



# Youth for Growth:

TRANSFORMING ECONOMIES  
THROUGH AGRICULTURE

## GLOBAL COMPANION

Prepared by an Independent Task Force\*

Felix Kwame Yeboah, *Principal Author*

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## Summary

The world is now home to the largest population of young people in history, with over 2.3 billion people—a third of humanity—between the ages of 15 and 34.<sup>1</sup> In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) across Africa and South Asia, a large share of the growing population is comprised of adolescents and young adults.<sup>2</sup> This unprecedented demographic shift creates new pressures for a global food system that is already struggling to deliver food and nutrition security.

World leaders are at a critical juncture. If not managed properly, this rising youth population is a demographic challenge that will push fragile and food insecure nations over the brink. Massively growing youth populations in LMICs already face high unemployment and economic stagnation. If job growth does not keep pace with youth potential and food insecurity remains a severe challenge, the environment is ripe for disillusionment and instability.

However, this rapid increase in the youth population also presents an enormous opportunity. Global demand for agricultural and food products is on the rise as a result of population growth, urbanization, and diet transformation. With proactive programs, innovations, and investment that can meet food and nutrition security demands while supporting job growth, a booming youth population has the potential to transform entire regions, making them more prosperous, stable, and secure.

Government leaders, in close collaboration with the private sector, civil society, universities, and multilateral institutions, must continue to promote broad-based agricultural development as a catalyst for advancing youth livelihoods, while preparing and empowering youth to contribute to that growth themselves. As these surging youth populations come of age, how we meet their needs and aspirations—and how well governments integrate them economically, politically, and socially—will shape our shared future.

\*To learn more about the Council's Global Food and Agriculture Program—and to access the full *Youth for Growth* report—visit [thechicagocouncil.org/globalagdevelopment](http://thechicagocouncil.org/globalagdevelopment).

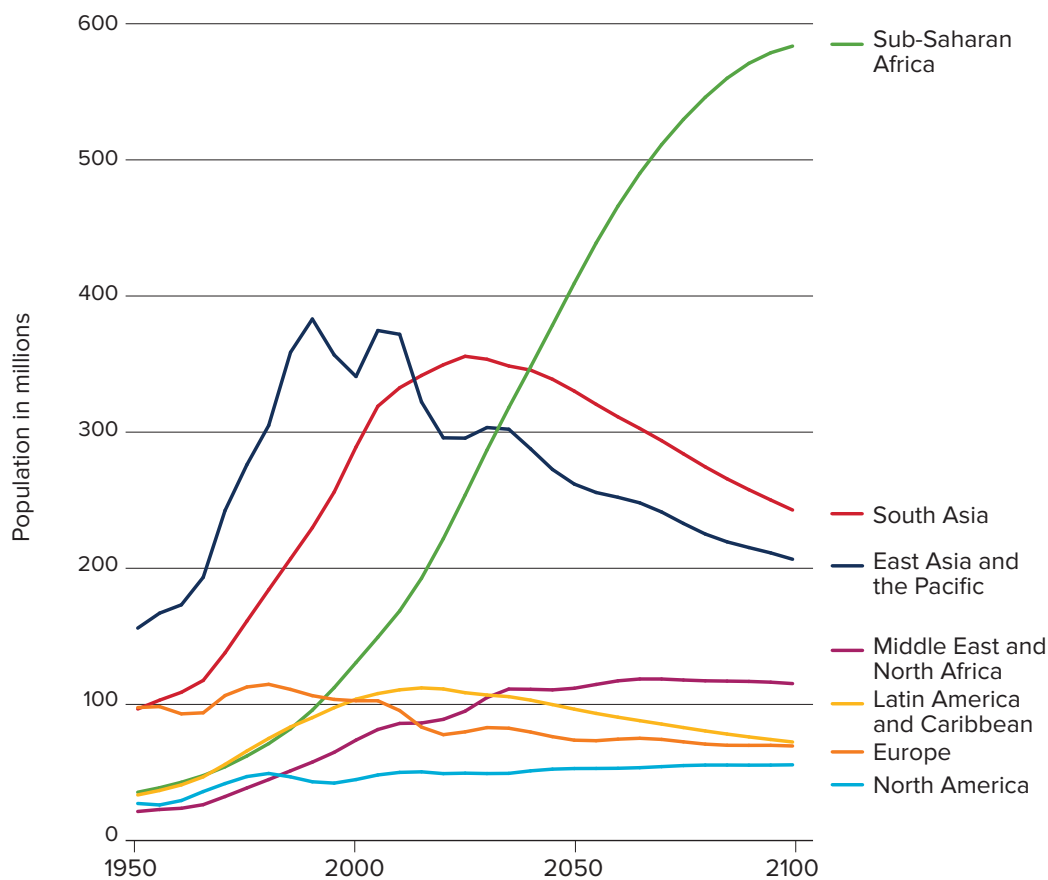
# Global youth populations are exploding, especially in Africa

Nearly 80 percent of the world's 2.3 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 34 reside in LMICs. In India about 1 million people turn 18 every month.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Africa's youth population is expected to double by 2050, with 1 billion people projected to be under 18 years old.<sup>4</sup> Today, more than 60 percent of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is below age 25.<sup>5</sup> Young people in LMICs also constitute a large share of the world's labor force. About 11 million young Africans reach working age each year.<sup>6</sup> By midcentury, a quarter of the world's working age population is expected to reside in Africa.<sup>7</sup>

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## Global youth population trends (age 15 to 24)<sup>8</sup>

Africa's youth population will continue to rise over the next century.



# Population growth is the fastest in regions where threats of food insecurity are the greatest

The regions of the world experiencing a dramatic increase in population are also the areas that are the most prone to food insecurity. Severe food insecurity is most prevalent and rising in SSA, reaching about 27 percent of the population in 2016—almost four times that of any other region. While severe food insecurity is declining as a percentage of the population in Asia, the region still has the largest number of undernourished people.<sup>9</sup> Since young people represent a significantly large share of the population and workforce in LMICs, efforts to promote youth livelihoods are critical to address the food insecurity challenges that these regions face.

## The risks of inaction are significant

Inaction in the face of rapid population growth and food insecurity can lead to social disruption, political instability, migration, and conflict. The Arab Spring in 2011, which toppled governments in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya and sparked political unrest across the Middle East, had its roots in grievances related to high food prices and the lack of job opportunities among young people.<sup>10</sup> Widespread joblessness and dissatisfaction among youth have a destabilizing effect that takes many forms, whether it be piracy off the coast of Soma-

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lia, xenophobia in South Africa, recruitment into terrorist networks, or gang activities in major cities around the world. The global community must engage youth and develop employment opportunities or risk being weakened by widespread instability and new threats to national security.

## Extremism

- ▶ Young people who lack compelling economic opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty are more likely to participate in extremism, piracy, crime, and social unrest.
- ▶ An estimated 40 percent of people who join rebel movements are motivated by a lack of economic opportunity.<sup>11</sup>

## Migration

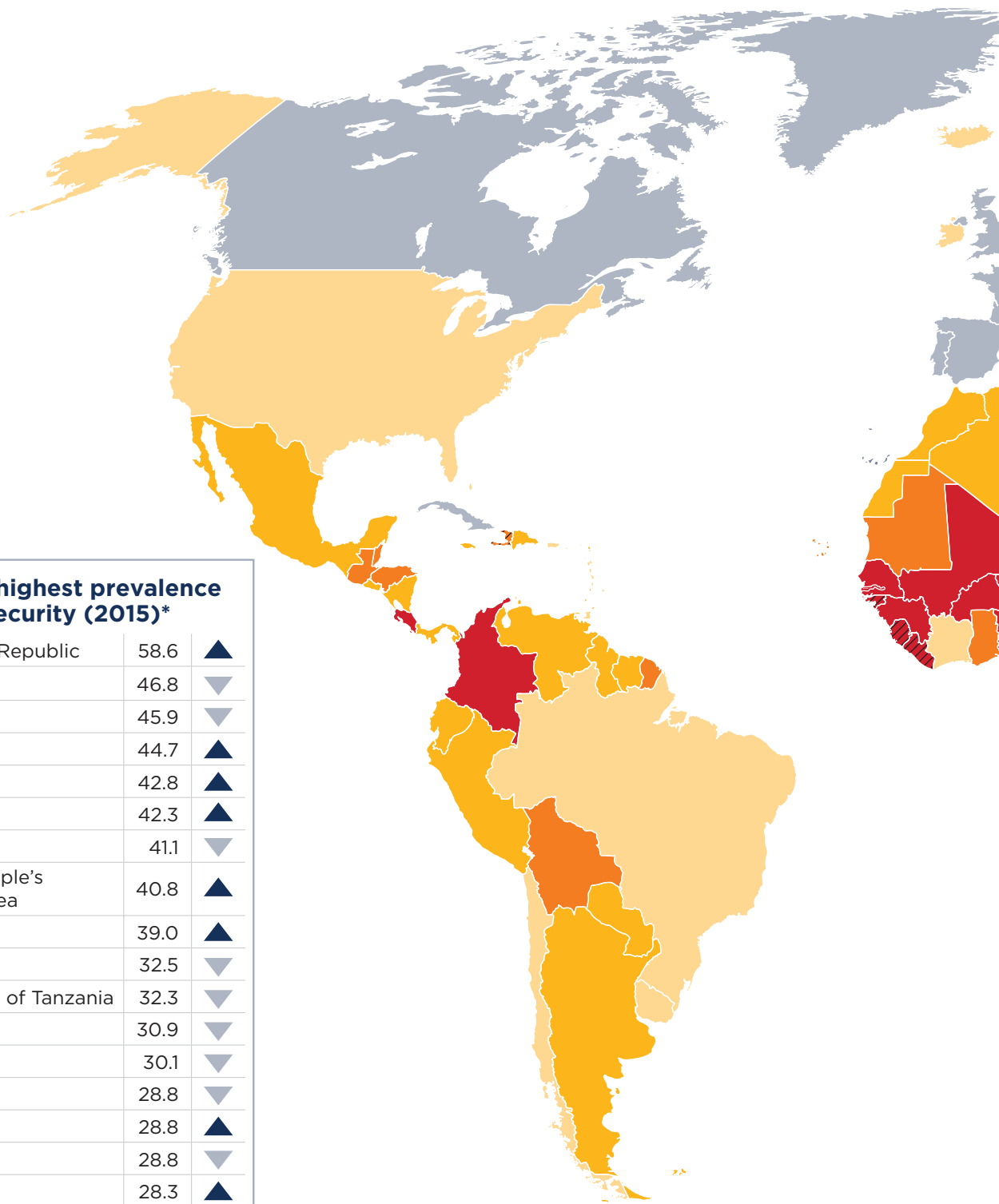
- ▶ Young people are more likely to migrate and constitute a significant share of international movement. Around 70 percent of migrant flows are people younger than 30.<sup>12</sup>
- ▶ Between 2000 and 2010, the net influx of international migrants to Europe, North America, and Oceania reached about 3.1 million per year.<sup>13</sup> This is almost twice as much as the previous decade.
- ▶ Unless measures are put in place to expand economic opportunities and food security in LMICs, many young people will continue to face increased pressure to migrate—even under life-threatening conditions—to Europe and North America in search of better prospects.

# Countries with highest prevalence of youth (age 24 and below) and food insecurity, as percent of total population<sup>14</sup>

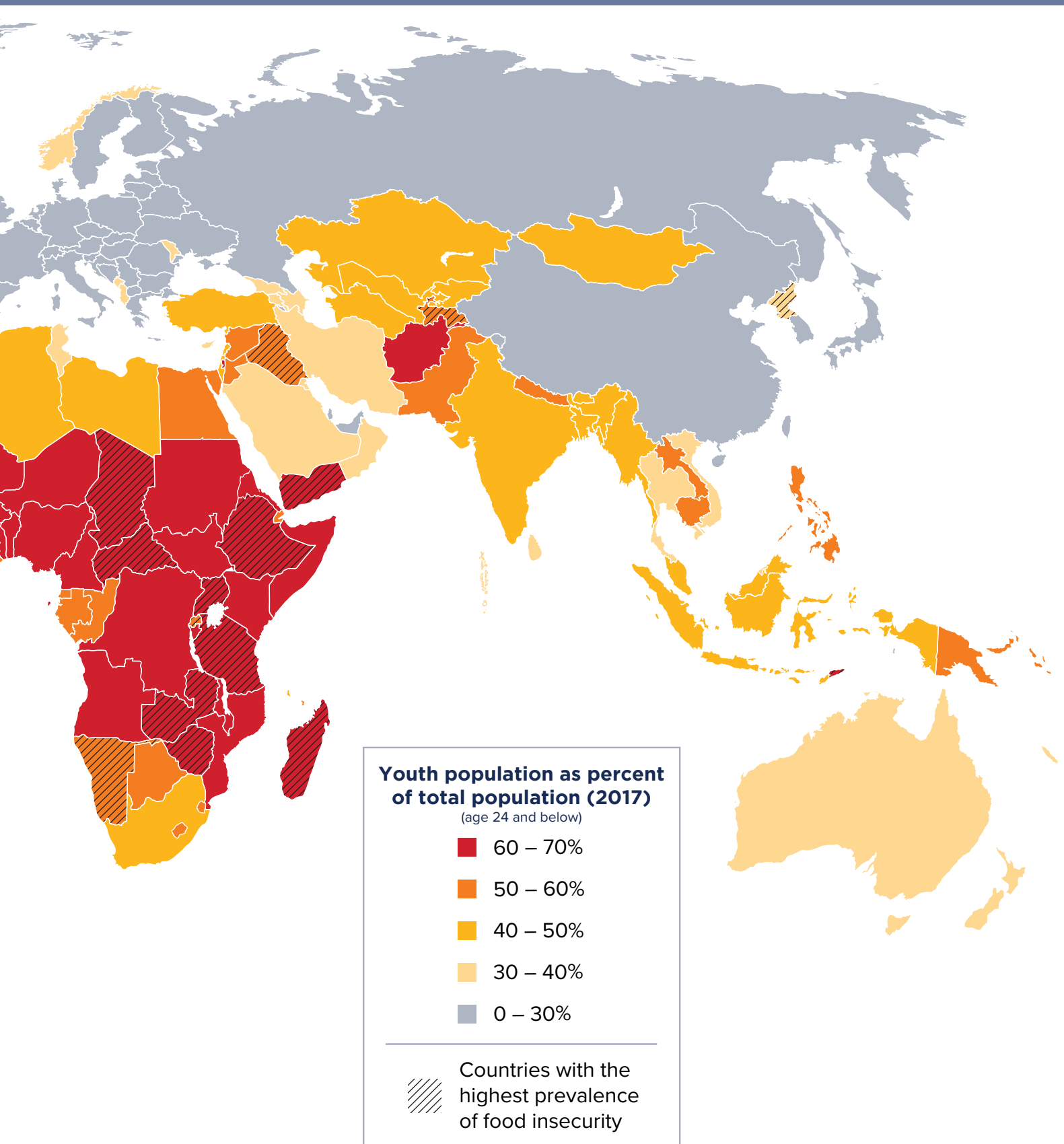
1	Central African Republic	58.6	▲
2	Haiti	46.8	▼
3	Zambia	45.9	▼
4	Zimbabwe	44.7	▲
5	Liberia	42.8	▲
6	Madagascar	42.3	▲
7	Rwanda	41.1	▼
8	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	40.8	▲
9	Uganda	39.0	▲
10	Chad	32.5	▼
11	United Republic of Tanzania	32.3	▼
12	Sierra Leone	30.9	▼
13	Tajikistan	30.1	▼
14	Ethiopia	28.8	▼
15	Namibia	28.8	▲
16	Yemen	28.8	▼
17	Guinea-Bissau	28.3	▲
18	Congo	28.2	▼
19	Iraq	27.8	▼
20	Timor-Leste	26.9	▼

▲ Rising food insecurity ▼ Falling food insecurity

\*Change over 10-year period (from 2004-2006 to 2014-2016). Does not reflect surges in food security that occurred in 2017.  
Note: While most current youth population data is from 2017, most current food insecurity data is from 2015. Data on prevalence of food insecurity unavailable for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.







## Stunted economic growth due to malnutrition

- ▶ The *Global Nutrition Report* estimates that SSA and South Asia each lose about 11 percent of gross national product every year due to the cumulative impact of malnutrition and stunting.<sup>15</sup>
- ▶ Studies estimate that 43 percent of children under the age of five in LMICs are at risk of never achieving their full cognitive potential.<sup>16</sup>
- ▶ About one in every three children in SSA and South Asia is stunted. Studies have found that stunted children spend less time in school, learn less when they are in the classroom, and earn 20 to 40 percent less as adults.<sup>17</sup>
- ▶ A transformed agriculture sector can increase economic opportunities for young people and help minimize recruitment into terrorist and criminal organizations that threaten security. It can also reduce the severity of the global migration crisis and promote food and nutrition security and social stability in politically precarious regions.

## The agrifood system—a sector of opportunity for economic growth and job creation

Agricultural growth is paramount to youth employment and to reduce food insecurity and poverty. Likewise, engaging youth in agriculture is necessary in order to address the myriad issues facing the sector.

### Increased demand for food and agricultural products offers an opportunity for investment and job creation

Global demand for food and agricultural products is on the rise as a result of population growth, urbanization, and diet transformation from income growth in some geographies and for some demographics. Investments to help jump-start the agricultural sector in LMICs and to restructure agricultural and food production systems to meet food demand locally have the potential to create jobs and improve lives for young people in areas where they reside.

### Agriculture is the largest employer of the youth labor force

The agrifood sector is already the single largest employer of the labor force and young people, particularly in rural areas. This will remain so for the foreseeable future, particularly in LMICs. However, in these regions productivity and earnings in agriculture are currently too low to provide a decent livelihood for the millions of people employed on farms and too low to stimulate new jobs beyond the farm. Therefore, strategies that increase the productivity and profitability of agriculture offer the most powerful means to improve youth livelihoods, promote economic growth, and achieve food security.

### Agricultural productivity will significantly determine the rate of job growth in the off-farm economy

Because of its strong multiplier effects on the rest of the economy, a flourishing agriculture sector will spur job growth in the off-farm sector. Sustained and inclusive agricultural productivity growth is widely accepted as an important catalyst for economic transformation, increasing incomes and off-farm employment. Investment in agriculture is also cost effective and has proven to effectively reduce poverty more than twice as much as investment in other economic sectors.

## Rural youth migration<sup>18</sup>

Youth populations have been migrating with increased frequency in the last several decades. According to UNICEF, the number of young migrants increased from 23.2 million to 28.2 million globally between 1990 and 2013. The motivations for migrating are varied and depend on many circumstances—conflict and food insecurity among them. But with young people ages 15 to 24 accounting for an eighth of the global migrant working population, the search for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities is undoubtedly a top factor.

The outflow of youth from rural communities is both an opportunity and a challenge. Young migrants who find gainful employment in urban areas or abroad often send remittances back to families. This can help communities improve sanitation, public health, education, and agricultural investment through a new, stable outside source of income. Yet remittances can also create greater income inequality within these communities. Similarly, while

reduced person-to-land ratios from migration outflows can improve environmental health, lessen job competition, and increase availability of land, they can also mean greater work burdens for those left behind.

When young people migrate and never return, their home communities experience a brain drain as well as a lost opportunity to develop new norms, values, and knowledge from young people's experiences in other communities. Youth who leave may also have difficulty finding work, especially in urban areas, due to competitive job markets, social exclusion, and vulnerability to radicalization or human rights violations.

The challenges faced by rural youth highlight the need for greater support to ensure either the availability of jobs in their home regions or the skills, training, and connections needed to succeed in larger centers of employment.



Credit: REUTERS/Akintunde Akinleye

# A youth-inclusive agricultural transformation agenda is essential

Agricultural transformation is an indispensable step toward building broad-based economic growth and improving food security and youth livelihoods in LMICs. However, this transformation will not occur spontaneously. It will require supportive policies and pragmatic investments in strategies that effectively address constraints in the agricultural sector and that give special attention to young people as a crucial part of the solution.

If properly equipped, young people can be vital change agents to facilitate the agricultural transformation process. Young people are natural adopters of technology, making them more receptive to innovations necessary to transform the agricultural sector. Also, youth make up a large share of the labor force in most LMICs and represent a significant source of labor for agricultural activities. Finally, with a longer time horizon, young people are inherently well positioned to serve as stewards of a sustainable, resilient agri-food system.

A youth-inclusive agricultural transformation agenda is essential 1) to ensure that agricultural growth and development delivers on its promise to provide viable livelihoods for youth across the agriculture and food sector and beyond and 2) to empower youth to help contribute to the transformation. Incorporating

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the particular needs and circumstances of youth is therefore necessary when designing and implementing solutions to the challenges facing the agrifood sector. At the same time, systemic challenges to the agrifood sector must be addressed holistically if such a youth-inclusive agenda is to be achieved and sustained over time. A youth-inclusive agricultural transformation agenda therefore seeks to:

- ▶ address overall social, economic, and biophysical limits to broad-based agricultural productivity growth to generate the income and employment multipliers for the benefit of all social groups, including young people;
- ▶ harness and maximize the youth-specific strengths for the agricultural transformation process (e.g., areas where youth engagement may have comparative advantage, such as the use of information and communication technology [ICT]);
- ▶ address youth-specific constraints limiting young people's engagement in agriculture and their ability to build successful agricultural enterprises (e.g., cultural and social norms limiting young people's access to resources); and
- ▶ empower young people to effectively participate and share in the formulation and implementation of agricultural transformation strategies. This is necessary to ensure the transformation agenda aligns with the future that young people envision for themselves.

# Elements of a youth-inclusive agricultural transformation agenda

Creating a youth-inclusive agricultural transformation agenda will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, and civil society. National and local governments in LMICs that are experiencing surging youth populations have a decisive role to play and must be an integral part of all efforts to secure youth livelihoods. Governments set the rules for private-sector engagement in the economy through policies, legal frameworks, and investments in security, infrastructure, and education. Governments also help to institutionalize civil society interventions, which promote long-term sustainability. Sound policymaking and dedicated leadership are imperative to unlock the potential of rising youth populations, laying the foundation for economic success and stability worldwide.

## Stimulate job creation through broad-based agricultural productivity growth and an improved business environment

Sustained improvement in youth employment requires measures that promote job-rich, inclusive economic growth. Without overall improvement in the rate of job growth, youth-targeted employment interventions will only displace other people from their jobs. Such displacements will reduce the net benefits and cost effectiveness of the interventions.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, with young people between 15 and 34 constituting more than half of the labor force in most LMICs, any interventions focused on addressing the structural and policy constraints to overall employment will automatically benefit young people.

Because the economies in most LMICs are agricultural-based, increasing agricultural productivity growth and strengthening the linkages between agriculture and the rest of the economy through agro-based manufacturing and services are critical to income growth and job creation. It is essential that strategies promoting agricultural productivity growth are designed to allow the millions of smallholder farmers

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to contribute to the economic transition. This would help ensure broad-based and inclusive agricultural growth with greater multiplier effects on the rest of the economy. Specific actions to promote broad-based productivity growth and an improved business environment may vary across countries but will include the following:

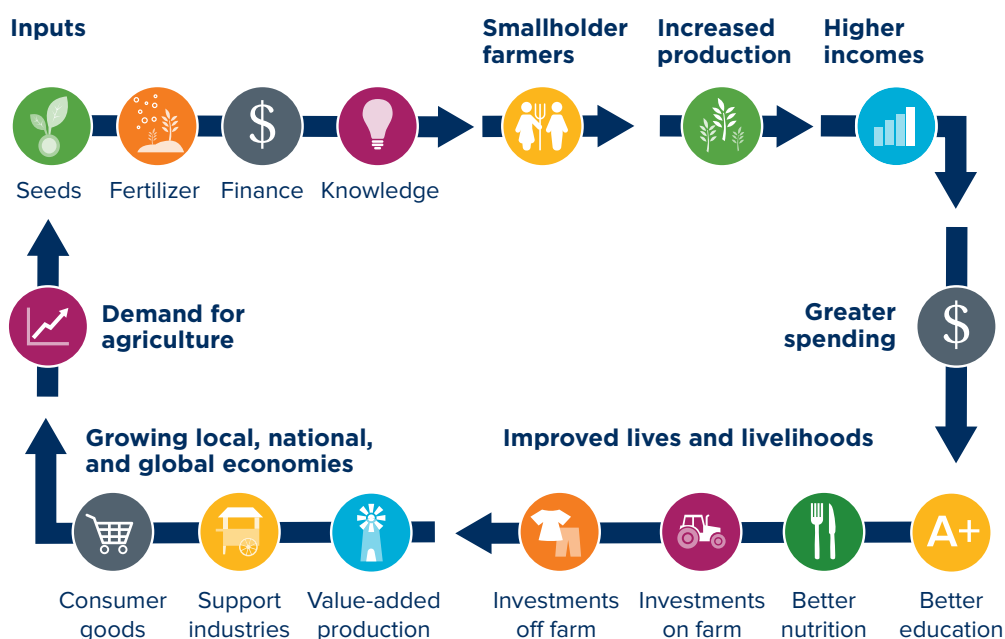
- ▶ Invest in agricultural research, institutional capacity building, extension systems, and infrastructure;
- ▶ Improve access to productive services (finance, insurance, and markets);
- ▶ Promote diversification opportunities for high-value crops;
- ▶ Improve the business climate (regulatory environment) to foster private-sector participation and investment;
- ▶ Invest in critical infrastructure in secondary towns and cities and build links to urban areas to make secondary cities attractive destinations for private firms.



## Access to inputs breaks the subsistence cycle

When 65 percent of impoverished working people earn their living through agriculture, investments to make their work more productive can transform entire economies.

**Sustainable employment loop**—Sustained agricultural productivity growth arising from access to improved inputs and agronomic practices increases outcomes.



Source: Illustration by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs

## Empower and prepare young people for the labor market (human capital development)

Tapping into the potential of surging youth populations requires strategic, long-term investment in human capital as well as increased access to productive services. Young people must be nourished and educated to have a strong foundation to succeed and to take advantage of opportunities in the agrifood sector and beyond.

In an era of transformative developments in ICT, high-quality education and skills are indispensable for securing employment, whether as a self-employed farmer, an employee of a company, or an off-farm entrepreneur. The future labor market is expected to be knowledge and technology intensive, demanding a range of technical, business, and “soft” behavioral skills that go beyond what educational and training systems in LMICs are currently delivering.<sup>20</sup> Successful farmers, entrepreneurs, and wage workers of the future will need significantly upgraded education and skills. Educated and highly skilled individuals can more easily adopt and use improved technologies and are more inclined to take advantage of opportunities to increase their incomes. Low levels of education are associated with low skills and earnings and could hinder overall economic transformation.<sup>21</sup>

## Soil degradation hinders agricultural development<sup>22</sup>

Soil degradation and poor soil health pose a major threat to agricultural production and food security on a global scale. Soil degradation decreases agricultural productivity by reducing soil quality, stripping the soil of water, organic matter, and nutrients. In addition, degraded soils that are unable to retain water contribute to increased soil erosion and a risk of floods and runoff, causing further destruction of agricultural lands, the pollution of waterways, and the decline of fish populations. It is estimated that worldwide the productive capacity of some regions has been halved as a result of soil erosion.

Exacerbating this issue, rising land scarcity across the developing world is forcing many

farmers into continuous cropping, which restricts options for crop rotation or sustainable soil management practices to improve soil quality. These practices are rapidly depleting soil micronutrients and organic carbons, with deleterious effects on yields and returns from farming. Without an effective policy response, soil degradation could undermine future agricultural productivity gains and weaken the sector's ability to create jobs for young people. The future of agriculture and its contribution to youth livelihoods will depend on how quickly this trend could be reversed through sustainable intensification, including effective soil and land management practices, water conservation, and integrated pest management.



Credit: REUTERS/Sukree Sukplang

## Effective youth entrepreneurship programs<sup>23</sup>

Enabling youth to become entrepreneurs is a complex but necessary step in successful economic transformation. Programs to help young people become entrepreneurs in the agriculture sector in LMICs are already making a difference.

One notable example is the Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment (ENABLE) youth program developed by the African Development Bank. The program trains young entrepreneurs operating within agricultural value chains—agripreneurs, as they are called—through incubation units. It then provides successful graduates with business development and finance assistance to support new enterprises. In addition, the African Development Bank has sponsored the African Youth Agripreneur Forum, a platform for “aggregating agripreneurs across Africa and escalating the impact of their activities.”

Another program of note is Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise (STRYDE), a youth development program by TechnoServe in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation. STRYDE includes three months of in-

tensive training in entrepreneurial and soft skills, followed by a nine-month program that includes business mentoring and counseling, employment linkages, and linkages to financial institutions. The program also uses business plan competitions and job fairs to help STRYDE graduates. An impact assessment of the first phase of the project reveals that 54 percent of STRYDE graduates are currently running micro- and small enterprises, 14 percent are engaged in farming, 21 percent have found wage employment, and 9 percent have returned to school.

Most of these incubator programs are in the initial stages of implementation and have not yet undergone independent evaluation. It will be important to track participants in agribusiness incubator programs over time to learn how many survive and thrive as agripreneurs (and whether their enterprises are profitable and sustainable), how many workers (particularly youth) they employ, and whether there are positive spillovers and verified effects in their communities.



Investments in human capital development must also take into account the needs of young people from early childhood through adulthood. Access to healthy food, nutrition education, and health services is tied to the future productivity of the labor force and must also be addressed for youth education and livelihood initiatives to be successful. Empowering and preparing young people for this rapidly transforming labor market of the 21st century requires the following key actions:

- ▶ Improve access to healthy food, nutrition education, and health services for the early stages of children's development;
- ▶ Expand access to education;
- ▶ Reform educational curricula to reflect labor market realities and address skills mismatch;
- ▶ Introduce agricultural science and business in the curriculum;
- ▶ Promote youth entrepreneurship;
- ▶ Modify educational approaches to impart skills needed for productive employment.

## **Improve conditions for responsive youth employment policymaking**

The success of youth employment programming also depends on the extent to which interventions are grounded in the evolving realities of the young people they serve. Systems for understanding and adequately responding to the changing needs of young people must be created. Some measures for doing this include the following:

- ▶ Invest in actionable research on labor market conditions;
- ▶ Strengthen youth voice in policy dialogue and program design;
- ▶ Educate the public to help reform social norms that limit youth livelihood development;
- ▶ Recognize that youth are a heterogeneous group of people and that a diversified strategy is needed.



# Global leadership for youth-inclusive food security<sup>24</sup>

Creating a global, youth-inclusive food and nutrition strategy requires a concerted effort between global partners. National governments must work closely with bilateral and multilateral partners to keep food and nutrition security high on the global agenda. Priority should be placed on setting achievable yet ambitious targets for youth engagement in agricultural development for the short, medium, and long term.

The G7 and G20 summits in particular provide a forum for global leaders to build on their previous commitments, incorporating new dimensions that reflect current demographic trends and strategic priorities. In 2017, under Italian leadership, the G7 Summit prioritized food and nutrition security. This resulted in particularly impactful financial commitments from both public and private sources for interventions in the first 1,000 days, from pregnancy through the first two years of a child's life. Under German government leadership, the G20 Summit emphasized a number of issues related to food and nutrition security, particularly elevating the importance of youth in rural areas as critical to a prosperous, well-nourished, and safe world over the long term.

Canadian leadership at the upcoming G7 Summit and Argentinian leadership at the G20 Summit should build on these agendas and commit to establishing the essential building blocks of long-term peace, security, and economic opportunity. But it is not just the G7 and G20 that are needed to make a difference. Leadership is needed at the local, national, and multilateral levels.

## The Berlin Charter

- A call to action from Germany's 2017 G20 presidency, the Berlin Charter presents a modern vision for rural development guided by the creation of opportunities for young people in the rural world.
- The charter was developed in collaboration with academia, civil society, the private sector, members of the public, and—critically—rural youth from around the world.
- Finalized at the One World – No Hunger conference in Berlin, the charter provides a call to action for the G20 and the world to lead a youth-centric development agenda that drives opportunities for rural young people globally.

## Startup India

- Launched in 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Startup India is a government-led initiative designed to create a nurturing environment for start-ups across India by simplifying the regulatory and tax burdens; providing funding, business development advice, and growth incentives; and leveraging industry-academia partnerships to help new start-ups through the incubation phase.
- The Indian government's goal is to establish more than 75 start-up hubs across the country—focused on the national and state levels—with assistance provided by national research institutions and the Federal Bank of India.



- This ambitious initiative is in its early stages, but it has already registered more than 30,000 start-ups through the Startup India Hub and has drawn the attention of global investors like SoftBank and Google.

### **The African Union's Year of African Youth**

- The African Union (AU) declared 2017 as the year of "Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth," recognizing the need to invest in the continent's youth to drive forward development for the next generation.
- Investing in youth is seen as part of the AU's mission to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and its own Agenda 2063, which seeks to realize the "Africa We Want" through concerted investment and development over the next 50 years.
- Through a consultative process with stakeholders, the AU has created a road map focused on fostering employment and entrepreneurship, education and skills development, health and well-being, and rights, governance, and youth employment.



Credit: Xuame Olleros/RTI International

# Renewed and refocused global investment in agriculture can catalyze youth engagement and entrepreneurship

Strong leadership, smart investments, effective global cooperation, and sound policy choices will help fight hunger and malnutrition as well as strengthen a nation's security. The leadership of Argentina should be applauded for focusing the G20 on creating a more sustainable food system and considering prosperous routes for young people navigating the future of work. Fundamental to this strategy must be an emphasis

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on global food and nutrition security and the role of agriculture and food as a driving force shaping the future of work for large and growing youth populations around the world.

For many years, the G20 has recognized the importance of global food security, and indeed, under the German presidency in 2017, there was an emphasis on rural youth livelihoods. There is an opportunity for even greater leadership, especially within the themes laid out for this year. As an overarching step, the G20 could revisit and update the 2013 Food Security and Nutrition Framework, which supports demand-driven economic opportunities and income generation for smallholder farmers and youth through increases in productivity and market access. However, there is an opportunity for more significant G20 leadership, particularly in recognizing the important role agriculture must play in economic development, employment, and reducing poverty. Agriculture could be a solution to the challenges faced by rising, underemployed youth populations, but this is not an automatic outcome. Directed programming, a coordinated strategy, and prioritizing smart investment at the global level are critical. These initiatives can guide and underpin work being done at the local, state, and national levels.

## **Recommendation 1: The G20 should acknowledge the unique challenges youth face in regard to food insecurity. The nations of the G20 should pledge to align programming with a youth-inclusive strategy across the agrifood sector.**

Food and nutrition security are inextricably linked to national security and stability. Because of their vulnerability in the face of challenging socioeconomic circumstances, young people are particularly susceptible to migration, extremism, economic instability, and acts of civil discontent. Food security is crucial in mitigating these risks. Many nations acknowledge the need to unlock the economic potential of citizens in developing nations through efforts targeted at land tenure, access to financing, infrastructure improvements, and the promotion of an enabling environment. Youth-inclusive strategies integrated into all domestic programming is critical to ensuring the future economic security and prosperity of developing nations. Agriculture is a key industry that is ripe for innovation, and the G20 should continue to recognize that bold and smart investments in agriculture and food security will lead to increased regional stability and economic prosperity.

The Berlin Charter, a joint call to action developed under the 2017 German G20 presidency, should be considered an important reference document outlining the potential for leadership and investment among G20 countries in regions of the world with large rural youth populations. The call to action within this document provides excellent building blocks for a significant effort within the G20 going forward.

**Recommendation 2: The G20 should create an additional engagement group, mirroring the models of the T20 and B20, to incorporate insight from agricultural research universities, including land-grant institutions.**

Prominent universities from all G20 countries should be invited to participate in order to bring a diverse group of voices together. Universities are the backbone of both research and public knowledge in the majority of countries. Their expertise and years of experience would bring an important historical foundation and potentially innovative and unique solutions. Strong and sustained long-term investment in agricultural research and development (R&D) is a fundamental building block of agricultural transformation and is therefore essential to the health, resilience, and productivity of the food system the world over. This includes the development of networks for the dissemination of this critical research to farmers, agriculturalists, and the public. R&D is directly responsible for building the intellectual capacity of youth on and off the farm.

**Recommendation 3: G20 member countries should recommit and reconfirm dedication to supporting global agricultural research via the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).**

The CGIAR has played a critical role in advancing food security globally and protecting countries from the shared global threat of pests and diseases that move across regions without respect for borders. Nearly 60 percent of cropland used for food production globally is planted with improved varieties that utilize germ-plasm from one of the approximately 7,250 varieties developed with CGIAR research. Independent analysis estimates that every dollar invested in the CGIAR system's research generates a \$17 return.<sup>25</sup> Returns from these investments range from reductions in poverty to greater crop disease resistance to productivity increases. For every dollar invested in CGIAR research, \$9 worth of additional food is grown in developing countries.<sup>26</sup> As a global body of key nations, the G20 must continue to commit to building this coordinated research capacity.

**Recommendation 4: The G20 should place nutrition security at the center of efforts to create a sustainable food future and a strong future workforce.**

The G20 Food Security and Nutrition Framework, created at the request of the 2013 G20 Leaders' Declaration, does not appropriately address the dramatic impact malnutrition has on the global population. Stunted children become stunted adults, and this leads to stunted economies. The average country's GDP per cap-

*The G20 should update its framework to reflect the outsized impact this issue has on populations and the new dual challenges countries are facing of undernutrition and obesity.*

ita is 7 percent lower than it would have been if none of its current workers had been stunted in childhood. In Africa and South Asia, the average is even higher at 9 to 10 percent.<sup>27</sup> This cognitive and physical stunting limits the opportunities for youth and young adults. They are not prepared for a competitive, globalized world, and this creates an intergenerational cycle of both malnutrition and poverty. The G20 should update its framework to reflect the outsized impact this issue has on populations and the new dual challenges countries are facing of undernutrition and obesity.

**Recommendation 5: The presidency of the G20 should create an annual youth summit within the Y20 engagement group focused on agricultural education and technical exchanges.**

While the Y20 creates an impressive opportunity for youth to engage with the G20, it is equally as critical that the dynamic young people engaging in the process should also have the opportunity to interact with each other. The creation of a Y20 youth summit, hosted by the rotating presidency of the G20, would be an unparalleled opportunity for international youth to be exposed to new and innovative ideas from around the globe. In addition to agricultural education, the promotion of youth entrepreneurship is important for sustainable youth livelihoods. The G20 should play a leadership role in supporting the future generation of talent through innovative, experiential entrepreneurship opportunities and the development of entrepreneurial skills designed for the needs of industry.

**Recommendation 6: The next generation of talent must be supported by promoting emerging hubs of youth entrepreneurship, appropriate digital infrastructure, and an enabling environment for business.**

In order to create a thriving and employed youth population that can survive in a competitive globalized world, countries need to have several building blocks in place. First, the population needs to have the skills to succeed. Supporting the development of a dynamic and prosperous next generation will require new and innovative techniques. Skills training must be complemented with access to critical resources. Mentorship support, technical training, risk mitigation tools, and physical “hubs” with access to professional services are all needed, but access to potential investors is also needed. Because all entrepreneurs need a similar basic package, incubators and accelerators have become a popular model for supporting entrepreneurship development. The G20 should coordinate with and support the work being done by organizations

*Supporting the development of a dynamic and prosperous next generation will require new and innovative techniques.*

such as the World Bank and African Development Bank. The World Bank is currently working with FINTRAC to build business incubators in Africa based on successful models in Silicon Valley. In order to be effective, policies and initiatives should target the needs and desires that young entrepreneurs identify.

Second, countries must have the infrastructure to support these entrepreneurs, especially those in rural areas. Rural access to digital information in the form of mobile phone and internet connectivity will be critical for prosperity. Without concerted efforts, rural areas—where the majority of people are employed in agriculture and off-farm activities—will be among the last to come online. Delayed access to internet resources for the agricultural community will have a dramatic impact on the development of food systems. The G20 should encourage and support countries’ efforts to build their digital infrastructure by sharing best practices and innovative financing models.

Third, once these entrepreneurs come online in both rural and urban areas, there must be an appropriate business environment for them to succeed and grow from small- to medium-sized businesses. The G20 is uniquely positioned to provide guidance on the development of an appropriate enabling environment for emerging economies to mirror.



# Endnotes

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