

Press Release

AFF, SLU and KEFRI launch AfricanYouth4Forests (AY4F) virtual community dedicated to empowering youth in sustainable forestry

Nairobi, 31 March 2025 – The African Forest Forum (AFF), in partnership with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), proudly announces the launch of the **AfricanYouth4Forests (AY4F) Community of Practice**, an interactive platform designed to empower young professionals, students and entrepreneurs in the forestry sector across Africa.



The AY4F Community of Practice will serve as a collaborative space where members can exchange ideas, share best practices, and co-create innovative solutions to advance forest conservation, enhance climate resilience, and unlock green economy opportunities. Through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, and networking, the platform aims to equip Africa's youth with the tools and resources needed to address pressing environmental challenges and contribute meaningfully to sustainable forest management.

The live discussions will take place from **March 31 – April 11, 2025**, from 12:00 Noon – 2:00 PM Nairobi Time (09:00 AM – 11:00 AM GMT) [virtually via Howspace](#). The program will feature interactive chat discussions during the first week and live webinars in the second week, ensuring an engaging and dynamic learning experience.

Prof. Labode Popoola, Executive Secretary-CEO of AFF, emphasized the significance of engaging young people in forestry:

"We recognize the critical role that young people play in shaping the future of Africa's forests and tree resources. By providing a dynamic and inclusive space for engagement, we are fostering the next generation of forestry leaders and equipping them with the skills and knowledge to drive positive change."

Dr. Jane Njuguna, CEO of KEFRI, emphasized the importance of the virtual event, stating:

"We are proud to collaborate with AFF and SLU on this AfricanYouth4Forests (AY4F) initiative, which empowers youth to take an active role in environmental stewardship and the sustainable management of our forests."

Sara Gröslund, Head of SLU Global, underscored the role of youth in sustainable forestry:

"Africa's youth is crucial in re-thinking sustainable forest management. There are great opportunities in acknowledging this and working together with young professionals and students who drive climate resilience, unlock green economy opportunities, and shape the future of forests."

The launch of the AY4F Community of Practice aligns with AFF's broader mission to promote sustainable forest management and ensure that Africa's forests continue to provide essential ecological, social, and economic benefits. With support from SLU and KEFRI, the initiative will facilitate research collaborations, mentorship programs, networking, and policy dialogues to enhance youth participation in forestry and environmental governance.

Young changemakers, students, educators, activists, scientists, experts and policy makers in the forestry sector are invited to join the AY4F Community of Practice and be part of this transformative journey towards a greener and more sustainable Africa.

For more information or to join the AY4F Community of Practice, please visit:

www.afforum.org

Background

"*AfricanYouth4Forests*" (AY4F) represents a dynamic intersection between Africa's verdant forests and its vibrant youth. Anchored in the belief that the continent's future is intrinsically linked to the conservation of its forests, this initiative aims, through science-based communication, to empower young Africans to transform their environmental aspirations into actionable realities.

The project focuses on Kenya and Cameroon but also – through digital media, networks and collaborations – aims to reach young people across the continent. To achieve optimal effect, a palette of activities is included – workshops, digital media, web-based discussion forums, and participation in international conferences.

Central to the project is establishing exchanges between young people and the research community about the forests, their threats and opportunities; as well as to encourage young people's commitment to sustainably manage the forest resource.

AY4F is an initiative led by the African Forest Forum (AFF) in partnership with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI). It is supported by a Youth Advisory Council (YAC), which provides strategic oversight and guidance on key issues impacting youth participation in the forestry sector."

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