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FORUM

GLOBAL
YOUTH
ACTION

UNCCD COP16 Youth Statement on Agrifood Systems

We, the youth of today, stand united in our vision for sustainable agrifood systems that nourish people, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all.

We firmly believe that agrifood systems are central to addressing the interconnected challenges facing humanity and the planet, including land degradation, food insecurity, biodiversity loss, climate change and poverty.

The World Food Forum Youth Assembly in partnership with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Youth Caucus, Save Soil and others, have consulted youth from all over the world, both on the ground at the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP16) of UNCCD in Riyadh and virtually, presenting the following Call to Action:

We call on governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to:

1. Include youth in decision-making and policy framework design

- Create platforms for youth to meaningfully participate in shaping agrifood systems policies at national, regional and global levels.

- Actively involve youth in governance structures and decision-making bodies.
- Promote policies that prioritize soil protection and regeneration, ensuring the active participation of marginalized groups, particularly women and Indigenous Peoples, in agrifood systems.

2. Invest in youth-led science and innovation

- Provide mentorship and capacity-building opportunities to equip youth with skills for developing innovative solutions and sustainable livelihoods.
- Establish awards, grants and recognition programmes to incentivize youth-led initiatives addressing agrifood systems challenges and climate change.
- Invest in advanced research and technology to enhance segregated data collection, enabling informed decision-making, and actively involve youth in leading or supporting these initiatives. Develop platforms that bring together youth, researchers, policymakers and industry leaders to collaboratively design and implement innovative solutions to address agrifood systems challenges.

3. **Mobilize resources for youth-driven solutions**

- Establish dedicated financial mechanisms to support youth-led initiatives that foster sustainable agrifood systems.
- Prioritize regenerative farming by allocating funds in national budgets and international projects, ensuring equitable and accessible funding opportunities for widespread adoption.
- Facilitate youth participation in developing sustainable agrifood value chains.

We recognize the unique challenges youth face in different regions, from arid lands and small island states to conflict zones and beyond.

We call for cross-regional collaboration to share best practices and innovative solutions tailored to local needs.

By investing in our potential, including us in decision-making and creating enabling environments, we can achieve agrifood systems that support people and the planet alike.

Together, we can build a future where no one is left behind, and where agrifood systems thrive in harmony with nature.