

**EMBARGOED UNTIL MAY 18, 2021 AT 00:01 AM CET**

## Launch of a global youth-led campaign to transform food systems

*A pledge to encourage millions to create sustainable food systems*

A shoutout from young leaders behind the Act4Food Act4Change campaign:

- **Sophie Thow-Healy, Ireland:** “We as young people have to act with urgency. We believe that the momentum before the Food Systems Summit should be used to ignite discussion and spark action globally. This is why the youth-led pledge exists, to create and support concrete global action.”
- **Huiyu Ouyang, China:** “Young leaders like me can champion my country’s economic success to growing a healthy society with healthy eating habits. We can enable, inspire and motivate more youth to act for positive changes across the country.”
- **Dipty Chowdhury, Bangladesh:** “I strongly believe that young people like me can be the drivers for change in the world. But for this to happen the world must hear from us, the young people. We need youth empowerment for better food systems. And the pledge is a platform for the youth to raise their voices together across the world. Coming from this part of the world, every day I realize the enormous importance of affordability and availability of nutritious food. I want to see nutritious food as a basic right and get rid of all the cheap junk food that is now readily available to us.”
- **Mike Khunga, Malawi:** “Countries in sub-Saharan Africa are stricken by climate change, droughts and food insecurity leading to hunger and often death. Young people like me can be agents for change building communities’ awareness on ways to make them become more resilient to shocks, stress and other vulnerabilities.”
- **Lana Weidgenant, Brazil:** “Unfortunately food apartheid exists and we have to address it head on. Racism is at the root of who is affected most from food insecurity, climate change, and the environmental effects of industrial food production. In Brazil, Indigenous peoples are impacted most by food production practices and the policies as well as international consumer demand fueling these methods. Social justice is an important part of our advocacy and we can achieve broad change as youth from around the world working together.”
- **Janya Green, USA:** “I’m highly interested in agriculture and I’m leading a 2-hectare Village Community Garden in my rural community in the southern region of the United States. As a garden manager, I try to provide the community with nutritious foods to combat the obesity epidemic and other nutrition-related diseases. The garden is also a platform to educate local farmers about new technologies like aeroponic towers. You too, you can do that!”
- **Rayan Kassem, Lebanon:** “I believe that advocating for healthier diets while protecting nature through youth engagement on a continuous basis is necessary amid the region’s instability and I am really eager to grow the linkages and potentials for food systems and nature protection in West Asia and Globally.”
- **Lavetanalagi Seru, Fiji:** “Transforming our food systems requires a whole of society approach and young leaders who in recognition of the interconnectedness of our struggles – from the climate crisis & biodiversity loss, food hunger & poverty, to water and health security, are boldly stepping forward and manifesting their demands through this pledge for a better and sustainable world.”

**18 May 2021, Geneva/London** - Today, a global youth-led food movement was launched, promising to ignite a campaign action to combat hunger, improve health and heal the planet. The #Act4Food and #Act4Change campaign takes the form of a simple pledge and list of actions. The pledge brings together young people from around the world to focus on personal action and advocacy as a contribution to systemic change.

The overarching vision behind this global youth movement is to achieve sustainable global food systems that provide all people with access to healthy and sustainable diets. The pledge urges governments, businesses, UN agencies and youth counterparts to act boldly and promptly. The list of actions are what young people want businesses and governments to do in order to fix our broken food system. We are asking young people to contribute to shaping the food system of the future by voting for their priority [Actions 4 Change](#).

### The Pledge

*We know our current food systems contribute to ongoing health, climate, and biodiversity crises, and violation of human rights. We will only be able to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with a fundamental transformation of our food systems.*

*While we as young people have been excluded from most political and economic decision-making processes, we are also the ones who will live the longest with the consequences of decisions made today.*

*We pledge to act. And we demand urgent large-scale action from others, especially from decision-makers in government and business.*

***As youth we #Act4Food #Act4Change to support #GoodFood4All***

More than half of the world's population is under the age of 30. As a collective force, young people have extraordinary potential to mobilize and influence global movements, which can be initiated in the form of a simple pledge. The actions for change will enable young people to engage with advocacy and campaigning in their own countries as well as creating a united voice across the globe in the lead up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit. The [UN Food Systems Summit](#) was announced by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres on World Food Day October 2019 as a part of the Decade of Action for delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The aim of the Summit is to deliver progress on all 17 of the SDGs through a food systems approach, leveraging the interconnectedness of food systems to global challenges such as hunger, climate change, poverty and inequality.

“Transforming food systems to deliver on the SDGs by 2030 will require action by everyone, everywhere – and youth will need to be at the center to ensure success,” said Dr. Agnes Kalibata, UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit. “Indeed, young people are already bringing ideas, energy, awareness, and action to all parts of the UN Food Systems Summit process, at local, national, regional, and global levels. This pledge is a great example of a youth-led contribution to lead the way for inspiring actions and commitments needed to achieve a shared vision for people, planet, and prosperity.”

Anna Taylor OBE, Executive Director the Food Foundation said, “The time to act is now. Our food system and the planet are facing a crisis and we have a young generation who are incredibly engaged in wanting to drive change. The power of their united voices will send an important message to businesses and Governments around the world that they need to act urgently and boldly. The pledge will unite them, and the Actions 4 Change will enable them to campaign and act in their own countries and communities.”

2018 World Food Prize Laureate, Dr Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director of GAIN, currently chairing Action Track 1 of the Summit, said, “Hunger and malnutrition continue to be major challenges faced by millions around the globe. The Act4Food Act4Change pledge campaign is an extraordinary initiative spearheaded by youth to act to solve global problems, including the issue of global hunger and malnutrition in all its forms. We believe that the collective voice of the younger generations holds great power, and will lead to impactful, overdue, and necessary change.”

The unprecedented challenges presented by the global health pandemic and the climate crisis, coupled with exponential population growth and unsustainable consumption, production and distribution patterns, all threaten the global population and the planet. We have less than ten years to follow through on the historic commitments made by world leaders in 2015. We believe young people need to be at the centre of efforts in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Speaking at the launch, Ireland’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence, Simon Coveney, said: “Ireland is delighted to be supporting the Act4Food Act4Change pledge campaign. It is a powerful example of youth voices from across the world coming together to achieve change in a critical year. The Pledge is simple yet highly effective, and gets to the heart of what food systems transformation is all about: ensuring that every person has access to safe, affordable and nutritious food that is produced sustainably.”

Wendy Morton MP, FCDO Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas, said, “Young people cannot live healthy and resilient lives and fulfill their potential if the food they eat isn’t nourishing or if it harms the planet. Yet, for many, such a life is currently out of reach. Act4Food Act4Change presents a unique opportunity for young people throughout the world to take action and to drive real change.”

### **About the #Act4Food #Act4Change campaign**

The [Act4Food Act4Change](#) is a pledge campaign that galvanizes youth action to defeat hunger, improve health and heal the planet. The campaign brings together global youth input to focus on personal action and advocacy as a contribution to changing the food system and urges governments and businesses to act boldly and urgently. The Youth Act4Food Act4Change in Support of the Summit and GoodFood4All is facilitated by GAIN and the Food Foundation.

### **About the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition**

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a Swiss-based foundation launched at the UN in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with both governments and businesses, we aim to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious food for all people, especially the most vulnerable. [www.gainhealth.org](http://www.gainhealth.org) @GAINalliance

### **About Food Foundation**

The [Food Foundation](#) is a UK charity working to influence food policy and business practice, shaping a sustainable food system which makes healthy diets affordable and accessible for all. We work in partnership with researchers, campaigners, community bodies, industry, investors, government and citizens to galvanize the UK’s diverse agents of change, using surprising and inventive ideas to drive fundamental shifts in our food system. These efforts are based on the continual re-evaluation of opportunities for action, building and synthesizing strong evidence, convening powerful coalitions, harnessing citizens’ voices and delivering impactful communications. [www.foodfoundation.org](http://www.foodfoundation.org) @Food Foundation

**For more information or interview requests:**

## **Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition**

Sadia Kaenzig, Head of Communications, [skaenzig@gainhealth.org](mailto:skaenzig@gainhealth.org)

## **The Food Foundation**

Jo Ralling, Head of Communications and Youth, [jo.ralling@foodfoundation.org.uk](mailto:jo.ralling@foodfoundation.org.uk)

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