientists Group Report. Key findings: young people from diverse groups globally - especially rural and indigenous youth and young women - can play a crucial role in driving sustainable and resilient food systems.
- Key challenges: there is a lack or limitation of resources such as land, finance and human resources, and youth are being deprived of these resources.
- Launch of the third edition of WFF Transformative Research Challenge for young researchers who are aiming to transform agrifood systems and create a better food future.
- Intergenerational panel discussion to present innovative solutions to accelerate agrifood systems transformation in the overall context of COVID-19 recovery, boost climate action and achieve the 2030 Agenda goals. Panelists included young & young-at-heart researchers from Wageningen University & Research, International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Jordan, and Youth Food Lab incubator team working on food loss & waste
- Introduction of the first Youth Food Lab cohort and their innovative solutions for agrifood systems transformation
- Launch of the third edition of WFF Startup Innovation Awards which aim to elevate the next generation of entrepreneurs who are creating new technologies and innovations to benefit our planet and the agrifood systems we need to thrive. Past winner, Umami Meats

shared their successful experience in running their startup on cultivated sustainable seafood that shows great potential in transforming agrifood systems.

- Address by FAO Chief Scientist, inviting everyone to incorporate science, technology and innovation, especially those provided by the youth and women, in every effort to transform agrifood systems.

### **Key recommendations for action**

- Young researchers are encouraged to apply to the 2023 Transformative Research Challenge to share their solutions for agrifood systems transformation.
- Startup teams are encouraged to provide innovative solutions within the FAO Strategic Framework of the four betters by applying to the 2023 Startup Innovation Awards
- Youth plays a key role in reaching the SDGs, and science, innovation and technology are key levers to accelerate their solutions. Youth solutions should be invested in, fostered, and accelerated.
- Further investment in youth-focused programmes like the World Food Forum is needed to ensure the youth voice is heard, and youth have a seat at the table for the decisions that will affect their future.