



African Youth Innovation, Enterprise and Leadership in Climate Action Convening 2026

Dates & Venue: 6-7 August 2026, Addis Ababa

Theme: Scaling youth-led solutions for resilient food systems, climate action and green prosperity in Africa

Tagline: Showcasing what works. Scaling what matters. Shaping what comes next.

Focus	Agenda	Outcome
Innovation • Enterprise • Leadership	Food Systems • Climate Action • Green Jobs	Scale what works across Africa

Message

African youth are not waiting for the future—they are already building it. The challenge is no longer proving that youth-led solutions work, but identifying what works, investing in it, and scaling it across the continent.

1. Background and Rationale

Africa's future will be largely determined by the ability of its growing youth population to drive economic transformation, food systems resilience, and climate adaptation. The continent is home to the youngest population globally, with approximately 70 percent of Africans under the age of 30 and an estimated 375 million young people expected to enter the labor market by 2035¹. At the same time, Africa faces increasing pressures arising from climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, food insecurity, unemployment, and vulnerability to economic shocks.

Agriculture and food systems remain central to Africa's development agenda, employing over 60 percent of the workforce and contributing significantly to livelihoods, incomes, and economic growth². However, the sector continues to face major challenges, including climate variability, declining soil fertility, land degradation, water scarcity, low productivity, limited access to markets and finance, and inadequate integration of technology and innovation. Climate change is expected to further exacerbate these challenges through increased droughts, floods, heat stress, and other climate-related risks that disproportionately affect young people and rural communities³.

¹ African Development Bank (AfDB), 2024.

² African Union Commission (AUC), 2025.

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2023.



Despite these challenges, African youth are increasingly emerging as innovators, entrepreneurs, technology developers, climate practitioners, and business leaders who are creating practical solutions to transform food systems and strengthen resilience. Across the continent, youth-led enterprises and initiatives are advancing climate adaptation, promoting nature-positive agriculture, developing sustainable farming systems, expanding access to digital agriculture technologies, delivering climate information and advisory services, creating green businesses and jobs, and strengthening agricultural value chains.

Youth are also driving innovation in emerging sectors such as climate-smart agriculture, regenerative agriculture, digital extension services, artificial intelligence applications in agriculture, renewable energy for agriculture, climate services, precision farming, ecosystem restoration, and circular economy enterprises. These innovations are improving productivity, strengthening resilience, enhancing environmental sustainability, creating employment opportunities, and contributing to more inclusive food systems⁴.

However, many successful youth-led solutions remain fragmented, localized, and underinvested. Limited access to finance, business development services, markets, networks, mentorship opportunities, and supportive policy environments continue to constrain the growth and scaling of youth-led enterprises and innovations. While numerous youth-focused initiatives in climate action, digital innovations, nature-positive and sustainable production and green economy exist across the continent, there remains limited opportunity for systematic exchange of experiences, peer learning, strategic partnerships, and collective identification of pathways for scaling successful models across countries and regions.

The transition toward resilient food systems, climate-smart development, nature-positive production, and green economic growth presents unprecedented opportunities for African youth. Investments in climate adaptation, sustainable agriculture, ecosystem restoration, digital transformation, renewable energy, and agribusiness value chains are expected to generate millions of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities over the coming decades ⁵. Realizing these opportunities will require stronger ecosystems that connect youth innovators, entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, researchers, and development partners.

Against this backdrop, the Africa Youth Food Systems and Climate Innovation Event 2026 will serve as a continental platform for showcasing successful youth-led solutions, promoting peer learning and mentorship, strengthening partnerships, facilitating investment opportunities, and identifying pathways for scaling innovation and enterprise development. The Event will bring together youth leaders, entrepreneurs, startups, practitioners, policymakers, researchers, investors, and development partners to exchange experiences, explore future opportunities, and contribute to shaping Africa's food systems and climate agenda leading into the Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSF) 2026, COP31 and COP32.

⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2024.

⁵ International Labour Organization (ILO), 2023; United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2024.



Rather than focusing solely on advocacy, the Event will emphasize action, innovation, enterprise development, and scaling impact. It will provide a platform to demonstrate how African youth are already contributing to food systems transformation and climate resilience while identifying the investments, partnerships, policies, and innovations required to unlock greater impact at scale

2. Goal

To accelerate the scaling of youth-led innovations, enterprises, and leadership that contribute to resilient food systems, climate action, sustainable agriculture, and green economic transformation across Africa.

3. Objectives

- **Showcase and scale youth-led solutions:** To identify, showcase, and promote scalable youth-led innovations, enterprises, and leadership models that advance climate adaptation, nature-positive agriculture, sustainable farming systems, digital transformation, and resilient food systems across Africa.
- **Accelerate youth entrepreneurship, green jobs and investment:** To strengthen pathways for youth employment, entrepreneurship, agribusiness growth, and green job creation by connecting youth-led enterprises with markets, finance, investors, and strategic partners.
- **Foster learning, collaboration and leadership:** To facilitate peer-to-peer learning, mentorship, networking, and collaboration among youth leaders, practitioners, innovators, policymakers, researchers, and private sector actors working across food systems and climate action.
- **Shape Africa's future food systems and climate agenda:** To develop a forward-looking roadmap that captures youth experiences, emerging opportunities, policy priorities, and investment needs for advancing resilient food systems, climate action, digital innovation, and green economic transformation in Africa.
- **Create a joint platform for youth voices:** Bring together young African leaders, youth networks, climate advocates, food systems actors and institutional partners to identify and elevate youth priorities for climate-resilient food systems ahead of AFSF-26 and COP31 &32.

4. Thematic Areas

The Event will focus on the following interconnected themes:

1. Climate action and adaptation
2. Nature-positive agriculture
3. Sustainable farming systems



4. Green jobs and entrepreneurship
5. Digital agriculture (digital climate, and extension services and markets)
6. Climate policy and leadership
7. Youth agribusiness startups
8. Youth networks and shared priorities/voices

5. Expected Outputs

- *Africa Youth Food Systems and Climate Innovation Showcase* featuring successful youth-led enterprises, technologies, and innovations.
- *Africa Youth Innovation Scaling Roadmap* outlining practical recommendations for scaling youth-led solutions, enterprises, and climate innovations.
- *Africa Youth Green Jobs and Future Opportunities Outlook* identifying emerging opportunities in food systems, climate action, digital innovation, and green economic transformation.
- Strategic partnerships established between youth innovators, investors, governments, private sector actors, and development partners.
- Pipeline of investment-ready youth enterprises and innovations identified for further support and acceleration.
- Partnership among African youth platforms for a common voice and shared priorities.
- Recommendations for strengthening youth engagement in Africa's food systems and climate transformation agenda.

6. Expected Outcomes

- Increased visibility and recognition of youth-led innovations and enterprises across Africa.
- Enhanced collaboration among youth innovators, entrepreneurs, policymakers, researchers, and investors.
- Improved visibility of youth-led enterprises to investment, markets, and strategic partnerships.
- Increased opportunities for scaling of proven youth-led solutions across food systems and climate sectors.
- Stronger contribution of youth to resilient food systems, climate adaptation, and green economic development.
- Improved understanding of future opportunities for youth within Africa's evolving food systems and green economy.
- Strengthened collaboration and shared responsibilities among African youth platforms.

7. Target Participants

The Event will convene approximately 80-100 participants representing:

- Youth entrepreneurs and startups
- Youth-led agribusinesses
- Youth climate innovators and practitioners
- Digital agriculture enterprises
- Climate service providers
- Youth farmer organizations
- Youth policy advocates
- Youth Networks
- Researchers and academic institutions
- Investors and financial institutions
- Private sector actors
- Development partners
- Government representatives
- Regional and continental institutions

8. Expected Legacy

The Event will contribute to a continental platform for identifying, connecting, scaling, and investing in youth-led solutions that contribute to resilient food systems, climate action, and green prosperity. It will generate evidence, partnerships, and practical pathways that support Africa's youth to become drivers of sustainable agricultural transformation and green economic growth while contributing to regional and global discussions at AFSF 2026, COP31, and Africa's COP32.

9. Expected Run of Show (Tentative)

DAY 1: LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE		
Theme: Showcasing Youth-Led Innovation and Transformation Across Africa		
Time	Agenda	Responsible
08:00 – 09:00	Registration and Innovation Expo Opening • Participants explore youth-led enterprises, climate innovations, digital agriculture solutions, climate services, nature-positive production systems, and agribusiness ventures.	



09:00 – 10:00	Opening Ceremony • Welcome remarks • Event objectives and expected outcomes • Opening keynote: <i>Africa's Youth Are Already Building the Future</i>	
10:00 – 11:00	High-Level Leadership Dialogue Topic: <i>The future of food systems and climate action through the lens of African youth</i> • Successful youth entrepreneurs • Climate innovators • Policymakers • Private sector leaders	
11:00 – 11:30	Networking Break and Innovation Showcase	
11:30 – 13:00	Youth Solutions Marketplace Selected youth innovators present proven solutions and lessons learned across climate adaptation, nature-positive agriculture, sustainable farming systems, digital agriculture, climate advisory services, agribusiness and value chains, and green enterprises. Format: 10-minute TED-style presentations followed by moderated discussion.	
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 – 15:30	Parallel Experience Sharing Sessions • Session A: Climate Adaptation and Resilience • Session B: Nature-Positive Agriculture and Sustainable Farming • Session C: Digital Agriculture and Climate Services • Session D: Agribusiness, Markets and Enterprise Development Focus: What worked? What failed? Key lessons for scaling.	
15:30 – 16:00	Health Break	
16:00 – 17:30	Mentorship and Leadership Café Small group interactions between youth participants and investors, agribusiness leaders, climate experts, technology innovators, and policymakers.	



	Topics: Enterprise growth, career pathways, leadership development, access to finance, and scaling innovation.	
17:30 – 18:00	Day 1 Reflection: Key insights and emerging opportunities.	
18:30 – 19:00	Startup exhibitions, networking, and partnership building.	

DAY 2: SCALE WHAT WORKS AND SHAPE THE FUTURE		
Theme: Building Partnerships, Investment Pathways and Future Opportunities		
Time	Agenda	Responsible
08:30 – 09:00	Recap of Day 1: Summary of key lessons and emerging themes.	
09:00 – 10:00	Future Outlook Keynote Topic: The future of green jobs, food systems and climate innovation in Africa. • Future skills • AI and digital transformation • Green economy opportunities • Emerging investment areas	
10:00 – 10:30	Health Break	
12:00 – 13:30	Investor and Partnership Dialogue Topic: What will it take to scale youth-led solutions across Africa? • Development finance institutions • Impact investors • Venture funds • Agribusiness companies • Development partners Interactive dialogue with youth enterprises.	
13:30 – 14:30	Lunch	
14:30 – 16:00	Co-Creation Session Developing the Africa Youth Innovation Scaling Roadmap. • Scaling innovation • Enterprise growth	



	• Green jobs • Climate adaptation and resilience • Digital transformation • Future investments	
16:00 – 17:00	Presentation of Recommendations Each thematic group presents top innovations to scale, key investments required, priority partnerships, and future opportunities.	
17:00 – 17:45	Closing Plenary Topic: From innovation to impact: accelerating youth-led transformation across Africa. • Africa Youth Scaling Roadmap • Future Opportunities Outlook • Partnership commitments	
17:45 – 18:00	Closing Remarks • Official event closure	

Organizing partners:

- AGRA -HQ
- AGRA-Ethiopia
- Green AgroSolution (LERSHA)
- Jaco's Ladder Africa
- ICPAC
- ILRI
- Ban Ki-moon Foundation
- YOUNGO
- World Food Forum
- Global Citizen
- PACJA
- YPARD
- AUC (?)
- AfDB (?)