

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 20 May 2021 10:00 GMT +03:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Resilient & Inclusive Food Systems for Sustainable Economic and Human Development in South Eastern Kenya Economic Block (SEKEB)
CONVENED BY	SEKEB CEO Faith Muthoki
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/15567/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Kenya

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

100

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

Male

Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The theme was selected to generate some conversation outcomes across the Action Tracks. Each participant was encouraged to engage in a multi-stakeholder process and contribute to the discussion topics selected recognizing the complexity of food systems to draw game changing solutions and commitments to the summit.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

After the opening remarks and plenary panel discussion, participants were divided into breakout rooms to discuss their topics and report back to the main room. There was a moderator and rapporteur in each breakout room to ensure everyone had an opportunity to be heard and voice opinions. The dialogue registration process allowed participants to select discussion topics of interest so that each participant could constructively contribute to the breakout sessions.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

Allow participants to select the breakout room of their choice so that they can comfortably and constructively contribute to the discussions. Ensure the agenda, discussion topics and questions are shared with participants prior to the event so that they adequately prepare for the discussions and are ready to be actively engaged during the discussions. Arrange for your rapporteur forms to follow the FSDs gateway feedback form format and train your moderators and rapporteurs to understand the dialogue process and principles of engagement.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

On May 20, 100 participants from various stakeholder groups in the South Eastern Kenya Economic Blok (SEKEB) gathered in a virtual Dialogue as part of the Kenya United Nations Food Systems Dialogue series in preparation for the Food Systems Summit.

Communities of interest were grouped around the following areas during the dialogue:

- Building resilience in food systems
- Enhancing partnerships
- Strengthening inclusivity in food systems
- Leveraging on enabling and coherent legal and policy framework

Some challenges explored include:

- Ensuring year-round availability, affordability, and consumption of diverse, safe, and nutritious foods and diets.
- Strengthening the capacity of local producers to optimally and sustainably benefit from local production across the value chain.
- Enhancing and incentivizing meaningful and beneficial participation of women, youth and people with disabilities in food systems.
- Strengthening policy and legal frameworks to enable the region accrue optimal benefits from food systems.

The key issues raised were:

- Policies and regulatory frameworks: The transformation of agriculture and food sectors in the SEKEB region need to be anchored and rooted in the law and aligned with the counties' budgets, plans and policies. A people-driven policy process is required to ensure policy developed is responsive to the specific needs of SEKEB. Policy coherence and harmonization between the county and national governments is crucial while the three counties need to also align their agricultural policies.
- Partnerships and collaboration: No one actor can do it alone! Partnerships and collaborations are required in training and capacity building, financing, education and research to ensure a common vision is shared in realizing food and nutrition security in SEKEB.
- Financing: For existing initiatives to be scaled up to the last mile, financing is crucial. Financing is not about pumping money into projects or giving handouts. Financing can range from organizing farmers into cooperatives and groupings to enable them pull their resources together, to the creation of the SEKEB bank to provide interest-free loans, to governments and private sector creating co-financing systems.
- Climate change: SEKEB being an ASAL is vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and this is a key factor that needs to be considered when designing solutions to address the food systems challenges in the area.
- Research and reliable data: Research and availability of reliable data is crucial to ensuring evidence-based planning, right from the national government level, to SEKEB, to the three counties and up to the smallholder level. Research and reliable data will ensure solutions meet the specific needs of SEKEB.
- Innovation and technology: Harnessing agricultural innovations and technologies is critical to realizing efficiency of food systems in SEKEB and contribute to food and nutritional security in the region. Irrigation is a major agricultural technology that is guaranteed to make SEKEB a food and nutrition secure region. The use of digital tools can support the deployment of extension services, financial services, as well as enhance policy participatory processes.

ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- ✓ Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

- Building resilience in food systems

Climate change has greatly impacted the already fragile ASAL region greatly derailing the progress of labour output and consistent farming cycles. Livelihoods and farm investments have also been impacted and the food security of the region jeopardized. Building the resilience of food systems in the SEKEB region requires the strengthening of data-led research on weather patterns, planning using evidence approach rather than traditional practices, and maximizing the use of water catchment areas and resources. Investments in innovation and technologies are also needed to further build the resilience of food systems in the region. These technologies include irrigation, use of digital agriculture tools in extension services, supporting market access and managing post-harvest losses through processing of produce. The three counties need to pull their resources together and leverage on each other's strength thereby making the food systems more effective and efficient.

- Enhancing partnerships

Partnerships presents an opportunity for exchange of knowledge, resources, and information sharing which is key to behaviour change. Partnerships are required across the value chain and can be instrumental in enabling smallholders and other value chain actors access financing, training (e.g. on challenges such as post-harvest losses and waste management) and boost innovation. Through networking, partnerships have the potential to strengthen communities and help solve local issues faster, enable locals engage in new practices like research and make it easier for demonstration of new products or practices to a wider audience. Creating local partnerships builds ground root networks that create self-sufficiency and reduce dependency. Faith Based Organizations, Women Groups, Youth Groups etc bring together ready constituents who have a common good.

- Strengthening inclusivity in food systems

The participation of youth, women, and people with disabilities is critical to realizing food systems that are inclusive. The SEKEB has already existing opportunities that need to be leveraged and scaled to enhance the participation of these groups in food systems to realize food and nutrition security. These opportunities include the Kenya Youth in Agriculture Strategy that includes a robust measures and solutions to meaningfully engage young people in agriculture across SEKEB; presence of strong research institutions in agriculture, as well as Technical and Vocational Training (TVETs) institutions. The leadership in SEKEB is viewed as forward thinking which is deemed as a very important facet in ensuring the region could achieve agricultural transformation. The ASAL nature of the region is deemed as strategic advantage providing and opportunity for youth, women and people with disabilities to venture into profitable value chains. The proximity to the urban centers, particularly the country's capital Nairobi, for the counties is deemed as a welcome opportunity to provide women and youth with stable markets. The SEKEB counties are also well resourced with water from the Athi and Tana rivers which provide opportunity for their successful exploitation through irrigation technology. The creation of the SEKEB Bank will be a great boost to young people interested in agri-business as it will enable access to much needed capital. SEKEB has also initiated successful agro-processing and value-addition that is an opportunity to enhance the capacity and skills of young people as well as provide meaningful employment for them.

To leverage these opportunities and realize the active participation of young people, women and people with disabilities in food systems, it is critical to ensure that these groups have ownership rights and access to productive resources including land, finance, digital agriculture and technology solutions, training and access to research data and information.

The full implementation of the Kenya Youth in Agriculture Strategy is critical. The SEKEB counties should accelerate the process of integration as this would provide an opportunity for connection of youth across the block therefore making it possible to achieve aggregation of produce and peer to peer learning and sharing of experiences. There is also need for friendlier business environments within SEKEB by lessening the stringent licensing requirements for agribusinesses.

- Leveraging on enabling and coherent legal and policy framework

The transformation of agriculture and food sectors in the SEKEB region need to be anchored and rooted in the law and aligned with the counties' budgets, plans and policies. Major discrepancies exist between the national and county functions with agriculture being a devolved function while policy making still rests with the national government thereby making it difficult to deliver on much needed agricultural reforms specific to the SEKEB region. It is critical to ensure there is policy coherence and harmonization of overlapping roles and division of policy making responsibility between the two levels of government.

Within the counties, there is lack of alignment in agriculture policies. Intergovernmental cooperation, institutional coordination, public participation and stakeholder involvement is required to ensure that policies in the SEKEB region are people driven, optimal and facilitated agricultural transformation leading to food and nutritional security.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

• Building resilience in food systems

The resilience of food systems in the three counties in the SEKEB region can be strengthened by the counties pulling their resources together. There is need to reduce competition among the counties and grow as a bloc/region. This includes maintaining collective processing plants where farmers from all the three counties can access, e.g., Makueni has developed a processing plant, how can farmers from the other counties access it? Farmers must have free access to facilities across the three counties. There is also need to create linkages and have open markets to allow free interaction and access among agribusinesses. Governments should enable the private sector and ensure ease of doing business.

Strengthening household resilience requires creating awareness among communities on the importance of dietary diversity, encouraging kitchen gardening and vertical farming for smallholders. The role of livestock should be acknowledged, and households encouraged to invest in livestock.

Research is crucial in providing farmers with more accurate information on weather patterns and when to plant. Information trickling down to smallholders can further be strengthened and scaled up by engaging young people in extension service which will ensure each county has field extension officers in every ward. Use of digital technology to disseminate extension services is also crucial.

Strengthening private sector can further contribute to developing sustainable food systems in SEKEB. This can be achieved by: developing and approving policies that promote local production; creating enabling environments that promote local ownership across the value chain; promoting new technologies by offering incentives to SMEs; making energy affordable; and maximizing the use of already existing infrastructure such as the Standard Gauge Railway and road networks that have improved the connectivity of the counties.

• Enhancing partnerships

Enhancing partnerships requires support from the county governments and existing networks. County administration support is required to reduce bureaucracy and administrative bottle-necks to reduce burden on businesses and smallholders. It is important that opportunities available at the county level are communicated to value chain actors, whether financial or training. All SMEs can, for example, be put in one group to support each other.

There is need to mobilize farmers into cooperatives and groupings to grow crops which can be used to improve health and nutrition outcomes (e.g. pawpaw that can be fortified for porridge to be used in school feeding programs). Research on local needs is required so that partnerships are planned and build around these needs. Some local partnership needs include opportunities for educating and training local producers on value addition to diversify production, access to technology and innovations, market access (including pricing), creating awareness on forgotten crops etc.

• Strengthening inclusivity in food systems

Prioritization of youth involvement and meaningful engagement in the agri-food sector in SEKEB is critical. This prioritization should be accompanied by the right policies and investments in youth projects that address the barriers and that incentivize young people to engage in agriculture as a career and business. There should be means and avenues to make agriculture attractive to young people with such incentives as making ag technology solutions ubiquitous for the youth, including some climate-smart technologies such as irrigation. Technology and mechanization further provide additional benefits especially in reducing the labour burden of women farmers.

Access to interest friendly capital is also crucial to attracting more youth, women and persons living with disabilities to participate in food systems to grow and scale their farms and agribusinesses.

Taking a cue from the success of agro-processing and value addition in the SEKEB counties, more efforts should be made in enhancing the capacity and skills of young people in the counties on the subject as value addition and agro-processing is leading to economic gain for agri-food producers.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

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KEYWORDS

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy |
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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/UNFSS-SEKEB-Dialogue-FSS-Gateway-Report.docx>