

Farmers' Constituency – ACE & Youth Intervention (SB62)

My name is Maria Giulia De Castro and I lead work on youth at the World Farmers' Organisation. I am speaking today on behalf of the UNFCCC Farmers' Constituency, representing farmers from all over the world, in all their diversity contributing to food security and global development and delivering essential ecosystem services while facing first-hand the impacts of climate change.

Today, we bring forward the perspective of young farmers, a growing force for sustainability in agriculture, yet one too often left without a seat at the table. Globally, according to the last World Youth Report, there are over 1.2 billion young people aged 15–24, the majority living in rural areas of developing countries—many of whom are engaged or aspire to engage in farming. Yet, they face deep and persistent barriers.

Young farmers often lack land titles, credit history, and access to formal cooperatives. These constraints exclude them from climate finance, innovation ecosystems, and leadership spaces. Many wish to remain or return to farming but are prevented by structural challenges—not by a lack of will or capacity.

We therefore stress that, from the perspective of young farmers, a just transition must also be a **just intergenerational transition**. It must create the conditions for fair and viable generational turnover in agriculture. This includes access to land, finance, markets, education, and decision-making spaces.

As the 2025 ACE Dialogue focuses on policy coherence and coordinated action, we emphasize that aligning youth empowerment with climate objectives requires integrated action across sectors. This means:

- Ensuring young farmers are engaged as co-creators of climate policy and solutions, including NDC 3.0;
- Removing barriers to farm-level resources such as finance, training, and access to data and digital tools;
- And supporting youth leadership through inclusive governance and locally grounded capacity-building pathways—like those offered by programs such as the WFO Gymnasium, a program aimed at providing knowledge on advocacy and global processes as well as soft skills on topics such as leadership, public speaking, negotiation.

Young farmers bring digital fluency, adaptability, and a strong commitment to sustainability. **They are not only the future—they are already contributing as innovators, knowledge multipliers, and connectors within their communities.** Let's ensure they are empowered to shape a climate-resilient agriculture that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable across generations.

We look forward to collaborating more closely with ACE, YOUNGO and all interested actors to enhance the role and engagement of young farmers at SB62 and beyond.

Thank you.