

Gender and Youth Engagement Pledge Campaign | Advancing Commitments for Inclusive Agrifood Research and Innovation in Africa

Background

Women and young people are central to Africa's agrifood systems, contributing to food production, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and policymaking. Despite their significant role, **they remain underrepresented** in leadership, decision-making, funding opportunities, and institutional governance. While continental and global frameworks including the Malabo Declaration, the Kampala Declaration, Agenda 2063, and various African Union and European Union commitments have called for greater investment in and inclusion of women and youth, translating these commitments into institutional action remains a challenge.

To address this, the CEA-FIRST project, through the International Research Consortium (IRC) on Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA), has developed a **Gender and Youth Strategy** to strengthen the integration of gender and youth considerations across **research, innovation, policy, and institutional processes, fostering greater participation of women and young professionals in shaping inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems**. To translate this Strategy into tangible action, Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) and the CEA-FIRST is leading a practical pledge campaign.

The Gender and Youth Engagement Pledge Campaign

The campaign calls all institutions participating in AASW to:

Publicly commit to at least one action that advances gender equality and youth inclusion over the next twelve months. The campaign seeks to **promote institutional ownership, accountability, and collective action** towards more inclusive agrifood research and innovation systems in Africa.

Location and Date of the Campaign Launch

Launch: 9th Africa Agriculture Science Week (AASW) and 10th FARA General Assembly

 Abuja, Nigeria, on 27 July 2026

 27 July 2026

Following its launch, the **campaign will continue through a twelve-month implementation and follow-up period**, during which participating institutions will be encouraged to report on the progress made towards fulfilling their commitments.



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Objectives

The overall objective of the campaign is **to promote the implementation of practical actions that strengthen women and youth engagement in African agrifood research and innovation systems.**

The specific objectives are:

1. To encourage institutions to make **concrete commitments** towards **gender equality** and **youth inclusion**.
2. To promote **institutional ownership** of the recommendations contained in the **IRC Gender and Youth Strategy**.
3. To create visibility for **good practices** and **institutional efforts** that support women and youth engagement.
4. To foster accountability through **voluntary reporting** and **sharing of progress** made on **pledged actions**.
5. To strengthen collaboration among **institutions** working towards inclusive **agrifood systems transformation**.

Join the Campaign | Examples of Pledges

- Establishing **gender and youth focal points**;
- Strengthening **mentorship opportunities** for young professionals;
- Improving representation of **women and youth in governance structures**;
- Integrating gender and youth considerations into **research programmes**;
- Creating **internship, fellowship, or leadership development opportunities** for women and youth.

Prospective partners

The envisaged partners include universities, research Institutions, development partners, farmers' organizations, youth- & women-led networks.

- International Research Consortium (**IRC**) member institutions
- The Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation (**CEA-FIRST**) member institutions
- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (**FARA**)
- Young Professional for Agricultural Development (**YPARD**)
- African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (**AFAAS**)
- Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (**CORAF**)
- Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (**FANRPAN**)
- Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (**RUFORUM**)
- Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (**ASARECA**)



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Gender and Youth Engagement Pledge Campaign I

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Expected Outputs

The main outputs expected from the campaign include:

1. **A public launch** of the Women and Youth Engagement Pledge Campaign during AASW.
2. **A set of institutional pledges** made by participating organizations.
3. **Increased awareness** of the IRC Gender and Youth Strategy and its recommendations.
4. **A register of participating institutions** and their commitments.
5. **Documentation and communication products** highlighting institutional commitments and progress.

Our approach and planned activities

- ▶ Development of a **pledge framework** based on recommendations from the IRC Gender and Youth Strategy.
- ▶ **Engagement of AASW participants** and partner institutions prior to the event to encourage participation in the campaign.
- ▶ **Launch of the pledge campaign** during a dedicated session at AASW.
- ▶ **Public endorsement** of commitments by participating institutions.
- ▶ **Documentation and communication** of institutional commitments through IRC and partner communication channels.
- ▶ **Follow-up engagement** with participating institutions to capture progress and lessons learned.

**Join the campaign to foster tangible action in
supporting women and youth!**
Fill in the form [here](#) to Make your pledge



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