The United States appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Zero Draft of the HLPE Report on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems. We expect that the HLPE Report will result in a set of focused, practical [apolitical] and evidence-based voluntary recommendations that the CFS members can consider.

**General Comments**

* The United States is concerned by the advocacy of ‘food sovereignty’ in the Zero Draft. The United States disagrees with the statement that the achievement of sustainable development goals should facilitate any transition towards food sovereignty. As the HLPE should be aware, ‘food sovereignty’ could justify protectionism or other restrictive import or export policies that will have negative consequences for food security sustainability, and income growth as well as negative implications on youth engagement and employment. Improved access to local, reginal, and global markets helps ensure that food is available to people who need it most and smooths price volatility. Food Security depends on appropriate domestic action by governments, including regulatory and market reforms, that is consistent with international commitments.
* The United States recommends the future drafts of the HLPE Report on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment remove references to food sovereignty as the concept has negative ramifications for food security and youth empowerment. Additionally, the concept of ‘food sovereignty’ is not well incorporated into the Zero Draft of the HLPE report it is unclear how ‘food sovereignty is linked to youth engagement, youth employment, or “economies of well-being.” The United States strongly suggests that food security would make a better pillar for economies of well-being than food sovereignty, especially given the strong linkages between food security and nutrition. The emphasis on food sovereignty is also in marked contrast to recent HLPE Reports such as the 2020 Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030.
* To its credit, the Zero Draft pays significant attention to the perspectives and experiences of indigenous youth, intergenerational concepts and realities, and debunking common assumptions about youth such as that they are de facto innovative.
* The role that the private sector can play in advancing youth employment in agricultural food systems is largely missing from this report. In subsequent versions, the HLPE Report should focus more on heterogeneity among private sector actors in diverse markets and what supports an enabling environment for business and inclusive markets, would be very important additions. While evidence points to the pursuit of business cases as central to efforts to facilitate youth-inclusive markets, incentives for market actors are quite diverse. Some of this is captured in discussion of why young people are interested in work in agriculture and food systems, but more could be captured on how they shape their businesses and how and why diverse businesses perceive and engage with young people. What do we know about youth-led, youth-serving, and/or youth-engaging businesses in agriculture and food systems?
* Relatedly, the subsequent version of the Report should also look at how governments can bolster the private sector either through private public partnerships, design government programs to consider opportunities for private sector inclusion, and through the development of entrepreneurship ecosystems to facilitate private sector growth. Opportunities for youth in agriculture and food systems are shaped by many factors, including the states of transformation (structural, rural, employment) of each society, and very specifically, who is doing what in markets in any given space.
* Another area of high concern for the United States is the recommendation “In technology policy, governments should prioritize “job-rich” technological innovations and take steps to minimize those that destroy jobs on a large scale.” The United States is a strong advocate for the use of technology and innovation to build more sustainable food systems. In 2019, the United States launched the Agricultural Innovation Agenda through which the U.S. Department of Agriculture will stimulate innovation so that American agriculture can achieve the goal of increasing U.S agricultural production by 40 percent while cutting the environmental footprint of U.S. agriculture in half by 2050. Innovation that increases productivity is critical for meeting the world’s food needs and shrinking agriculture’s environmental impact. Agricultural productivity growth is also a powerful engine for poverty alleviation, increased food security and improved standards of living. The United States is concerned that this HLPE recommendation could lead to less sustainable food systems in the future, hindering the transformation that is needed to meet the 2030 agenda.
* The United States also has concerns with how countries would attempt to apply this recommendation. It is often difficult to tell which technologies would be “job-rich” and which ones would destroy jobs. The famous example of this is the relationship between ATM machines and bank tellers in which the number of bank tellers rose despite the widespread introduction of ATMs in the 1980s and 1990s. Instead, the nature of job changed from a cash-focused position, to customer relations positions. Similarly, many digital agriculture applications would allow for the farmers to directly access markets and customers. However, it is impossible to know how the adoption of many of these digital tools will affect agriculture jobs. These digital tools may decrease agricultural employment due to reduced middlemen in the system or they may increase employment by allowing smallholder farmers to increase on-farm jobs. The connection between agricultural productivity and employment is noted in multiple reports including the 2017 World Bank Report on the Future of Food: Shaping the Food System to Deliver Jobs (<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/406511492528621198/pdf/114394-WP-PUBLIC-18-4-2017-10-56-45-ShapingtheFoodSystemtoDeliverJobs.pdf>).
* Foundational concepts that are referred to and elaborated in other HLPE Reports could use further elaboration here in this report. The Zero Draft could also be strengthened by basing the foundational concepts on commonly used definitions. For example, on page 7, the authors offer a definition of sustainable food system based on the six dimensions of food security, which is not widely recognized. Additionally, this definition does not reflect widely recognized definitions of sustainability based on social, economic and environmental dimensions. We recommend that this report, which uses the HLPE 2014 definition of food system, also use the HLPE 2014 definition of sustainable food system. Additionally, the definition of food environments seems incorrect. A useful reference that might help ground the work is “Towards a Common Understanding of Sustainable Food Systems: Key approaches, concepts and terms” 2020, Sustainable Food Systems Programme, One Planet Network <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/resource/towards-common-understanding-sustainable-food-systems-key-approaches-concepts-and-terms>
* The Zero Draft seems to advocate directly for the transformation of food systems based on agroecology, food sovereignty and local farming. By advocating for a narrow, limited view of agricultural transformation, the Zero Draft of this report strays from the mandate set for it by the CFS Plenary at CFS 46 to “Review rules, regulations and policy approaches, including territorial approaches, aimed at addressing the complexity of structural economic, cultural, social and spatial transformations currently taking place globally”. Instead of advocating for a particular vision of the transformation, the HLPE should be in line with the mandate from CFS Plenary look at how these changes are and will continue to impact youth engagement and youth employment. The United States notes that there is considerable diversity of opinion about how food systems should be transformed to increase their sustainability and global food security. In particular, many experts envision and advocate for sustainable food systems based on increased productivity through innovation, a vision that is absent from the Zero Draft of this report.

**Specific Questions**

1. The V0-draft is structured around a conceptual framework which presents three fundamental pillars for youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems (AFS): rights, agency and equity. Do you think that this framework addresses the key issues affecting youth engagement and employment in AFS?

The report would greatly benefit from a stronger focus on how do we create jobs and opportunities for youth in AFS, which needs to include a focus on inclusive markets and creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurs and innovative AFS businesses. Without gainful employment – that pays the bills and offers opportunities for advancement – engagement can become frustrating, not fulfilling, particularly for youth. It is unclear why the report does not sufficiently focus on these topics, but one possible reason could be the framework for the Zero Draft. For this reason, it could be worthwhile for the HLPE to consider the framework of Productivity, Connectivity, and Agency used by IFAD in their 2019 [2019 Rural Development Report Creating Opportunities for Rural Youth](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ifad.org%2Fruraldevelopmentreport%2F&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cf2ba297bf93f4d1d9f7208d8b890fb23%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C637462280131570670%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=Ez4zAFtpD0G44OcBUN1qjdyyDMa90NQilV7AuyYywRk%3D&reserved=0)

This is not to say that the current framework (in particular the focus on youth agency) is not relevant to understanding and approaching youth engagement and employment in agricultural and food systems. However, if this remains the framework, the Report needs a stronger discussion of these why it considers these pillars foundational and in particular on their relevance for youth employment. The authors may also wish to expand the pillar on rights to include one rights and responsibilities to more explicitly look at assumptions being made about who is responsible and on the evolving ability of governments and other actors to deliver. That is say, the discussion on the report needs to look beyond the recognition of human rights to practical suggestions on how they are realized. Relatedly, the authors would benefit from discussion on the political economy and tradeoffs involved in their recommendations. Additionally, the “mediating dynamics” referred to are of equal importance to the three pillars and suggest elevating attention to these dynamic structures and processes in the summary of how youth engagement and employment is framed.

Some additional suggestion/comments from the first section of the report:

* Suggest speaking more to young people’s psychosocial well-being and social and emotional development - including speaking to love, care, belonging and identify formation.
* The Zero Draft has nice language and points on balancing autonomy and dependence, as well as other “balances.” Suggest considering how this is dealt with in the law (a bit comes out later in a nice paragraph on 15-17-year-olds) and what places young people generally find themselves in. Can we zero in on some features of the transition from childhood to adulthood that tend to be salient generally, including to challenge the notion of “independence” as a chief objective of adulthood - rather than the realities of interdependence, etc.?
* “Relationality” being the main defining feature of the concept of youth is useful but is not easily understood by the more casual reader. Suggest moving away from jargon to plain speech; is there a way to capture this that is easily described and referred to by diverse audiences?
* The recognition of multiple factors that influence youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems is extremely important and well received/seen.
* How do the dimensions in Figure 3 figure in political economy?
* Page 14 focus on youth and nutrition that identifies youth as subjects of nutrition need is well noted. Suggest adding in attention to youth as agents of nutrition; how they shape production and consumption of highly nutritious foods and healthy diets is key to feature here (youth as influencers does come out later in the doc). Suggest more explicit attention to the rate of child marriage and early motherhood and the related nutrition implications.
* Suggest more explicit attention in particular to reproductive health and family planning services for young people, particularly female youth, as key to shaping their ability to engage in agriculture and food systems.
* The discussion on the predictive reliability of youth aspirations indicators is well received, as is that on youth mobility, which clarifies key points on pluriactivity and mobility.
* Suggest considering the degree to which research on women and agriculture and food systems addresses age considerations; more could be done to break down siloed youth-focused and women-focused work.

2. The V0-draft identifies main trends for youth engagement in agriculture and food systems, focusing on employment, resources and knowledge. Do you think that the trends identified are the key ones in affecting outcomes with respect to youth’s engagement in AFS and broader FSN outcomes? If not, which other trends should be taken into account? In particular, can you offer feedback on the following:

2.1. Where are youth currently under- and over-represented in food systems employment/work? How does this change when considering intersectional categories such as gender, place, ethnicity?

* The existing dialogue on intersectionality is both important and well-done, and we appreciate the strong focus on indigenous youth. However, the Zero Draft would benefit from more consideration of youth with disabilities and other segmentation among youth.
* The Zero Draft would also benefit from more attention to specific occupations needs discussion on the multidimensionality of pathways in different contexts. While the breakdown by country income-level is very useful, the report could look more granularly at specific contexts, for example, within the realm of on-farm work in low-income countries, what are the pathways to engagement and employment transformation in mixed livelihoods situations across agroecological zones, private sector and enabling environment landscapes, etc.?
* The message that employment and livelihoods opportunities in agriculture and food systems are in part unpredictable due to shifts in food systems and the dynamic tech sector comes through. However, the Zero Draft should have a strong message on the need to strategically create jobs and that different actors have to work together to make that happen. While this isn’t an implementation manual or guide, it compiles evidence and frames relevant issues and could summarize further some of what’s known about what’s likely to help or not help in certain contexts. If on-farm work is going to produce opportunities over the next ten years in low-income countries, how will that happen? What needs to be done, and who needs to act?
* Suggest more discussion on income and household decision-making regarding livelihoods. How much income do youth need? What change in youth incomes creates what effects for different youth in different circumstances? What do youth do with their earnings? How many jobs with what earnings potential are needed to move how many youth and their families out of poverty? How many of these can be derived from agriculture and food systems?  What income are they putting together with mixed livelihoods, and what does this bring them? How does the economic well-being of their families affect their well-being even with increases in income? What are negative externalities of increased income, including for female youth? What kinds of skills are needed among youth with rising incomes - financial management, savings, etc.?
* Suggest naming and describing concepts of resilience around the discussion of decent work (individual, household, community, society, system).
* Very good/important section on 15-17-year-olds on page 24. Suggest layering in a gendered lens further, including in relation to trends among adolescent girls in some areas to school dropouts, early marriage and child-bearing, underscoring this moment of transition as particularly important for potentially avoiding long-term economic and social impacts of gender inequality.
* Suggest including more information on what characterizes/defines rural and employment transformations. The explanation of agricultural transformation as characterized by movement out of labor-intensive activities is well noted (pp 28-29) [while also noting opportunities in production activities over the next decade].
* Page 29, section 2.3 includes a focus on working conditions and harmful labor particularly in production and particularly among youth, but should address gender issues, including GBV and girls’ and women’s time poverty and intersections with gender norms that could favor the more rapid loss of girls’ education and exposure to early marriage and early pregnancy. Also, exposure to adversity/armed conflict and the implications for young people (see [Lowicki, Untapped Potential, Adolescents Affected by Armed Conflict, 2000](https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/files/adolescents_armed_conflict.pdf)) and a range of emerging and existing threats should be explored.
* Section 2 should speak more to different kinds of firms, including SMEs, and private sector perceptions of youth as employees, customers and suppliers. It should also speak to different types of youth “agripreneurship” and youth roles in family enterprises function, including  gendered roles.
* What are the macro and microeconomic contexts? What are the implications for diets and nutrition of particular engagement, employment trajectories?
* Suggest adding in attention to water security, sanitation and hygiene issues as part of agriculture and food systems and the need for youth engagement in the professionalization of water systems.

 2.2. How has digital technology, agriculture 4.0 and automation affected youth employment in AFS? What is their likely impact in the coming decades?

* Nice discussion on page 30 of job creating and shedding dynamics in the context of digital technologies. A bit more detail on this comes out in later sections, including with regard to different types of employment. Overall, stronger attention to the need for technologies to be *demand-driven,* that is, sustainably demanded and used productively by young people, is suggested. Also, equal if not more emphasis should be placed on technologies that are not digital to address gaps in uptake by youth at scale.
* How are the technologies currently bought and sold? How will or should they be sustainably into the future? (Consider the Making Markets Work lens questions of “Who does? Who pays?”)
* Suggest avoiding jargon and spelling out what “agriculture 4.0” means for readers not in the know.

3. Employment

3.1. What can make i) farming/fisheries/livestock rearing and other forms of food provision and ii) other roles in the food system a more attractive option for youth employment?

* The summary of factors that influence youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems in the document is useful. As commented elsewhere, suggest unpacking incentives through a market systems development lens. Also suggest considering how market systems development approaches draw from other evidence bases, including Positive Youth Development to create a balance between “high-intensity and low-intensity market facilitation” for sustainable youth inclusion at scale. See AWE study linked herein.
* p 43 Strongly suggest a stronger focus on de-risking capital to youth and further breaking down the appropriateness and feasibility of different types of finance for different types of capital needs. Suggest emphasizing VSLAs as a key option for many youth (starting where youth are/their level of need and ability to manage risk) and link to financial management and business skills training. Focus more, too, on examples coming out of East Africa on digital products and the need to focus less on supply and more on demand and on youth-focused value chain financing, as well as A2F4Y (access to finance for youth) through cooperative membership.
* Page 31 opener is essential about a systems lens - could make this more explicit.
* Page 32 makes a number of strong claims on the economic, social and ecological superiority of small-scale farming in terms of resilience and adaptive capacities that does seem not some to fully incorporate all the evidence on the topics. Note that some of the sources referenced in this section do not support the claims being made. Suggest that the authors deploy a more nuanced discussion here. It might also be helpful for the authors to look closer at which specific factors make some smallholder farmers more successful than others.
* Again, suggest discussion on the income that young people and others make. What do youth need to lead better lives? How much of a change leads to what kinds of impacts in different contexts? How do young people use money? What about emerging risks of increased income (also in the context of digital technologies), including to youth through involvement in electronic betting and gender-based violence?
* See Chapter 7 of the [ReSAKSS 2019 Annual Trends and Outlook Report: gender equality in rural Africa, from commitments to outcomes](https://www.ifpri.org/publication/2019-annual-trends-and-outlook-report-gender-equality-rural-africa-commitments-0#:~:text=The%202019%20Annual%20Trends%20and,to%20fully%20achieve%20these%20goals.&text=The%20report%20serves%20as%20the,on%20over%2030%20CAADP%20indicators.). Note the section of Chapter 7 that speaks to evidence on differential access to land use in some settings, where married female youth have more access than males and unmarried females, etc.
* Page 42, 3.2.1 knowledge and extension section is too limited and not elaborated sufficiently in subsequent sections, particularly in comparison to the preceding section on land constraints. Know-how is key; refer to studies by the Feed the Future Developing Local Extension Capacity activity reports and articles on youth and private sector extension.
* P 46 It’s a very important point to not only promote youth involvement in youth organizations but youth involvement in diverse organizations. What about coops? VSLAs? Business associations?
* Suggest more attention to agriculture as a business and opportunities in diverse supporting markets.
* Suggest attention to international development approaches that facilitate markets through youth-inclusive market systems development. Suggest discussion of the components of markets, and how/whether the market systems lens lends itself to thinking about much-needed scale and sustainability. Refer to this recent study from Feed the Future Advancing Women’s Empowerment funded by USAID/RFS on [Youth, Women and Market Systems Development in Agriculture and Supporting Markets.](https://www.agrilinks.org/post/agricultural-development-youth-women-market-systems)
* The authors acknowledge that studies of youth attitudes show that agriculture is not a desirable career path for most youth, but then say that these studies are not valid because stated aspirations cannot be trusted. The authors seem to take this conclusion to the extreme, leading to them disregarding useful findings from these studies, particularly with regard to what youth say would make agriculture a more desirable career path. These include:
  + Availability of land and inputs
  + Farming is at least partly commercially oriented
  + Farming can be combined with other (non-farm) income sources in pluri-active livelihoods
  + Better access to agricultural land, capital, knowledge and markets
* The report should include better analysis/discussion on how to improve the above. A study that seeks youth empowerment should listen to youth.
* As the authors note, the ILO defines decent work as involving “opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men” (ILO, 2020a). Unfortunately, the paper does not adequately recognize the importance of productive work and opportunities for personal development.

3.2. Under what conditions should children be allowed to work in AFS when they want to?

* Agreed with the general statement (p11): “A focus on youth engagement needs to also consider what strategies can be put in place to ensure that entry in food systems as workers or entrepreneurs happens at the right age and under conditions that are not detrimental for the development and future prospects of young people.”
* See comment elsewhere re: the importance of zeroing in on opportunities for adolescent girls that support avoidance of early marriage and pregnancy. Also recognize that if girls are thrust into these roles and need to earn livelihoods at ages that do not correspond with legal rights to work, and where there are weak social protection systems, they must be facilitated to meet their and their families’ needs.
* See also comment elsewhere re: addressing gendered and age-related risks to adolescents in armed conflict, including recruitment into fighting forces, sexual violence and exploitation, other forms of harmful labor. (Note also the coping skills that young people develop in contending with abuse and lack of support systems and the dynamics of changing notions of adult protection roles over children they and their systems and institutions have failed to protect).

4. Land and other resources

4.1. What models of land and resource access and redistribution best support young people to engage in food systems for sustainable livelihoods?

* Does there need to be “best models?” rather than a diverse set of potential approaches that are appropriate and potentially useful in different situations given the context?  It seems like there is something to be learned from each of the many examples, with key considerations re: participation (youth, intergenerational) and power, among others.

4.2. Do these models take account of the differences amongst youth in terms of gender, indigeneity and other characteristics?

* The models do take into account the differences amongst youth in terms of gender, indigeneity, and other characteristics. Suggest much stronger attention to soil degradation and conservation and implications for youth engagement and the various modes and models outlined.

5. Knowledge

5.1. What policies/initiatives could stop the loss of, and support the revitalization of, traditional, ecological and marginalised forms of knowledge in AFS?

5.2. What policies/initiatives could integrate traditional and modern knowledges (including educational programming in primary, secondary, post-secondary, and technical training), to prioritize equity, agency, and rights in AFS and create new opportunities for youth? 

* Overall in the education / knowledge section, where do we come out on whether youth have the know-how to engage and work in AFS and how they might develop it? How are education services developed, provided and demanded sustainably? Can we dig through the details for some more key take-aways that capture some of the important nuance?
* Suggest including a critique of TVET investments in international development work and identification of the need for the diversification of education products and services to meet the needs of young people who will not easily find or recapture formal education opportunities, for whom TVET is irrelevant, unavailable and unsustainable. How are youth, private sector and other stakeholders bridging the gaps? Again, see DLEC study on youth and private sector extension and advisory services for one set of ideas.
* The Zero Draft would benefit by providing greater evidence that the of traditional and marginalized forms of knowledge would have a positive effect on youth engagement or employment. In addition, not all traditional practices prioritize equity, agency or rights of women and girls or marginalized members of the community. Note that not all traditional practices are ecologically sound.
* A variety of skills that would help youth be successful in AFS are largely missing from the Zero Draft. What about in business, for basic skills - from financial and business skills to soft skills - and technical skills? What about key professions? What is needed, for example, for the professionalization of water security and water systems?
* While the Zero Draft focuses on what universities and other educational/research institutions can learn about and share traditional knowledge, it fails to look at flipside on what and how users of traditional knowledge can learn from universities and other educational and research institutions. Pressures from climate change, pests, and diseases (such as Fall Army Worm and African Swine Flu) will create new challenges for traditional production systems and as a result they may need to adjust or adopt new techniques in order to remains sustainable.
* As mentioned on question 3.1, a discussion on agricultural extension programs is unfortunately largely absent from the Zero Draft. The document would greatly benefit from a large discussion of how these programs can be linked to youth seeking employment in agricultural systems.

5.3. How do the experiences of young women differ from those of young men in knowledge generation, acquisition and transfer?

5.4. How can grassroots and youth-driven learning opportunities and knowledge transfer be strengthened and supported?

5.5. What are the implications (potentially positive and/or negative) of online platforms and social media increasingly playing the role of knowledge providers?

* Emphasize demand-driven approaches - can young people demand and derive benefit sustainably?

6. Drawing on HLPE reports and analysis in the wider literature, the report outlines several examples of potential policy pathways to address challenges to youth engagement and employment in AFS, and to transform AFS to make them more “youth-friendly”. The HLPE seeks input on case studies that could illustrate successful policy initiatives that have improved youth employment and engagement in AFS, and in particular:

6.1. Successful implementation of existing policy commitments, including examples of rights-based approaches to youth employment, as well as protection from unemployment, in food systems.

* A critical shortcoming of the Zero Draft is that little to no evidence is provided for many of the recommendations in Section 5.2. Future versions of the report would benefit from more examples and evidence for many of the recommendations presented in the Zero Draft. Taking for example the recommendation on youth-targeted public employment programmes: What countries have tried this approach? What were key factors to making this approach a success? What scientific studies show that this is a useful approach to youth employment?
* Would recommend a summary of actionable upshots for specific situations and stakeholders i.e. a “play book,” where key parameters and scenarios are outlined, with suggestions for action by various stakeholders.
* Can we more succinctly focus on answering the question: How can governments and other stakeholders support an enabling environment for businesses to create employment opportunities for young people in AFS?

6.2. Initiatives to improve equity in access to resources and improved working conditions (including in conditions of informality) for young people within AFS.

6.3. Pathways for increased youth agency in AFS policy, including best practices and mechanisms to improve the leadership role of youth, including young women, in their own organizations, and in broader AFS and food policy discussion spaces.

 6.4. Pathways for equitable use of technology and digitalization, in particular ensuring access to and control of information and data by youth.

* It would be helpful to expand on ensuring the availability and affordability of new technologies and reduced risk management for youth farmers, especially medium- and small-scale ones, who embrace such innovations

6.5. Financial instruments and marketing tools that are available to youth within AFS.

6.6. Examples of economies of solidarity, collective enterprises and other collaborative initiatives among young people in AFS.

6.7. Examples of how consumers and urban actors are involved in working towards a sustainable food system that values and involves youth.

7. On data and knowledge gaps:

7.1. Do you have additional data or information that could help refine the analysis of the interplay between youth’s characteristics, aspirations, rights, resources and knowledge, AFS sustainability and FSN outcomes?

7.2. Is the set of case studies appropriate in terms of the dimensions and issues chosen and their regional balance? Do you have other good practices and examples of policy and interventions that could accelerate progress towards the SDGs by enhancing opportunities for youth?

* One interesting case study is the 4-H program in the United States. 4-H is the premier youth development program of the United States Department of Agriculture. 4-H seeks to promote positive youth development, facilitate learning and engage youth in the work of their community through the Cooperative Extension Service to enhance the quality of life. 4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults. 4-H today serves in every state nationwide, operating in rural, urban and suburban communities. 4-H members engage crucial topics, from childhood obesity and food safety and security, to climate change and sustainable energy. The variety of STEM opportunities available from the 4-H out-of-programming, in-school enrichment programs, and clubs/camps range from agricultural and animal sciences, to rocketry, robotics, and computer science—all with the goal to enhance our nation’s capability to remain competitive in important scientific friends and leader in addressing the challenges of the 21st century. In 2013, a study of 4-H (<http://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/4-H-Study-of-Positive-Youth-Development-Full-Report.pdf>) showed a correlations between 4-H and healthier choices, civic activity, and academic activity, in particular STEM.

 7.3. What are ways to collect better data on the situation of and prospects for youth in AFS? What can be done to improve population and employment data to give a more accurate picture of young people’s multidirectional mobility between places and sectors and multiple income sources?

8. Are there any major omissions or gaps in the V0-draft?

* One thing the report does not discuss is how employment in government agencies themselves can be a pathway for engagement employment in agricultural and food systems. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has several programs that allow hundreds of U.S. youth college graduates to find employment at USDA after graduation. These include the USDA Internship Program, the USDA Recent Graduates Program, and the USDA Presidential Management Fellows Program. USDA also has to programs that combine employment at USDA with college tuition funds. These include the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program (<https://www.usda.gov/partnerships/1890NationalScholars>) and the USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program (<https://www.usda.gov/partnerships/1994-program>). Combined, these programs provide an important pathway for students that wish to work for the public sector on agriculture and food systems.

8.1. Are topics under-or over-represented in relation to their importance?

* The Zero Draft largely leaves out of the need for agriculture and food systems to be productive and generate income (the economic dimension of sustainable development). The Draft largely overlooks the role of education, technological change and entrepreneurship in driving income growth and economic development – and in creating expanded opportunities for youth.
* Suggest more attention to political economy considerations, which currently do not get much attention in the text, and in particular, considerations of the situation of young people affected by crisis, such as armed conflict and displacement.
* The report is light on the growing importance of urban food systems in driving youth employment, especially as global populations continue to move to urban centers.
* The report under-represents other parts of the supply chain (besides the farm) in food systems, namely transportation, where youth are often involved/employed.
* The important role that complementary agricultural infrastructure can play on rural employment is largely missing from the report. For example, see the World Bank 2017 Report on the Future of Food: Shaping the Food System to Deliver Jobs (<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/406511492528621198/pdf/114394-WP-PUBLIC-18-4-2017-10-56-45-ShapingtheFoodSystemtoDeliverJobs.pdf>).
* Suggest drawing more from evidence for international development investments in youth inclusion in agriculture and food systems, including critique of TVET and the limitations of supply-side approaches, and more on the diverse ways in which youth and businesses are addressing gaps in youth know-how to enable productive and mutually beneficial youth engagement in agriculture and supporting markets.
* The global focus of the paper, which captures diverse country perspectives is useful, but some of the specifics on what pertains to particular contexts could be further drawn out. The policy section could have a summary “play book,” where key parameters are outlined, with suggestions for action by various stakeholders outlined in summary. This would help with the adaptability of the Report’s recommendations.
* Related to this, what are the main take-away messages for various actors?
* What should we be doing as a diverse community to ‘think globally and act locally’ to rapidly facilitate youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems?
* Suggest addressing some imbalances within the paper in terms of the amount of attention paid to various subjects. For example, the treatment of youth and land is very comprehensive and includes a very useful set of diverse examples and approaches, while access to finance for youth (or any number of other issues) could be approached with an equal level of detail, given the range of experiences. While it would be unfortunate to lose useful information, suggest further addressing the balance.

8.2. Are there any redundant facts or statements that could be eliminated from the V0- draft?

8.3. Are any facts or conclusions refuted, questionable or assertions with no evidence base?

8.4. If any of these is an issue, please share supporting evidence.