

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Monday, 10 May 2021 09:48 GMT +12:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Action Track 1 Food Systems Stakeholders Dialogue
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Mr Ritesh Dass-Permanent Secretary-Ministry of Agriculture
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23722/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23722/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Member State
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	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

72

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

9

19-30

55

31-50

7

51-65

1

66-80

80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

26 Male

46 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

24 Agriculture/crops

3 Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

2 Trade and commerce

7 Education

2 Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

1 Financial Services

7 Health care

2 Nutrition

24 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

3 Local Non-Governmental Organization

1 International Non-Governmental Organization

1 Indigenous People

8 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

22 Government and national institution

10 Regional economic community

12 United Nations

1 International financial institution

5 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

1 Consumer group

6 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 1 – Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all. The Fiji National Dialogue for Action Track 1 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 Health and Medical Services, the National Food and Nutrition Committee 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) Reducing Hunger (ii) Access to Nutritious Food (iii) Safe Food. The Action Track 1 dialogue was Chaired by the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services, who also led the three main presentations. 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 72 stakeholders participated in the Dialogue from diverse, multi stakeholder backgrounds consisting of government ministries, civil society, international and regional agencies (including UN agencies), academia and other key actors

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

As highlighted above, the Fiji national dialogue on Action Track 1 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 72 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 1 – Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all was held on 10 May, 2021 at a crucial time as the country battled its second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. 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. Seventy-two participants took part in the dialogue. They 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 Fiji Convenor – 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) – Presentations on Action Track 1 – Poverty and inequality – Ministry of Agriculture – Access to Nutritious Food - Ministry of Health and Medical services (MoHMS) – Safe Food – MoHMS – Discussion groups on themes and questions focused on questions such as (i) What are the main poverty issues in Fiji? (ii) Is inequality an issue? Who are worse off? (iii) What are the transformations needed in Fiji’s current Food System in order to address this? (iv) What opportunities are needed for increasing incomes across the food system? Social protection? (v) What barriers have prevented 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. Access to Nutritious Food, Ministry of Health & Medical Services

The nutritional situation of Fiji's population is determined by data collected from the decennial National Nutrition Survey (latest 2015) and the food availability information from the Food Balance Sheet. Dietary pattern is shifting away from the traditional diet of root crops to more of a cereal-based diet. Starchy staples of root crops provided 22% of total energy in the diet while cereal-based foods contributed 38% to the total dietary energy per day.

Fiji has high dependency on food imports where 69% of calories were imported while only 31% was sourced locally in 2010.

Fiji is burdened with Non-Communicable Diseases, Communicable Diseases and Micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia. In the last 10 years, anaemia is still a problem in all age groups from children under 5 years (63%), 5-14 years (45%), 15-17 years (43.5%), adult 18 years and above male (32.4%) and female (48.2%) and pregnant women (40%).

### 2. Poverty and Inequality, Ministry of Agriculture

The poverty result of the 2019-20 Household Income and Expenditure Survey was addressed. At national level, the proportion of people living below the poverty line was 29.9%. More people in the rural areas (41.5%) compared to urban areas (20.4%) are living below the poverty line Household heads who have more members in the household are found to be poor.

The average household size for poor households is 5.6 while non-poor households is 3.9. The same trend is also observed between poor and non-poor households in urban and rural areas. Poverty rates were also high with household heads that did not complete at least primary education. By employment sector, more poor households are employed with non-subsistence agriculture sector (44%) in comparison to agriculture subsistence sector (41%). People who live with a household head that is employed in the private sector have higher poverty rates than those in public sector.

In observing the relationship between agriculture and poverty in Fiji, it was found that 41.4% of the rural population live below the poverty line, whereas 73.4% of the rural population lives in agricultural households. In terms of rural households, 45.5% of rural households live below the poverty line, while 86.6% of these rural households are agricultural households. This reiterates the need to develop the agricultural sector to alleviate poverty in Fiji.

### 3. Safe Food, Ministry of Health & Medical Services

The burden of food borne diseases in the Pacific showed that unsafe food has caused many acute and chronic diseases, with more than 200 diseases spread through food. In Fiji 14 cases and 2 hospital admissions of food borne diseases were reported in 2018.

Some key aspects proposed for the discussion include enabling policy and regulatory standards to protect consumers, upgrading and accreditation of current laboratories for testing foods for monitoring and compliance purposes, creating more awareness and collaboration on enforcement to relevant stakeholders, multi-sector collaboration to enable more participation for wet markets to farmers markets, more awareness and understanding of evidence-based approach for food safety, empower consumer voices and innovations in the food safety system. Food safety challenges include limited resources, limited knowledge and understanding with decision and policy makers on Food Safety, multi-sectoral strategy on ensuring food safety.

## 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

### Main findings and conclusions

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. Reduce Food Insecurity

Fiji needs to transform its mindset by focusing on a whole of society approach and build capacities on systems thinking. There is a need to identify linkages, break silos, improve food supply chain (market, transport, infrastructure etc) and reposition and market healthy foods to make them more appealing. There is also a need to relook at government policies to support transformation.

Opportunities to increase income across the food systems need to be reconstructed and rebuilt to identify the root causes of poverty. There is a need to invest more in the next generation in communities while addressing policies.

#### 2. Increase Access to Nutritious Food

Access to healthy foods is an issue in Fiji, with different reasons identified in the Dialogue, as those related to regulations, need to boost national production, infrastructure and high costs of transport from rural to urban areas etc. The high cost of production in Fiji and exorbitant bank lending fees were also identified as barriers to access nutritious foods.

Initiatives bring about change require political and should be driven by an overarching authority, as the Prime Minister's Office. Priority investment by government should focus on agriculture and fisheries since these sectors play second fiddle to tourism. With commitment and investment, implementation can take place and boost industry by the inclusion of insurance policies for farmers, for example. We need to work with financial institutions to provide access to finance for farmers to grow our agriculture sector.

#### 3. Safe Food

Pending food safety related policies need to be approved so programmes can be implemented. Some legislation and regulations need to be reviewed as well

The Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health need to link together closely on food safety issues and strengthening of food testing capabilities.

More technology and training on food safety is required.

### ACTION TRACKS

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### KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights		Governance
	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

### Strand 1 – Reducing Hunger and Inequality

Lack of access to land for people to be able to grow their crops and get fresh foods is a key aspect related to poverty in Fiji. This is especially important in urban areas around informal settlements where children and pregnant women are suffering the most in terms of triple burden malnutrition. For example, obesity, anemia, underweight. Inequality, especially with vulnerable groups, worsened after COVID-19. Lack of equal opportunities, access to services e.g phone ownership, employment and resources are all impacted.

The game changing solution is to look at poverty from an intersectional lens (gender, ethnicity, education, etc) to ensure no one is left behind. Fiji needs to be more inclusive and nutrition-sensitive in its policies with social protection beneficiaries and should consider basic services for people in this space. Opportunities to increase income across the food systems need to be reconstructed and rebuilt to identify the root causes of poverty and invest more in new generations within communities while addressing policies.

### Strand 2 – Increase Access to Nutritious Food

In Fiji, people are eating more processed foods particularly in the urban areas where the media has played a big role in marketing some of these foods. In order to change that, informal markets should be linked to formal ones, changing concepts and behavior to encourage and promote eating local healthy foods. Small and Medium Enterprises should be supported for mass production of vegetables and fruits in order to ensure availability and affordability at all levels. Some ideas for the way forward included creating a robust online system throughout the value chain in the food system; increase communication access to rural areas to increase marketing opportunities and promote more involvement in the barter system.

The challenge of lack of affordability was also addressed through advocating for more planting and production at all levels and Ministry of Agriculture to lead through pilot and model farms, increase tax on imported foods, improve research capacity on productivity within ministries.

It is important to increase self-sufficiency and reduce heavy reliance on rice and wheat imports as well as enhancing partnerships to sustain development projects and promote diversification in communities. Legislation should be in place for any house built to have a space for backyard gardening including informal settlements.

Regulations need to be reviewed to include High Fat, Sugar & Salt reduction targets to make foods healthier; review the level of fortificants on flour and monitor its iron content. Education plays an important role; the Ministry of Education may revise its curriculum to include food and nutrition security and value chain in the food system.

### Strand 3 – Safe Food

Legislation and regulation approval processes in government are too lengthy. Food Safety Act needs to be reviewed to align with trade agreements requirements. Accessing data and information on food safety is an issue since this is not readily available. More work is required to stop heavy metal contaminants in food and water. Government officers need to be equipped to conduct food safety checks. Technology such as development of Apps is required to track and trace and ensure consumer safety. Awareness is needed on the use of pesticides for farmers and consumers and other alternatives such as home-made solutions that could be used instead of pesticides. Better coordination on reporting of food safety issues from relevant agencies on marine ecosystem as for example fish poisoning.

The group identified areas or types of food that need more attention in Fiji such as local vegetables, fruits and root crops, fish and seafood, meat and livestock and food adulteration on local and imported food products. Meat handling needs more attention where illegal slaughtering of livestock is happening in the community especially for social functions or roadside sales. Pending food safety related policies need to be approved so programmes could be implemented. Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health need to link together closely on food s

### ACTION TRACKS

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### KEYWORDS

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			Environment and Climate

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Culturally, Fijians and Pacific islanders are not comfortable with disagreeing with one another publicly or in a meeting setting. The Pacific way is through consensus and silence is used to signify agreement in a formal setting. Hence, there were not many issues of divergence emerging from group discussions, although we acknowledge that this may have differed had there been stakeholders with more divergent views present.

The one area of divergence occurred during discussions on Strand 1 (Reducing Hunger and Inequality) and was related to land degradation and its negative impact on fisheries; conflicting policies such as poultry/ livestock rearing within residential properties which are contrary to the Public Health Act. Policies prioritizing yaqona and tobacco for economic benefits (which may favour wealthier producers) have negative social and health impacts that need to be considered.

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### KEYWORDS

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# ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

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## RELEVANT LINKS

- **Fiji leads National Dialogue on Food Systems**  
<https://www.fiji.gov.fj/Media-Centre/News/FIJI-LEADS-NATIONAL-DIALOGUE-ON-FOOD-SYSTEMS>
- **Fiji leads national dialogue on food systems**  
<https://www.pressreader.com/fiji/fiji-sun/20210516/281685437734311>
- **Fiji leads national dialogue on food systems**  
<https://www.fijione.tv/news-posts/fiji-leads-national-dialogue-on-food-systems/>
- **Fiji begins dialogue on food system**  
<https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/covid-19/fiji-begins-dialogue-on-food-systems/>
- **Action Track 1 commences**  
<https://twitter.com/fijiangovt/status/1389793230896590848?s=21>
- **Fiji Kickstart Food Systems Dialogue**  
<https://www.facebook.com/207532522613024/posts/4285970811435821/?d=n>
- **Fiji leads National Dialogue**  
<https://www.facebook.com/1470667426537790/posts/2911396149131570/?d=n>
- **Series of Dialogue**  
<https://www.facebook.com/1470667426537790/posts/2915650755372776/?d=n>
- **Fiji Commence series of dialogues**  
<https://www.fijitimes.com/fiji-commences-series-of-national-dialogues-on-food-systems/>