

ACTIVITY REPORT

International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA) Local Committee ANU Delegation at the World Food Forum's (WFF) Flagship Event 2023

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Event Overview

The WFF Flagship event of 2023 took place from October 16th to 20th at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy with more than 6,000 in-person participants and 65,000 online visits¹. This significant gathering marked a commitment by WFF to the theme "Agrifood Systems Transformation Accelerates Climate Action" in 2023. This emphasizes the need to transform our agrifood system—which encompasses the journey of food from farm to table and is currently responsible for 90% of global deforestation and a third of human-driven GHG emissions—to become more efficient, inclusive, and resilient and make it a central part of the global climate solution. Youth participation in this forum is particularly noted with the establishment of the Youth Policy Board, which is tasked with identifying and drafting policy recommendations for the World Food Forum. The board also provides strategic direction for activities, including the development of WFF National Chapters or the youth platform. IFSA started its partnership with WFF in 2021, focusing on youth action, innovation lab, and education.

IFSA's Participations at the WFF Flagship Event 2023

Comprising nine students specializing in forestry and related fields, the IFSA delegation represents various universities across the globe: Australian National University, Georg-August- Universität Göttingen, Yale University, Chungnam National University, Universitas Gadjah Mada, IPB University, Technical University of Munich, Università della Tuscia, and University of Concepción. IFSA Local Committee (LC) ANU was represented by Arifah Hidayati. During the week-long execution of the WFF Flagship Event 2023, IFSA delegation actively engaged in the following components of the event.

1. Inauguration of FAO Park's Global Library of Trees and Flowers

The event occurred on October 15 at Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome, building on the launch of FAO Park Global Library of Trees and Flowers during the 43rd session of the FAO Conferences in July 2023. This park represents a green space initiative to educate the public about the significance of biodiversity and plants for life on Earth. The final project layout will encompass planting various tree species on a 2.5-hectare plot, complemented by educational and learning paths surrounded by greenery. The 2.5- hectare plot showcased 100 newly planted trees and plants from seven regions worldwide. The IFSA delegation also took this opportunity to meet with Zhimin Wu,

¹ WFF 2023 Global Youth Forum: Results Report, available at https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/world-food-forum/WFF_2023_results_report.pdf.

the FAO Director of the Forestry Division and an ANU Fenner School alumnus, to discuss potential future collaborations between the two organizations.

2. Global Youth Forum

a. IFSA side event #1: Youth-led Agroforestry

This side event was held in collaboration with the Mediterranean Youth Task Force (MYTF) designed to function as a platform for young agro-foresters to exchange experiences, address challenges, and gather recommendations based on existing initiatives and best practices that are reshaping traditional farming and forest-based methods. The overarching goal is to cultivate socioeconomic opportunities within this dynamic field. More than 40 participants attended this session in-person and was also streamed online. The panelists for this event are listed below.

- Rizka Afif Muhammad - IFSA
- Sekar Ayu Woro Yunita - IFSA
- Mohamed Agamy - Forest data analyst (FAO)
- Vitor Vannozzi Brito - Carbon officer (Hummingbirds)
- Amina Maalim - Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI)
- Yotmatha Raleng - Hillwild, Rewilding Project, India

Our delegates presented their experiences in conducting policy advocacy for food security program in their country and how agroforestry could boost local tourism and small-scale farmers' income. The comprehensive discussion with both panellists and participants highlighted prevalent challenges, such as a negative attitude towards agroforestry, hurdles in social and economic transformation, and uncertainties related to climate change, including issues like low water supply, which collectively hinder the implementation of agroforestry. However, it was noted that these challenges significantly depend on the diverse profiles of each country.

Several recommendations were gathered, including incorporating agroforestry into the school curriculum to introduce the concept that agriculture and forestry can coexist without fully converting forest ecosystems for agricultural activities. The panellists agreed that to garner more support from the grassroots level, we should initiate efforts at the local level and then scale them up. Additionally, there is a need to discard the mindset of "waiting to be involved as a youth"; instead, a proactive approach is encouraged. While monitoring is challenging in agroforestry, periodical monitoring and evaluation is imperative, mainly to prevent the introduction of invasive species. Technical expertise remains crucial for mainstreaming agroforestry practices, and selecting suitable species that benefit the economy and biodiversity is essential. Furthermore, showcasing the benefits of implementing agroforestry should be considered to engage more farmers.

b. IFSA side event #2: Youth action for resilient foodscapes

This side event was the result of active collaborations between IFSA, the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD), the International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences (IAAS), the UNFCCC Youth and Children Constituency (YOUNGO), and ACT4FOODACT4CHANGE. During the event, participants were divided into four major groups, each guided by a facilitator, to discuss youth engagement in policy spaces and dialogues related to climate adaptation and finance in UNFCCC, Food & agriculture in UNFCCC, UNFF/Committee on Forestry (COFO), and WFF. IFSA led the facilitation of the group discussion on youth engagement in UNFF/COFO.

Some key takeaways from the discussions include the following:

- Opportunities for youth participation in these policy dialogues are limited. Therefore, it is crucial to familiarize oneself with the UN system before further engagement by delivering interventions or engaging in policy advocacy.
- Active involvement in discussions, training, or workshops provided by institutions like the Global Landscape Forum and Youth in Landscape can be a starting point. These platforms unite youth from diverse backgrounds in the same room to share best practices in food systems and forest ecosystems.
- Specific steps towards inclusive and forward-thinking policy-making regarding the transformation of food systems at COFO and UNFF involve going beyond IFSA and connecting with other parties with similar views. Different dimensions (urban and rural areas) and levels (villages, regions, national) should be considered. Mainstreaming youth requires representation at every stage of the policy-making process. These youth representatives should also connect with other parties, including NGOs, to express a more global and consolidated opinion, aligning goals to increase lobbying power with country delegates.
- Identifying resources for conducting joint research, with the result being a white paper or position paper, is crucial. This output serves as input for science-based policy-making processes.

c. National Chapters: Empowering local youth action to drive global agrifood transformation

During the final day of the event, participating youth organizations had the chance to present their official statements concerning the transformation of the agrifood system to accelerate climate action, aligning with the theme of the WFF Flagship Event 2023. These statements were conveyed to all attendees, including the government officials/country delegates. IFSA's statement specifically highlighted the crucial role of agroforestry, emphasizing its substantial potential as a solution for shaping the future of our global food system. It also shed light on the synergies

between forestry and agricultural land. The full statement can be found in the appendix.

3. Bilateral meeting with FAO Forestry Division (NFO)

FAO, particularly its Forestry Division (NFO), has been one of IFSA's professional partners since 2015. Through this partnership, various collaborations have been implemented, especially those promoting forestry education globally. On the last day of the WFF Flagship Event 2023, the IFSA delegation had the opportunity to conduct a bilateral meeting with Elaine Springgay and Ferdinand Ayimasse from FAO NFO. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss IFSA's priorities in 2024 that require support from FAO, including participation in COFO and WFF events next year. Additionally, a brainstorming session was conducted to explore mutually beneficial modalities for the ongoing partnership between the two institutions. The next steps include reviewing the existing work plan and developing an MoU and work plan between IFSA-FAO for 2024. The work plan will be collaboratively developed, with IFSA represented by the Head of the FAO Sub-Commission. Regular check-in meetings will be scheduled to ensure continuous coordination throughout the process.

Acknowledgement

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Documentations



Figure 1. IFSA members with FAO Director of Forestry Division and ANU Alumni, Zhimin Wu, during the opening of Global Library of Trees and Flowers (15/10/23).



Figure 2. IFSA members as the panellist of the "Youth-led agroforestry" side event organised by IFSA and with the Mediterranean Youth Task Force (MYTF)



Figure 3. Arifah Hidayati, IFSA LC ANU member (centre front), with other IFSA delegates from Europe, America, and the Asia-Pacific region.



Figure 4. Meeting with Elaine Springgay and Ferdinand Ayimasse from FAO NFO to discuss the IFSA-FAO partnership for 2024.

Appendix I. IFSA's statement at the Global Youth Forum



