



## **KENYA YOUTH IN AGRIFOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT 2026**

*Youth Leading Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems*

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

#### **Background**

Agriculture is the backbone of Kenya's economy, contributing over 21% to GDP, employing more than 40% of the workforce, and supporting over 70% of rural livelihoods. Yet the sector faces mounting pressures from climate change, post-harvest losses, land-use changes, and limited market access, which threaten its ability to feed a growing population.

Kenya's youth (aged 15 - 34) make up approximately 35% of the total population. Yet, the World Bank estimates that nearly 75% of Kenyans under the age of 35 face limited access to meaningful employment opportunities. This persistent unemployment undermines progress toward Kenya Vision 2030, Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals, threatening not only social and economic stability but also the nation's long-term food security.

The agrifood sector holds significant potential to absorb this growing youth population. Young Kenyans are actively engaged across all nodes of the agrifood system from farm to fork, developing sustainable solutions in food production, processing, distribution, and marketing, while also advancing agricultural technologies and innovations. However, many of these promising solutions remain small-scale due to limited access to financing, weak market linkages, poor coordination among stakeholders, and fragmented youth policies. Despite more than a decade of youth summits, conferences, and youth-focused programs and policies, few initiatives have translated into sustainable and measurable outcomes. Consequently, a significant gap persists between promising ideas and their effective implementation.

In response, the Kenya Youth in Agrifood Systems Summit 2026 is conceived as a high-level national platform to position youth as key actors in agrifood systems transformation. The summit will adopt a solution-oriented approach through executive roundtables and policy commitment sessions, addressing barriers limiting youth participation across agrifood value chains. It will also feature exhibitions, field learning visits, and the Youth in Agrifood Systems Awards, recognising outstanding youth leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs, as well as mentors and organisations supporting youth-led agrifood systems transformation. The summit will also serve as Kenya's youth-focused pre-stocktaking platform, contributing to the United Nations Food Systems Summit.



## **Youth in Agrifood Systems: From Dialogue to Action**

The Summit, themed “Youth Leading Resilient and Sustainable Agrifood Systems,” seeks to shift the narrative from viewing young people as beneficiaries to recognising them as key drivers of agrifood systems transformation. It emphasises that resilient, sustainable, and inclusive agrifood systems can only be achieved through meaningful youth participation across all nodes of the agrifood system.

The Summit aligns with key global, continental, and national frameworks and priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Kampala Declaration and CAADP Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2035, the African Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS), the International Year of the Woman Farmer, and the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. At the national level, it contributes to the implementation of Kenya Vision 2030, the Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS), the Kenya Youth Development Policy (2019), and the National Agroecology Strategy for Food System Transformation (NAS-FST), while advancing efforts to strengthen youth participation, employment, innovation, climate resilience, and leadership across Kenya’s agrifood systems.

### **Goal**

To position young people as key drivers of agrifood systems transformation by strengthening their participation in policy processes, innovation, entrepreneurship, climate action, and strategic partnerships

### **Specific Objectives**

1. Generate evidence-based and youth-driven policy recommendations to strengthen youth inclusion and leadership in agrifood systems.
2. Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and collective action to address barriers and unlock opportunities for youth in agrifood systems.
3. Showcase youth-led innovations, enterprises, and impactful initiatives to promote learning, replication, and investment.
4. Promote strategic partnerships and knowledge exchange among key stakeholders to strengthen youth participation, innovation, and investment in agrifood systems.
5. Recognize and celebrate outstanding youth contributions to agrifood systems transformation, leadership, and innovation.



## **Expected Outcomes**

1. Youth-driven policy recommendations generated to inform agrifood systems policies and strategies.
2. A Youth in Agrifood Systems Declaration developed, outlining priority actions and stakeholder commitments.
3. Enhanced visibility and investment opportunities for youth-led agrifood enterprises and initiatives.
4. Strengthened partnerships and collaboration among key agrifood systems stakeholders.
5. Increased recognition of youth leadership, innovation, and excellence in agrifood systems.
6. A stronger and more coordinated platform for sustained youth engagement in agrifood systems transformation.

## **Summit Structure**

### ***Day 1: Status of Youth in Agrifood Systems***

High-level plenaries, keynote addresses, regional dialogue outcomes, policy discussions, and stakeholder dialogues examining the current status of youth participation in agrifood systems, including access to productive resources, employment, entrepreneurship, and barriers to meaningful engagement.

### ***Day 2: Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Partnerships***

Thematic discussions, innovation and enterprise showcases, investment and financing dialogues, partnership roundtables, exhibitions, and co-creation sessions focused on scaling youth-led agrifood enterprises, strengthening markets, promoting climate resilience and agroecology, and advancing collaborative action across the agrifood ecosystem. The day will culminate in the presentation of the Youth in Agrifood Systems Declaration, announcement of stakeholder commitments, and the Youth in Agrifood Systems Awards Gala.

### ***Day 3: Making Agrifood Systems Work for Youth***

Field learning visits providing participants with practical exposure to successful youth-led enterprises, innovation hubs, research institutions, policy processes, and sustainable farming initiatives. The visits will showcase practical solutions, partnerships, and models that can be scaled to create more inclusive, resilient, and youth-responsive agrifood systems.

## **Target Audience**

1. Young farmers and agripreneurs
2. Youth organizations and groups
3. National and County Government representatives
4. Civil society organizations



5. Private sector actors
6. Research and academia institutions
7. Development partners and donors

### **Organizers and Partners**

The Kenya Youth in Agrifood Systems Summit 2026 is convened by:

- WingFarm Organisation (Lead Organizer)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (Co-Convener)
- Youth Organizations: World Food Forum (WFF) Kenya Chapter, YPARD Kenya, KASA, Project Shambani, The Green Embassy Kenya, and IFJAD
- Civil Society Organisations: PELUM Kenya, TISA, and SUN CSA Kenya
- Multi-Stakeholder Platforms: ISFAA and the Right to Food Coalition

### **Organizers and Partners**

Details will be communicated through official channels.

Partners logo's to be added