



**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States**

**49th Committee on World Food Security**

**(11-14 October 2021)**

**Item VI: Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems**

Madam/Mister Chair,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. We would like to express our deep appreciation for the report produced by the High Level Panel of Experts on promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems. The report is very timely and provides us with an excellent basis to address an important additional dimension for supporting sustainable food systems that can ensure food security and nutrition for all. The concrete recommendations included in the report are applicable to all countries.
3. We appreciate the fact that the report takes into account the diverse nature of young people and fully recognises the differing contexts in which they find themselves and their differing opportunities and skills, whilst clearly spelling out their rights and needs.
4. We also welcome the fact that the report assigns an important role to young people in fundamentally transforming our food systems. Young people can indeed make a vital contribution to achieving nutritious and healthy diets, regenerating ecosystems, mitigating climate change, and promoting social justice and equality.
5. The possibilities for young people becoming agents of change, through fostering sustainable food systems and contributing to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, need to be highlighted. As the report clearly states, food systems are still the largest employer of people in the world and provide a huge potential for youth employment and engagement. Using innovative approaches and tools, combined with intergenerational transmission and knowledge-sharing on food systems, is however necessary to provide a range of new opportunities. Youth are also instrumental in linking rural and urban areas.

6. However, there are some difficult obstacles that need to be addressed, such as enhancing access to land and other assets and vocational training. Working within and for food systems needs to be attractive and to provide a good livelihood. Access to natural resources, finance and markets are a key driver for enhancing youth engagement in agriculture and food systems. It is our responsibility to empower young people and create an appropriate enabling environment in which their full potential can come to fruition.
  
7. Many countries, both within the EU and globally, have identified young people and the inclusion of a youth perspective in policy-making as a fundamental element in the transition to sustainable and resilient food systems. The HLPE report is an excellent basis for preparing the policy recommendation process on this key topic. The EU and its Member States look forward to this process, in which it is vital to ensure that the voice of young people is properly heard.

Thank you, Madam/Mister Chair.

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