

CL 174/3 - Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25

Information Note - November 2023

Office of Youth and Women (OYW)

1. This Information Note elaborates on the proposal presented in the Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 to establish an Office of Youth and Women to strengthen FAO's capacity to better serve its Members through advocating for youth and women.¹ The Office will help ensure that youth and women act as conduits both internally, supporting women and youth career enrichment, and externally, by gathering innovative ideas and approaches from youth and women within the FAO mandate.
2. As an Office, it has a cross-cutting function within the Organization - working in close collaboration with Divisions, which house the specific technical and professional expertise of FAO, as well as with Decentralized Offices - to ensure that the important topics of youth and women continue to be mainstreamed across the Organization.²
3. The Office will take forward and further institutionalize the work of the FAO Youth Committee and the FAO Women's Committee which have been operating and delivering since 2020, but without a structural home in the Organization. The Youth Committee was established with the dual objectives of empowering youth and fostering a more youthful and dynamic FAO, and the FAO Women's Committee was established to further support an organizational culture that is gender equal, inclusive and that reflects the diverse and energetic nature of FAO's female workforce.
4. Building on the work of the Women's Committee, the Office will continue, *inter alia*, to: provide a "safe space" to discuss topics affecting women in the Organization, such as gender parity, sexual harassment, and parental leave provisions; promote advocacy, communication, innovation and outreach through regular dialogue forums to better connect female colleagues around the globe, exchange experiences on specific themes of common interest, and learn from successes from FAO and other organizations in empowering women in the workplace and beyond; and strengthen visible leadership and accountability of managers for gender mainstreaming through its "She Matters" initiative geared at fostering transformational leadership for women's empowerment and the welfare of female staff at all levels of the Organization.
5. Building on the work of the Youth Committee, the Office will continue to actively work to enhance youth participation, engagement and development and learning initiatives within FAO through focused initiatives, including: empowerment of young professionals within the Organization, with a special focus on fostering development and learning opportunities; promoting a Mentorship Programme to cultivate young talent, advance workplace inclusivity and provide employees with enriching professional experiences while promoting excellence; enhancing the onboarding experience for new FAO colleagues by providing practical information for staff members, consultants, volunteers, fellows and interns joining the Organization; and organizing learning sessions to inspire participants with insights on innovation, technology and sustainable development in the realms of food and agriculture.

¹ CL 174/3, paragraphs 23-26

² Other examples of Offices include the Office of SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs, and the Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment.

6. The Office will also engage with relevant global initiatives, and UN and other partners and stakeholders, further enhancing the advocacy for, and engagement of, youth and women in agrifood systems. The Office will work closely with the FAO technical divisions that coordinate the implementation of the FAO Policy on Gender Equality and the Rural Youth Action Plan and related programmes and initiatives, as well as with relevant Programme Priority Area teams including PPA BL1: *Gender Equality and Rural Women's Empowerment* which seeks to ensure women's equal rights, access to and control over resources, services, technologies, institutions, economic opportunities and decision-making, and eliminate discriminatory laws and practices, through gender-responsive policies, strategies, programmes and legal frameworks.

7. Global youth engagement in agrifood systems will be channeled through outreach activities of the World Food Forum (WFF) Global Youth Forum – a youth-led global network of partners that aims to empower young people everywhere to actively shape agrifood systems while achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a better food future for all. The WFF-Global Youth Forum acts as a major youth platform in global food governance and serves as a global think tank that fosters youth-led solutions in innovation, science and technology. It features a range of interactive events, networks and content platforms organized around four thematic tracks: (a) youth action – which empowers and connects young agents of change to spark global dialogues and galvanize transformative actions towards a sustainable global agrifood systems; (b) innovation lab – which inspires innovation for sustainable development in support of ending hunger and transforming our agrifood systems, through global competition and education to spark behavioral change; (c) education – which works with schools and youth groups worldwide to call on youth to take action and become food champions; and (d) culture – which brings together the worlds of youth through the universal language of culture to inspire hope and incite action to end world hunger and transform our agrifood systems.

8. The Office will be staffed with one director, four professional posts, and two general service posts, entailing a total additional cost of USD 1.5 million (Chapter 5).^{3,4}

³ USD 0.5 million approved in the Programme of Work and Budget 2024-25 for the World Food Forum (C 2023/3, paragraph 72 k) is also allocated to this Office.

⁴ To balance the net increase in budgeted posts, an equivalent number of posts have been identified for abolition. In those units, the work is transitioning to more flexible staffing arrangements through the reprogramming of 80% of the equivalent resources as non-post resources.