

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Thursday, 27 May 2021 10:00 GMT +06:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Transformation and Future of Aquatic Food Systems in Bangladesh
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Dr. Mutisungilire Kachulu (FAO) and Dr. Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted (WorldFish)
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/17640/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/17640/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Independent
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	Bangladesh

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

### PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18      18 19-30      116 31-50      70 51-65      12 66-80      0 80+

### PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

176 Male      40 Female      Prefer not to say or Other

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

140	Agriculture/crops	8	Education	14	Health care
	Fish and aquaculture		Communication		Nutrition
	Livestock		Food processing		National or local government
	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets		Utilities
36	Environment and ecology		Food industry		Industrial
18	Trade and commerce		Financial Services		Other

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

32	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
4	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation	16	Local authority
4	Small-scale farmer	52	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
12	Large-scale farmer	28	United Nations
	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
42	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People	8	Consumer group
18	Science and academia		Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

This was a consultative process dialogue, co-organised by the FAO and WorldFish. The formulation of dialogue thematic areas and group discussions was also consultative and represented different stakeholder interests and critical areas of aquatic food systems in Bangladesh. The group facilitators and discussants were nominated and selected based on their technical expertise. Facilitators were briefed prior to the dialogue and created open and inclusive debate that allowed participants to freely contribute and identify actions or policy recommendations that will leverage aquatic food systems' capacity to contribute to sustainable, equitable, resilient, safe aquatic foods and the attainment of SDGs by 2030 in Bangladesh.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

A keynote speaker with expertise in aquatic food systems and vast experience in global, Asian region and Bangladesh context was identified to outline the main issues, success stories, challenges, potentials and future scenarios of the aquatic food systems in Bangladesh. The keynote speaker laid the foundation for, and stimulated participants' discussions and contributions to the dialogue. The thematic areas selected represented the complexity and urgency of aquatic food systems. Discussion thematic areas included: i) enhancing aquatic food and nutrition security, and sustainable consumption; ii) promoting nature-positive production and building resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks; iii) advancing equitable livelihoods in aquatic food systems; and iv) strengthening aquatic food systems governance and policy dimensions. The dialogue ensured inclusivity of all stakeholders, including fish farmers and fishers, fish processors and market actors, consumer representatives, policy makers, research institutions, and development partners. All participants were respected and were encouraged to freely contribute to the dialogue. The dialogue followed the Chatham House rule of confidentiality, without alluding any suggestions to particular individuals.

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

Briefing facilitators on conducting break away sessions and applying the dialogue principles is crucial in simulating participants' discussions and capturing contributions that represent the diversity of participants. Gender inclusivity and different sector affiliation representation should be encouraged as it enriches discussion to resolve complex issues surrounding food systems.

# 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

The dialogue's main focus was on identifying and understanding the specific challenges faced in the aquatic food systems and proposing possible necessary actions or policy recommendations that would leverage the aquatic food systems capacity to contribute more to sustainable, equitable, resilient, safe aquatic foods and the attainment of SDGs by 2030 in Bangladesh.

As entry points, the dialogue focussed on four thematic areas: i) enhancing aquatic food and nutrition security, and sustainable consumption; ii) promoting nature-positive production and increase resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks, iii) advancing equitable livelihoods in aquatic food systems; and iv) strengthening aquatic food systems' governance and policy dimensions.

### 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

The aquatic food systems is an important sector of the Bangladesh economy and its citizens' livelihoods. The sector contributes about 4% of national GDP, 60% of animal protein, 2% of national exports and engages over 17.5 million people. The sector's potential to contribute to the national economy, food and nutrition security, poverty reduction and other SDGs is higher, but faces a number of challenges which include:

- 1) Low consumption of fish by the poor and low income households, who usually, experience high malnutrition levels. Therefore, urgent actions have to be undertaken to increase sustainable production, ensure access of safe and nutritious aquatic foods, promotion of nutrition-sensitive aquaculture and fisheries policies, and measures to tackle malnutrition.
- 2) Increased degradation of fisheries resource natural habitats by among others, siltation, eutrophication, over-exploitation and illegal fishing. There is urgent need to enrich open waters with aquatic biodiversity restoration and improve ecosystems management.
- 3) Low climate resilience and limited capacity to withstand shocks. Actions are required to accelerate productivity and resilience through climate smart investment. There is urgent need to promote generation and adoption of climate resilient technologies in the aquatic food systems' value chain, generation of climate information, development of insurance products and safety nets to compensate fish farmers during disasters.
- 4) Huge inequalities leading to exclusion of poor fish farmers, especially women who have restricted opportunities to participate in aquatic food systems. There is urgent need to increase access of poor farmers including women, to public water bodies. Additionally, financial opportunities should be developed and accessible to small-scale fishers to enable their participation in the profitable aquatic food systems' value chain.
- 5) Need to strengthen governance and policy dimensions of aquatic food systems. Enforcing regulations to reduce unsustainable production oriented policy systems, to more sustainable production and equality oriented policy systems, promote data generation, technology development and uptake.

### 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

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

Discussions under thematic area one: Enhancing aquatic food and nutrition security, and sustainable consumption.

Discussion topic 1: Increasing aquatic food consumption in family diet.

Actions are needed to improve consumption levels of fish in resource constrained and vulnerable families, and especially by women and children in both rural and urban areas. One way is to promote production and consumption of micronutrient-rich small indigenous fish. There is also need to increase nutrition awareness and improve understanding on consumption of aquatic foods to meet nutritional requirements at different stages of the life cycle for people living in different social, economic, cultural and environmental context. Promotion of nutrition-sensitive aquaculture measures can help tackle the existing challenges of malnutrition. Nutrition education should build awareness and knowledge about processing, cooking and preparation of food mixed with nutrient rich fish for feeding minor children. Production and consumption of fish based products (fish powder and fish chutney) can help meet nutritional requirements of pregnant women, lactating mothers and minor children. Fish based products should also be included in school feeding programmes. The country should develop aquatic food based dietary guidelines and make it available to all people of Bangladesh.

Discussion topic 2: Improving productivity and quality.

Effective and efficient production and distribution systems are needed to ensure access by all, and especially the poor households. There is need to promote pond ownership at household level and to ensure access to public water bodies by resource restricted families, as fishers and most marginalised communities' livelihoods depend on common water resources. Aquatic food standards and regulations on safe aquatic foods without detrimental effects to health should be enforced along the entire value chain i.e. from production, processing, transportation and marketing.

Discussion topic 3: Improving aquatic diversity.

Diversity should be improved in terms of both production and intake of aquatic foods. This would address observed species diversity loss due to unsustainable practices that in turn affect fish species and production. There should be promotion of eco-nutrition that integrates environmental health, human nutrition and conservation of natural resources. Habitat restoration and community based management need to be promoted. Both government and other stakeholder may promote the establishment of adequate fish sanctuaries and sustainable management, along with awareness campaigns. Ensuring proper implementation of existing Fishing Regulation Act is very important to enhance fish biodiversity and sustainable production in the open waters.

### 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

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

Discussion under thematic area two: Promoting nature-positive production and increase resilience to vulnerabilities and shocks.

This thematic area focussed on how to boost aquatic food production to meet the fundamental human right to healthy and nutritious food, whilst following sustainable production practices and building resilience to shocks including climate disasters.

Discussion topic 1: Urgent need to curb the natural habitat degradation for fisheries resources and optimize resource use. Along with climate change, heavy pollution from agricultural land, over-exploitation, and unregulated fishing are the key issues in the fishery habitat degradation. There is need to collectively strengthen awareness and promotion of nature based approach with the active engagement of relevant stakeholders to ensure social, economic and environmental benefits. Identification of highly degraded ecosystems should be undertaken and accordingly, upazila/sub-district or community level fishery ecosystem management plans should be developed and support should be provided to ensure their effective implementation.

Discussion topic 2: High input cost and low aquatic food product prices, specifically during shocks.

Cost of inputs such as seed and feed is observed to be usually high during times of disasters, however prices offered to resource constrained fish farmers are low. Government should support, for instance the reduction of production cost by reducing electricity tariffs and providing subsidies for feed and seed. Efforts to create and enhance online market platforms for fish products to improve farmers' returns should be strengthened. Insurance services and products that can easily be accessed and are affordable by vulnerable communities should be developed to provide compensation during loss and damage. Alternative off-farm livelihoods options should also be devised and promoted as emergency support measures during disaster.

Discussion topic 3: Building resilience to climate change impacts.

Currently the affected communities have limited capacity to plan and address climate change impacts. There is need to promote research and generation of technologies or adaptation practices. These may include ecosystem-specific climate resilient fish species that are tolerant to different climatic risks such as high temperatures and salinity levels, pond depth and aeration, fast growing species, integrated crop and aquatic farming practices, and promotion of cage culture.

Discussion topic 4: Limited access to early warning systems.

Specifically for the most vulnerable communities, there is need for community based early warning systems particularly for floods and cyclones. Additionally, different stakeholders may support climate risk vulnerability assessment to identify the different climate risks in the most vulnerable areas, communities or hotspots. This would improve community understanding of the specific risks and development of short and long-term participatory community adaptations plans to address and respond to the identified risks. There is also need to improve coordination among stakeholders that undertake or support climate risk assessment in different regions throughout the country, to share and create a common information database. The harmonised risk and vulnerability assessment database would improve knowledge generation and planning for disasters.

Discussion topic 5: Deteriorating indigenous aquaculture production and biodiversity.

The indigenous aquaculture production and bio-diversity (species, genetic, beels, haors, baors and estuarine ecosystem) is under threat. Preservation of indigenous genes, species and ecosystems is urgently required and should be promoted. There is need to sensitise communities on existing innovative approaches, ideas and adaptation measures especially indigenous adaptation processes. Deliberate efforts should be made to assess and tap voices and knowledge of farmers and fishers.

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



## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

Discussion under thematic area three: Advancing equitable livelihoods in aquatic food systems.

This group discussed how aquatic food systems may contribute to equitable livelihoods through active participation and involvement in productive employment and decent work for all actors along the aquatic food systems' value chain. Issues highlighted, included how to reduce risks for the poorest; enable entrepreneurship and promote equitable access to resources and improve resilience through social protection to climate-vulnerable communities.

Discussion topic 1: Access to finance and affordable credit services.

Currently poor farmers have limited access to formal finance which forces them to seek loans from informal money lenders at exorbitant interest rates, that end up trapping poor families in a vicious cycle of poverty and oppression. Under current lending terms provided by the informal money lenders, poor farmers end up losing all their resources and properties to pay back the loans. Action is needed to end such exploitation of poor farmers by informal financial agencies. Fish farmer associations should be empowered to create and run own credit operations for fisher communities. Addition efforts can be made where loans at low or concessional interest rates may be provided. This would require capacity building and start-up funds with close monitoring and regulation by relevant government agencies.

Discussion topic 2: Access to fishery resources.

While there is policy provision that small-scale fishers should have access to government owned water bodies, the situation is often different, with large fishers having most access and small fishers having very limited access. There is need to ensure that there is equality in access to public water bodies. Co-management approach would be the best option to including the poor fishers and other resource users in accessing government owned public water bodies.

Discussion topic 3: Limited opportunities to participate in aquatic food systems value chain.

Most poor fish farmers and fishers sell fish at very low prices and are often unable to even recover production cost. Due to social barriers, female farmers especially, have less access to supply chain. Women farmer cooperatives should be established and more collection points or more women friendly fish markets should be created to enable women farmer participation and access to better markets.

Discussion topic 4: Financial support to aquatic food systems input suppliers.

Fish seed producing hatcheries do not get expected support as compared to other sectors in times of emergencies. The government support which is extended to other agricultural sector in times of emergencies such as Covid -19, should be extended to aquatic food systems input suppliers. This will also have positive multiplier effects along the value chain.

Discussion topic 5: Promotion of alternative livelihood options.

Livelihood options, especially during emergencies and fish ban periods, are limited to many poor households. There is need to create permanent livelihood options to complement the poor fisher families' income generation. Capacity building of the resource constrained fishers and alternative livelihood options are required to ensure alternative means of income generation.

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

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

Discussion under thematic area four: Strengthening aquatic food systems governance and policy dimensions.

This group focussed on policy dimensions regarding sustainable use of water and fishery resources, building climate resilience and mitigation of climate change impacts, and enhancing welfare of the fisheries communities during disasters.

Discussion topic 1: Improving aquatic food production and value chain.

There is urgent need to promote research on small scale or artisanal fisheries to promote low-trophic, diversified, environmental-friendly, economically viable, and socially acceptable aquatic foods. This would involve technology/innovation generation, capacity building from production and throughout the value chain (small storage facilities, insulated transport vans to minimise post harvest losses, small landing sites in inland water areas, and quality control along the entire value chain). Reforms as suggested in other thematic groups are required to increase access to finance. A revolving fund mechanism may be created to support fishers' input quality procurement to improve productivity. Additionally, efforts to improve and adopt co-friendly management approaches to promote a more sustainable farming system are required.

Discussion topic 2: Improving livelihoods through aquatic food systems

Mechanisms should be put in place to improve livelihoods by combating social exclusion, vulnerability, and poverty. Adoption of model fishing villages which have potential to transform livelihoods should be upscaled. Empowerment of women fishers through savings and capacity building should be encouraged. Provisions should be made for fishers and fish farmers to have complementary economic activities such as feed production, artisanal production of fishing gear, operation of fish feed mills, shrimp de-heading for processing, mat-making, bee-keeping, tree plantation, horticulture, tailoring, etc.

Discussion topic 3: Promoting management of climate change impacts.

Climate change impacts are evident everywhere in Bangladesh. There is urgent need to promote technologies for adoption and build capacity for planning and implementation of climate resilient interventions. Firstly, information on climate change should be generated and analysed to understand the various risk posed to different regions and communities, and guide decision making. Climate risk and vulnerability analysis should be undertaken for all hotspot areas and specific technologies analysed for suitability in those areas. Communities should participate and be involved in formulation of community adaptation plans.

Discussion topic 4: Promotion of guidelines for sustainable small-scale fisheries (SSF).

In the context of food security and poverty eradication, the Voluntary Guidelines for Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) should be promoted. Proper functioning of the multi-scale and multi-level inclusive governance systems should be enhanced by creating and enabling community spaces to contribute to transformative changes in the management and sustenance of SSF in Bangladesh. It is also necessary to enhance the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) to promote the balance between biodiversity and livelihoods. To improve safety at sea, fishermen should be supported and equipped with GPS and other necessary warning systems.

### 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

## **AREAS OF DIVERGENCE**

### **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**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation                | <input type="checkbox"/> Data & Evidence         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights              | <input type="checkbox"/> Governance              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women & Youth Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade-offs              |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and Climate |