

Editorial

Engaging youth in Agrometeorology for Sustainable Development

Global population is projected to reach 9 billion by 2050 and the number of young people (aged 15 to 24) is also expected to increase to 1.3 billion, accounting for almost 14 percent of the projected global population. Most born in the developing countries of Africa and Asia, where more than half the population still live in rural areas. Over the past few years, youth have been shying away from agriculture and globally there is an increasing interest in finding ways of engaging youth in agriculture and associated domains.

Globally, several challenges contribute to the low ambitions of youth building a carrier in agricultural meteorology. Some of them are real, including tangible constraints in access to information and training that prevent youth from pursuing careers in agrometeorology. Others are perceived challenges, having more to do with the way young people think about careers in agrometeorology. Young people's perceptions of agrometeorology are also influenced by the views and opinions of adults around them, including parents, relatives, and community members. Some of the most pervasive challenges hindering youth involvement in agricultural meteorology includes Family and community pressures, perceived social class, access to training, education, and information on agricultural meteorology.

Current concerns with the sustainability of agroecosystems in different parts of the world have heightened the awareness for careful use of the natural resource base on which agriculture depends. For proper and efficient use of soils and plant/animal genetic material, knowledge of the role of climate is an essential precondition. The youths have an important role to play as agents of change, and their engagement guarantees sustainable development in the challenging field of agrometeorology. Nestled in the heart of most youths is the desire to be a problem solver. Coincidentally, this comes in handy in providing accurate weather forecasts to

save lives and provide professional support to emergency response amidst meteorological disasters. Additionally, the youths have the potential to look at the challenges of meteorology from a new perspective and therefore the need to invest more in their potential.

WMO launched in 2014 a new web-based Youth Corner (www.wmo.int/youth/). In February, it issued a new edition of *Careers in Meteorology* aimed at young people who are deciding what to study or what kind of work to pursue. In March, over 100 students were invited to WMO headquarters in Geneva to celebrate World Meteorology Day with the theme 'Weather and Climate: Engaging Youth.' While weather and climate issues affect the lives of young people today, they will have increasingly dramatic impacts in the future.

Youthful populations offer a great opportunity for many countries as the entrepreneurial and innovative energy of young people can help revitalize and enhance local economies. This is particularly true in the agricultural sector, where new technologies and innovative farming practices have the potential to enhance the sector's productivity and effectiveness. However, young people do not automatically gravitate to farming. We have expose youth to agriculture meteorology early, engage youth in solving climate related problems in agriculture, create students visit program, encourage Weather Club to include agrometeorology, mentorship within institutions, bringing the youngest members into the society and student membership, organize student conference on Agrometeorology targeting high schools, create special scholarships and fellowships in agrometeorology, use of social media for agrometeorology, etc.

Youth can significantly contribute to climate action but they urgently need adequate capacity building and support to make informed decisions that are aligned with achievement of global goals. With about 1.8 billion

young people worldwide in the age group of 10–24 years, it is important to have an active engagement with youth in decision-making processes to enable intergenerational collaborations and inclusive partnerships that collectively seek solutions for resilient and sustainable development.

JAMES IJAMPY ADAMU

Chief Agrometeorologist Nigerian Met Agency (NiMet)

Email: ijampy@gmail.com

SURENDER SINGH

Managing Editor, Journal of Agrometeorology

Email: surendersd@yahoo.com