

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 12 May 2021 09:15 GMT +12:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Action Track 2- Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
CONVENED BY	Ritesh Dass -Ministry of Agriculture
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23720/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Fiji

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

106

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

30

19-30

82

31-50

15

51-65

2

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

44 Male

61 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

29 Agriculture/crops

8 Fish and aquaculture

5 Livestock

4 Agro-forestry

3 Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

6 Education

3 Communication

2 Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

3 Financial Services

13 Health care

8 Nutrition

14 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

7 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

4 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

2 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

3 Local Non-Governmental Organization

5 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

9 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

47 Government and national institution

15 Regional economic community

16 United Nations

International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

2 Consumer group

2 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The Fiji National Dialogue was divided into five separate Action Track dialogues, each focusing on a specific Action Track. This report refers exclusively to Action Track 2 – Shift to Sustainable Consumption Patterns. The Fiji National Dialogue for Action Track 2 was curated by the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and led by the Fiji Convenor, the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Mr Ritesh Dass. Technical support for the curation of the dialogue was provided by the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) offices in Suva, Fiji. Recognizing and observing the UNFSS Principles of Engagement, a series of highly consultative, inclusive, preparatory meetings were held in the lead-up to the dialogue with key government ministries and partners such as the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Health and Medical Services and Ministry of Agriculture as Convenor. The preparatory meetings developed the dialogue agenda, framed questions and topics for discussion, developed a group reporting template to focus and guide group discussions and identified themes for discussion across three strands (i) Non-Communicable Diseases (ii) Blue Food (iii) Green Food. The Action Track 2 dialogue was chaired by the Fiji Ministry of Fisheries and opened by its Permanent Secretary, Mr. Pene Baleinabuli. The technical experts also led the Blue Food presentation. The prep meetings highlighted the Summit's Principles of Engagement and ensured that they were understood and incorporated into the format of the dialogue agenda and the identification of participants. In addition to this, participants were sent a URL to register online where they were required to read and agree to the Principles before being able to register. This ensured that everyone read and understood the Principles and committed to the SDGs before participating in the Dialogue. A group of 105 stakeholders participated in the Dialogue from diverse, multi stakeholder backgrounds consisting of government ministries, civil society, international and regional agencies (including UN agencies),.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

As highlighted above, the Fiji national dialogue on Action Track 2 ensured that the UNFSS seven Principles of Engagement were observed throughout the dialogue curation process and its preparatory meetings. They were reflected in the development of the dialogue agenda and in the careful selection of participants from a diverse range of stakeholders. The need to (i) act with urgency, (ii) commit to the Summit and show (iii) respect for all views and individuals were highlighted throughout the dialogue preparatory process, and were endorsed by stakeholders during the dialogue as well. The (iv) acknowledgement of complexity in our food systems was highlighted, particularly in the context of Fiji and the Pacific, where the food we eat not only brings together as families and communities – it also connects us back to the land and sea, where our food is traditionally sourced from. Transformation therefore, would require a systemic multi-stakeholder approach, taking into account the fragility of our food systems and unique vulnerabilities to factors such as climate, environment, biodiversity and food safety challenges etc. (v) Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity (vi) Complement the work of others – This was reflected in the diverse group of 105 participants who were part of the multi-stakeholder national dialogue - from areas of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, farmers, youth and women's organisations, consumer groups and environmental activists. The dialogue provided an opportunity to 'think outside the box' and share innovative thinking, connect stakeholders and broaden partnerships. (vii) Build trust - The dialogues was curated and facilitated in a way to ensure a "safe space", promote trust and encourage mutual respect for ideas and discussion.

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

The Summit Principles of Engagement served as important guidance for Fiji in the curation of its dialogues across all five Action Tracks, including the National Dialogue. The Principles encouraged Fiji to think innovative, transformative and to draw on the wisdom of a diverse group of stakeholders and partners to explore solutions in our food systems, and to help advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, the Principles were used to guide different stages of Fiji's dialogue preparatory process and assisted in the identification of participants and stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and diversity. The Principles also assisted in facilitating discussions to ensure that all views were heard and respected and that any divergent views arising at any stage of the process were taken into consideration, listened to with respect and recorded.

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

The Fiji national dialogue on Action Track 2 – Shift to Sustainable Consumption Patterns was held on 12 May 2021 at a crucial time as the country battled its second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with restrictive measures and lockdowns. This makes this Food Systems Summit even more crucial to Fiji as it enables the country to study the challenges exposed or exacerbated by the COVID crisis and to find transformative solutions to emerge and build back. Curation and Methodology – In compliance with the country’s COVID-19 restrictions, the Fiji national dialogue was virtually curated on the Zoom platform, using a participatory method of wide, multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement. In addition, interaction and crowdsourcing platforms such as Slido, polls and the Zoom chat box were also used to crowdsource questions and engage participants in live polls and quizzes throughout the duration of the four-hour dialogue. One hundred and five participants took part in the dialogue that was officially opened by the Permanent Secretary of Fisheries, Mr Pene Baleinabuli. Participants represented government ministries, development agencies, UN agencies, civil society, international institutions, Pacific regional agencies, women’s groups, international NGOs and academia. Prior to the dialogue, participants received the following from the Secretariat: (i) Invitation to participate in the dialogue (ii) Dialogue Agenda (iii) Relevant resource materials (reading materials, video links etc.) (iv) Reporting template identifying questions and topics for discussion groups Dialogue Format – Registration of participants (online in advance and on the day itself) – Official opening address by the Permanent Secretary for Fisheries – Setting the Scene What is the UN World Food Systems Summit 2021? (Video on the Summit by Dr Agnes Kalibata) – What is a Food System? (Examination of existing Fiji and Pacific food systems, including strengths and vulnerabilities) by the Director of Fisheries – Presentations on Action Track 2 o Non-Communicable Diseases – Ministry of Health and Medical Services o Blue Food - Ministry of Fisheries o Green Food – Ministry of Agriculture – Discussion groups on themes and questions focused on questions such as (i) What are the contributing factors to unhealthy diets leading to the high rate of NCDs in Fiji? (ii) Highlight areas which need improvement in order to enhance healthy diets in Fiji (iii) What are the transformations needed in Fiji’s current Food System in order to address NCDs in Fiji? (iv) Who are the key players that can make transformation happen? (v) Are there barriers preventing this? – Participation and Engagement – Through crowdsourcing using Slido questions, live polls, zoom chat, zoom breakout discussion groups, plenary reports/discussions and presentations. Group reporting templates were also shared with participants to review following the dialogue to allow them the opportunity to include any information that may have been missed out by rapporteurs – Communications and media – The outcomes of the dialogue and key messages from the Fiji Convenor were highlighted in a Press Release issued to the media which received extensive coverage by local mainstream media and on social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter). UNFSS hashtags #UNFSS @foodsystems #SDGs and #foodsystems were used in all media content to ensure that messaging had a multiplier effect. Links to media coverage are included in the Attachments section at the end of this report.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Dialogue focused on a comprehensive exploration of Fiji's food systems as follows:

1. Strand 1 - Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Ministry of Health and Medical Services

The 2011 WHO STEPwise Approach to NCD Risk Factor Surveillance (STEPS) survey found 0.6% increase in those smoking cigarettes (20.7% in total), 9% increase in alcohol consumption (30.6% in total), 8.5% increase in obesity (32.1% in total) and 0.8mmol/L increase in mean fasting blood glucose compared to the previous survey in 2002. This survey also reported that 85% of participants did not consume five serves of vegetables and fruits per day, as it is recommended. Overall, NCDs are estimated to cause 84% of all deaths in Fiji. According to the Economic Burden Report Fiji, 2018, the country loses FJD 406 million (almost 200 million USD) per year due to this problem.

Fiji is changing its dietary pattern over the years, as dietary intake studies showed that more people are shifting away from the traditional root crops to a more cereal-based diet with high dependence on food imports.

Fiji has joined 22 other Pacific Island countries and territories in the Pacific Monitoring Alliance for NCD Action (MANA) to work on a prioritized list of actions such as reduced salt consumption, trans-fat, unhealthy food marketing to children, food fiscal policies, healthy food policies in schools and food-based dietary guidelines. Major gaps identified from the MANA dashboard include the need for a National Taskforce to have controls on tobacco industry interference, trans-fat, food marketing to children and alcohol advertising. Other areas for action include taxation-based approaches, enforcement, strengthening legislation and availability smoking cessation support. Complementary actions will need more awareness raising and settings-based approach.

2. Strand 2 - Blue Food, Ministry of Fisheries

The main focus of the presentation was on Aquaculture Projects, with huge potential in terms of Blue Food and currently spread out in the four divisions in Fiji, involving 470 farmers and 815 ponds. The different initiatives aiming to increase food security, improve the livelihoods of rural people and generate income and employment. The main initiatives include the Aquaculture Project (tilapia farming and freshwater prawn farming), the Freshwater Aquaculture Development Programme (tilapia farming and freshwater prawn farming), the Brackish Water Development Programme (shrimp farming and sandfish farming), and the Mariculture Development Programme (giant clam farming, seaweed farming and edible oyster farming). Limitations identified for this work include the delay in the endorsement of the National Fisheries Policy and Fiji Policy on Food and Nutrition Security. Ministry of Fisheries coastal development programme focused on sustainable development and management, lack of capacities within officers due to high staff turnover and budget shortages to conduct development and awareness programs.

As a way forward, the Ministry of Fisheries would like to see the endorsement of policies and bills, robust awareness on the importance of healthy seafood handling, processing and consumption at all levels, enabling platforms for more open communications, data collections and sharing among cross-cutting agencies, focused research on local commodities for sustainable development, targeted fisheries development projects to include healthy diets benefits, seafood post processing and handling and capacity building of officers and communities on the importance of seafood production chain and the importance of healthy diets.

3. Strand 3 - Green Food, Ministry of Agriculture

The situation analysis revealed that dietary patterns have changed and moved away from traditional root crops to a more cereal-based diet (imported foods), less consumption of vegetables and fruits. A recent study found that most food outlets within school environment selling sugar sweetened beverages and high availability of sweet and salty snacks in school canteens. Different studies show most farmers in Fiji indicated that COVID-19 restrictions adversely impacted their capacity to produce and sell crops while market vendors repo

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

A summary of the main outcomes of the Group Discussions is reported in the next section, however, below are additional findings across the three thematic areas:

1. Strand 1 - Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Ministry of Health and Medical Services

The main contributing factors to unhealthy diets that could lead to the high rate of NCDs in Fiji include poverty and unhealthy food choices. Processed foods are cheap, healthy foods are more expensive, so behaviour change is a challenge. Other factors identified cultural and religious aspects of food habits, not eating balanced meals from the three main food groups, no dietary diversity, less consumption of fruits and vegetables due to difficult to access them especially during COVID-19 lockdowns and movement restrictions and lack of education and nutritional knowledge (especially for the lower income group and marketing or advertisements of unhealthy foods).

Fiji needs transformation in the current Food System to address NCDs. Many key players can make this transformation happen including people living with NCDs, communities, research institutions and universities, government and private sector, development partners, NGOs etc. Some elements that are needed are a bottom-up approach, more technology, increased budget to build a strong economic argument, and building the capacities of many stakeholders.

2. Strand 2 - Blue Food, Ministry of Fisheries

Blue food is around the engagement of women and other marginalized groups that are engaged in fisheries - they are critical in the food nutritional security space. The subsistence fisheries space (where women dominate) does not get enough attention, and needs to be better integrated into planning and development of blue food production systems. There is a need to fully engage women and other marginalized groups that are critical in the food nutritional security space, giving them a voice in the blue food dialogue. This means improving our data collection, and improve inclusion in policy development and implementation.

Blue foods can contribute to healthier diets by replacing less healthy body building (protein) foods such as tinned meats and other processed foods that are high in salt and are highly consumed in Fiji. Promoting fresh food and less processed foods to reduce NCDs.

Impact of COVID-19 is a ground reality in our communities where lockdown restrictions are affecting the production and livelihood of villagers that depends on fish and have turned to barter system (Navakavu Village was mentioned as an example).

3. Strand 3 - Green Food, Ministry of Agriculture

Fiji has high dependency on processed foods and a change of mind-set is needed on our young generation through awareness and educational programs. COVID is an opportunity to realise the role green food can play, previously people turned to commercial crops such as ginger but after COVID people moved to other crops and home gardening to feed themselves. Road side stalls, which have been promoted during this period, have offered more opportunities to sell and buy healthy foods locally. Opportunities of e-commerce platforms, capacity, technology (biogas with food waste from the community) to have direct link to the market are also key. During COVID-19, the Market for Change Project (implemented in partnership by UN Women and UN Development Programme, UNDP) observed that due to economic and social issues in the West Division, there was an oversupply of vegetables and lots were wasted.

Farm has to provide food and income shift into a more commercial stage of farming, 1-2 Ha; many communities grow cassava and other products that could be exported. Production capacity in the country is not enough with no supply consistency. Value supply chain needs more support with products that are market driven. 70% of products in the rural community go to the markets, 30% support the food security of the producers and their families.

Strengthening of linkages among the seeds for some value chains and zoning our food production system according to weather and soil type would be important. Some efforts on scaling up urban environments for production, lower price fluctuations, support settlements, gender transformative approach for women-based violence, family work together in the back yard gardening and other initiatives to bring food to the table were also discussed.

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	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

Strand 1 – Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Ministry of Health and Medical Services

Some ideas to transform the current Food System in Fiji are the need to transfer knowledge between generations and to teach the value of traditional foods at schools. Informal markets should be moved to formal. The endorsement of the Fiji Policy on Food and Nutrition Security, increasing tax on unhealthy foods, improve the research and development capacity and increase technology involving youth to address the complex food systems, and better data for policy and decision making were also mentioned. Private sectors as gate keepers of the food system could reformulate products to reduce salt, sugar and fats. The ministries of Health and Education should collaborate in the enforcement of canteen guidelines in schools. Multi-sectoral partnerships and Champions to promote healthy living were also discussed.

Some of the barriers are resistance to behaviour change, limited resources, research gaps to design better strategies, outdated information, more action on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health to be included on Food and Nutrition Security, late detection of NCDs, unhealthy environment leading to unhealthy lifestyles and NCDs complexities. Some ideas to overcome these barriers are to shift the focus to positive behaviour outcomes, and increasing education and land investments for agriculture.

Strand 2 – Blue Food, Ministry of Fisheries

In addition to more inclusive policies, an area that needs to be improved to maximize access to healthy foods in a sustainable manner is the enforcement of regulations. For example those regarding sizes of fish caught and the allocation of the amount of fish per fisherman and marketing regulations for fresh fish at the point of sale (when fish are cleaned and cut up ready for cooking difficult to check if the fish is fresh). Sea foods, farmed fish and prawns need to be made available to consumers due to their nutritional value. Value addition including looking at "waste" and "leakages" in the blue food systems (especially under COVID-19), adopting traditional knowledge of food storage in remote areas and scale up investment within community current practices were also pointed out. Invest in technological innovation and transfer, focus beyond the farm, shift incentives to reward sustainability and storage or quality control. School curriculum may be reviewed with specific emphasis on micronutrients in fish that are healthy and edible.

Local markets including virtual options with better information could be strengthened; better package labelling and improving transport and enhanced marketing strategies would increase fish consumption should also be considered. Benefits of eating fresh foods versus canned foods should be emphasised to the public (for example TV programme similar to Pacific Food Revolution). Finance instruments from donor partners could be also explored. Transformation in Fiji's food system should include boosting blue food production to include community experiences such as the marine protected area (MPA), with spill-over effects showing positives, as shared by the Navakavu community. More awareness on the potential benefits for other communities is needed as well as making them formal through the inclusion of better licensing platform on fishing rights access.

Barriers will include making markets COVID friendly in these challenging times. Lack of awareness in promoting attractive cooking recipes for blue food and prices and its affordability in both local and overseas markets.

Strand 3- Green Food, Ministry of Agriculture

In order to maximise access to healthy foods which are available and affordable, seeds distribution for food gardens need to be accompanied with a training manual in vernacular languages on how to plant and germinate their own seeds. Organic farming should be promoted by the government and linked to community engagement ensuring that they meet the Pacific Organic Standards (IFAD).

Value addition and compositing would reduce food wastage.

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KEYWORDS

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	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Strand 1 – Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Ministry of Health and Medical Services

The money from taxation of unhealthy foods could be redirected to Food and Nutrition Security initiatives. Legislations to be applied to unhealthy foods should be mandatory as for the tobacco act. Messages from government, private sector etc. to the public can be conflicting creating confusion for consumers.

Need to look through the lens of the local community in terms of consumption of high value foods versus lower nutrients at a cheaper cost.

Some participants thought that COVID-19 has attracted too much attention/resources but looking at NCD deaths versus COVID-19 deaths in Fiji, there should be a better balance.

Strand 2 – Blue Food, Ministry of Fisheries

Regarding marketing practices, some tensions were highlighted between restrictions versus trade and producers versus middlemen (where producers are benefiting less in terms of cost).

Another area of divergence relates to the need to be aware of mercury contamination in fish that could also have health implications. A gazette collaboration work between MOF and MOA enforcing the Ridge to reef to help lessening the damaging from feeding ground for fish through deforestation and over use of chemicals.

People are too busy at work and cleaning fish is time consuming whereas tinned fish or other processed meat product is more convenient.

Strand 3 – Green Food, Ministry of Agriculture

There seems to be some divergence between prioritising commercial commodities and food crops. Some participants asked if Fiji has enough food for all, while others thought that food exports should be encouraged (as for example root crops).

The seeds distribution programme were very successful providing healthy food to many families, however some vegetables flooded at certain points in time and this resulted in waste produce. Some participants thought that pest and diseases should be addressed as this problem could affect export pathways later on and that collaboration with the Biosecurity Authority in regards to clean seeds should be increased.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **<https://www.facebook.com/fiji.agriculture/posts/2917526578518527>**
<https://www.facebook.com/fiji.agriculture/posts/2917526578518527>
- **Fisheries collaborates towards UN Food Systems Summit**
<https://www.facebook.com/fisheriesfiji/photos/a.918129004969662/3930562280392971/>
- **Eliminating wasteful patterns of food consumption is critical**
<https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/eliminating-wasteful-patterns-of-food-consumption-is-critical/>
- **Fiji to establish roadmap to ensure safe nutritious food over next decade**
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-05/17/c_139951626.htm
- **Fiji to establish roadmap to ensure safe nutritious food over next decade**
http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2021-05/17/content_77505342.htm
- **Importance of our Oceans**
<https://mobile.twitter.com/FisheriesOf/status/1396563268496355330>
- **Food Systems Dialogue challenged to seek culturally appropriate game changing**
<https://www.facebook.com/fiji.agriculture/posts/food-systems-dialogue-challenged-to-seek-culturally-appropriate-game-changing-so/2917526578518527/>