



Statement by the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF)

Africa Food Systems Forum 2026, Kigali, Rwanda

The Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF) is pleased to participate in the **Africa Food Systems Forum (AFSForum2026) in Kigali, Rwanda, from 31 August to 04 September 2026**. SAYoF will attend as a regional youth platform committed to advancing Africa's food systems through meaningful youth engagement, innovation, and investment.

The **SAYoF delegation** will be led by **Georgia Blessing Apson (Tanzania)**, the **Food Systems and Nutrition Focal Person** for SAYoF, and **deputized by Matsietsi Rampai (Lesotho)**, **Setsoto Agribusiness & Consultancy**, and a member of SAYoF's **Business, Agriculture, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Cluster**. Together, the delegation will represent youth voices from across Southern Africa and contribute to discussions on strengthening agri-food systems and expanding opportunities for young people across the value chain.

Set against the backdrop of the **Africa Food Systems Forum's 20th Anniversary: Two Decades of Transforming Africa's Food & Agriculture**, the 2026 edition in Kigali convenes under the theme: **"Investing in Africa's Agri-Food Systems: Nourishing Nations, Growing Jobs, Building Resilience"**. The Forum, recognized as the continent's most important annual convening, brings together heads of state, scientists, investors, and implementers, with the goal of translating commitment into concrete action. This year's programme will host **5,000+ delegates from more than 50 countries** for four days of high-impact programming, deal-making, and policy dialogue.

SAYoF's attendance also comes at a strategic time, following the conclusion of the **8th SAYoF Youth Forum in partnership with AU, SADC-PF, AGRA, International Idea, Equality Now, New Economy Hub**, among others, which focused on **Agriculture, Food Systems, Nutrition, and Climate Action**. With momentum from the youth priorities and recommendations that emerged from the 8th Youth Forum, SAYoF will engage at the Africa Food Systems Summit to champion youth-led solutions, strengthen linkages across stakeholders, and support pathways for increased investment in sustainable agri-food systems in Africa.

Issued by the Southern Africa Youth Forum (SAYoF)

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