

GCSAYN First Annual Forum (GAF-I) 2026

Key themes of 2026 GAF-I:

Sustainability through efficient use of resources and climate-smart practices and Technologies; Digital tools and literacy, work for creating access and capacity as foundational for smallholder farmers, women and youth in CSA action; Innovative approaches to increase youth and women's employment in food systems with green practices and outcomes.

11-12 August 2026, Nairobi, Kenya

Communiqué of the GCSAYN First Annual Forum (GAF-I) 2026

INTRODUCTION

The Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network Global (GCSAYN) organized the First Annual Forum (GAF-I) from 11 to 12 August 2026 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Forum registered 323 participants with 150 attendees in person and 125 online comprising of young people, government representatives, development partners, academia, research institutions, farmers, technical experts, civil society, private-sector actors and other stakeholders from Africa and beyond.

Ambassador Mussie Hailu, GCSAYN Board Co-Chair, Ethiopia, officially opened the Forum, which provided a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange and collaboration on youth leadership, climate-smart agriculture, resilient food systems, digital innovation, climate resilience and sustainable development.

The Forum recognized the critical role of young people in addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, food and nutrition insecurity, environmental degradation and limited livelihood opportunities. Discussions focused on youth leadership and innovation, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable food systems, digital agriculture and artificial intelligence, climate information and media literacy, agricultural extension, soil health, citizen science, partnerships and opportunities for young people.

The Forum also provided a platform for young innovators from colleges and universities to showcase practical innovations and solutions, demonstrating the contribution of youth research, creativity and technology to contemporary agricultural, environmental and climate-related challenges. Participants emphasized the need to create enabling pathways through which such innovations can be supported, connected to opportunities and translated into practical and scalable solutions. The Forum further underscored the importance of strengthening collaboration among young people, governments, educational and research institutions, farmers, development partners and the private sector in advancing climate-smart agriculture, resilient food systems and meaningful youth participation in sustainable development.

OUTCOME OF THE FORUM

The Forum:

- i. Recognized young people as key actors and solution developers in transforming food systems, advancing climate-smart agriculture and strengthening climate resilience, and called for greater investment in youth-led innovations, enterprises and leadership.
- ii. Emphasized the importance of climate-smart agriculture in strengthening food security, livelihoods, environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change, while recognising the need for appropriate policies, technologies, climate services and collective action.
- iii. Highlighted the importance of innovation and digital technologies including artificial intelligence, geospatial technologies, Earth Observation, digital agricultural platforms such as FAO Agro-informatics Platform, early-warning systems, precision agriculture and digital financial services in improving agricultural productivity, planning, decision-making and resilience.
- iv. Recognized the importance of reliable agricultural data and integrated digital systems, including the lessons emerging from Kenya's Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (KIAMIS) experience, while emphasizing data governance, interoperability, security, infrastructure and capacity as essential elements of digital agricultural transformation.
- v. Emphasized the need for inclusive digital transformation, particularly addressing gaps affecting women, youth, smallholder farmers and other groups with limited access to digital devices, connectivity, information and financial services.
- vi. Recognizing the importance of media, communication and outreach, as well as information literacy in climate action, including the need for young people and other stakeholders to distinguish misinformation from disinformation, critically evaluate climate information and rely on credible scientific evidence and research.
- vii. Highlighted participatory approaches to agricultural extension and climate adaptation, emphasizing that farmers are important holders of knowledge and should be actively involved in co-creating, owning and applying agricultural solutions.
- viii. Called for stronger linkages and strengthening collaborations amongst youth, farmers, universities, research institutions, governments, private-sector actors, development partners and technical institutions to ensure that knowledge, innovations and research are translated into practical solutions.
- ix. Emphasized the importance of creating pathways for youth innovation to move from ideas to implementation, including through mentorship, financing, technical skills, market linkages, internships, entrepreneurship opportunities and partnerships.
- x. Recognized the importance of volunteerism and grassroots engagement as mechanisms through which young people can contribute to sustainable development, climate action and community resilience.

- xi. Reaffirmed the importance of protecting ecosystems and strengthening climate adaptation, including through environmental awareness, sustainable resource management, early-warning systems, climate-resilient agricultural practices and community participation.
- xii. Called for greater attention to youth employment and green jobs, particularly through innovative approaches that connect young people to emerging opportunities across sustainable agriculture, technology, climate action and the wider green economy.

COMMITMENTS

The participants of the GCSAYN First Annual Forum:

- i. Pledge to strengthen youth leadership and meaningful youth participation in climate-smart agriculture, food-systems transformation and sustainable development.
- ii. Commit to promoting youth-led innovations and activities, as well as supporting young people to develop practical solutions that respond to food insecurity, climate change and agricultural challenges.
- iii. Commit to strengthening partnerships among governments, youth networks, educational and research institutions, farmers, development partners, the private sector and other stakeholders to expand opportunities for young people.
- iv. Commit to promoting digital literacy, responsible use of information and access to appropriate technologies that enable young people, farmers and communities to participate effectively in the digital transformation of agriculture.
- v. Commit to promoting participatory approaches that recognise and integrate farmer knowledge alongside scientific, technical and digital knowledge.
- vi. Commit to encouraging the development of practical pathways through which proven youth innovations can be financed, scaled and translated into sustainable enterprises, livelihoods and green jobs.
- vii. Commit to strengthening climate information literacy and encouraging the responsible sharing and use of accurate, credible and science-based climate information.
- viii. Support youth in learning and development of utilizing digital tools in agriculture by organizing virtual/hybrid/in-person trainings lead by experts in that given field/area

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognizing that the transformation of Africa's agrifood systems requires sustained collaboration and investment, the Forum:

- i. Calls upon governments and development partners to strengthen policies, programmes and investments that enable young people to participate meaningfully in agriculture, climate action and food-systems transformation.

- ii. Calls for increased investment in youth-led innovation, including access to finance, mentorship, technical skills, research, incubation, markets and appropriate technologies.
- iii. Urges educational and research institutions to strengthen opportunities for young people to acquire practical skills in climate-smart agriculture, artificial intelligence, digital agriculture, geospatial technologies, data analytics, soil science and other emerging areas.
- iv. Calls upon governments, research institutions and partners to strengthen agricultural data systems, digital infrastructure, interoperability, data governance and e-extension services while ensuring that women, youth and smallholder farmers are not excluded.
- v. Encourages the wider adoption of participatory agricultural extension approaches that respond to farmers' different needs and scales and promote the co-creation and ownership of knowledge and solutions.
- vi. Calls for stronger collaboration between research and practice, ensuring that scientific and technical knowledge is effectively connected with farmer knowledge, local realities and community needs.
- vii. Urges stakeholders to expand access to reliable climate information and media and information literacy, including through digital learning platforms such as the UNESCO Climate and MIL MOOC.
- viii. Calls for deliberate measures to address gender and youth gaps in digital access, including access to devices, connectivity, digital skills, information and financial services.
- ix. Encourages the creation of clear pathways for scaling youth innovations, linking innovators with policy-makers, investors, technical institutions, markets and other opportunity gatekeepers.
- x. Calls upon stakeholders to strengthen climate adaptation and resilience measures, including climate services, early-warning systems, ecosystem protection and climate-smart agricultural practices that are accessible to vulnerable and smallholder farmers.
- xi. Encourages stronger regional and global youth cooperation through networks, partnerships, volunteerism and knowledge-sharing platforms that connect young people to opportunities and enable the exchange of solutions and experiences.
- xii. Urges stakeholders to move from dialogue to implementation by developing measurable action plans, identifying responsible actors, mobilising resources and establishing mechanisms for tracking progress on the recommendations of the Forum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The participants of the GCSAYN First Annual Forum express their sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Kenya, United States International University–Africa (USIU-Africa), Rift Valley National Polytechnic (GCSAYN Global Co-ordination Unit),

GCSAYN and all strategic partners for their support and contribution towards the successful convening of the inaugural Forum.

The Forum also appreciates the leadership and participation of the African Union Commission, African Development Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNESCO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Volunteers (UNV), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the various academic, research, civil society, private-sector and youth organizations that contributed to the Forum.

We particularly acknowledge the speakers, moderators, facilitators, rapporteurs, volunteers, interns, mentees, Borlaug Scholars, youth leaders and participants whose knowledge, experiences and active engagement enriched the discussions and contributed to the outcomes of GAF-I.

The participants appreciate the collective commitment demonstrated throughout the Forum and look forward to continued collaboration in translating the outcomes of GAF-I into practical initiatives that strengthen youth leadership, climate-smart agriculture, resilient food systems and sustainable development.

Issued at Nairobi, Kenya, following the conclusion of the GCSAYN First Annual Forum (GAF-I), 12 August 2026.