

**MORE ABOUT PARALLEL SESSION:**  
**DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION AND YOUTH FOR ZERO HUNGER BY 2030**

**Background**

Africa's youth population is expected to double to over 830 million by 2050. In many continents across the globe, young people represent a promising, yet untapped, source of numerous opportunities for disruptive innovation for transforming food systems. Youth, particularly in low and middle-income countries, struggle to find decent jobs, make the transition from education to work, and mature in terms of independence. A growing aspiration gap lays bare the friction between economic realities and what it means to be suitably employed or a successful entrepreneur. The agricultural sector still holds a great deal of potential. According to the World Bank, in 2014 over 60% of people in Africa lived in rural areas and relied on agriculture for their livelihoods. The African Union has set a target 'to double the total productivity and to increase youth employment in the agricultural sector by 30%'. By 2025, Africa's food import bill is expected to increase to over US\$ 110 billion and the share of Africans living in urban areas is estimated to grow by 70% by 2050. Integration is needed between trends of structural transformation and the goals and needs of young people.

**The focus of this session**

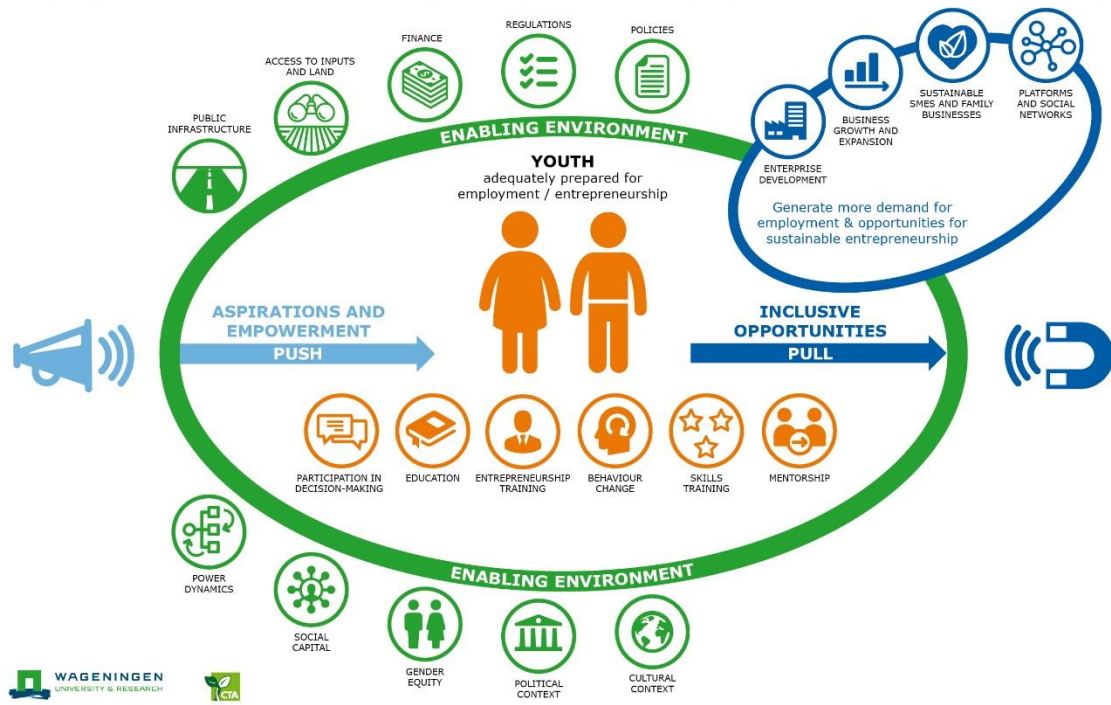
Increasingly, many organisations and institutions are recognising the urgency of addressing the matter of youth employment and entrepreneurship. Various influential institutions have defined their commitment to this cause. To name a few:

- The G20 has pledged to support the African Union to double the total productivity and increase youth employment by 30% in the agricultural sector by 2030.
- The European Commission has developed flagship programmes (e.g. the EIP and EUTF Africa) to spur job creation and economic development in a bid to address root causes of migration.
- The Jobs for Youth in Africa strategy of the African Development Bank aims to create 25 million jobs and equip 50 million youth by 2025.

The parallel session '**Disruptive Innovation and Youth for Zero Hunger by 2030**' will discuss the approaches used by a number of key organisations related to youth employment and /or entrepreneurship to achieve their goals and targets. Triggered by various short keynotes, we will interactively reflect on programmes supported by public and private entities such as CTA, IFAD, Danone, Mercy Corps, and WUR with a focus on what is currently being done. Throughout this session we ask the questions: What are the most effective ways to address the challenge of youth under- and unemployment, and expand youth entrepreneurial opportunities? Can a transformed agri-food sector absorb millions of youth in a meaningful way? Who is doing what and where? What areas and issues receive much attention, and what interventions are underrepresented?

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Supply & demand factors impacting youth employment & entrepreneurship



**Interactive mapping of current efforts**

These questions will be discussed using the framework developed. Many interventions are based on the assumption that young people are either insufficiently equipped or not sufficiently motivated to support the agricultural transformation agenda. Inadequate preparedness, diverging aspirations, and a shrinking labour market close them out of finding productive and rewarding jobs and becoming successful entrepreneurs. Both the supply side and the demand for labour / markets as well as the enabling environment need to be considered. This is what we call the 'push' and 'pull' approach. Beyond questioning individualistic and supply oriented approaches from an economic viewpoint, it is also important to look at how young people are embedded in social relationships and societal norms. These influence both their aspirations for the future and their actual agency when pursuing work and entrepreneurial opportunities and navigating uncertainty. Education, skills training, behavioural change and entrepreneurship support, participation in decision-making processes may be conceived as some crucial elements to prepare them for taking advantage of opportunities. However, where market conditions do not offer young entrepreneurs many opportunities, or if educated and skilled young people find it difficult to get work then investments made do not yield the desired results.

**Programme (tentative)**

- Welcome & introduction to the session
- Keynote: H.E. Akin Adesina, President African Development Bank)
- Introduction to the framework

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- 3 minute pitches by CTA, Mercy Corps, RUFORUM, WUR
- Interactive mapping session and discussion
- Closing and invitation to join follow-up session '**Scaling-up Youth-Led Programmes**'

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