



Tana High-Level Forum
on Security in Africa



IPSS



PRE-TANA YOUTH CONSULTATION FORUM
Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Sustainable Peace and Security
12 August 2021 | Virtual Conference
Outcomes Report

 **TANA FORUM**

 **unesco**

Pre Tana Youth Consultation Forum

**Transforming Food Systems:
Youth Innovation for Sustainable
Peace and Security**

 12 August 2021

 10:00 AM-3:30 PM (GMT +3)

 Virtual-Zoom

25-29 October
Bahir Dar, Ethiopia

Managing Security
Threats: Building Resilience
for the Africa We Want

 **2(10)21**
years

#tanaforum | tanaforum.org

1. INTRODUCTION

The 10th edition of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa will take place on 25-28 November 2021 in Bahir Dar in hybrid format under the theme, “Managing Security Threats: Building Resilience for the Africa We Want”. In line with this, the Secretariat held a youth consultation forum which provided a platform for young Africans to engage and mobilize on the Tana Forum theme and youth related issues. Youth day was celebrated at international level on 12 of August 2021 under the theme “Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health”. This availed an ideal opportunity to hold the Pre-Tana Youth Consultation Forum on one of the threats Africa faces today i.e., Food Insecurity. Hence, the Tana Forum Secretariat in partnership with UNESCO hosted a regional youth consultation forum on the theme “**Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Sustainable Peace and Security**” which resonated with both the theme of the international youth day and this year’s Tana Forum.

2. BACKGROUND

With 60% of the total population aged below 25, Africa is the youngest continent in the world. The United Nations predicts that by 2050 global populations will increase by 2.5 billion people and young people are expected to make up half of the 2050 global population. With the rapid rise in populations, providing food security increasingly requires innovative solutions and technologies. Since the year 2014, Africa has witnessed a prevalence of undernourishment and today nearly 256 million people on the African continent suffer from severe food insecurity with 20 percent of population suffering from undernourishment. Moreover, close to 400 million people are moderately food insecure lacking have regular access to nutritious and sufficient food.

In addition, to climate change-related weather patterns, economic slowdowns and down turns, Political and social instability including conflict, poor governance is the driving force of the current food insecurity in Africa. Especially, in a continent where the livelihoods of millions of men and women are reliant on agriculture, the emergence of conflict and instability causes dramatic and severe change in their lives. Conflicts destroy food systems, decimate crops and livestock resources, and cause loss of assets and incomes. Post-election crises have its own effect on availability, accessibility and affordability of food, an issue which has not received sufficient attention it requires. Electioneering may end up in crises and impasses that prevent farmers from accessing their farms and intimidates citizens from going to markets. Conflicts trigger food insecurity, malnutrition and hunger which in turn intensify conflicts especially in fragile states. Violent conflicts slow down farming, destroy infrastructure and markets which impinge on the ability to produce, buy and sell food. Access to food has also been more and more employed in conflict situations as an intentional art of war.

Similarly, food security plays a vital role in sustaining conflict prevention and conflict mitigation, peace-building efforts and peace-building can strengthen food security. Food

security strengthens social unity, addresses drivers of conflict and builds up authenticity in governments. Food security is important in ensuring the sustainable reintegration of ex-

combatants into civilian life and peacetime livelihoods by avoiding the risk of them going back to wartime means for acquiring food. Hunger can also weaken peace aggravating existing anxiety and grievance drawing back peace building efforts and reviving violence.

Hence, for Africa to move forward, as H.E. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, the Commissioner African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture has stated in a High-level side event held on 8 February 2020 along the margins of the 33rd African Union (AU) Summit under the title 'Hand-in-Hand in Partnerships towards Maintaining Peace through Improved Food Security and Nutrition in Africa,' jointly organized by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). "...we need to create stronger mechanisms linking food security and nutrition to peace and security. Let us take our destiny into our hands and create more opportunities and robust economies."

With the youth bulge and being the most affected group, targeting the youth is a promising way to address the developmental and stability challenges associated with decreasing food security. To effectively address the problem of food security, and its numerous linkages, a shift is needed from viewing youth as a challenge, to viewing youth as an asset and ally and work towards more equitable food systems. The theme of International Youth Day in 2021 "Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health", also aimed at emphasizing that the transformation of global food systems would not be meaningful without the participation of young people.

3. OUTCOMES AND TAKEAWAYS

- Today's food systems have proven incapable of guaranteeing food security, now and in the future. They are grossly unsustainable and we need innovation for new ones. Transforming food systems is therefore integral to food security. Food security exists when all people of all types have physical and economic access to sufficient safe dietary needs for active and healthy life. Food security is complete when nutritious food is available, accessible, affordable, utilised, stable, and safe for all.
- Food security is inextricably linked with health, climate, peace and security, among many others. Thus, there is a need to have a more holistic and systematic approach to its policy and practise. Therefore, securing is not sufficient on its own, it needs to be hand-in-hand with other relevant sectors. Examples include like transportation and energy which play critical role in the production and distribution of food.
- Africa is not on track to eliminate hunger and tackle malnutrition. However, youth present an opportunity to upturn this situation. To leverage this opportunity, there

is a need for meaningful inclusion and participation, intergenerational knowledge transfer and partnership and other forms of support, capacity building, and the implementation of relevant frameworks in this regard? Furthermore, there is a need to build a more conducive environment for youth meaningful engagement in the agricultural sector.

- The need to re-image youth perceptions of agriculture emerged: from a way of life to a wealth-generating commercial enterprise; and from an activity of the elderly, to a lucrative opportunity for the young.
- There is a need to invest and build the capacity of African youths to exploit new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and digital platforms to drive information and knowledge flow, and modern agricultural practise.
- Governments and institutions should be careful to not have a one-size-fits all policy approach. There is a need to recognise context specificities in their responsiveness. They need to distinguish between long- and short-term goals, and understand the demand and supply side of the agricultural sector. For governments and institutions, also, there is a need to address the problem of non-implementation.
- Start-Ups need to be aligned to technological or digital innovations within agriculture. They may use technology innovations at community level to address local problem in a local fashion. Solving a local problem with local solution is one way to build the responsiveness of Start-Up to global needs.
- Youths must develop adequate knowledge, expertise and network relevant to the subsector of agriculture they seek to invest in.
- The African Continental Free Trade Area presents a huge opportunity to transform food systems, and create wealth and employment for African youth. Thus, its implementation towards easing up people, goods, services, and financial movements must be leveraged to the advantage of the agricultural sector.
- Women inclusion, especially young women, is critical to achieving food security on the African continent.

4. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WELCOMING AND OPENING REMARKS, KEYNOTE ADDRESS, SESSION 1, SESSION 2 AND CLOSING REMARKS.

- **Welcoming and Opening Remarks**

Ms. Lettie T. Longwe, Interim Director of African Peace and Security Program/APSP/and Head of Tana Forum Secretariat, Institute for Peace and Security Studies /IPSS/ gave the opening remarks. While reiterating the positive role of youth, it was made clear that the devastation and scope of conflict and instability affects all members of community. On this premise, a call was made for youth to participate in processes that enhances peace, security and development; and refrain from participating in activities that threaten them. Within the

context of food security, according to Ms. Longwe, youth participation may also positively bring in new ideas, energies, innovation, and stir the adaptation of new technology in farming systems to improve on the status quo. Furthermore, the impact of climate change and the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on food security and food, peace and security were noted. Against this backdrop, Ms. Longwe wished for a fruitful discussion with youth that would yield a practical way forward. Ms. Longwe appreciated United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) for the collaboration, and wished the forum a great success.

Professor Hubert Gijzen, Director, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa, who sat in Nairobi, welcomed and celebrated everyone with respect to the International Youth Day. Having noted the global theme, “Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health”, and acknowledged other events and discussions in alignment with this theme, he posited that food security is central to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and all of the 17 SDGs. From a historical approach, he highlighted that food security had always been a challenge; including before the Neolithic evolution. The importance, according to him, is highlighted in the positioning of food security in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Professor Gijzen further argued that more than enough food is produced to feed everyone on this planet; yet, as many as 811 million people still go hungry today, every day. It was further noted that about 256 million out of 1.3 billion people in Africa suffer from serious food insecurity. In addition, the complexity of food insecurity involving production, distribution, local availability, affordability, and nutritional value intrinsically links food insecurity with water and energy security for instance. These, according to Professor Gijzen, is definitely a threat to the realisation of all SDGs and provides a fertile ground for conflict, instability, and frustrates the international community’s promise of leaving no one behind. Thus, he reiterated that today’s food systems are grossly unsustainable and we need innovation for new ones. The impact of global food system on water usage (and vice versa), habitable and arable land, ecosystem, personal health and biodiversity, deforestation and green house pollution, among others, were cited with examples. He acknowledged that the transformation of food systems is an ambitious, but needed and time objective. Concerns were also expressed towards the billions that will join the planet in the coming decades.

In this regard, the need for innovation, creativity, and open-minds through meaningful engagement of youth was emphasised. Professor Gijzen therefore stated the pre-forum as an important step in the right direction, noting that youths are key actors, partners and drivers of change. The platform is thus a serving the imperative need to capitalise on the youth voices, perspective, innovations and critical thinking which cannot be over-emphasised, as youths have demonstrated their capacity in the past such as their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, he also noted that a hybrid of innovation and creativity combined with traditional and indigenous knowledge is important. Quoting the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, “Young people cannot do it on their own, they need allies”, he acknowledged the timeliness and importance of the collaboration informing the

pre-Tana Forum Youth Consultation to facilitate a frank and open dialogue to discuss an issue such as food security. He rounded off his remarks by stating the pre-Tana Youth Consultation would also feed into the preparations of other major flagship events such as the October 4 - 8, 2021, Biennale of Luanda – “Pan-African forum for the Culture of Peace” which is a joint initiative of UNESCO and other partners, and the 10th Tana High-Level Forum on Peace and Security in Africa from the 25th to 29th day of the same month. He concluded with the UN’s Secretary General’s words, “Lets guarantee young people a sit at the table as we build a world based on inclusive, fair and sustainable development for all”.

- **Key Note Address**

Dr. Janet Edeme, Head of Division, Rural Economy and Agriculture delivered the keynote address. She expressed delight in her participation, and conveyed the greetings from the Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission (AUC), who she described as passionate about the promotion of the youth agenda and transformation of food systems on the continent.

The centrality of food systems to daily lives, well-being and societal peace and stability was reiterated, as the population increase by 2050 side-by-side the challenges of climate change and Covid-19 pandemic was highlighted. Dr. Edeme further stated that about 20% of the continent’s population which makes up about 256 billion people suffer from severe food insecurity. Key drivers of this include growing conflict, instability, climate change, economic slowdown and downturn. On this premise, it was posited that Africa is not on the track to eliminate hunger by 2030. Against this backdrop, a call for urgent response to transform food systems at global, continental, regional and local level was made. In light of this, the instrumentality of youth demography was highly noted; arguing that with the appropriate support and enabling environment, youth contribution is a necessity because transformation of food systems will not be meaningful without them. Youth have become an important policy focus for international and regional frameworks; thereby, reiterating and stirring the youth inclusion, as well as youth meaningful youth participation and youth-focussed programs in AgriFood systems on the continent.

Dr. Edeme concluded by discussing the impact of conflict on food systems, and vice versa. It was further noted that the current food system contributes to health, climate, and peace and security problems on the continent. Fixing it therefore requires a collective action and meaningful youth inclusion. More importantly, sustainable and resilient food systems should be built around young people through investments in decision-making processes and supporting their innovative ideas and actions.

Dr. Edeme appreciated the participants for their attention.

- **Session 1: Food Insecurity, Stability in Africa and its impact on Youth**

Mr. Yonas Berhane, Communications and Profile Management Coordinator, Africa Peace and Security Programme (APSP), Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) moderated the

session. He began by reiterating the essentiality and criticality of the theme because the youth are the most affected in the food security issues. The overall objective was to assess and explore food insecurity and stability in Africa as it impacts on youth. First session discussion points would unpack the concept of food security and determinant of food insecurity, as well as links between food security and sustainable peace and security. Furthermore, the session sought to explore the state of food security in Africa and identify the causes of food insecurity with special focus on political and social instability conflict poor governance, pre-and-post-election crisis and impact of covid 19 pandemic; including its link with youth, peace and security. Overall, Mr. Berhane anticipates that there is no doubt a need for collective engagement and responses to tackle food insecurity in Africa. He went on to introduce the first speaker on the panel, Dr. Chimimba David Phiri.

The first speaker began by defining and conceptualising food security. According to him, “food security exists when all people of all types have physical and economic access to sufficient safe dietary needs for active and healthy life”. He further posited that the fundamentals of food security include availability, access (economic and physical resources for a nutritious diet means of acquisition), utilisation, stability (which includes the element of time) and safety. Wherever any of these are lacking, hunger food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms are expected. Thus, the degree of their presence determines food security. On one hand, the place of conflicts and protracted conflicts on the agricultural sector was stated and reemphasised; this includes crops, livestock, and the forced migration. Overall, therefore, food production is impacted negatively. On the other, the existing food systems was examined and adjudged to be one of the major drivers of food insecurity primarily because of its unsustainability and degree of fitness for purpose. Overall, this brings to bear the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. As Africa was not on the track to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, the pandemic further dealt a devastating blow on the continent in this regard.

Food insecurity, according to the Dr. Chimimba David Phiri, the first speaker, affects education, health and mental health, and to a large extent fuels human insecurity. First, food insecurity cause many to drop out of school; malnutrition which makes humans vulnerable to health challenges; and metal health. Notably, the Covid-19 death toll is found higher with those who are malnourished or with weak immune system. Food insecurity is also a push factor for youth to join armed or extremist groups to make a living. Dr. Chimimba concluded by highlighting the gradual paradigm shift from agriculture being a business of the old to one which youth are willing and seeking to participate, including educated youths.

The moderator re-echoed the key points of Dr. Chimimba David Phiri, and reintroduced the second speaker Ms. Sylvia Akankwasa who spoke within the Ugandan context. The degree of unemployment was highlighted; especially among graduates in which many of them are also left for self-employment or the informal sector a call was mad for meaningful youth

participation. Within the same context, the educational background of graduates does not root them enough to participate efficiently in Agriculture, either with respect to policy or practice. Notably, also, the perception of agriculture as an activity of last resort weakens its prioritisation, thereby contributing to food insecurity.

The third speaker, Mr. Keith Andere, Director of Programs, Africa Youth Commission, furthered the conversation on the intersection between employment and the agricultural sector. An important weakness that requires redress, according to him, is the weak ability of Africa's agricultural sector to generate wealth. Commercialisation is weak and farming is rather seen as a way of life and not a wealth-generating business. This impacts the value chain. Regardless, he favoured the need to use new technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to drive modern agricultural practise. Furthermore, in his conceptualisation of youth in this context, he argued that young people are not homogenous. They are also divided along political, socioeconomic, geographic, identity, literacy and education context.

The top three constraints to youth meaningful engagement in agriculture include: access to land (especially for young women), access to finance/capital, and structural barriers. He recommended the following: skill development initiative towards earning outcomes, skills transfer, local ownership/invest in and support AgriTech and local Start-Ups, and inclusive economic growth, among others. According to the third speaker, Mr. Keith, Agric growth is not sufficient alone it needs to be hand-in-hand with other relevant sectors; and there is a need for comparative analysis for youth inclusive intervention against traditional agricultural practises to better understand a youth inclusive approach. Furthermore, Policy makers must avoid a one-size-fits all solution by distinguishing between long- and short-term goals and looking at the demand and supply side solution, local context. With food insecurity as a push and pull factor for conflict, it is well within the African Union (AU) Silencing the Guns campaign.

The Question-and-Answer session began with a question to Dr. Chimimba: How can national policies be linked to international laws to identify gaps between food security and peace and stability? He responded by stating the lacuna between the signing of international agreements and commitments, and its translation to domestication or intra-state policy action/implementation have been sorely lacking. This impedes food security and healthy nutrition on the continent. "How and to what extent have these laws and policies been implemented or operationalised?" is an example of a question he deems important within this context. He then concluded by recommending more congruence between what the countries sign and what they do on the ground. The second question was directed at Ms. Sylvia Akankwasa: What are the structural and legal gaps that has made food security difficult in Africa? From the Ugandan context which she spoke from, lack of awareness and implementation was highlighted. Many youths and citizens are uninformed and not sensitized about existing laws and policies that could be leveraged, as well as lack of implementation of

those laws and policies were noted. Lack of financial resources or commitment from policy makers to operationalise the policies was also mentioned as a major gap.

“What possible scenarios are there to secure food for young and end hunger as part of the AU Agenda 2063, and how has the progress been so far?” Was the question for Mr. Keith Andere. His response began from acknowledging the existence and importance of international and regional frameworks within the scope of the theme, and cited a few examples. He furthered the discussion by stating that securing food for young people must be viewed as a holistic systematic ecosystem in the context of securing food. For instance, 30% of food is lost post-harvest, and this is a huge portion of the harvest and profit for the farmers. Thus, post-harvest processing needs to be more secure. On this premise, he advocated for the need to figure out how such gap is closed such that Africa is not losing post-harvest. In addition to this, he highlighted the need to make policies and the environment more conducive for manufacturing to thrive because it is during the value addition process that we can secure what we are using post-harvest. Acknowledging that the Agenda 2063 is a long time for the present youth, he suggested opportunities that lie in 2030 which may be a more immediate roadmap but still feed into achieving the Agenda 2063. However, more still needs to be done in terms of policies and youth engagement to support the agricultural sector and other related areas. He concluded with the opportunity the AfCFTA bring and highlighted

the issues with cross-border money transfer as a barrier in the context of agriculture when selling products, paying suppliers, receiving payments. This was used as an example to reiterate the point that surrounding pillars of the agricultural sector are equally important for food security on the continent.

The next question for Mr. Keith Andere was, “Technology and innovation is a great enabler in food system could this deepen the technological divide?” While the class divide created by technology and innovation is acknowledged, Mr. Keith noted that is the good and bad tech as some have negative consequences on the earth’s ecosystem which is a threat to food security and human health. Regardless, there is a need to make sure no one is left behind; thus, boosting digital literacy in communities should be prioritised. To achieve this, further collaboration between and among institutions and youth-led organisations is required. Not only that, there is a need to ensure that young people are at the driver’s seat.

Dr. Chimimba responded to “How can we make the agricultural sector attractive to the young people in Africa?”. Indeed, there is hesitance from graduates and young people in going into agriculture. At the root of this is the perception of agriculture as a way of life and not a wealth creating business; meanwhile, there is a lot of incentive in the agricultural sector. To make the sector more attractive, however, focusing on what the youth are already doing is an advantage: this involves the use of technology as many would not be interested in using hand-hoe in digging lands. Within this context, capacity building/development to build expertise is key. He highlighted that there are pockets of institutional arrangements at the continental level within this context for AgriPreneurs. Thus, for effectiveness, he recommended a more

systematic and (women) inclusive approach. The next question was for Ms. Sylvia Akankwasa concerning the impact of fertilisers on land and its implication for land health and food security. In her farm, organic fertilizer is used which she recommends as unarmful

The penultimate question was for Mr. Keith Andre concerning how to solve the youth problem about Start-Up capital in the agricultural sector and use indigenous knowledge for better productivity. Mr. Keith noted that Start-Ups need to be aligned to technological or digital innovations within agriculture. One way to have that is to use technology innovations at community level to address local problem in a local fashion. This is because solving a local problem with local solution is one way to build the responsiveness of Start-Up to global needs. Concerning finances, a holistic approach is required. As AU member states are trying to support via various initiatives and investments, internal funding mechanisms need to also be built. Youth should be ambassadors of youth-led enterprises, such that they also invest in themselves. Young people should be the first champions to invest in young peoples' agricultural business. Furthermore, the need to translate useful content on the internet to African languages would be helpful. This involves taking advantage of emerging techs like Artificial Intelligence (AI) to translate existing knowledge, and collect, preserve and exploit indigenous knowledge for a localised benefit in native languages.

Dr. Chimimba responded to the last question: How can we strengthen the voices of youth to participate more in the policies around food security around agriculture? Youth exclusion in policy processes was acknowledged. However, he advocated for the need for Heads of

Government and those who have the convening power to get governments fully aware of the importance of youth inclusion. Furthermore, activist organisations need to also push their way and appeal for youth's interest. He concluded with a critical point that not everyone would go into agriculture but those who choose to should be supported with incentives, and be included in policies and policy consideration. A call was then made to all participants that they have a role to play in this regard.

- **Session 2: Youth Innovation for Sustainable Peace and Security in Africa**

H.E. Mr Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Spécial Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Horn of Africa moderated this session. In his opening, he thanked TANA Secretariat and UNESCO for organizing this timely meeting on one of humanity's existential concerns in close collaboration with the institute for peace and security studies (IPSS), Addis Ababa University. He acknowledged the alignment of this meeting with the United Nations (UN) ultimately towards a future that is strong, safe and fair for all. He further congratulated the participants and reiterated the importance of the discourse by highlighting the state of food insecurity in Africa, especially in terms of its links with climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. Climate change continues to affect the food systems and food security, and the pandemic worsened the condition. The positive role of youth was acknowledged to upturn the negative impact, and resilience. He also reemphasised the question concerning unemployment. He went on to

introduce the first speaker, Mr. Romilson Silveira, President, Pan African Youth Network for Culture of Peace /PAYNCOP/, who was not present at the time due to technical issues. The next speaker, Ms. Chioniso Michelle Murinda, a FemWise member and delegate of the World Bank Group Youth Summit, with amazing skills and experience.

The speaker began with salutations and dived right in to highlight the increase in youth population and challenges they face. This particularly concerns empowerment and employability. To address this, a multistakeholder approach was recommended. Having critiqued the political environment that naturalised youth in a direction that may threaten food systems. Having emphasised the importance of the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, she advocated for youth inclusion at all levels in which political and economic participation of youth is allowed. This, according to Ms. Michelle, will have a direct influence on how youths can be instrumental in food systems and food sustainability because it would provoke more innovation for food systems and food sustainability.

Furthermore, the infrastructural gap was discussed especially in terms of energy and transportation. First, lack of or limited energy sources (electricity) limits food production and the productivity of food systems. Such developmental approach is critical; yet, solar energy lacks the required investment for instance. Secondly, distribution in terms of transportation is a problem. This is regarding the safety of roads, especially in insecure or conflict-ridden areas; and lack of roads for efficient food distribution. Reiterating that food systems is beyond agriculture, she argued that the trade modes and regimes and financing are also a major challenge to food security. She also mentioned that Information and Communication Development (ICT) development may also be boosted within the context of food systems. She

also argued in favour of not defining youth by age alone, and stated that transitional group may be more beneficial for food systems and the holistic nature of policies.

Having highlighted that procurement, distribution and consumption in Africa are unsustainable, she brought the issue of Africa as primary producers that is mostly dependent on other climes for production. The dependence on vaccine West for vaccine production was cited as an instance while noting that raw material come from the continent. Also, the continent consists of largely rural areas and the gaps between them and urban centres is unhealthy; hence the need to decentralise these urban centres. In treating youth as key stakeholders, she noted the need to fund youth participation. In essence, make capital available to procure and acquire what is required in terms of resources and skills within the context of the agricultural sector. As she draws towards her conclusion, she discussed the class difference further underlining that youth are not a homogenous group.

In her closing, she recommended the need to create a conducive environment and facilitating youth inclusion in policy processes and youth engagement in the private sector: from the mapping and planning stage to its implementation. The socio-economic environment should improve as well as institutional support to the youths to up-turn the delinquent behaviour of

many youths, especially those who are not interested in activism or revolt but have simply given up on life and waiting to die. Transparency and accountability within the food systems, and enhancing networking across youth at continental level was also mentioned. The moderator's comment highlighted how her presentation brought to fore interrelated issues that may not have been spoken of in discussing food systems, how it presents a dimension of politics as an institution that touches every aspect of society.

The presentation of the next speaker, Mr. Eskender Mulugeta, Founder and Project Director, Food Secured Schools Africa, Ethiopia, was aligned with previous discussions and added that as an agronomist the contention over farmland, food and survival come naturally and cannot be ignored. However, he noted that if the agricultural sector flourishes and it is treated well conflict can be reduced and peace can be more sustainable. He concluded with these key points. First, more practitioners are needed as the absence of forerunners in agricultural wealth is symptomatic of neglect of the sector; second, exchange of good experiences is beneficial and an example was the application of Ugandan models in the school gardens in Ethiopia.

The moderator acknowledged the practicality of Mr. Eskender's presentation, and mentioned his reiteration of the need to move away from toxic politics to one which presents concrete deliverables, and concrete investments in agriculture and food systems and the value chain. He furthered with the link between food, security, land, and how growth potential has been compromised by exclusive politics. Afterwards, the next speaker, Ms. Shila Salim, Sustainable Youth Development, Kenya, was introduced. She started by making the point policies play a very big role in ensuring that you have sustainable and conducive environment for food systems to work and to thrive. This corroborated the views of other presenters with the result of a research led by her organisation involving five counties in Kenya, namely: Kilife, Mabueni,

Machakos, Tichatalata, Mugoma. In this context she made a case for youth inclusion in policy processes: are young people involved in the formulation of these policies? Are they able to understand these policies? What is put in these policies? And are these policies speaking to the young people?

She further stated that social media is a space useful for promoting food systems in this regard. Thus, are we able to integrate the use of social media and food systems to ensure that people understand the role they have in food systems? As food systems and food security cannot be separated. Without food there cannot be strength to lead peace and developmental processes. On this premise, she advocated for greater food accessibility, and affordability, with better nutrition. Her presentation went deeper into stating the need for a consumer-oriented model that has proven expansive in terms in terms of climatic and ecological destruction.

The cost of living and the cost of farming/production for farmers have increased, especially for small scale farmers. This is amidst the lack of right machineries, skill to operate the

available ones, or resources to maintain them. In addition, agriculture has a role to deliver on the leave no one behind agenda and sustainable development cause; hence her emphasis on inclusive and participatory policies. Reiterated the importance of innovation and the digital space, building a favourable political environment, capacity building for youth in terms of public policy, sustainability, affordable production, scrutinizing the commitment made by African leaders, and investments. She also added the need to maximize waste through recycling.

The moderator re-emphasised the need to take agriculture from personal to policy level contribution making agriculture meaningful for the African continent and linking it to the global. Agriculture should be part of the societal developmental and transformative project as an entry point for transformative policies and actions continent wide and of course country by country. The moderator signified the end of the panel session, and introduced the open session for participants.

The first contributor pointed out the need to expose young people to the field where they can acquire the practical hands. This is because the schooling system in African countries does not do enough, even for those who study agriculture. The second contributor focused on the need to make agriculture more attractive, and reimagine youth perceptions of it; and suggested the introduction as a discipline and civic training in school curriculums. The next speaker pointed out the need to have more of such discussions as this, on agriculture; and mentioned the need for intergenerational knowledge transfer, as well as sensitization through media and performative arts. Another participant noted the need to not focus on arable lands to the neglect of animal farming like fisheries. Furthermore, it was noted that young people should also seek information with respect to agriculture and relevant networks with other youths.

Mr. Eskender Mulugeta shared his experience on access to credible market and highlighted the benefits of international banks in the country where he is domiciled, the need to be passionate towards agriculture, knowing which subsector of agriculture to invest in, maximizing digital platforms for networking, and growing food in a subsistence manner to really grasp the potentials in agriculture.

In their closing remarks, the panellists reiterated the importance of agriculture to development and the place of policies towards sustainable food systems, mentorship and intergenerational collaboration, a more responsible approach towards protecting the environment, and aligning agricultural curriculums with climatic patterns. The moderator ended the session and yielded the floor to Ms. Lettie T. Longwe, Interim Director of APSP and Head of Tana Forum Secretariat.

- **Closing Remarks**

Ms. Lettie gave the closing remarks. She appreciated everyone's participation in the forum and captured the key points from the conversation in a summary. She further urged the youths to be proactive by not waiting until they are invited, they need to demand their space



Tana High-Level Forum
on Security in Africa



IPSS



by being active change agents of socioeconomic development themselves. She noted that a lot was drawn from this meeting and made a commitment that IPSS would be more than happy to work with UNESCO in the development of a policy brief on food security and sustainable peace and security as an outcome from this meeting. In her concluding statements she appreciated UNESCO for the partnership, and expressed anticipation for participants to also be part of the 10th Tana Forum where a number of sub themes would be discussed under the overarching theme of managing security threats and building resilience for the Africa that we want.