

PRE-LAUNCH MEETING REPORT

Venue:

American Corner - Upper Hill,
Nairobi

20
25



INTRODUCTION

The World Food Forum Kenya Chapter held its pre-launch meeting on **Friday, 3rd October 2025** at the **American Corner** in Upper Hill, Nairobi. The meeting brought together youth leaders, agrifood system stakeholders, development partners, and representatives from the American Spaces Team to deliberate on WFF Kenya's strategic direction and the role of young people in transforming agrifood systems.

Participants then introduced themselves and registered both digitally and physically for the WFF network, marking the beginning of a vibrant and participatory engagement. The event registered a total of 58 participants.



OPENING SESSION

The opening session, moderated by **Mr. Apollo Karuga**, set the tone for the day's proceedings by providing a comprehensive overview of the World Food Forum its origins, mission, and the milestones achieved in promoting youth-led transformation of agrifood systems both globally and within Kenya.

Mr. Apollo traced the establishment of WFF as a global movement initiated by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** to amplify the voices and actions of young people in shaping sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems. He highlighted that WFF serves as a collaborative platform uniting youth, policymakers, researchers, and innovators to co-create solutions addressing food insecurity, climate change, and rural livelihoods.

Mr. Apollo reflected on the achievements of WFF Kenya since inception, noting the growing momentum among young agripreneurs, innovators, and community leaders who continue to champion sustainable food practices across the country.

He also acknowledged the challenges encountered in scaling youth participation, including limited financing, fragmented coordination, and insufficient policy support for agrifood innovation.

He underscored that the strength of WFF Kenya lies in its ability to bring together diverse youth voices—from rural farmers and student leaders to young professionals in research, agribusiness, and environmental advocacy. He encouraged participants to take ownership of the forum's vision and to see themselves as active contributors to national and global food system transformation.

Mr. Apollo further announced that a Youth Position Paper would be drafted ahead of the World Food Forum Flagship Event, capturing the collective insights, priorities, and recommendations emerging from the pre-launch deliberations. This paper, he explained, would serve as Kenya's youth contribution to the global dialogue on sustainable food systems.

PRESENTATIONS

AYA & Extension Services – Ms. Pauline

Ms. Pauline opened the session with a detailed presentation on the AYA Extension Services Program, a flagship youth-driven initiative designed to enhance knowledge sharing, mentorship, and innovation among young agripreneurs. She explained that the program creates a collaborative platform where youth in agriculture can exchange ideas, access practical resources, and showcase their solutions to local and national challenges in food production and sustainability.



She further encouraged participants to join the [AYA online platform](#) to remain actively engaged in discussions, trainings, and capacity-building opportunities. Ms. Pauline underscored that the program's long-term vision is to cultivate a generation of informed and connected agricultural leaders capable of transforming food systems at the grassroots level.

Youth Engagement and Value Addition – Mr. Jacob

Mr. Jacob addressed the critical issue of youth engagement and value addition within Kenya's agrifood sector. He emphasized the need for strong linkages between young farmers, county governments, and private sector actors to create synergies that drive sustainable growth. His presentation focused on fostering collaboration rather than competition among young agripreneurs, stressing that collective innovation and shared resources yield greater impact than fragmented individual efforts.



He elaborated on the importance of value addition as a tool for increasing profitability and food security, calling for policies and funding mechanisms that prioritize youth-led processing, packaging, and marketing enterprises.

PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Jacob also advocated for mentorship programs to connect young people with industry experts and financial partners capable of supporting scalable agribusiness ventures.

Agrifood Leadership Education Program (ALEP) – Ms. Alice

Ms. Alice Ritho presented the Agrifood Leadership Education Program (ALEP), which focuses on developing young leaders who can influence and drive systemic change in agrifood systems. She explained that ALEP provides a comprehensive leadership curriculum, combining technical knowledge, innovation skills, and mentorship from experienced practitioners in the sector.



Ms. Ritho showcased her personal project titled **“Nurturing Resilient Child-Led Households,”** which seeks to improve food and nutrition security in vulnerable communities through youth-led interventions. She informed participants that ALEP will be showcased at the upcoming **WFF Global Flagship Event** in **Rome, Italy**, offering Kenyan youth a platform to share experiences and innovations on a global stage. She further announced that the next ALEP call will focus on water-related challenges, recognizing the importance of sustainable water management in agricultural resilience. Ms. Ritho concluded by urging the participants to collaborate with mentors and resource persons to strengthen youth empowerment initiatives within their respective localities.

Act4Food Campaign – Mr. Amos

Mr. Amos Kamau introduced the Act4Food Campaign, a global youth movement advocating for healthier, fairer, and more sustainable food systems. He described the campaign’s objectives of mobilizing young people to take concrete actions both personal and collective to promote responsible consumption, reduce food waste, and advocate for equitable food policies.



PRESENTATIONS

He encouraged participants to sign the Act4Food pledge and become champions of sustainable diets and food system transformation within their communities. Mr. Kamau reiterated that young people must not only be beneficiaries of change but also active contributors to the design and implementation of solutions that advance food security and environmental stewardship.

Innovation Pillar – Ms. Elizabeth

Concluding the session, Ms. Elizabeth presented the Innovation Pillar of the WFF Kenya Chapter, which seeks to empower innovators and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to accelerate agribusiness transformation. She highlighted the importance of innovation as a catalyst for addressing persistent challenges such as low productivity, post-harvest losses, and market access barriers.



Ms. Elizabeth shared key successes from the **NextGen Agri-Bosses Project**, which includes youth capacity-building initiatives and the **Agri-Innovation Challenge (Agri-Hackathon)** a competition designed to identify and nurture promising agritech solutions. She emphasized the need to create an enabling environment where youth can translate innovative ideas into scalable business models, noting that the Innovation Pillar will continue to serve as a hub for creativity, research, and entrepreneurship in the Kenyan agrifood landscape.

OPEN SESSION

The open session and plenary discussion formed one of the most engaging and insightful parts of the meeting, providing a platform for participants to share reflections, experiences, and recommendations on strengthening youth participation and leadership in Kenya's agrifood systems. The session was moderated by **Ms. Foozia**, who guided the discussions with energy and inclusivity, ensuring that diverse perspectives were heard and documented.

Participants expressed appreciation for the World Food Forum Kenya's efforts to convene young professionals, farmers, innovators, and policy advocates in one space, noting that such platforms are instrumental in building collective ownership and action toward transforming the country's food systems.

During the deliberations, **Ms. Belinda**, one of the participants, emphasized the need for WFF Kenya to adopt a more proactive approach in supporting youth-led projects, particularly those selected under regional and global initiatives such as the Food Lab.

She noted that Kenyan youth have demonstrated exceptional creativity and innovation, but often lack technical and financial support to scale their ideas beyond the pilot stage.

Ms. Alice echoed this sentiment and suggested that underperforming or stalled projects should not be abandoned but rather re-packaged and submitted for alternative funding or partnership opportunities. She underscored the importance of mentorship and resource mobilization as key drivers of project sustainability and long-term impact.

The discussion also centered on the need to strengthen linkages between young agripreneurs, government agencies, and private sector actors. Participants highlighted that creating structured partnerships would not only enhance resource sharing but also improve market access, technical training, and policy alignment. There was consensus that capacity-building efforts should begin at the production level, where most young farmers operate, before advancing to value addition and processing.

OPEN SESSION

Participants also underscored the importance of policy and legislative advocacy as a means of addressing systemic barriers that hinder youth participation in agrifood systems. They called for more inclusive policymaking processes that actively involve young people in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of agricultural and food-related policies. Such engagement, they observed, would ensure that youth perspectives and needs are reflected in national strategies and resource allocation.

In her intervention, **Ms. Regina** stressed the need for inclusivity within WFF Kenya's programs, urging the team to recognize and address the diverse realities faced by youth across different regions, backgrounds, and capacities. She highlighted that effective inclusion requires not only gender and regional balance but also consideration of marginalized and rural youth who often face the greatest challenges in accessing agrifood opportunities.

A proposal emerged during the session to establish a Youth Advisory and Mentorship Program,

through which one hundred trained young people would serve as advisory service providers and peer mentors to guide subsequent cohorts. This initiative was viewed as a practical step toward institutionalizing mentorship within WFF Kenya and ensuring the continuity of youth capacity development efforts.

The discussion also touched on the importance of institutional partnerships, with participants agreeing that pursuing accreditation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would significantly enhance WFF Kenya's visibility, credibility, and access to global collaboration frameworks. Accreditation, they noted, would position the chapter to participate more effectively in international decision-making spaces while attracting additional technical and financial support.

Throughout the plenary, participants demonstrated a high level of engagement, contributing thoughtful insights that reflected their commitment to advancing Kenya's agrifood agenda.

KEY POINTS

The attendees raised the following key points:

**Enhancing Youth
Inclusion in
Decision-Making
and Opportunities**



**Supporting
Innovation
and Ideas
Post-Pitching**



**Building Capacity
and Expertise**



**Strengthening
WFF Kenya
Chapter
Operations**



KEY POINTS

- **Belinda (KALRO):** Works with pastoral communities; participated in Youth Food Lab and Flagship 2024. Observes limited sustainability and weak post-training support. Recommends encouraging member participation in training, mapping initiatives, improving information access, and linking One Health to our work.
- **Partnerships:** Opportunity to partner with KenInvest and Kenya Chamber of Commerce to reach investors and scale youth enterprises.
- **Advocacy & Grassroots:** Need to amplify advocacy at grassroots level and design ways to reach youth without internet access.
- **Coordination & Collaboration:** Youths are working in silos — create working groups and regional (county) clusters; Steering Committee to curate 10 suggestions and members to select top 5.
- **Capacity & Scale:** Encourage youth to use institutional avenues (KIRDI, Enable Youth, AFC, CABI) and require ripple-effect mentoring (e.g., 100 trained youth each mentor ≥10 people).
- **Innovation & Inclusion:** Design mechanisms to include grassroots innovators/SMEs in Innovation Pillar activities; create a Gender & Social Inclusion department within WFF-Kenya.
- **Food Loss & Waste:** Explore mechanisms to collect surplus food and redistribute it (children's homes, shelters) in line with safety and health standards.
- **Knowledge & Visibility:** Build a database of members' professional expertise; encourage members to use social media to showcase skills. Recognize champions (e.g., Lydhia Kiswii, Makueni) on Chapter channels.
- **Multilateral Engagement & One Health:** Integrate One Health concepts and explore UNEP and other multilateral participation. Liaise with Belinda (KALRO) for technical guidance.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 01) DRAFTING OF A YOUTH POSITION PAPER**

Participants agreed that a Youth Position Paper will be developed to consolidate the outcomes of the pre-launch meeting.
- 02) STRENGTHENING MULTI-SECTORAL COLLABORATION**

The meeting emphasized the importance of fostering stronger partnerships to accelerate agrifood system transformation.
- 03) ENHANCING CAPACITY BUILDING AND MENTORSHIP**

Participants called for the expansion of training programs to equip young people with advisory, leadership, and technical skills.
- 04) PROMOTION OF VALUE ADDITION AND LOCAL INNOVATION**

The discussions underscored the need to promote context-specific value addition initiatives to improve productivity, reduce post-harvest losses, and create employment opportunities for youth in rural and urban settings.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



05) ADVOCACY AND POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Participants highlighted the need for sustained policy and legislative advocacy to create a more enabling environment for youth-led agribusinesses

06) INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND RECOGNITION

The forum resolved to pursue accreditation with UNEP to enhance WFF Kenya's institutional legitimacy, visibility, and access to international collaboration opportunities.

07) COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVITY

The meeting reaffirmed WFF Kenya's commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that youth from diverse regions and backgrounds are meaningfully represented

CLOSING

The closing session brought the day's deliberations to an inspiring conclusion. Ms. Christine Karanja delivered the final remarks, commending all participants, presenters, and moderators for their active engagement and insightful contributions throughout the meeting. She observed that the discussions had generated valuable ideas and recommendations that would inform the drafting of the Youth Position Paper and shape the World Food Forum Kenya Chapter's strategic direction moving forward.

POST-EVENT ACTIONS

- Compilation and circulation of the Youth Position Paper and meeting report.
- Establishment of communication channels for ongoing collaboration.
- Post-event evaluation survey and distribution of photos and materials via email.

