

**Building knowledge, skills and talent development of youth
15 October 2015 - Private sector mechanism
Samba Zablon**

Good morning your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Samba Zablon, I am representing Global youth from the 2015 Youth Ag Summit.

Currently there is a decline in the number of farmers (stat) globally. This is further demonstrated with the average age of farmers now in the range of late 50s - early 60s. This is happening at a time when there is a renewed call to end hunger and achieve global food and nutrition security. This calls for greater adoption of new technologies and innovations. Young people have the skills, creativity and energy required to bring about this change in the agriculture sector. But how do we entice the youth to pursue careers in agriculture?

We need to make agriculture more attractive. We can do this by giving youth the ability to have success and contribute to global food security. Private, public and civil sectors can do so by giving youth a seat at the table, and by involving them, consulting with them. By doing so we are fostering their development and ensuring not only their success but the success of the ag industry.

One best practice example for a private-public partnership approach is the Youth Ag-Summit jointly organized by Bayer and the Future Farmers Network, a global agricultural youth conference with 100 delegates from 33 countries participating. This group of delegates recommended several ways young talents can be directly developed and utilized:

- **Boost education and skills building**
Develop a fair and open multi-channel platform for formal and informal educators in the agricultural industry to build greater skills through ongoing education.
- **Communicate the value of agriculture careers and farming**
Globally promote the importance of agriculture and enhance the image of farmers and the breadth of opportunities in the agricultural industry.
- **Innovate for sustainable intensification and new production systems**
Create a global network that links young innovators to agricultural needs to drive information, sharing and funding solutions.
- **Foster personal and organisational leadership**
Boost youth leadership skills and impact through membership of various youth groups (4-H, Future Farmers Network, Youth Ag-Summit) to provide experience, mentorship and support for their vision.

Talent development can be fostered by involving youth, allowing them to try, fail, learn and then succeed. This positive learning environment is necessary to attract youth to ag and ensure they improve the industry well into the future.