

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 10 June 2021 13:30 GMT +07:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Asia-Pacific Regional Food Systems Dialogue
CONVENED BY	ESCAP, FAO, UNDRR, UNEP, WFP, WHO
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/24475/
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

726

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

362 Male

356 Female

8 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

47 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

12 Local Non-Governmental Organization

67 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

57 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

180 Government and national institution

5 Regional economic community

357 United Nations

1 International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

n/a

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

n/a

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

n/a

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

Interaction with participants was via questions during the planning stage of the event, and through questions and comments through a chatbox during the presentation/discussion time. Crowd surveys were conducted during the event to capture key words describing opportunities for change and priority action areas.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Asia-Pacific regional food systems dialogue was organized to (i) provide insights from the national dialogues that are currently being convened in the region on the five action tracks, and (ii) identify opportunities for regional and sub-regional collaboration. It considered cross-cutting issues that had emerged as priority areas for action during the recent Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (<https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/8>).

A diverse range of stakeholders participated in the event, consolidating regional views, perspectives and experiences regarding pathways and actions for equitable and sustainable food systems transformation and to support the implementation of the SDGs within the context of current realities.

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

Global food systems rely on national and regional ones to function properly. Regional food systems occupy a central role in ensuring a smooth transition between the national and global food systems. This underscores the importance for regional actions towards harnessing synergies.

The Asia-Pacific region is crucial for the global food system, considering its scale in terms of population, human capital, economy and productivity; and its interdependence with global aquatic and agroforestry food systems.

Regional cooperation and national transformation are the cross-cutting actions that can make communities and collections of stakeholders work together with national governments and local authorities to transform food systems and achieve the SDGs.

The region could increase food access and utilization by providing incentives to steer food consumption towards more diverse, healthy, and balanced diets by populations, especially women, children, and the urban poor, and improvement in food marketing and raise awareness.

Climate action could be supported by expanding agro-ecological practices and promoting resilient food systems that produce healthy food.

The region should tackle the vulnerabilities of women in agriculture by engaging women in policy-making process and understanding the challenges that women face such as lack of access and opportunities.

A shift in consumption patterns and production processes could be achieved by improving waste management systems, and through a focus on digitalization of the farm and rural economy.

Addressing supply chain practices at all stages and collaboration between primary food producers is key for making safe food available. Food standards should be harmonized at regional and sub regional level.

Social protection system should be leveraged, by expanding investments in social protection systems that take food security and the nutritional needs of vulnerable populations into considerations.

The region needs collaboration on technology transfer for more productive and climate resilient crops and practices, proper economic valuation of natural capital, and the improved access of farmers to land and social services. A business-conducive environment to attract private sector investments towards agricultural infrastructure is needed to grant farmers and consumers in the region access to wider markets and better products. This in turn calls for collaboration for regional standards and improved trade, as well as improved platforms linking food surplus and deficit countries to ensure food security.

During the dialogue, stakeholders stressed the importance of, and commitment to, disseminating game-changing solutions centered around new technologies through regional platforms; promoting family farming a viable livelihood within the UN Decade of Family farming; pioneering actions to enhance consumers experience of food access and safety; reimagining global agriculture and increasing sustainability through value chains; coordinating to ensure and champion environmental sustainability at the food systems summit and beyond; improving rural development and food systems, with operational focus on climate change.

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 - 1/2

MESSAGES FROM COUNTRY DIALOGUES AND NATIONAL CONVENORS

This session emphasized that food systems are a wide and cross-cutting topic which are at the same time locally specific. Instead of focusing on individual components of food systems, such as food security, nutrition, vulnerability etc., the concept of food systems has sensitized the stakeholders about the need for a holistic approach, and discussions are expanding from commodity to systems, from activity to chains, from actors to stakeholders, from consumption to health, from present to future generations.

Systems thinking is becoming more widespread. There is a paradigm shift from dealing with problems only inside 'silos', towards addressing problems in their entirety. Working across sectors and disciplines can be destabilizing but the dialogues are making stakeholders more comfortable with this approach and are understanding that food systems are key for the achievement of the SDGs. Increasing production is necessary but not sufficient as there is a need to simultaneously look at production, distribution and consumption in a systemic approach.

Stakeholders and partners have been encouraged to join a systems approach to localize sustainable production and identify areas of action ranging from the shift to healthy diets for poor communities, to resilience for people most exposed to shocks, to the recognition that unless a positive effort is made to engage the youth the food systems transformation will not be sustainable. Inclusion is key and the convenors work has to be accessible to all.

The dialogues provided an opportunity for government and people to take account of the learnings of the covid disruption and think about the strategic options for moving towards a national transformation of the food systems. Sustainability and resilience will be at the heart of this and rebuilding will focus on sustainable food systems, ensuring that women and youth are more central. This seems to be a common pattern especially in the Pacific. Inclusivity is making challenges and gaps turning into actions and the dialogue process is showing its value and will continue beyond the Summit.

Within the food systems approach it is important to give a central role to the people, including through safety nets and nutrition and health concerns, encompassing ecosystems and private enterprises. National dialogues in the region emphasized the involvement and empowerment of all stakeholders, and especially youth and women. Regional cooperation and national transformation are the cross-cutting actions that can make this happen, and make communities and collections of stakeholders join national governments and local authorities to transform food systems and achieve the SDGs.

Dialogues have been framed around the Summit action tracks or with a focus on country-relevant topics such as access to food, vulnerability to malnutrition, production of higher quality food, nature positive production systems for local farmers and fishers, resilience of food systems including interventions designed to ensure resilience at small farm level, making farmers' livelihoods stronger and secure, educate the public on nutritious and healthy patterns, and environment friendly and nutritious production.

Bringing together national and independent dialogues is key to the work of convenors who can start from existing strategies and use the dialogues to involve different stakeholders to develop pathways. Convenors make action tracks them locally specific within the countries, reflecting the diversity of food systems and people, with an overall strategic approach for a sustainable food systems transformation. Inclusion of additional action tracks is seen as a way to ensure national characteristics are brought into the Summit. Linking priorities from different countries and working together with partners in the region is instrumental to advance on the priority areas identified.

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 - 2/2

OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL ACTION

Participants representing different sectors and organizations discussed their role in making food systems more sustainable. Discussion was introduced by some recommendations outlined at the 8th APFSD:

- Achieving sustainable food systems requires an integrated approach;
- Leveraging social protection system to enhance food security and nutrition outcomes;
- Strengthening urban agriculture and local food production can improve nutrition and access to food among the urban poor;
- Restoring the health of agroecological systems will be needed to boost resilience;
- Effective recovery responses will need to pay particular attention to the gendered impacts of changes in the agricultural system;
- Digitalization can play an important role in strengthening sustainability and resilience through supply chain and improved traceability;
- Importance of data availability to inform policy and programming, including by providing regular data on household food security, affordability of diets, and consumer choices.

Climate induced stresses and shocks are magnified by social and political fault lines. Some countries have misalignment between farming policies, adaptation of financial and technical resources and climate adaption responses. Simulated modelling for implementing research informed climate smart agricultural techniques, new technologies for data collection and increased crop production are instrumental to feed the growing population with the same amount of arable land. Public research agencies should adopt these new technologies but need political will and commitment. Regional cooperation is needed for technology transfers.

For many people farming is not a choice. To advance equitable livelihoods for small farmers while promoting sustainable and efficient production methods there is a need to confer land rights to farmers and secure their access to lands and forests. At the same time, equal rights are needed by women farmers; notably ASEAN has a roadmap for gender sensitivities in farming. Other measures include promoting the agency of family farmers; increasing their social and political power, giving them access to economic and social services. We need to value the services provided by farmers, and appreciate biodiversity and fresh produce. This in turn calls for better infrastructure and access to local markets.

Better infrastructure can connect local consumers to wider markets, improving consumer choices and access to foods. Regional trade can promote enhanced food availability and access to healthier nutritious food. Addressing supply chain practices at all stages and collaboration between primary food producers is key for making safe food available. Food standards should be harmonized at regional and sub regional level. Nutrient information on packaged foods should be easy to interpret to allow consumers to make informed choices.

Rice is the staple crop for the region, but rice farming correlates with malnutrition, poverty, and depletion of natural resources. Water variance and availability is affected by drought and climate change, so we need better regional assurances and dialogue between surplus and deficit countries to ensure food security. Policy alignment is critical on safety standards as well as better data definitions to avoid food waste and loss and provide better predictability of crops and food availability. Nature positive production is already economically viable, but we fail to recognize it because we do not measure a range of negative and positive externalities across the value chain. We need perverse subsidies to be 'repurposed' to pro-nature alternatives, which would allow the price that consumers pay to better represent the 'true cost' of food.

Proper economic valuation of natural capital is unquantified at present but may become a key indicator of GDP. An economic structural transformation is the precondition for agriculture competitiveness and improved food systems. Farmers need access to infrastructure, finance, digitalization, transport etc. Low public sector investment makes private sector key, but it needs a more business-conducive environment.

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

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

n/a

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

ATTACHMENTS

- **Opportunities for Change**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Opportunities-for-Change.pdf>
- **Action Areas**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Action-Areas.pdf>

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Recording of the Dialogue**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGiJ8kGymu0>