

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 8 June 2021 13:30 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	"Pathways towards Sustainable Food Systems" - A German contribution to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021
CONVENED BY	Cornelia Berns (Head of Division International Cooperation and World Food Security, Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23520/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Germany

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

495

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

188 Male

307 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

32 Agriculture/crops

3 Fish and aquaculture

32 Livestock

5 Agro-forestry

26 Environment and ecology

12 Trade and commerce

111 Education

13 Communication

22 Food processing

13 Food retail, markets

27 Food industry

2 Financial Services

4 Health care

23 Nutrition

110 National or local government

0 Utilities

0 Industrial

60 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

15 Large national business

10 Multi-national corporation

0 Small-scale farmer

4 Medium-scale farmer

5 Large-scale farmer

44 Local Non-Governmental Organization

11 International Non-Governmental Organization

0 Indigenous People

111 Science and academia

157 Workers and trade union

11 Member of Parliament

0 Local authority

111 Government and national institution

15 Regional economic community

1 United Nations

0 International financial institution

0 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

0 Consumer group

0 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The event was aimed at initiating a longer-term dialogue process on sustainable food systems in Germany. Existing processes, policy initiatives and current social issues, above all, served as the starting point and reference framework for the kick-off event. Based on this, the dialogue focused on identifying potentials and obstacles and deriving concrete activities from them. On this basis, scalable measures are to be identified in the further dialogue process in order to realise sustainable food systems involving all actors. The dialogue was, in a technically sound manner, based on scientific findings. Despite the large number of actors and partly controversial viewpoints, the actors embarked on a respectful and productive dialogue through transparent preparation and qualified facilitators.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

There was a general consensus among all actors that the global food system must undergo transformation. This underlined the need for the UN FSS 2021 and the actors adopted the call to action. The event pursued an inclusive multi-actor approach. All actors were thus able to interact with each other and contribute their broadly diversified perspectives. Alongside the active participants, all interested parties were able to digitally follow and comment on the plenary sessions on the conference platform via livestream. Participants of the kick-off event chiefly included experts from civil society, the scientific and business communities and other sectors. The variable methodology rendered good and genuine cooperation possible, which even extended to the formation of new partnerships. Aided by creative methods and communication tools and channels, the actors succeeded in engaging in a motivated, creative and open exchange on how food systems can be made more sustainable. The professional conception of the event was aimed at breaking up a one-dimensional technical viewpoint. The integral approach to challenges and solutions was pursued in all five thematic areas. To this end, the actors drew upon current policy papers from the fields of agriculture and food, environment, health, development cooperation, diplomacy, finance, etc. as a foundation for different national policies. The participants responded very positively to this.

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

The digital event format has proved its worth, notably for the workshop segment. A broad participation of different food system actors was achieved. What matters in particular is good planning of the event and the entire follow-up process. The role of the moderators/facilitators in the working groups or in the entire dialogue process is very challenging and calls for strong methodological skills. Society harbours high expectations, a fact which makes good communication, participation and transparency all the more important. A longer-term and structured process, in which intermediate goals are set, is recommended.

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 process in Germany strives to analyse existing national food systems and identify positive approaches on the way towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and render them useful for the future. The dialogue was structured into five thematic areas, which were based on current issues that are vital for the future:

1. Costs and benefits of environmentally sound and socially acceptable production
2. Requirements for sustainable agricultural food production
3. Sustainable food systems in rural and urban areas: Infrastructure requirements
4. The future food industry
5. Food of the future - more plant-based

The selection was based on current, existing political dialogue processes and issues from science, industry and civil society.

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 following overriding subjects were identified in the individual thematic areas, which will be further explored in the follow-up process:

- Transparency in supply chains ranging from production via processing right up to consumers (contribution to Action Tracks 2 and 3)
- Systemic educational approach to sustainable food production and nutrition (contribution to Action Tracks 1, 2 and 3)
- How is sustainability achieved through new framework conditions? (contribution to Action Tracks 3 and 4)
- Structures - notably the implementation of measures (at regional level) (contribution to Action Tracks 1, 4 and 5)
- Responsibility also in a global context (contribution to Action Tracks 4 and 5)

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

Thematic area 1: Costs and benefits of environmentally sound and socially acceptable production
Selected results and impetus for future dialogues:

- It is important for all parties involved to achieve a paradigm shift based on the insight that "avoiding damage is more economical and ecological than making good damage".
- The theoretical groundwork for the evaluation of costs and benefits has been laid. One excellent instrument is the true-cost approach.
- Transparent supply and processing chains represent a basic requirement.
- Agricultural holdings are called upon to develop new distribution channels, diversification and new business models.
- Operational bookkeeping and accounting of holdings should be brought into line with sustainability criteria (societal performance).
- Sustainable production methods should be rendered visible and tangible for consumers. Notably at the local level.
- Communication by farmers is required to enable direct consumer interaction and thus deepen the perception and appreciation of the agricultural sector.
- In order to sustainably convert the food system in Germany, state intervention is required (levies, taxes, subsidies, etc.).
- State instruments should be used in line with the objectives (e.g. geared towards the SDGs) in order to genuinely foster environmentally and socially acceptable production.
- In the longer term, a global matrix for social, economic and environmental standards must be developed.

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

Thematic area 2: Requirements for sustainable agricultural food production
Selected results and impetus for future dialogues:

- Smart farming systems (e.g. agro-forestry systems) are required in order to implement ecological intensification.
- Substance cycles, also beyond farming, must be closed.
- The importance of breeding should be highlighted, as well as the need to support it.
- A central role is attributed to research and the quick transfer of results into practice.
- Technical innovations should be reinforced and the importance of social innovations should be underlined.
- Education and knowledge exchange are key factors in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

Thematic area 3: Sustainable food systems in rural and urban areas: Infrastructure requirements
Selected results and impetus for future dialogues:

- Municipalities and regions should be better equipped to support regional structures such as value-added chains.
- Consideration should always be given to reducing red tape.
- Coordinators are needed who develop networks and promote networking and knowledge-sharing.
- Regionality should be promoted. It would be wise to establish a federal network for regional value chains in order to learn from one another across the board. Bringing together local initiatives on the ground is also helpful.
- Away-from-home catering, in particular in communal catering facilities, is considered as a great lever for change to strengthen regional value-added chains.
- The subject of sustainability should be integrated into vocational training and continuing training curricula more and more. Across the board, there was a call for comprehensive and inclusive educational work.
- A targeted training of training officers, vocational teachers and other educators was identified as key.
- If small producers and processors pool their product range, for example via food hubs and other trading formats, they can benefit from shared logistics and marketing.
- Product policies in the regional sector should focus on a quality strategy, because regional processing operations cannot keep abreast in an all-out price war. Developing professional infrastructures is key to the success of these operators.

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

Thematic area 4: The future food industry
Selected results and impetus for future dialogues:

- Avoiding food loss and waste must be an absolute priority.
- Pioneering entrepreneurs in existing companies and in start-ups as well as think tanks should be made more visible so that solutions can be implemented and disseminated.
- Sustainability needs more investment (capital), which also includes funding options with a minimum of bureaucracy, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (upfront financing).
- Long-term planning predictability should be assured, including the implementation of a coherent sustainability policy with clearly defined aims and a timeline for implementation. Policy-makers are generally urged to step up the pace and be more pragmatic.
- A new way of consumer communication with a focus on mainstream consumers is necessary.
- The appreciation of foodstuffs should be promoted and explicitly demanded.
- A dialogue format gathering consumers, industry, academia and administrations should be established. Basically, this forum should do away with silo mentality and confrontation, but focus on cooperation and togetherness instead.
- Support schemes should be set up for the targeted introduction of new approaches in marketing and food loss and waste reduction.
- Food business operators should be obliged to offer/accept further training opportunities on sustainability issues.
- Better assessment of food loss and waste and reduction/use of invisible food via platforms.
- Sustainability should be reward in a more visible manner and by paying premiums (THG budget, carbon leakage etc.).

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

Thematic area 5: Food of the future - more plant-based
Selected results and impetus for future dialogues:

- The share of consumption of (red) meat and milk/dairy products should be reduced.
- By 2030 sustainable food consumption should have a significantly higher share of diverse foods of plant origin.
- Sustainable food consumption takes into account health, social and environmental impacts of the entire food system.
- The influence of food environments is underestimated. Societies should put more emphasis on designing these food environments.
- The food systems of the future should be innovative and break new ground.
- Producers and foods should be better appreciated.
- Good communication is vital.
- More steering impulses from the consumption side are needed, in addition to the political measures that are predominantly on the supply side.
- We need evidence-based food and nutrition policies.
- Awareness-raising of sustainable food consumption has to be a natural part in all phases of living and learning.
- Our mindset and jobs should be guided by the concept of circularity ("CircularSociety").

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Divergences emerged in all areas. They were, in particular, related to aspects of perception and/or target achievement (trade-off between goals). They included issues with respect to:

- The integration of climate and ecological criteria into the agri-food sector;
- Should we have more organic production, and are conventional practices bad? What is a balanced relationship of cropping practices in an integrated product approach?
- What is the right diet? Should we all become vegans or can those of us who can afford it continue to eat meat?
- Which labels have the qualities to guarantee transparency, clarity and trust? Do we need new labels?
- How can we improve the image of agriculture and producers?
- Why do many people in Germany eat unhealthy diets, and why is it so hard to convince people to adopt healthy eating patterns?

All participants were aware that in Germany our views and thoughts are based on a German perspective. At European and international levels (e.g. in the global South), there are other problems that depend on our way of producing and trading food. International food systems are composed of many (national) subsystems and are closely linked. It is all the more important to maintain our dialogue and possibly expand it beyond Germany's borders.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **National Dialogue: Pathways to Sustainable Food Systems - a German contribution to the UN Food Systems Summit**
https://www.ble.de/DE/BLE/UN-Food-System/UN-Food-System_node.html