



THE GYMNASIUM

A HIGH-LEVEL CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

*Providing a wide spectrum education to young farmers
to train them to become future farmers' leaders*



WORLD FARMERS'
ORGANISATION



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PRESENTATION

THE CONCEPT

The name derives from the ancient Greece where young people were trained in a *gymnasium* by a mentor, who was responsible for their education path. During this period, they were taught all kind of arts, economics, politics, law, to make sure their education was complete and successful.

The WFO Gymnasium programme is a high-level capacity building programme aimed at training young farmers to make them become future leaders in the agricultural sector, implemented in close partnership with Bayer.

In the present economy, education is at the centre of all professional experiences and, like in ancient times, it is the most valuable asset for all. Soft skills acquisition and intellectual capital management are crucial for succeeding in a highly intense competitive environment requiring a diverse knowledge and high-level specialization. This is the spirit of the Gymnasium programme, considering that today's young farmers play a critical role for the achievement of global food security, tackling the climate change, while improving the viability level on the farm.

This role has been recognized by the UN Rome-based agencies and will be strengthened during the implementation period of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028, UN DFF¹.

As a member of the UN DFF steering committee, WFO is engaged in promoting the empowerment of young farmers as key players in the achievement of food security and sustainable development.

Implemented by WFO with the support of Bayer, this initiative intends to enhance the capacity of today's young farmers by exposing them to training modules on topics related to the global agricultural agenda. Young farmers receive lessons from international leaders, who work in the various policy areas at global level and also have the opportunity to attend and be actively engaged in global events related to agriculture (i.e. plenary sessions of the Committee on World Food Security, CFS, Global Forum on Food and Agriculture, GFFA).

The Gymnasium group is composed of 20 young farmers from all over the world. Each edition of the programme is intended to last for 30 months, and the young farmers meet at least twice per year on the occasion of international conferences related to agriculture, so to gain an exposure to the reality of the global negotiations on agriculture.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/1099026/>

OPENING CEREMONY

The first edition, , was launched on October 8th, 2017, with an opening ceremony held at LUISS Guido Carli University, in Rome and was closed in WFO HQs on 9 February 2020 with the presentation of a final work made by the Gymnasium students before the Board of Directors of WFO.

The opening ceremony was an important moment to recall the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships to fight against the global challenges the world is facing, being the agricultural sector among the ones with the greater potential to act as driver of the change. The event featured the participation of high-level representatives from different Organizations with a strong interest in agriculture and supportive of the role of the young farmers. The UN Rome-based agencies were represented respectively by Dr Gilbert F. Hounbo, President of IFAD and Mr. Ren Wang, Assistant Director-General of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department at FAO.

Dr Hounbo underlined the importance of a sustainable agricultural sector in the global challenge of achieving food security and nutrition and the importance of empowering farmers, especially youth, giving them the tools, skills and knowledge to see farming as an opportunity and to engage in the sector. Dr Hounbo also underlined the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships and the importance for IFAD to work in close partnership with farmers' organisations.



Mr Wang stressed the importance of a program like the Gymnasium in a historical moment when, for the first time in a decade, the number of undernourished people increased again. He also recalled the need to tackle all the three dimensions of sustainability (social, environmental and economic) and to generate some changes in the way we produce and eat food, stressing the fundamental role of farmers, especially young farmers.



Dr Martin Märkl, Senior Stakeholder Engagement Manager at Bayer, underlined the importance of this kind of initiative as the Gymnasium program as an excellent example of multi-stakeholder partnership and capacity building program with the aim of strengthening the farmers' voice in the public debate on sustainable agriculture.

The opening ceremony also featured the intervention of H.R.H Princess Viktoria de Bourbon de Parme, Save the Children Ambassador, who thanked the young farmers for committing themselves to grow the food we all eat facing challenging like climate change and conflicts. She reassured the young farmers by saying that they are not alone in this battle as everyone, from policy makers to advocates and consumers, needs to contribute to more sustainable and healthy food systems to ensure food security and nutrition for all.





The opening ceremony ended with the closing remarks of Dr Theo De Jager, President of WFO, who recalled that agriculture is primarily about people and therefore it is about diversity, innovation, ideas. He said that the world is now facing new wars, the wars of hunger and poverty, and he defined the young farmers as generals in these battles and he encouraged them to take out the most from the experience of the Gymnasium as a way to establish networks, partnerships, gain, create and share ideas and knowledge.

MODULES

These are some of the modules that were taught during the programme:

- International agricultural policies,
- Effective lobbying,
- Political negotiations on Agriculture,
- Trade,
- Contract Farming,
- Business management,
- Farmers' Organisation management,
- The impact of Climate Change in Agriculture: Farmers' solutions to Climate Change,
- Agricultural micro and macro-economic systems-Environmental Management (Management of Natural Resources),
- Sustainable Development,
- Food security and social protection,
- Water resources management,
- Risk Management: Principles and Applications in the agricultural sector,
- The use of innovation in the agricultural sector,
- Multilateral Agricultural System (UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, FAO, International Fund for Food and Agriculture, IFAD, and UN World Food Programme, WFP),
- Effective communication,
- Animal health and animal welfare.
- The key role of agricultural research and its impact on the sector,
- Focus on IFAD Farmers Forum,
- The role of Major Groups in the Stakeholder Mechanism of the United Nations.

FIRST EDITION (2017-2020)

1st SESSION - ROME, 7-8 OCTOBER 2017

During the first day lessons were held at LUISS University in Rome and the students attended the following learning modules:

- *Agricultural multi-stakeholder systems* with H.E. Mario Arvelo Caamaño, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the UN Rome-based agencies in Rome and CFS Chair. He provided the students with some historical background on the creation on the three UN Rome-based agencies explaining their different roles and functioning as well as how they collaborate together to achieve common goals.
- *International Trade Law* with Dr Doaa Abdel-Motaal, Executive Director of the Rockefeller Foundation Economic Council on Planetary Health, Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford and former Deputy Chief of Staff, World Trade Organization, WTO. She introduced the WTO explaining its main functions and how both national and international trade law have an impact on agriculture and the way we produce, sell and consume food.
- *Effective Communication* with Dr Sabina Zaccaro, Communication and Media Specialist at FAO, in Rome. She provided the students with examples of effective communication campaigns and products, explaining how important is to be able to effectively introduce ourselves and the job we do to effectively establish relations and create networks.

On Sunday 8th, the students convened at the WFO premises to attend the following lectures:

- *Effective Lobbying* with Dr Theo de Jager, president of WFO. The president underlined the importance of lobbying as the art to influencing decision-makers and the importance to have a policy/mandate which is the result of a consensus process among the members of an organization or group, to influence other policies.
- *Agricultural sustainability* with H.E. Hans Hoogeveen, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN Rome-based agencies in Rome. The Ambassador, with his long experience in the multi-lateral systems dealing with topics like food security and nutrition, provided students with some examples of sustainable agriculture from his country, The Netherlands. He recalled the importance of assuring that all the three dimensions of sustainability to effectively achieve food security and nutrition for all.
- *The global Agrifood system: climate changes, challenges and opportunities* with Prof. Riccardo Valentini, Nobel Prize Laureate on Climate. He provided the students with some scientific information on climate change and its effects and how these affects the Earth. He also focused on its devastating effects on agriculture and at the same time how agriculture contributes in terms of emissions and the potential ways to reduce them.

After attending the classes during the weekend, the young farmers also participated in the 44th plenary session of the CFS, at FAO headquarters. During the plenary they had the opportunity to follow the negotiations, take the floor to make intervention on behalf of the farmer's constituency as well as networking with different stakeholders.



An example of the statements delivered during the CFS plenary can be found at the following link: <http://www.wfo-oma.org/news/as-a-basis-for-good-nutrition-food-availability-and-access-need-to-be-ensured-first-ms-kouassi-statement-at-cfs-44.html>. Ms Ahou Lea Kouassi, farmer from Côte d'Ivoire, made an intervention on item III d of the agenda, *CFS Advancing Nutrition including the Decade of Action on Nutrition*,

stressing the key role of farmers in advancing nutrition as they are the first link in the food chain.

2nd SESSION - BERLIN, 16-17 JANUARY 2018

After the great success of the first session in Rome, the second session of the Gymnasium training program was held in Berlin from 16th to 17th January 2018, during the Green Week.

The opening remarks were given by Mr. Bernhard Krüsken, DBV Secretary General, who expressed his happiness to welcome the Gymnasium students at the DBV Headquarters. He was followed by Bayer AG whose representative stressed the importance of agricultural education and by Ms. Luisa Volpe, Head of Policy Development at WFO, who highlighted the role of Young Farmers as future Agricultural leaders and pillars of WFO's activities.

During this second session, the young farmers attended the following learning modules:

- *Organization and Leadership in Farmers' Organizations - the German case* with Mr. Christian Gaebel, Policy Officer at Deutscher Bauernverband (DBV). Mr Gaebel provided the young farmers with a concrete example of how a farmers' organisation works in Germany, presenting the case of DBV.
- *Innovation and Sustainability – Smart Livestock* with Mr. Jens Munk. Coming from the WFO Danish organisation, he brought the Danish case with a focus on sustainability in the livestock sector and how Denmark is improving in the smart livestock sector.
- *Public Private Partnership in the global agriculture agenda* – focus on animal health with Dr Norbert Mencke, Head of Policies and Stakeholder Affairs at Bayer Animal Health. Dr Mencke underlined the importance of partnerships, bringing some example from the Bayer's perspective.
- *International cooperation projects of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture* with Dr Franz Josef Feiter, former German Secretary of State and former Secretary General of COPA-COGECA. Dr Feiter gave the students some historical background on the development cooperation sector in Germany with a special focus on the ones concerning agriculture.

Furthermore, they also had the opportunity to draft and adopt the outcome document that was the basis for the declaration that Young Farmers delivered at the 10th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference of the Global Forum on Food and Agriculture, on 20th January 2018.



Ms Sarah Croofot from New Zealand and Mr Denis Kabiito from Uganda delivered the statement on behalf of the young farmers' delegation.

<http://www.wfo-oma.org/news/young-farmers-statement-global-forum-for-food-and-agriculture-2018-1.html>

This second session of the Gymnasium ended with some closing remarks from WFO President, Dr De Jager, who recalled the

students the privilege to be part of a program like the Gymnasium to be trained and become future agricultural leaders. He said: *"in Farmers' organisations most of the work is building trust and making sure that everyone is on board (...) you approach the people you lead with a plan. To have a plan you must be able to read the future. See where you want to be. This is what distinguishes a good leader from a mediocre one"*.

3rd SESSION - ROME, 11-12 OCTOBER 2018

After meeting in Rome and Berlin, the Gymnasium group convened again in Rome last 11th and 12th October 2018, right before the 45th plenary session of the Committee on World Food Security, CFS. The opening remarks were given by Bayer AG, WFO President Dr Theo De Jager and Mr Ercole De Vito, Coordinator of the Food Law and B&C Law LL.M. at LUISS University.

During this session, they attended the following modules:

- *Bottom-up processes of consultation and dialogue between Farmers' Organizations and Governmental Institutions – IFAD Farmers' Forum* with Mr. Jean-Philippe Audinet, Lead Technical Specialist of Producers Organizations and Rural Development at the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD. He spoke about the example of the IFAD Farmers' Forum, FAFO, as a best practice of how organised agriculture may influence the global political dialogue.
- *The critical role of multi-stakeholder partnership in the global dialogue on Agriculture – FAO vision* with Ms. Emma McInerney, Partnership Officer, Cooperatives and Producer Organizations, Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO. She involved the students in a role play to make them understand how effective negotiations are. Young farmers brought into groups representing different stakeholders and simulated a negotiation.
- *Negotiation and Inter-Personal Communications skills* with Ms. Annalisa Maffey, Results Coach. She involved the students in a very interactive lesson on how to communicate and express our feelings and opinions and how it affects the way other people see us, with the impact that this has both on our personal and working life.
- *Legal analysis of contract farming arrangements* with Ms. Frederique Mestre, Senior Legal Officer, International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, UNIDROIT. She provided students with some information on UNIDROIT and on the work it does in the agricultural sector, explaining how important the legal framework in terms of rules is, laws, property rights and private law, contracts.

Furthermore, on October 12th and 13th the group had the opportunity to join the lectures of the Master's in food law run by the LUISS Guido Carli University, where they had the opportunity to interact with other students on legal foundations of the multilevel-system governing the food sector at the international level.

Gymnasium participants were also involved in the works of the 45th plenary session of the CFS that took place from October 15th to 19th at FAO headquarters in Rome.

During the plenary, they took the floor to make intervention on behalf of the farmers and they were also invited as panellists in several side events. Please find below some examples of their interventions:



Mr Jannes Maes, young farmers and president of CEJA, advocating for a stronger inclusion of young farmers into the global debate. He strengthened the role of young farmers as entrepreneurs, underlining the need for support for creating opportunities for young farmers in rural areas as well as the importance for them to have a decent income as a precondition to succeed in all the global challenges, including achieving food security

<https://www.facebook.com/worldfarmersorg/videos/738181999849446/>

Ms Agustina Diaz Valdez, young farmers and President of Ateneo SRA, addressing the CFS plenary the item on critical and emerging issue in food security and nutrition, calling for the need to start evaluating the effective impact of the CFS policy products on countries and rural communities



<https://www.facebook.com/worldfarmersorg/photos/a.363785677044519/1898881936868211/?type=3&theater>

Mr Chairman,

My name is Agustina Diaz Valdez, I am a young farmer from Argentina, member of the WFO Youth committee. WFO appreciates the work of the HLPE and recognizes the relevance of the Note on Critical and Emerging Issues and the practice to update it regularly as a good basis for further discussions on particularly relevant issues. In 2017, when the Second Note on Critical and Emerging issues was presented, WFO greatly appreciated the focus on thematic clusters like climate change, nutrition and healthy food as well as knowledge and technology. We think that, those three issues remain very relevant in the global dialogue, particularly from our perspective as farmers. Let me reiterate, Mr Chairman, WFO support to the work of the HLPE and its key product. After ten years from the HLPE establishment, we retain that has now come the time for making an evaluation on the impact on countries and rural communities of the HLPE policy guidelines. In light of this, with regards to the idea of commissioning WFO welcomes the proposal of a stocktaking analysis of the HLPE work in the past ten years and we think this is the perfect timing to link it to a self-evaluation from member States on the policy implementation at country level of the CFS policy works. In this way, the HLPE report would not only be a narrative analysis, but would also show the results, the achievements of the CFS in promoting its policy products and if those are effectively used at country level.

Thank you, Chair.

4th SESSION - NEW YORK, 13-14 JULY 2019

The fourth session of the WFO Gymnasium training programme arrived in the heart of the largest annual gathering on SDGs implementation, the UN High-Level Political Forum 2019, with 16 young farmers from all over the world gathering together in New York, for two weeks of networking, debates and skills training.

Under the theme “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, the July 2019 session of the WFO Gymnasium trained the participants on the history of the stakeholders’ engagement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, from its design up to date. Representatives from key multilateral Organizations and private sector entities joined the class on July 13th and 14th to share their experience in this context.

Lecturers at this session included **Gwilym Roberts – Harry**, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; **Barrie Bain**, International Fertilizer Association; **Zak Bleicher**, IFAD; **Lola García-Alix**, Indigenous Peoples Major Group; **Steve S.J. Lee**, UN Major Group for Children and Youth.



The impact of this Gymnasium Session will live on long after our young farmers have returned to their home, not only for the different and inspirational lessons. But above all for having had the chance to be involved in the works of the UN High-Level Political Forum 2019, that took place from July 9th to 18th at UN headquarters in New York.

They represented the WFO and its positions, as panellists in several side events and as spokespersons during the Official Sessions: **Ahou Lea Kouassi**, from Ivory Coast, spoke on behalf of the farmers at the International Day of Cooperatives celebration; **Jannes Maes**, from Belgium, brought farmers’ perspective to the table of the side event “AGRICULTURAL INPUTS TOWARDS GOAL 13”; **Anne Schwagerl**, from Minnesota, represented WFO at the event “FARMERS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES JOINING HANDS TO BOOST THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SDG 13 AND ITS LINK TO SDG 2”; **Veronica Barbati**, from Italy, addressed the audience of the side event “THE LAUNCH OF THE UNITED NATIONS DECADE ON FAMILY FARMING (2019-2028): Synergies and main contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”; **Aubriel Jones** took the floor at the side event on trade and Sustainable Development



to highlight the importance of considering farmers on trade discussions; **Innocent Jumbe**, from Malawi, intervened at the event “What Major Groups and other Stakeholders want out of the HLPF review?”; **Dimakatso Sekoto**, from South Africa, had the opportunity to present an official statement on behalf of WFO at the Official Review session on SDG13.



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5th SESSION - MADRID, 6-7 DECEMBER 2019

The fifth session of the WFO Gymnasium program took place in Madrid on December 6th and 7th. It brought together once again the group of young farmers of the first edition of the training program created by WFO to prepare the future leaders of farmers organisations.

This group of active young farmers leaders from all over the world gathered in Madrid on the occasion of the UN Conference for Climate Change COP25, to deepen and reinforce their knowledge of the international decision-making process on climate change.

This session focused on Climate Finance, Agroecology and Digital Transformation for climate change, among others, exposing the participants to the work and insights of the leading organisations working around the Climate change agenda and involved in the COP25.

Lecturers at this session included **Mr Martien Van Nieuwkoop**, Global Director for Agriculture and Food, World Bank; **Mr Gábor Figeczky**, Head of Global Policy, IFOAM Organics International; **Mr David Stevens**, Director of Bonn Office, UNDRR; **Dr Bruce Campbell**, Director, CCAFS; **Dr Ceris Jones**, facilitator of the WFO Working Group on Climate Change, UK NFU, and **Mr Gerolf Bücheler**, Policy Advisor Environment & Sustainability, DBV; **Mr Hayden Montgomery**, Special Representative, GRA and New Zealand Government.

They had the chance to be involved in the works of the UN Climate Change Conference 2019, representing WFO and its positions, as panellists in several side events and as spokespersons within official interviews.



Furthermore, the group joined the meetings of the youth non-governmental organisations (YOUNGO), sharing their opinions and exchanging their views on the crucial role of young people to accelerate the achievement of a sustainable future for all.



FINAL SESSION - ROME, 8-9 FEBRUARY 2020

The final session was organized on the occasion of the 7th Global Meeting of IFAD Farmers' Forum, FAFO, that took place in Rome from February 6th to 11th, 2020. This allowed the young farmers to experience the FAFO, get in touch with other farmers from all over the world as well as other stakeholders.



On Saturday 8th, the students convened at the WFO premises for a full day session with life coach Annalisa Maffey, who organized a one day session focused on developing leadership skills of the Gymnasium group. The 18 young farmers who were present in Rome worked together and exercised on the following skills: Leadership; Personal communication; Team working; Active listening, Negotiations. The day was intense and very productive and at the end the young farmers were able to develop and present their own positions on matters related to the global agricultural agenda with self-confidence and communications skills proper of international high-level experts on agriculture. This day of

exercise helped the young farmers group perform at their highest standard on the next day, when they presented their final work to the Board of Director of the WFO.

THE GRADUATION DAY



On Sunday 9th, the young farmers presented their final work to a special evaluation committee.

Led by the WFO President, Theo de Jager, the Committee included the members of the WFO Board of Directors, Dave Velde, Vice President and Representative for the North-American Constituency; Arnold Puech D'Alissac, Treasurer and Representative for the European Constituency; Abdelmajid Ezzar, Representative for the African Constituency and Sok Sotha, Representative for the Asian Constituency.

Climate change, women empowerment and youth involvement in agriculture, as well as food security, turned out to be the most interesting current global farming issues in the discussion. Below are some details of the final works presented by the young farmers.

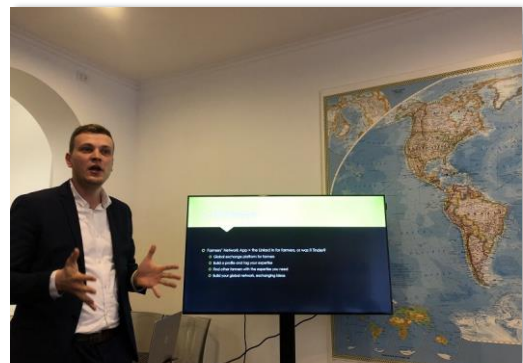


The SDGs & The New York Stage

Veronica Barbati introduced how through multifunctional farming, she is putting into practice what she learnt about the United Nations SDG in New York.

Young farmers in a global context

Giel Boey suggested we should talk about 'fair trade rather than free trade'.



Grass Roots farming, the solution to Climate Change

Richard Bower focused on climate change, presenting tangible actions he is undertaking and intends to undertake on his farm to mitigate against and adapt to climate change.

Family Farming and the Sustainable Development goals

Sarah Crofoot presented on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Decade of Family Farming.





Agriculture in times of climate change

Christoph Daun reminded the audience of Article 2 (1) of the 2015 Paris Agreement. We must do what we can do to mitigate against climate change, but food production must not be reduced with a growing global population.

Effective communication

Agustina Diaz Valdez highlighted the importance of effective communication as farmers with consumers.



Women in Agriculture

Aubriel Jones presented the innovative work she is doing with her university, to provide opportunities for women in Agriculture, with the SDGs in mind.

Farmers in Africa: Their Perspectives and Needs with View on Food Security in line with North to South Partnerships & Investments.

Denis Kabiito presented on the importance of organised agriculture, helping to combat food poverty and food security in Africa.





The Impact of Gymnasium to Global Farming Advocacy. A Case of Rwanda

Cryspin Kayitare examined barriers young farmers face, against opportunities for agriculture to be a leading industry for economics and society.

The Impact of Gymnasium to WCPO members

Lea Kouassi gave a presentation on the work she does as a farmer to care for the environment and support rural communities.



Rockyview Farm

Danielle Lee spoke about the ten goals she has set herself and her industry to be more sustainable, including knowledge transfer and farm assurance, also highlighting the importance of reducing food waste past the farm gate.

Research & Agriculture. A change leading partnership towards sustainable farming

Diana Lenzi informed the audience on how climate change is affecting her high-quality organic wine production and how research is so critical to agriculture's future success.





Impacting CFS policy direction

Jannes Maes presented how farmers and youth should influence the annual Committee on Food Security CFS conference in Rome.

The Impact of Gymnasium to Cambodian Farmers

Sovanthy Meas explained how he is helping other farmers in his country to write business plans.



Tackling Climate Change in the US

Anne Schwagerl presented about the transformations needed in food systems for global sustainability, a synopsis of the US Farm Bill and changes she would like to lobby on through US National Farmers Union.

Making Climate Action a Reality for Farmers

Dimakatso Nono Sekoto explained how farmers could utilise the work of researchers, policymakers and professionals.





Digital Transformation in Agriculture: Building Food Systems using Innovation and Technology to Develop Africa

Brenda Tlhabane highlighted the technology she is embracing on her farm, including 'Talking fields', using her previous career in IT to push agriculture forward.

At the end of the inspiring and forward-looking debate, these brilliant young minds in world agriculture received a diploma for having successfully completed their training path, during an amusing and touching ceremony.

The WFO President, Theo de Jager, thanked the young farmers for their effort, enthusiasm and dedication, and the remarkable contribution they brought in the different global meetings they had the chance to attend, like CFS, HLPF, COP25, GFFA. *"We believe in you as the future leaders of our agriculture policies; you learnt more than we expected. This is not the end..."*, said the WFO President, during his closing speech.

Since its inception, the Gymnasium has had a significant impact on the group, beyond expectations, as several participants highlighted.

"We started this program coming from different countries and continents, and it was not easy to get familiar with each other. Still, after a few days, we became friends. We shared our experience not only in agriculture issues but also in social life" said Denis Kabiito, a young farmer from Uganda.

"As French-speaking, when I started this training program in English, I was quiet and shy, but day by day, with my fellow young farmers, my English has improved," said Lea Kouassi, a young farmer from Ivory Coast.



CONCLUSIONS

The process that led to the creation of the Gymnasium was a complex one, made of building trust and find common goals to implement. The Gymnasium program has been running now for more than two years. It is an innovative and visionary programme, a very good example of multi-stakeholder partnership and a great source of opportunities for the young farmers and the organizations that have supported it, namely WFO and Bayer AG. In fact, the agreement between WFO and Bayer AG generated additional opportunities to increase the participation of young farmers in a number of initiatives that will have a long-lasting impact on the global discussion on agriculture.

First of all, after the first session of the Gymnasium, WFO managed to sign an agreement with LUISS University that allows WFO young farmers to take part in the LUISS master's in Food Law. In 2019, two young farmers, one from Cote d'Ivoire and another one from Cambodia attended the master in Rome, living an incredible learning and personal experience. Currently Crispin Kayitare, young farmer from Rwanda, already a member of the WFO Gymnasium, is attending the master while at the same time serving as intern at WFO International Secretariat.

Furthermore, thanks to the program, the selected young farmers have the chance to be exposed to international events related to agriculture where they can actively take part in the negotiations (i.e. Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, GFFA, 2017 and 2018, the High Level Political Forum on the SDGs in New York.) It is worth mentioning that last year the group also prepared an official statement that was then presented by two selected young farmers' representatives, Ms Sarah Crofoot from New Zealand and Mr Denis Kabiito from Uganda, at the Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference 2018 at the margins of the GFFA. They presented some concrete challenges to the Ministers, asking for the Governments' support in their respective countries to tackle such challenges like the need for increasing investment in research and development, create more space and frameworks for interactions between farmers and involve them in the decision-making process. Some young farmers also participated in the 2019 edition that took place last 17-19 January with a sponsorship offered by the German Ministry for Agriculture); 44th and 45th plenary sessions of the CFS.

These events are also the occasion for them to establish networks with different stakeholders (i.e. private sector, Governments, civil society, farmers), to gain and share knowledge, to get visibility participating as panellists in side events or taking the floor during the plenary. With regards to the CFS, it is relevant to mention that the young farmers were invited to attend the high-level dinner that the Private Sector mechanism, PSM, hosts every year where Bayer AG was also present with its representatives. The 2018 high-level dinner was held under the title of *Engaging, Recruiting, and Retaining Youth in Agriculture* and the Gymnasium young farmers, together with others, the Gymnasium young farmers were involved in a debate with other stakeholders to facilitate the youth engagement aiming at influencing CFS future workplan with a specific focus on youth. A perfect example of this can be represented by one of the young farmers, Ms Dimakatso Sekotho from South Africa. During the CFS 44 she was invited by H.E. Hans Hoogeveen to attend a high-level event he organised with a focus on urbanisation and rural transformation. Furthermore, in May 2017 she was invited by H.R.H Princess Viktoria de Bourbon de Parme to attend the event *Farmers of the Future* that she was organising during the Seeds&Chips Summit that took place in Milan.

Moreover, the agreement with Bayer AG brought other opportunities such as: in 2017, right after the CFS 44, some of the young farmers were invited to take part in the GRA Study Tour organised

by the Global Research Alliance on Greenhouse gases together with WFO. This was a stimulating opportunity to enter in contact with other farmers and researchers from all over the world, debating and influencing the discussion on topics like agricultural emissions and how to reduce GHGs coming from the agricultural sector and also doing field visits to some Italian farms near Rome. During the 2018 WFO General Assembly, all the Gymnasium young farmers convened in Moscow and participated in the 5 days event. On the occasion of WFO GA, they had the chance to attend the Assembly as WFO members, participating in the debates, addressing the side events as speakers and networking with other invitees. It is worth mentioning that, during the last GA, a WFO youth committee was created to empower even more young farmers and to push forward their needs as part of the daily advocacy work of WFO and Bayer AG.

This group of young farmers ended to be students and are now ready to actively participate in the global dialogue on agriculture with enough knowledge and skills to make a real impact on policies and regulations. The knowledge that the young farmers group has acquainted is fresh and dynamic representing a first-hand source for both WFO and Bayer AG.

The young farmers leaders are in fact ready to contribute to WFO and Bayer AG work on sustainability in its wider dimension. They are also ready to interact with their own Governments, with stakeholders, with farmers organizations across the globe to bring the voice of those who live and work at farm level every day.

They are also ready to return the know how they have developed to the two institutions that have provided them with this rare opportunity, WFO and Bayer AG, and to work with us in the development of new initiatives for the future of the agricultural sector worldwide. Moreover, they have put their experience at the disposal of the next Gymnasium groups to work together for the creation of a large young farmers leaders' platform that can support WFO and Bayer AG in the creation of their respective policy positions.

This first edition of the Gymnasium program ended in February 2020.

This is just the beginning of a long path that WFO, together with the support of Bayer AG, had the opportunity to put in place and that is building a fundamental heritage, not only for the young farmers that are part of such program, but also for the impact that a stronger voice coming from the youth in agriculture can have on the international debate.

The experience of the first group of Gymnasium attendees must not be dispersed. That is why an "Alumni Heritage" will be developed, including a dedicated on-line platform, a special section of the WFO website, as well as opportunities to meet in person and consolidate the network of powerful young farmers leaders across the globe, ensuring a continuous exchange.

ANNEX 1 – YOUNG FARMERS' BIOS

Agustina Díaz Valdez, Argentina

Agustina is 25 years old and she is from Argentina. She is studying Veterinary Sciences at the University of Salvador and she is also doing a Tertiary Rural Administrator course. She is the former President of the Ateneo, the young farmers' organisation of the Sociedad Rural Argentina.

Ahou Lea Kouassi, Côte d'Ivoire

Lea Kouassi is a farmer from Côte d'Ivoire and she is currently working as General treasurer at the Union Inter Régionale Victoire, UIREVI. From 2012 to 2014 she also had the role of Director General of UIREVI.

Anne Schwagerl, United States of America

Anne Schwagerl is a diversified organic grain and pastured livestock producer in western Minnesota, USA. She holds a bachelor's degree in Geography at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter Minnesota. She currently serves as the state secretary of Minnesota Farmers Union.

Aubriel Ricole Jones, United States of America

Aubriel Jones grew up on an Organic Farm in Western Nebraska. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Literacy and a dual minor in Global and Environmental Sustainability and Agricultural Resource Economics. She served as an Agricultural Ambassador for the CSU College of Agricultural Sciences, worked with the CSU Extension Office in their communications and outreach department, and was an advisor for ag students. Although Aubriel works part time on the farm, her full-time job is working for the Colorado State University as Academic success coordinator and program developer for the Department of Agricultural & Resource Economics. She is also facilitator for the Annie's Project, an Educational Platform dedicated to strengthening women's roles in modern farm and ranch enterprises.

Brenda Tlhabane, South Africa

Brenda Tlhabane is a Livestock, Game and Crops Farmer operating in Limpopo and Gauteng Provinces in South Africa. She has dedicated her last 5 Years into the Agricultural, Land Reform and Rural Development Sector to enhance Economic Development and Upliftment of Youth and Women in Rural Areas.

Christoph Daun, Germany

Born in 1988, Christoph Daun is a young dairy farmer from Germany. In cooperation with his brother and father, he runs their family farm. The farm is located in the Eifel mountain range in western Germany next to the border of Belgium and Luxembourg. As a board member of the German Young Farmers' Organisation (BDL), he was responsible for their representation within CEJA. He has regularly participated in CEJA meetings and is therefore familiar with CEJA's structures and network.

Cryspin Kayitare, Rwanda

Cryspin Kayitare is a farmer and journalist communicator in agriculture; he produces severally agriculture stories and radio talk show. He is communication officer in INGABO Farmer's Organization. He participated and contributed in deferent meetings and seminars on development of agriculture in the world.

Danielle Lee, Canada

Danielle Lee holds runs a farm with her family located just west of Calgary, Alberta. They raise commercial beef cattle, with an Angus influence and also have a small flock of North Country Cheviot sheep, which they raise primarily for lamb. She is currently the Chair of the Canadian Young Farmers Forum (CYFF). She is also a volunteer with the Calgary Stampede and their agriculture programs, especially programs aimed at educating the public about agriculture and farming.

Denis Kabiito, Uganda

Denis Kabiito is a biologist, a farmer, fisheries scientist and aqua culturist. He served as an extensionist with 10 years' work experience in rural extension development work plus advocacy, training and lobbying. He is experienced in program development and management, monitoring and evaluation and a public health specialist. Currently, he is the national coordinator for the newly founded Uganda National Young Farmers Association and facilitator of the WFO youth committee.

Diana Lenzi, Italy

Born and raised in Rome, Diana Lenzi holds a degree in Political Science, but she dedicates herself to her true passion, professional cooking, and she also graduated from the professional school of Gambero Rosso. After a few years of total immersion among the kitchens of the most important Roman restaurants, in 2008 she was asked to manage the Family Winery, the Petroio Farm. She then moved to the farm in Siena to learn locally and directly what it means to do agriculture and quality wine and how to give entrepreneurial energy to the family business.

Dimakatso Sarah Sekhoto, South Africa

Dimakatso Sekhoto built a career in the financial services sector. She developed her understanding of agriculture working as the managing director of her family commercial farm: 2100 ha of land farming cattle, apples and grain. She was selected for various scholarships for agribusiness courses and was even selected for Young Agricultural Entrepreneurship Fellows in Oklahoma State University, US and is a MasterCard scholarship alumna at the Frankfurt School of Finance. She co-founded GrowthShoot, a company focused on youth empowerment in agriculture, the NEC member of AFASA, as the national youth coordinator and she sits on the Board of Thabang Holdings, an agricultural investment portfolio. She attends national and international conferences and agricultural forums representing youth in farming.

Giel Boey, Belgium

Giel Boey is a farmer and an experienced Chairman with a demonstrated history of working in the farming industry. Skilled in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, Farms, Agriculture, and Public Speaking. Strong entrepreneurship professional with a Bachelor's degree focused in Agriculture, General from Katholieke Hogeschool Kempen. He currently serves as International Policy Advisor at Boerenbond.

Jannes Maes, Belgium

Born in 1991, Jannes Maes grew up on a Flemish farm (dairy cattle, sheep and arable crops) in Aalter, East of Flanders and has been passionate about agriculture and horticulture since childhood. He later attended secondary agricultural education and then obtained a bachelor's degree in agriculture. Today, he works with his family on their dairy farm, cooperating with other farmers in collecting and processing their milk. He currently serves as President of CEJA. Mr Maes

has been an active member of Groene Kring for several years, representing it at both regional and national level.

Meas Sovanthy, Cambodia

Meas Sovanthy is a farmer and he currently works as an individual consultant and Provincial Business Coordinator focusing on increasing agriculture production from improving crop cultural practices, higher yields and appropriate management of land and production inputs, rural livelihood improvement. He also works with farmers' organizations to provide capacity building on business plan and financial management.

Richard Bower, United Kingdom

Richard Bower is a beef and cereals family farmer in the West Midlands, England. All beef cattle are sold direct to abattoirs. 60% of Cereals are used to feed the animals the rest are marketed through merchants. He holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Agri Food Marketing with Business Studies at Harper Adams University followed by a Post Graduate certificate in Food and Fresh Produce Management. He is an active member of CEJA European Council of Young Farmers and a Henry Plumb Foundation scholar.

Sarah Crofoot, New Zealand

Is a beef and sheep farmer from New Zealand. She previously worked as Meat and Fiber Policy Advisor at Federated Farmers New Zealand.

Mahess Roopun, Mauritius

Mahess Ropun is a farmer from Mauritius and he is currently working as Vice President and young farmers leader at the Falcon Citizen league, a farmers' organisation in Mauritius.

Innocent Mzee Jumbe, Malawi

Innocent Jumbe is a 28 years old farmer based in Lilongwe, Malawi. He holds a bachelor's degree in environmental science and Technology, majoring Environmental Management. He is currently working as a Seed Production Director at a family owned company called Peacock Seeds. Maize, Sugar Beans, Cowpeas, Groundnuts and Pigeon Peas are the main crops he produces, all as certified seeds. He is also involved in livestock production focusing on cattle, goats and sheep.

Veronica Barbati, Italy

Graduated in Economics and Management of Tourist Services, young entrepreneur Veronica Barbati, 32, is the President of Coldiretti Giovani Impresa. Veronica is the owner of the Barbati farmhouse, located in Roccabascerana. Between herd-farm farms, the farm contains a long history of traditions, tastes and love for the land. Today it has become a very important landmark in Campania, thanks also to the production of extra virgin olive oil, fresh cheeses and ricotta, strictly handmade jams, mushrooms, tomatoes and peppers in oil and under vinegar. Veronica is eager to encourage young people to rediscover the values of agriculture and defend the agro-food excellence of the area.

ANNEX 2 – TEACHERS’ BIOS

1st SESSION - ROME, 7-8 OCTOBER 2017

Doaa Abdel-Motaal

Doaa Abdel-Motaal is Executive Director of the Rockefeller Foundation Economic Council on Planetary Health. She is an environment, climate and agriculture expert with over twenty years of national and international experience. Doaa was advisor to the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Pascal Lamy, and Deputy Chief of Staff. She was Chief of Staff of the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development, and external assessor of the performance and operations of the United Nations World Food Program.

Hans Hoogeveen

Hans Hoogeveen serves as Ambassador / Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations for Food and Agriculture. Before that he was the Director General for Agriculture and Nature Management at the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs. He is co-Chair of the International Network on Blue Growth and Food Security as well as co-Chair of the international network of Champions 12.3 (Food Losses). Over the course of the last two decades, Dr. Hoogeveen served in numerous international functions.

Mario Arvelo

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Dominican Republic to the Rome-based United Nations agencies (the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, and the World Food Programme) and CFS Chair.

Riccardo Valentini

Riccardo Valentini graduated in Physics in 1985; in 1987 he became Researcher at the University of Tuscia.

Since 2000 he is an Ordinary Professor at the University of Tuscia (Department of Forestry and Resources Resources). Prof. Valentini has in particular been the pioneer in research on the role of agro-forestry systems in climate change and greenhouse effect by developing new carbon-dioxide absorption technologies from terrestrial vegetation. In 2007, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, along with other scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), for research on climate change.

Sabina Zaccaro

Sabina Zaccaro is a professional journalist and a communication expert with 15 years' experience working with digital, print and broadcast media, as well as UN agencies and NGOs. She has coordinated media and development projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and worked with local journalists to mainstream human rights and equal opportunities in the regional media agendas. She is currently senior communication coordinator in the office for corporate communication at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization.

Theo De Jager

Dr De Jager is president of the World Farmers' Organisation and former president of SACA and PAFO.

He has farmed in South Africa since 1997 (in the South African Lowveld region) with timber and subtropical fruits (avocados, mangoes and macadamia nuts) and recently also goats.

2nd SESSION - BERLIN, 16-17 JANUARY 2018

Christian Gaebel

Christian Gaebel, born in 1985, completed vocational training to become a farmer in a mixed agricultural farm in eastern Saxony, Germany. From 2008 to 2011 he studied Agricultural Economics (B.Sc.) at the Dresden University of Applied Sciences. From 2011 to 2014 he studied Agricultural Economics and Business Management (M.Sc.) at the Justus-Liebig-University Giessen, including working as a research assistant at the Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics. Since November 2013, he is working for the German Farmers' Association (Deutscher Bauernverband e.V., DBV) in the Department 'Environment and Rural Areas' as a policy advisor for agricultural policy.

Norbert Mencke

Lecturing Parasitology at Hannover Vet. School, Germany, Diplomat of the European Veterinary Parasitology College, (DipEVPC), since September 2003, Reaccreditation December 2008. Specialties: Veterinary Parasitology, Discovery of new chemical entities esp. in the field of ectoparasiticides, anthelmintics, Scientific Marketing of Companion & Livestock brands

Franz Josef Feiter

Dr Feiter studied agricultural economy, law and political science studies at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-University of the Rhineland in Bonn. He also holds a PhD in Agricultural Science. He held various positions in the German Government including as State Secretary in the German Federal Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forestry from 1993 to 1998. He is also a former Secretary General of COPA-COGECA.

Jens Munk

Jens Munk Ebbesen is a Veterinary, graduated at the University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. His focus is mainly on AMR, food safety policy, animal welfare policy among others. He currently works as Director for Food & Veterinary Issues at the Danish Agriculture and Food Council.

3rd SESSION - ROME, 11-12 OCTOBER 2018

Jean-Philippe Audinet

Jean Philippe Audinet is currently the Lead Technical Specialist of Producers Organizations and Rural Development at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). His main areas of focus are smallholder agriculture development, land issues and peoples' empowerment in market relations and policy making. As coordinator of the Farmers' Forum at IFAD, he promotes strong partnerships with farmer organisations in investment projects and policy dialogue.

Emma McInerney

Emma currently works as Partnership Officer, Cooperatives and Producer Organizations, Partnerships and South-South Cooperation Division at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO, in Rome.

Annalisa Maffey

Annalisa Maffey currently works as results coach at the Robbins Research International. As a Tony Robbins Results Coach, her mission is to be an active part in promoting peace, tolerance and

ending suffering in the world through self discovery and growth. Using Tony's tools and strategies, she helps her clients see their blind spots, disempowering beliefs as well as their strengths. She helps them discover their unlimited potential and hold them accountable on their goals. She is fluent in six languages and have lived on four continents, which has given her an expansive view and the ability to connect with people of all backgrounds.

Frederique Mestre

As senior legal officer at UNIDROIT, she gained extensive experience in legal research, legislative drafting and multilateral negotiations covering a broad range of topics including contract law, secured transactions, capital markets, cultural property and transnational civil procedure as well as agricultural law and contract farming. She presently participates as a member of the UNIDROIT Secretariat in the UNIDROIT Working Group for the preparation of a Legal Guide on Agricultural Land Investment Contracts.

4th SESSION - NEW YORK, 13-14 JULY 2019

Gwilym Roberts-Harry

Gwilym Roberts-Harry is a lawyer with an international background. In 2017 he worked for the NGO Major Group (NGO MG) and he contributed at coordinating the advocacy strategy of Non-Governmental Organizations at the High Level Political Forum at the United Nations. In 2019 he served as UNDESA Focal Point for the relations with the Major Groups & other Stakeholders.

Barrie Bain

One of the founders of FERTECON Limited in 1978, he worked for many years analysing the fertilizer industry, following both short-term and long-term developments. He presented on fertilizers at many conferences, both industry and in the financial sector. He is currently a consultant to IFA advising on UN affairs, working on behalf of the fertilizer industry on international issues affecting the industry at the UN and FAO. He is also involved in the Private Sector Mechanism at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and Committee for World Food Security.

Zachary Bleicher

Since 2012, Zak has been IFAD's representative at UN Headquarters in New York. In that capacity, he works to provide UN Member States with policy and technical advice as it relates to rural transformation in the context of realizing the objectives of the 2030 Agenda; provides strategic guidance and support to IFAD's engagement within the UN; and, seeks to build on and expand IFAD's partnerships with all stakeholders in relation to IFAD's mission.

Lola García-Alix

With her 25 years of work in the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, IWGIA, advocating for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights on a global level, Lola García-Alix knows every corner of the UN buildings in Geneva and New York. Lola is the team coordinator of IWGIA's programme on global governance. With a special focus on international human rights instruments for the promotion and the protection of indigenous peoples rights, Lola follows the work of the UN Human Rights mechanisms and procedures relevant to indigenous peoples, including the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Special Rapporteur and the UN Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Lola holds a MA in Sociology from the Complutense University of Madrid and has research experience in Denmark from the Institute for Cultural Sociology in Copenhagen.

Steve Lee

Steve Lee is a 25-year-old climate change activist, a policy advocate to the United Nations, and a global speaker. He is the Executive Director of FES (Foundation for Environmental Stewardship) and its 3% Project, which mobilizes 1,000,000 Canadian youth - that's 3% of Canada - through 5 national tours across 600 schools. It provides youth-friendly and holistic education on climate change and empowers them to take action on solving climate change in their local communities today. Steve has represented the Canadian youth on the issues of Climate Change, Sustainable Development, and Youth Empowerment at over a dozen international forums including G8 Summit, NATO, Facebook, UNEP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and World Bank.

Steve is a voice to the voiceless youth globally in policymaking and is currently serving as the Capacity Building Officer in the Secretariat of the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UN-MGCY), the UN General Assembly-mandated space. He has moderated and drafted policy outcome documents, lobbied diplomats and businesses, and negotiated deliberations with UN officials, heads of state, and industry leaders.

5th SESSION - MADRID, 6-7 DECEMBER 2019

Martien van Nieuwkoop

As a Director in the World Bank's Agriculture Global Practice, Martien provides leadership and global oversight to the agriculture sector dialogue, portfolio management, and partnership relationships, covering a wide range of issues, including food security and food safety; agricultural productivity and competitiveness; agribusiness and post-harvest value-addition; and climate resilient agriculture. Prior to his current position, he has held numerous managerial and leadership positions covering the Bank's engagement on agriculture in Africa, Latin-America and South Asia. Martien is a Dutch national, who holds post-graduate degrees in Agricultural Economics from Wageningen University, The Netherlands, and in Business Administration from Georgetown University, Washington, D.C, USA.

Gabor Figeczky

Gabor Figeczky is the Head of Global Policy at IFOAM-Organics International. In his capacity, he serves as IFOAM liaison with the United Nations, providing policy advice on food security, biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development. He also advocates at the global level for truly sustainable agriculture and agro-ecology, contribute to key global documents (FAO, IFAD, UNDESA) and he co-ordinates on behalf of IFOAM, the Farmers' Constituency in the UNFCCC process and the Farmers' Major Group for UNDESA (2030 Agenda).

David Stevens

David Stevens is Head of Bonn Office, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). He was born in Brazil where he graduated first in Civil Engineering (BSc) and then Environmental Planning (MSc), before going on to undertake his Doctoral research in Geography at the University of Maryland College Park. He worked for the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, before joining the United Nations in 1999. In his current role, he is responsible for the UNISDR Office in Bonn that oversees the Sendai Framework Monitoring Process and coordination of the DRR and Climate Change Agendas. His professional interests include sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, emergency and humanitarian response, adaptation to climate change and local, regional and national development programmes.

Bruce Campbell

Dr Bruce Campbell has a PhD in Ecology from Utrecht, but has increasingly moved into interdisciplinary work, championing new approaches to applied research on natural resource management. He is Director of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), and a staff member of the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). He operates out of the CCAFS office at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. He was previously based in Zimbabwe, Indonesia and Australia, where he has worked in agricultural and forestry research for development. He has published over 120 peer-reviewed articles and more than a dozen books.

Ceris Jones

Dr Ceris Jones has been Climate Change Advisor at National Farmers' Union UK for 12 years. Also, she currently serves as facilitator for the World Farmers' Organisation's climate change working group and as Constituency Focal Point for the Farmers' Constituency in the UNFCCC process.

Gerolf Bücheler

Gerolf Bücheler holds a bachelor's degree in renewable raw materials and bioenergy from the University of Hohenheim. Afterwards he added a Master in Agricultural Economics. Today he works for the German Farmers' Association (DBV) in the department for environmental policy and sustainability.

Hayden Montgomery

Hayden Montgomery is the Special Representative of the global Alliance of research on greenhouse gas in agriculture (GRA). From 2013 to 2016, Hayden was the ambassador of New-Zealand in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Before, he was strongly involved in issues related to climate change, especially as the main negotiator for agriculture and forest for New-Zealand within the UN negotiations on climate change and special adviser of the global Alliance of research on greenhouse gas in agriculture, based in New-Zealand Embassy in Paris.