

YPARD Policy Position | Demands on Agriculture and Food Systems for SB64



About YPARD

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) is a global network that empowers **young farmers, researchers** and **entrepreneurs** to actively contribute to **sustainable agriculture, influence policy** and **drive innovation**. It connects youth across regions, disciplines, and sectors, providing a platform for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and advocacy.

Through its regional and thematic working groups, YPARD facilitates collaboration among youth, development actors, and policymakers, ensuring that the perspectives of young stakeholders are integrated into international, national, and local strategies. YPARD also works to strengthen youth leadership, enhance skills, and create opportunities for intergenerational dialogue, mentorship, and peer learning.

YPARD actively contributes to major policy processes, including UNFCCC through and together with YOUNGO, GYBN, UNCCD Youth Caucus, and the CFS Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism, ensuring youth voices shape intergovernmental negotiations.

1. Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security

► YPARD calls for the **formal recognition of youth as key stakeholders in the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh Joint Work on Agriculture and Food Security**. Youth must be meaningfully engaged in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of climate-resilient agricultural and food systems at local, national, and international levels.

► As Parties increasingly focus on identifying needs and improving access to means of implementation, YPARD calls for **greater attention to the specific barriers faced by young farmers, rural youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, local community and other vulnerable groups** in accessing climate finance, technologies, capacity-building opportunities, and knowledge resources.

► We urge **Parties to move beyond consultation mechanisms and create structured opportunities for youth co-decision-making and leadership** within agriculture and food system policies and programmes. National agricultural and food security strategies should actively integrate youth perspectives and support youth-led solutions.

► YPARD further encourages **enhanced policy coherence across the Rio Conventions and calls for stronger coordination between climate, biodiversity, and land degradation agendas** to support sustainable and resilient food systems. Healthy ecosystems and biodiversity are the foundation of resilient food systems. Parties should promote nature-positive agricultural systems that conserve biodiversity, restore ecosystems, protect pollinators, and support the sustainable use of genetic resources. Climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and food security must be pursued through integrated approaches across the Rio Conventions.

2. Adaptation

Young farmers and rural communities are already experiencing the impacts of climate change through irregular rainfall patterns, declining productivity, increasing climate risks, and growing food insecurity. Strengthening adaptation within agriculture and food systems must remain a priority under the UNFCCC.

► YPARD calls for **increased support for climate-resilient agriculture, sustainable food production systems, and locally adapted solutions** that strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers, women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities. Particular attention should be given to improving water security, supporting traditional practices, reducing post-harvest losses, strengthening local food value chains, and increasing access to climate information, training, and adaptation technologies.

► Parties should **promote community-led adaptation approaches that build resilience while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for rural youth**. Funding opportunities are needed to facilitate adaptation and support local needs and practices.

3. Sustainable agriculture, soil health and agroecology

Healthy soil is fundamental to resilient and sustainable food systems, it is the third largest carbon sink and home to millions of microorganisms that support life and livelihoods. However, soil degradation, erosion, nutrient mining and declining soil organic matter continue to undermine agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods.

► YPARD calls on Parties to **prioritize soil health restoration and sustainable land management practices within climate action frameworks**. Investments should support agroecological and regenerative approaches, including Indigenous and cultural traditions, agroforestry, crop diversification, crop rotation, conservation agriculture, and soil restoration initiatives. Parties should also support nature-positive agricultural systems that contribute to ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, pollinator protection, and sustainable land stewardship. The conservation of agricultural biodiversity is essential for strengthening resilience to climate change and safeguarding food security.

► We further encourage the **promotion of circular and sustainable agricultural practices through youth-led awareness programmes, community initiatives, and volunteer networks** supporting sustainable farming, urban agriculture, and ecosystem restoration. Financial incentives for monocrops and other extractive systems should be redirected towards these approaches and soil restoration to support capacity and sustainability of solutions.

► Such approaches can simultaneously contribute to adaptation, mitigation, biodiversity conservation, food security, and improved livelihoods for rural communities.

4. Climate finance

The transition towards climate-resilient and sustainable food systems requires significantly increased financial support for women and youth-led initiatives.

► YPARD calls for **dedicated, accessible, and simplified funding mechanisms for women and youth-led climate action under existing climate finance instruments**, including the Green Climate Fund and the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance.

► Parties should **scale up public, private, philanthropic, and blended finance mechanisms to support adaptation, food systems transformation, sustainable agriculture, and youth entrepreneurship**. Financial instruments should also include insurance, risk-sharing and incentive mechanisms that facilitate youth investment in regenerative and agroecological practices.

► Improved access to **affordable finance remains essential for young farmers, agripreneurs, and rural enterprises seeking to implement climate solutions and strengthen local food systems**. Dedicated financing mechanisms should support youth-led innovation in climate-smart agriculture, digital technologies, biotechnology, early warning systems, and sustainable food systems enterprises. Investments in science, technology, and innovation are essential for accelerating food systems transformation. Opportunities should ensure they are accessible and support ecologically and culturally relevant solutions.

► YPARD calls on Parties to **expand financing opportunities for circular bioeconomy initiatives that create value from agricultural waste streams, promote resource efficiency, and generate green jobs for youth**. Special consideration should be given to reducing administrative and co-financing barriers that often prevent youth-led organizations, cooperatives, and early-stage enterprises from accessing climate finance. Climate finance mechanisms should also support biodiversity-positive enterprises, ecosystem restoration initiatives, and nature-based solutions that contribute to resilient food systems and rural livelihoods.

5. Just transition

A just transition in agriculture and food systems must create opportunities for all while protecting livelihoods, environments, food security, and social equity.

► YPARD calls for **strengthened investments in youth employment, entrepreneurship, green jobs, and sustainable rural economies**. Young people should be empowered as active agents of change across agricultural value chains through access to skills development, business support services, infrastructure, processing facilities, and markets. Particular attention should be given to improving youth access to productive land, secure land tenure, water resources, infrastructure, and productive assets. Limited access to land remains one of the greatest barriers preventing young people from entering and expanding agricultural enterprises.

► Parties should **ensure that transition pathways safeguard food sovereignty, land rights, and equitable access to resources while supporting the adoption of renewable energy technologies across agri-food systems**. Investments should also strengthen local processing facilities, storage infrastructure, value addition enterprises, and market access opportunities that reduce post-harvest losses and improve rural incomes. Solutions should contribute to mitigating and addressing environmental pollution and extraction with community governance and reparations for harm caused.

► Particular attention should be given to marginalized communities, young farmers and vulnerable populations especially those operating in drylands, rangelands, forest landscapes, and other climate-vulnerable ecosystems to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition towards sustainable food systems.

6. Capacity building

Building resilient food systems requires investments in education, knowledge exchange, and capacity development. Capacity-building efforts should strengthen youth engagement in science, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship, and research partnerships that contribute to climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable food systems.

► YPARD calls for **strengthened climate education, agricultural training, vocational programmes, and climate literacy initiatives** that equip youth with the skills needed to participate in sustainable agriculture and climate action.

► **Climate and food systems education should be integrated into formal and informal learning systems.** Governments and institutions should also support inclusive platforms for knowledge sharing, intergenerational learning, and collaboration among youth organizations, researchers, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, and policymakers. These opportunities should happen across scales and countries to facilitate the scaling of effective solutions. Special attention should be given to supporting youth participation in research, policy development, innovation ecosystems, and international climate and biodiversity processes.

► **Traditional knowledge and Indigenous practices should be recognized and integrated into adaptation and resilience-building strategies.** Capacity-building initiatives should facilitate knowledge exchange between scientific, local, and Indigenous knowledge systems to encourage co-creation of context-specific solutions.

7. Gender

Climate action in agriculture and food systems must be inclusive, equitable, rights-based and context-specific

► YPARD calls for the **meaningful participation and leadership of women, girls, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, youth and marginalized communities** in all climate and food systems decision-making processes.

► Parties should ensure **equitable access to adaptation finance, capacity-building opportunities, technologies, information, and climate programmes**. Gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches should be mainstreamed across all agricultural and food security policies and interventions.

8. Biodiversity, Indigenous Knowledge, Access and Benefit Sharing

Biodiversity underpins resilient food systems and climate adaptation.

► YPARD calls for **stronger integration of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, and sustainable use of biological resources** within agricultural and food systems policies.

► Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are custodians of valuable knowledge systems that contribute to climate resilience and sustainable resource management. Parties should **support the protection and promotion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems through inclusive governance, recognition of customary practices, and equitable partnerships**.

9. Nationally determined contributions (NDCs)

► YPARD calls for **all Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to be youth-responsive and gender-responsive and developed through meaningful consultations** with children, youth, farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and other rights holders.

► Parties should **strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms by monitoring the impacts of climate change and climate action on food systems, ecosystems, and vulnerable communities**. Regular reporting and inclusive monitoring processes should ensure that agricultural and food security commitments translate into tangible outcomes on the ground. Parties should strengthen the collection and reporting of age-disaggregated data to better understand the impacts of climate change and climate action on youth engaged in agriculture and food systems.

KEY DEMANDS

1. Strengthen youth leadership in Agriculture and Food Systems governance

- Formally recognize youth as key stakeholders through establishing minimum youth representation targets within UNFCCC negotiations and related agriculture and food systems processes.
- Establish structured mechanisms for youth participation, co-decision-making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of climate-resilient food systems.

2. Increase climate finance for youth-led food systems transformation

- Create dedicated, accessible, and simplified funding windows for youth-led climate and food systems initiatives.
- Support youth agripreneurs, smallholders, and rural enterprises through grants, blended finance, and risk-sharing mechanisms.

3. Promote biodiversity, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and equitable benefit-sharing

- Integrate biodiversity conservation and ecosystem restoration into food systems transformation.
- Recognize and support Indigenous Knowledge Systems as contributors to climate resilience.
- Support nature-positive agricultural systems that enhance ecosystem health and food security

4. Advance agroecology, soil health and sustainable land management

- Prioritize investments in traditional practices, soil monitoring, soil restoration, soil health enriching inputs, agroecology, regenerative agriculture, and sustainable land management.
- Promote practices that simultaneously enhance adaptation, mitigation, biodiversity conservation, and food security.

KEY DEMANDS (continued)

5. Strengthen adaptation and resilience of food systems

- Scale up support for climate-resilient agriculture, water security, climate information services, and locally led adaptation.
- Reduce post-harvest losses and strengthen sustainable food value chains to improve food security and rural livelihoods.
- Support locally led food systems that strengthen food sovereignty, nutrition security, and community resilience.

6. Promote a Just Transition for rural youth

- Expand access to green jobs, entrepreneurship opportunities, vocational training, and sustainable livelihoods.
- Protect food sovereignty, environmental health, land rights, and equitable access to resources throughout transition processes.

7. Invest in capacity building, climate education and knowledge systems

- Strengthen climate literacy, agricultural training, and youth capacity-building programmes both at global and grassroots levels
- Support knowledge exchange platforms that integrate scientific, local, and Indigenous knowledge systems.

8. Ensure gender equity and social inclusion

- Mainstream gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches across agriculture and food systems policies.
- Guarantee equitable participation and access to resources for women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and marginalized communities.

9. Promote youth-responsive and accountable climate policies

- Ensure NDCs and food systems policies are developed through meaningful consultations with youth and other rights holders.
- Strengthen transparency, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms to track progress and impacts on food systems and vulnerable communities.

Authored by the climate working group of YPARD with contributions from:

1. Michelle Gaëlle Bidima (**Burkina Faso**),
2. Enock Joseph Ssemuusi (**Uganda**),
3. Lidya Mulatu (**Ethiopia**)
4. Sebastian Pedraza (**Global**)
5. Nikita Bhusal (**Népal/USA**)
6. Victoria Olabode (**Nigeria**)
7. Evance Ochola (**Kenya/Germany**)
8. Katia Carranza (**Mexico/USA**)
9. Kitso Ephesia Monyadi (**South Africa**)
10. Sussana Phiri (**Zambia**)
11. Inimbom Bassey (**Nigeria**)

