

International Young Farmers' Forum

Statement of Young Farmers at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture GFFA 2026

Introduction

We, young farmers from across the world, come together at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) to share our perspectives on the future of agri-food systems under growing social, economic, and environmental challenges. Agriculture today faces unprecedented challenges: climate change is accelerating, natural resources and biodiversity are under increasing strain, and global food security must be ensured for a growing population, during a time where we continue to see a declining number of farms and area of agricultural lands. As the next generation of farmers, we are directly affected by these challenges and carry a strong responsibility to contribute to sustainable, resilient, and productive agri-food systems.

Global food security is also under severe threat as a result of war conflicts. These actions undermine the stability of global food supply chains and jeopardise food security worldwide. We have seen multiple examples of the negative effects on water resources in war torn areas and how water is used in warfare to inflict damage to local populations. We condemn war acts which target water infrastructure that farming communities and civilians rely on.

We emphasise that young farmers are not only implementers of change, but also innovators, entrepreneurs, and stewards of natural resources. Meaningful participation of young farmers in policy processes, combined with long-term investment, fair access to resources, access to knowledge and supportive regulatory frameworks to ensure profitability, are essential to enable generational renewal in agriculture. In this context water, harvest and resilience emerge as central pillars for the future of global agriculture.

1. Water

We recognise water as a fundamental and increasingly scarce resource for agricultural production worldwide. Across regions, young farmers are already experiencing the severe consequences of climate change through prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall patterns, floods,

water quality issues and increasing competition for water resources. In many countries, agriculture remains the largest user of freshwater, while groundwater levels are falling and surface waters are under growing pressure from pollution and insufficient protection measures.

We observe that outdated, damaged, or poorly managed irrigation and drainage systems significantly limit farmers' capacity to adapt to changing climatic conditions. We stress that water challenges are not only environmental, but also social and economic. Limited or unreliable access to water directly affects farm viability, restricts crop choice, reduces yields, and threatens rural livelihoods. Water scarcity and declining water quality also risk undermining generational renewal, as young farmers face increasing uncertainty when planning long-term investments. We therefore underline that water must be managed as a strategic resource, balancing agricultural needs with environmental protection and the interests of society as a whole.

We call for comprehensive water governance frameworks that promote efficient and sustainable water use, protect water quality, and ensure equitable access for farmers of all scales. This will require investment from public, private, and joint partnerships in modern irrigation systems, drainage systems, reservoirs, multipurpose dams and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Promoting clear, transparent, and predictable water regulations should result in maximising agricultural water availability and maintaining river flows while preserving ecosystems. Strengthening cooperation between farmers, authorities, and other stakeholders is essential to build resilience, safeguard ecosystems and protect biodiversity while securing agricultural production for the future.

We ask ministers of agriculture to facilitate the means for the participation of young farmers in both national and international fora and policy, recognising them as key stakeholders in securing water availability, sanitation, and sustainable water use as foundations for productive agriculture and food security.

2. Harvests

We underline that secure and resilient harvests are increasingly dependent on reliable access to water, energy, infrastructure, and knowledge. Climate variability, extreme weather events, invasive species, pests, diseases, and resource constraints are making agricultural production

more uncertain across regions. As these risks intensify, we emphasise the need for effective risk-management and protection mechanisms for farmers. Even with improved practices and technologies, agricultural production remains exposed to climatic, biological, and market-related challenges. Without accessible disaster insurance programmes, early warning systems, and timely emergency support, farmers bear a disproportionate share of risk. This exposure undermines income stability, discourages investment in sustainable practices, and weakens long-term resilience across food systems.

In many rural and remote areas, limited or unstable access to energy and water infrastructure continues to restrict irrigation, reduce productivity and increase production challenges. We promote the balance of urban and rural developments and resource distribution. We acknowledge that farmers are responding to these challenges through a wide range of approaches, combining traditional knowledge with innovation. Practices such as micro-irrigation, water storage, conservation agriculture, the [*10 Elements of Agroecology*](#), and improved soil management are helping to preserve moisture, reduce runoff as well as stabilising yields. New technologies and renewable energy solutions are increasingly supporting smarter water use and more efficient farm management, even in difficult production environments.

However, we emphasise that access to these solutions remains unbalanced. High investment costs, limited access to financing, insufficient advisory services, and gaps in infrastructure prevent many farmers, particularly smallholders and young farmers, from adopting practices that would strengthen harvest resilience. Without such targeted support, these barriers risk widening inequalities within agriculture and undermining food security.

We therefore call for the inclusion of young farmers in the policy making process; this will enable targeted investment in agricultural infrastructure, promote affordable and accessible technologies, support knowledge transfer and capacity building while providing an environment to increase efficiency and production. The *Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition* document by the Committee on World Food Security supports our call to action. Public support measures should recognise the diversity of farming systems and regional conditions, ensuring that solutions are adaptable and locally appropriate. Strengthening harvest resilience is essential not only for safeguarding rural economies and

farmers' incomes, while also maintaining stable food supplies and reinforcing agriculture's contribution to global food security.

3. Resilience

We emphasise that the bioeconomy offers a critical pathway to addressing the disconnect between increased production and farmer's incomes. When agricultural systems focus solely on producing higher volumes of raw commodities, farmers remain exposed to price volatility and often fail to capture sufficient value from their production. A well-developed bioeconomy enables farmers to move up the value chain thereby stabilising revenue and reducing dependence on volatile commodity markets.

Sustainable water management is foundational to this transition, as water supports both biomass production and downstream processing activities. By linking water governance with bioeconomy strategies, policies can help ensure that increased production translates into economic resilience, rural employment, and fair revenue opportunities for young farmers.

Conclusion

We reaffirm that water, harvests and resilience are central to the future of agriculture and food systems worldwide. Addressing these challenges requires long-term political commitment, coherent policies, and sustained investment that place young farmers at the centre of solutions. We call on governments, international organisations, and stakeholders to work collaboratively with young farmers to ensure fair access to resources, support innovation, and create conditions for sustainable agri-food systems.

By investing in water management, resilient harvest systems, and generational renewal, we can strengthen agriculture's capacity to adapt to climate change, protect natural resources, and contribute to global food security. We emphasize the need for a strong and independent voice of young farmers in forums, free from political pressure and vested interests.

We, as young farmers, are not only a promise for tomorrow, we are the force of today. It is essential we have a seat at the policy making table to have our voice heard. We are driving the change while having to deal with any consequences of the world leaders action or inaction. We stand ready to play an active role in shaping a brighter future.

Young farmers expressed divergent views, and could not achieve consensus, on the following:

- The inclusion of the fragment: “For example, the results of war have destroyed the Kakhovka Water Reservoir in Ukraine. This has had a profound ecological disaster in the region, which has severely damaged water security, agricultural land, and the resilience of farming communities.”