

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 15 July 2021 14:00 GMT +08:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Sustainable Healthy Diets in Southeast Asia – understanding the contexts and plan of action for nutrition-sensitive food systems
CONVENED BY	Dr. Ee Von Goh (University of Nottingham Malaysia) & Zhai Gen Tan (Asia School of Business, ASEAN Research Center)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/18851/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

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

34

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18 8 19-30 17 31-50 8 51-65 1 66-80 0 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

10 Male 24 Female Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

4	Agriculture/crops	14	Education		Health care
	Fish and aquaculture		Communication	3	Nutrition
	Livestock		Food processing		National or local government
1	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets		Utilities
1	Environment and ecology		Food industry		Industrial
	Trade and commerce	1	Financial Services	10	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
3	Small-scale farmer	2	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer	1	Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer	1	United Nations
3	Local Non-Governmental Organization	1	International financial institution
2	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
1	Indigenous People	1	Consumer group
14	Science and academia	5	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

A food system stakeholder analysis was carried out to construct a stakeholder selection and planning matrix. This matrix was used as a planning tool to ensure that an inclusive mix of stakeholders were invited. The convenors invited individuals from diverse stakeholder groups, sectors, gender, and countries in the Southeast Asia region. The convenors also went through various iterations of the invitation list, drawing on their respective networks. An inclusive mix of facilitators from different backgrounds were selected and briefed with care to ensure they create a space for dialogue that is conducive to respect and trust. Facilitators must ensure safe space so that all participants feel that they can contribute, therefore allowing unique perspectives to be added to the Dialogue. The discussion topics were designed to capture multiple aspects and perspectives of the food systems in Southeast Asia so as to embrace their complexity.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The convenor briefed on the UN Food Systems Summit at the opening of the meeting that provided a context for the Dialogue in relation to regional challenges and action and commitment to the summit. The convenor also briefed on the lacklustre progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals among Southeast Asia countries and urged the participants to embrace the urgency of sustained and meaningful action at all levels to reach the respective Goals. The Dialogue was framed around a forward-looking vision statement that encourages engagement of a wide range of stakeholders. The facilitators encouraged new connections, and enable the emergence of ways to move forward collectively and creatively, embracing the entire scope of opinions. Participants in the Dialogue were encouraged to respect differences and embrace diversity, and to listen to each other and be open to the co-existence of divergent points of view. The Dialogue recognised that Southeast Asian food systems are complex, and are transitioning rapidly from traditional to modern, harmony to harm, low-impact to high-impact. The food systems consists of highly interconnected social, technical, financial, economic, and environmental subsystems, hence their betterment requires a systemic approach. The Dialogue brings to the table a diversity of stakeholders working across the food system from production to consumption. They are inclusive and strive to showcase as many voices as possible, capturing diverse sociocultural, professional and regional perspectives. Chatham House Rule was strictly observed during the Dialogue. The Dialogue was curated and facilitated in a way which creates a "safe space" and promotes trust, encouraging mutual respect. The conclusions emerging from the Dialogue that are shared in the feedback are not attributed to single individuals.

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

The attrition rate, especially in the case of online event held during the extended periods of COVID-19 'lockdown', is likely to be higher due to problems such as access to and the reliability of internet while working from home. It can therefore be useful to invite more individuals from each of the stakeholder groups to ensure they are well represented during the Dialogue. It is important to provide careful and proper briefing for facilitators to ensure they prompt sufficiently and effectively to avoid rather superficial responses from the participants. Participation in the global orientation and training for convenors and facilitators was very useful in appreciating the principles of engagement. The UNFSS dialogue reference manual was very helpful in the planning and execution of the Dialogue.

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

Food and agriculture are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, hence, making food systems sustainable is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The dialogue is designed to identify priorities and action plans to transform the food systems in Southeast Asia. The four major focus of the Dialogue is:

- nutrition-sensitive and sustainable food production, including strengthening local area food production, development of traditional and alternative foods.
- resilient and sustainable food supply chain, while ensuring sustainable livelihoods.
- accessibility and affordability of nutritious food.
- nutrition-sensitive capacity development for better nutritional outcomes, including exploring culturally appropriate approaches.

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

Creating nutrition-sensitive food systems in Southeast Asia is an all-of society movement, involving dialogues, actions and cooperation between different stakeholders, from government to civil society. More research and data analysis will be important to define policies and ways forward. From the four breakout discussion rooms, several important themes emerge:

1. Food production is about transforming the society, beyond feeding the society:

Throughout the discussion, food production cannot be just about producing enough food for the population. Instead, food production is intricately interlinked with incomes, livelihoods and nutrition provided to the society. Food producers come from many different communities, some coming from vulnerable and poor groups such as indigenous communities in rural area. Thus, ways to improve incomes for these food producers much be in consideration, including the provision of high quality seeds and training farmers. On the consumer end, especially with the COVID-19 impact, many households have reduced incomes, and thus may not be able to afford food. This is especially so for urban poor and refugee communities who do not have access to land to produce their own food. Urban farming can be a way forward to secure their food availability.

Another important discussion is over the question of importation and production - some participants are of the view that countries should encourage greater production within the country, however there are also concerns over whether the higher cost of production for country might have other negative effects.

While policymakers, private sector and civil societies are progressing to evolve into a more socially-sustainable food production, the lack of political will and leadership may pose a threat to the ongoing efforts to strengthen the social aspect of food production.

2. Changing consumption habits for better nutrition

The discussion over changing consumption habits revolved around changing the habits of children's eating habits - it would be difficult for adults to change their eating habits accumulated after decades. While schools can play a role in educating the next generation, parents need to be educated in how to provide healthy and nutritious food. Hosting school farms can bring children closer to food production, sensitising them to food production. Thus, changing nutrition habits will require a look at the entire food supply chain.

Another change some participants proposed is the changing choices for more higher-end but not necessarily healthy food, where food away from home which are highly processed have taken precedence.

3. Technology as an important factor for the future of food production

Another important discussion revolves around the use of technology in food production and the food supply chain. New technologies are acknowledged as important drivers of the future of agriculture. Some have raised important questions on how technologies may not yield the promised greater productivity - where methods such as agroecology argue that these more natural methods are better. Others raised the issue that while new technologies are better, the cost of using new technologies can be prohibitive and raises the cost. For older farmers, learning to use new technologies may be a significant barrier to adoption.

Before these technologies can be introduced, basic digital infrastructures, such as internet and mobile connection needs to be established. This is on top of transportation infrastructures such as road network and irrigation network. Therefore, even if new technologies can benefit the farmer, basic infrastructures must be in place beforehand.

4. Environment sustainability of food systems

Environment sustainability is an important part of the discussion on food systems. One important feature is to avoid monoculture in agriculture, which endanger the sustainability of production. There were debates over whether plant-based production might encourage greater monoculture, however there are ways to mitigate that.

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 - 1/4

Food production is about transforming the society, beyond feeding the society

Some of the ideas in transforming the society beyond feeding the society is as follows:

1. Developing community-based agriculture that leverage on local biodiversity.
2. Developing opportunities for indigenous communities, including on being part of the organic food production.
3. Building an ecosystem with incentives to foster multi-stakeholder effort.
4. Urban farming as a solution for the urban poor to obtain some nutritious food items, requiring policy action and civil society movement.
5. Movements such as agroecology, which takes into account the whole ecosystem of diversity, human and social values.

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 - 2/4

Changing consumption habits for better nutrition

- Some ideas on changing consumption include:
- 1. Bringing agriculture closer to schools through small farming plots in schools.
 - 2. Basic knowledge of food culture to be taught at home by parents.
 - 3. Local government and housing ministry to create awareness on food through encouraging urban farming.
 - 4. Bringing food preparation lessons for children in schools.
 - 5. Increasing the consumption and knowledge of underutilised crops in Southeast Asia

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
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

Technology as an important factor for the future of food production

- Some ideas on using technologies to truly benefit farmers and increase productivity as follow:
- 1.Training younger generation at school and university levels on design, software, marketing etc that build capacity for the agriculture sector.
 - 2. Technology start-up competition focused on the food system.
 - 3.Increase transparency on the food system, including on genetically modified feeds etc.
 - 4. Modernising aquaculture and agriculture.

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

Environment sustainability of food systems

Below are some of the approaches which can be taken to build environment sustainability in food systems.

- 1. Altering the usual approach to grow monoculture crops.
- 2. Address large-scale deforestation which are a consequence of large-scale planting of commercial crops.

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

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Few areas of divergence were addressed in the session:

1. Technology vs traditional farming
There were debates over whether the use of technology will truly change productivity. Traditional farming, or its more recent agroecology methods have argued that this is a way forward - reducing the reliance on pesticides etc to build a production system that includes diversity, human and social values. However, others have argued that traditional farming methods will not be able to increase productivity.
2. Stakeholders to spearhead the effort of transformation
While everyone agreed that evolving the food system will require a multi-stakeholder approach, there are differing views of who should take the lead. Some believe that government and politicians should stay out from taking the lead as they do not have the incentive to ensure sustainable food systems, others believe that government play a crucial role in defining policies. Experts in nutrition should have a bigger role in advising NGOs etc on how to be more nutrition-sensitive in their action.

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
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	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
	Innovation		Data & Evidence
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		✓	Environment and Climate