

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Friday, 9 July 2021 13:00 GMT +01:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Building resilient and sustainable food systems: How can emerging lessons from communities affected by Covid-19 shape the way forward?
CONVENED BY	Institute of Development Studies, UK, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and International Development Research Centre, Canada
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/24209/
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

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18	1	19-30	43	31-50	16	51-65	66-80	80+
------	---	-------	----	-------	----	-------	-------	-----

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

28	Male	33	Female		Prefer not to say or Other
----	------	----	--------	--	----------------------------

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

12	Agriculture/crops		Education	6	Health care
	Fish and aquaculture	2	Communication	5	Nutrition
2	Livestock		Food processing	18	National or local government
	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets		Utilities
2	Environment and ecology		Food industry		Industrial
	Trade and commerce		Financial Services	14	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
	Small-scale farmer	25	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
2	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
4	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People		Consumer group
30	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

Embrace Multi-stakeholder Inclusivity: This event was designed to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders with perspectives from Government, research, development practitioners and local experiences. **Commit to the summit:** The dialogue was designed to directly feed into the summit process and to support the vision for sustainable food systems. **Be respectful:** To ensure that all voices within the dialogue could be heard, we fully briefed facilitators for the breakout groups to ensure space to contribute was given to all. We also committed to understanding and discussing both converging and diverging views and to capture these in the write up.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Reflect complexity: The dialogue was very rich with a diverse range of perspectives and ideas on priority actions. We created space for participants to contribute at length, capturing the complexity and depth. **Act with Urgency:** This event drew upon the current research being conducted across the globe on the effects of COVID-19 on marginalised groups and drew out the learnings for food systems from this rapidly emerging evidence. **Complement the work of others:** The basis of this dialogue was through bringing together 3 co-convening parties all of whom are working in the area of food systems and livelihoods (IDRC, IDS, ACIAR). Through this partnership, the complementarities between the work have been highlighted. In addition the creation of smaller discussion groups enabled participants to seek out new connections and build new relationships around their work. **Build Trust:** As with being respectful facilitators were briefed to create a 'safe space' for all participants to voice their perspectives. The event was recorded for note taking, but no views or perspectives will be attributed to any individual.

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

The convenor guidance from the summit pages was incredibly helpful in drawing out the practicalities around the principles of engagement when organising and hosting the dialogue. Well organised facilitator guidance to ensure that in the small group discussions facilitators support inclusive dialogue, mutual respect and fostering connections.

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

Event title: Building resilient and sustainable food systems: How can emerging lessons from communities affected by Covid-19 shape the way forward?

COVID-19 is having a major impact on households' production and access to good quality, nutritious food, due to losses of income, combined with increasing food prices, and restrictions to movements of people, inputs and products. The hardest hit in both rural and urban areas are frequently women and those who work in informal economies. This dialogue focused on drawing out the lessons and priority actions that need to be taken to respond to food security challenges in a way that addresses informality and gender dynamics, for food systems to become resilient, equitable and sustainable into the next decade. In particular the discussion generated lessons and ideas around advancing equitable livelihoods, building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress and to ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all.

The design of the dialogue was informed, in part, by ongoing research supported by IDRC, IDS and by ACIAR to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on food systems and livelihoods in different regions and contexts, helping the convenors to frame the entry points for discussion and identify actors to be part of the process. Please see relevant links section below.

The dialogue brought together a range of stakeholders and perspectives on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems and livelihoods, focusing on the evidence and experience generated from the most affected communities in low-income countries to generate ideas for action. The participants brought together knowledge and experience from across Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific and represented a wide range of thematic areas and sectors. Special attention was given to bring a southern voice and perspective into the discussion.

The key discussion topics were:

What does the evidence on impacts of COVID on food security and livelihoods suggest governments and communities need to do to reduce the vulnerability of women and other marginalized people?

What are the mechanisms through which civil society and governments can work together to identify what works to support more resilient, inclusive and healthy food systems, and to scale them to different agroecological and sociocultural contexts?

The event curator, opened the event and welcomed participants.

To set the scene we invited 3 keynote speakers from a range of geographic locations and perspectives to share insights from their work and reflect on the ways forward to support sustainable food systems for all, with particular focus on the most vulnerable groups.

These speakers were:

- Julio Berdegue (FAO) - FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Dicta Ogisi (CPED) – Professor of Agricultural Economics, Delta State University, and Senior Researcher at the Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED), Benin City, Nigeria. an independent Think Tank based in Benin City dedicated to promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty and inequality through policy oriented research and active engagement on development issues.
- Mariame Maiga (CORAF) - Regional Gender and Social Development Adviser for the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) based in Dakar, Senegal.

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

Responses from the political sector and civil society emphasized the immediate response to the immediate effects of the pandemic such as providing access to food to alleviate the impact on populations (social protection). In most instances these social protection responses need to be expanded to reach the most vulnerable – including women, youth, people with disabilities, displaced persons, and informal sector actors – but there is evidence across contexts that rapid large scale universally targeted social protection policies can reduce the impacts of shocks. There is also a need to ensure that the immediate responses include supporting the food systems to ensure they remain functional, for example through supporting access to markets. Although essential, we also need to develop longer-term strategies (based on access to gender-specific technologies, access to credit and guarantee funds, particularly for women and young people) if we are to develop food production systems that are more resilient (less vulnerable to pandemics) and equitable.

Food Systems are complex; we need more complex approaches that recognize intersectoral linkages for the development of risk assessment systems for more effective response. Comprehensive policy responses must consider environmental, social protection, health and food security factors in a contextual, evidence-informed way. The precarity of the informal sector has deepened and addressing this will be key to fostering more resilient food systems.

Key to design and delivery of comprehensive policy responses should be the inclusion of local voices in decision making and strategy design as well as indigenous knowledge and food production practices. Civil society can be a link to understanding the needs of the most impacted (we define this to include women, youth, people with disabilities, displaced persons and those working in the informal sector), and there is a need to strengthen coordination between formal government responses and community level responses (through networks, community organizations, civil society). It was suggested that greater collaboration with civil society may help foster trust in government responses in contexts where trust is weak.

The dialogue also highlighted importance of strengthening the resilience of local food production systems (essential for reducing vulnerability) while strengthening global systems to enable a global response to local crises. The coexistence of local systems/strengthening of local production systems while strengthening global production is an important challenge that we face in reforming and transforming food systems. In the past, changes were made to the benefit of some, and to the detriment of others.

Dealing with these issues will take political power and financial resources. For example, very few farmers have access to finance, much less so in developing countries. But adaptation to climate change and other shocks requires financial input from farmers. There is a gap in the ambition of the narrative (transform food systems, adapt to climate change, build resilience and confront COVID) versus the reality (inadequate provision of finance for farmers). Where are the resources that would make this agenda feasible? How can access to funding for adaptation resilience be facilitated?

There is a huge opportunity to use climate change adaptation and ecosystem restoration as a source of jobs creation. It is far more economical to create a job in ecosystem restoration, than to create one in construction, which is the typical recovery program. This approach to green growth could help to create and support essential livelihoods in the wake of the pandemic.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

What does the evidence on impacts of COVID on food security and livelihoods suggest governments and communities need to do to reduce the vulnerability of women and other marginalized people?

Livelihood impacts along the value chain and increasing food insecurity among the broader population due to disruptions to food systems highlights the need to balance containment measures and public health concerns with food systems impacts, ensuring access to both inputs for production and markets. Moving goods between countries became challenging due to containment measures in place (food security was more impacted in countries that adopted more drastic health measures), and uncertainty around border closures impacted millions of animals ready to be slaughtered that could no longer cross borders due to border restrictions. Food distribution was particularly a challenge for communities with limited capacity to transport food. Mobility constraints were an aggravating factor for large facilities which depended on workforce and labour coming from abroad which was restrained, but also affected small scale producers relying on external labour at critical moment in the farming season.

Lack of access to food and inputs because of the public health measures meant that people had to use strategies to adapt that were increasingly severe and harsh such as having to skip meals (especially women), selling land, and other various mitigation measures. Market closures and suspension of cross border trade as containment measures were particularly detrimental to those in the informal sector, small producers, and migrant farm workers – many of whom are women or youth – and relief measures such as social protection programs should be more targeted in addressing the impacts to these specific groups. When considering how vulnerability has increased during the pandemic, it is essential to also recognize the ways that confinement, restrictions on mobility and loss of livelihoods impacted social dynamics, including increased violence at a household level. Differential impacts of reopening may hold insights for how long-term recovery should be approached. In many instances, men are quicker to get back into the workforce than women.

Emergency response systems were insufficient to respond to pandemics. Sectoral, segmental approaches didn't work well during COVID. The pandemic highlighted the need to integrate responses from different sectors (health, agriculture, trade, etc). Across contexts, increasing food prices reinforced the need for greater action by governments and the private sector to ensure affordability and access to nutritious food. Fixed price schemes and school feeding programs were highlighted as one step towards addressing affordability issues, but these must ensure greater access to nutritious food. Limited access to quality food during the pandemic has been the result of challenges in production, transport, affordability of food, and compounded by food safety considerations.

Civil society and non-governmental organizations offer important links between government responses and the most impacted. Front line non-governmental organizations and social support organizations such as food banks are essential for government responses to be able to reach the most vulnerable and less accessible populations. Cooperatives can play an important role in crisis situations because they are already embedded in the communities and are setting up production diversification systems, to support communications on COVID, protection measures, etc. More active and dynamic cooperatives set up awareness-raising activities, sought seeds to diversify people's diets and kept the commercial channels open to sell production. Their members were less impacted by public health measures than those from less dynamic ones. Greater coordination between governments and civil society responses should be established to ensure that policies better reflect differentiated needs, and those most impacted can access relief and recovery programs.

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

What are the mechanisms through which civil society and governments can work together to identify what works to support more resilient, inclusive and healthy food systems, and to scale them to different agroecological and sociocultural contexts?

Potential mechanisms could involve technical assistance, capacity-building in the use of bottom-up approaches, promoting public-private sector partnerships, income diversification, social protection for the poorest, conduct more research and strengthen food distribution to reach markets.

There is a need to increase resilience at the local level and concurrently capitalize on global food production resilience (global markets with transport and logistics systems which were considered essential). Each supply chain is going to have its own unique vulnerability and solution profile. At the local level, greater attention to strengthening food sovereignty based on traditional systems is needed, and this should be accompanied by support to more sustainable production at a global level. The pandemic and its effect on food systems highlighted the importance of social programs in response interventions, as well as the importance of supporting small businesses rather than only individuals. Community involvement in project cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) is essential for the identification of responses adapted to ecological and socio-cultural contexts.

Provision by governments of credit and guarantee funds to support the development of small agricultural enterprises among women and young people, combined to capacity building would create favorable conditions for agricultural development. Access to credit is essential to support the development of agricultural businesses by vulnerable populations. The agricultural sector has enormous potential in terms of job creation and wealth, and governments must support the transition of small producers into the formal economy.

Only technologies that are resilient to climate change, gender sensitive (labor-saving) and nutritious (biofortification), will foster resilient and inclusive food systems especially in context of vulnerability aggravated by shocks such as pandemics. Digitization of agriculture is important but often women are the ones who do not have access to phones so it's important to ensure women are included in solutions. Digital tools can help the implementation of agricultural insurance systems. Cell phones can help formal and informal small-scale producers document their practices and show that crop losses are due to due to climate extremes or infestation, therefore supporting farmers claims and reassuring insurers that claims are valid (could we do the same for pandemics?)

Pandemic impacts reinforce the imperative to bridge humanitarian and development assistance. Food security shocks related to COVID have compounded food security shocks from drought, and those related to forced displacement and other climate shocks. Women, youth and other marginalized groups are most impacted. Relief efforts must be combined with long-term recovery efforts.

Governments need to take advantage of mechanisms put in place by community and civil society organizations, especially in rural communities where they can leverage existing trust, networks and more nuanced understanding of community needs. Support to producer organizations that are already present in rural areas (cooperatives can disseminate information and reach their members) can increase resilience – coops are socially conscious economic entities that contribute to social cohesion. They provide access to technical, financial and information services so investment in coops benefits communities. Civil society groups in urban settings have also played a key role but are often under-funded and disconnected from both government responses and other community efforts. Without greater government support, it will be challenging to leverage the full potential of these organizations in long term recovery.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

Private sector must be part of recovery efforts, with a clear role to play in provision and distribution of nutritious and affordable food, in new modes of production that supports climate resilience. There is a huge opportunity to use climate change adaptation and ecosystem restoration as a source of jobs creation, and green growth could help to create and support essential livelihoods in the wake of the pandemic.

More timely and disaggregated data is needed to inform planning, policy and practice that meets the needs of and can be accessed by policymakers and producers to react to potential future shocks. Collecting, collating and analysing data, then preparing it for decision-makers, requires technical capacity. Governments must invest in gender-sensitive agricultural research (including scientific, technological capacity building and leadership for women and young agricultural researchers) and provide research grants to help develop technologies that respond to the needs of women, men, and disadvantaged populations. Efforts should be made to further investigate instances of resilience in the face of the pandemic and conditions that allowed actors to pivot quickly to establish different food supply systems, and how sustainable this is and what lessons this offers for building more resilient, equitable food systems moving forward. New ways of analysing data to generate predictions will be needed. Data and methods should be made open access so that other researchers can examine, analyse and interpret the information and provide peer review.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> Data & Evidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Governance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women & Youth Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade-offs |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and Climate |

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The prevalence of small producers in the informal economy is a big challenge. It is important to recognize the role and potential of the informal sector as a key player in local food systems. There are different perspectives on the formalization of the sector in a context such as COVID where informality is a vulnerability factor but, in some cases, can be a resilience factor for some of the producers. Participants raised questions about whether informal systems were more nimble than formal markets in times of crisis, and whether they might offer more environmentally sustainable approaches.

The dialogue surfaced different perspectives on the scale at which action should be prioritized. Some participants pointed to the value in large scale responses for broad based universal (not means tested) social protection policies, noting that mobilisation of robust safety nets must by design be large. Others called for greater attention to local and mid-level government responses which play a key role in implementation. Overall, participants supported the need to work at multiple scales.

While the need for greater collaboration between civil society actors and government was echoed by many, the impact of the pandemic on these linkages varied across contexts. Some noted that pandemic responses strengthened linkages between civil society and governments, particularly when it came to sensitization of COVID-19 information, while others pointed to increasingly fragmented food aid with civil society attempting to fill gaps in an uncoordinated way.

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

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Food systems and food security in the time of lockdowns: insights from sub-Saharan Africa**
<https://www.idrc.ca/en/research-in-action/food-systems-and-food-security-time-lockdowns-insights-sub-saharan-africa>
- **The Impact of Covid-19 on Livelihoods and Food Security**
<https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/16720>
- **COVID-19 and food systems in the Indo-Pacific: An assessment of vulnerabilities, impacts and opportunities for action**
<https://www.aciar.gov.au/publication/covid-19-and-food-systems>