

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 26 May 2021 19:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Farmers and Consumers at the centre of 2021 UN SG Food Systems Summit
CONVENED BY	Consumers International and World Farmers' Organisation (WFO)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/20815/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/20815/</a>
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

75

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

75

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

52 Male

23 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

16 Agriculture/crops  
Fish and aquaculture

14 Livestock

3 Agro-forestry  
Environment and ecology  
Trade and commerce

Education  
Communication  
Food processing  
Food retail, markets  
Food industry  
Financial Services

Health care  
Nutrition  
8 National or local government  
Utilities  
Industrial  
37 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan  
Large national business  
Multi-national corporation  
10 Small-scale farmer  
15 Medium-scale farmer  
8 Large-scale farmer  
Local Non-Governmental Organization  
International Non-Governmental Organization  
Indigenous People  
5 Science and academia

Workers and trade union  
Member of Parliament  
Local authority  
8 Government and national institution  
Regional economic community  
United Nations  
International financial institution  
11 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance  
10 Consumer group  
8 Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

This Dialogue is the last in a series of three, whose purpose is to raise the profile of those players in the value chain who, although they are the lifeblood of it, are the weakest. Thus a path has been set out along which farmers and consumers have expressed a desire to bring together the interests of both and to identify concrete and replicable solutions on which to work together and to propose during this Summit through a single, strong voice. The organization of the dialogue was characterized by the respect and application of all the founding principles of engagement. Farmers and consumers met in a spirit of mutual respect and support, each identifying the other as a partner in the value chain. The ambition, therefore, is to strengthen the union and the bond that unites these two and provide an opportunity to break down the silos in order to shape the strategy for tackling the challenges that emerged from these meetings. In particular, this last session focused on developing real actions that take into account both points of agreement and disagreement. The complexity of food systems lies in those differences, which should not be annihilated but rather valued, as it is unthinkable to have a system in which one model prevails over all others: one size does not fit all. The awareness that change is urgent was present in all those who participated and inspired the identification of common priorities. The structure of the dialogue was designed to encourage open and constructive discussion. Questions addressed to participants concerned expectations and wishes from both the production and consumer side. There are actions and challenges to be overcome which are impossible to achieve without the commitment of both sides.

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

The premises of this dialogue were to promote inclusive and win-win solutions by adopting a holistic and systemic approach to understanding how to act in a complex system like the food system. In fact, farmers and consumers are the first and last ring in the food value chain and it is essential that they strengthen and reinforce their collaboration, fostering a systems approach to the value chain based on a fairer share of value all along. In doing so, therefore, a multi-stakeholder inclusivity was embraced and it was emphasized that everyone is called upon to play their part. The topics covered were multiple and carefully selected to encourage exchanges and reflect the complexity of food systems. The outcomes identified during the previous dialogue were the starting point and the basis for the discussion and further development of this last dialogue. Throughout the dialogue, a balance was sought in the representativeness of both sides and the involvement of all was ensured. The principle of complexity, respect and trust was embraced by all participants, who appreciated the opportunity for interaction and mutual exchange and hoped that cooperation could continue in the future. The starting point for the dialogue was the recognition of the principle of "acting with urgency". The desire to take common action and issue a joint declaration was expressed, accelerating the pace of change and committing to a shared path.

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

It is important to ensure the representativeness of all relevant categories. Also, it is good to consider that the list of registered participants reduces at the as some do not attend. Another aspect to consider: it is advisable to share in advance the topics on which the debate will develop, so that participants can be more prepared and participate even more actively. In particular, if the topics addressed are specific, it is recommendable to offer the possibility of getting information in order to put the participants at ease during the dialogue. Lastly, in order to cover all regions of the world - in case it is an international online event - it is recommended to organize multiple sessions in different time slots to allow the participation of representatives from different time zones.

# 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

This dialogue is the latest of a series of meetings between farmers and consumers culminating in the consolidation of a long-neglected alliance. Participants were divided into 3 break up sessions, each tackling a different topic identified during the first two dialogues as key areas in which change is needed for farmers and consumers. The different groups were asked to determine what specific solutions the Summit should deliver and what actions are needed from different stakeholders to facilitate this transformation.

One round of break up sessions was organized under the following themes:

- 1) Consumer information
- 2) Food standards and trade
- 3) Fairer share of value in the food chain

Each discussion that took place in the various break-up sessions was reported back to the plenary by a representative from each of the two sides. At the end of this discussion, in the plenary session, strategies and visions were developed with respect to future steps that could be leveraged through the process.

### 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 |

## MAIN FINDINGS

This last dialogue aimed to identify mutually beneficial solutions for food systems transformation, promoting a systemic approach to sustainable food systems through closer collaboration between producers and consumers, the first and last ring of the food value chain. In the course of the discussion and debate, a number of points of particular importance to both sides emerged. The main question in the dialogue concerned how this alliance could provide a solid foundation to safeguard the rights and interests of the two parties. Farmers, on one side, vehemently claimed their urgency to be recognized as entrepreneurs and to make their activity a viable and profitable business.

Consumers, on the other hand, have stressed their right to a transparent value chain. The trait d'union in these two complaints lies in the redistribution of risk and reward throughout the value chain. The ambition is to reduce social costs, to respect the environment and to strongly characterize the territory. Otherwise, we would continue promoting a model that adversely affects the balance along the food value chain, offloading the lost profit onto the weaker parties and producing misinformation for consumers.

One of the advanced proposals, for example, concerns a virtuous alliance with large-scale distribution and consumers, which does not penalize producers but enhances their work and their efforts to continue guaranteeing excellence. Once again, the importance of awareness and access to information was stressed, underlining the enormous power consumers have and the ability to influence both what to produce and how it should be produced.

For this reason, it is necessary to understand the role that consumers play in the food system. Only in this way will it be possible to reach a level of trust whereby producers better understand the needs of consumers and so that consumers feel more comfortable with all the products that are being produced. The final conclusion here is the will to build and nurture a community populated by these two parties and to make it real.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

CONSUMER INFORMATION  
Labelling cannot be the only solution and tool for conveying information to consumers. Among these, a large proportion are illiterate in terms of specific and technical descriptions. The intention to shift this burden back to consumers is a hazardous and unfair one. On the other hand, examples were raised on how to deliver a comprehensive scheme on which consumers can rely and compare different products. In this respect, the risk of wrongly demonizing certain foods was emphasised. Rather, it is good to encourage all consumers to have balanced diets and explanatory guidelines on what constitutes a healthy and balanced diet. This, of course, must be supported by widespread education of children. Some of the participants put forward as a solution the introduction of tax policies to discourage the purchase and consumption of sugar-containing, highly processed and low-nutrient foods.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

**FOOD STANDARDS AND TRADE**  
Trade has been recognised as a beneficial resource for both consumers and farmers. In fact, through trade, competition facilitates an increase in quality at affordable prices for consumers. Furthermore, it is important to remember that one system does not fit all. There are many differences between different agricultural areas and it is good to enhance them with a policy framework. However, the key to success is trust between consumers and producers. Greater transparency and sharing of data, transferable through the use and development of appropriate technology, is the winning strategy to achieve this goal.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

### FAIRER SHARE OF VALUE IN THE FOOD CHAIN

The solutions identified by participants are numerous, but it is important that they are multiple and scalable. For example, farmers' markets function very well on a local basis and provide that local engagement with the consumer on the farm. However, it may not be scalable. Therefore a different market solution is needed to make that happen. Inefficiencies are present throughout the supply chain but technologies will help to bring them to light and overcome them. Undoubtedly, transparency of information will allow a better distribution of that value along the food chain. Thus, participants believe that a better balance can be achieved, but any solution will need a strong international legal framework for governance. In addition, the potential for a common taxation approach was discussed. There is a necessity to find a way to encourage virtuous behaviour, but also to manage the unintended consequences of individual choices to ensure the right holistic outcome for the future.

In terms of strengthening consumers' purchasing power, educating consumers about their food can help them understand the value of their food, which enables them to pay the prices of different types of food.

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## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The only points of friction and disagreement concerned the use of pesticides during cultivation and the perspective regarding the production/consumption of animal proteins. In this case, consumers expressed concern about the health and environmental consequences of these practices. However, farmers have articulated forcefully the reasons behind such a choice. First of all, getting rid of animal protein from the human diet, especially in Africa or also in certain areas of Latin America and South-East Asia, where there is a challenge of stunting growth would be detrimental. Conversely, in food systems such as the European one, the challenge is to produce more with fewer resources. However, this is not achievable by getting rid of fertilisers or agrochemicals. Instead, what should be discussed is a smarter and more effective use of available resources to reduce the use of agricultural land. If there is a desire for greater equality along the food value chain, the entrepreneurial dimension of agricultural production must be recognised and dignified. Producing food is what farmers make their living from, and like any business it is profit-driven. If there was no profit in food production, nobody would do it. However, it is vital to be able to make that profit every year. For this reason, no one is more concerned about protecting the environment and aware of the risks of climate change than farmers.

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