

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 15 June 2021 12:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Innovation for Sustainable Food Systems: the role of New Improved Plant Varieties
CONVENED BY	World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) and International Seed Federation (ISF)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/25106/
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

152

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19 19-30

70 31-50

52 51-65

11 66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

85 Male

67 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

20 Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

15 Livestock

7 Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

5 Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

42 Industrial

63 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

4 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

4 Large national business

21 Multi-national corporation

10 Small-scale farmer

25 Medium-scale farmer

7 Large-scale farmer

13 Local Non-Governmental Organization

27 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

5 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

11 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

9 United Nations

International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

16 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The dialogue was organised in full respect of all the principles of the summit. Specifically, this dialogue promoted and embraced the multi-stakeholders inclusivity as its core. Indeed, the diversity of participants ranged from farmers to the private sector, from international organisations to research institutes. The occasion facilitated the identification of concrete actions aimed at developing strategies to be proposed within the Food Systems Summit in support of sustainable and fair solutions for all. The creation of a safe space in which attendees felt free to express their opinions, experiences and visions always with mutual respect among the presents was encouraged. Moreover, the event was organised and convened through a consultative process through which the participants developed a better understanding of food systems.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The organisation of this independent dialogue provided a comprehensive view of the context in which global challenges can be addressed and offered an opportunity to commit to the Food Systems Summit as a vehicle to act with urgency and build trust among the various actors. One of the most important aspects on which the dialogue focused was the axiom that food systems are complex and one size cannot fit all solutions. It was acknowledged that there is no simple answer: it is necessary to take into account the differences existing at the local level and to adopt a flexible approach to current global needs.

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

It is important to ensure the representativeness of all relevant categories. Also, it is good to consider that the list of registered participants reduces as some do not attend. Another aspect to consider: it is advisable to share in advance the topics on which the debate will develop so that participants can be more prepared and participate even more actively. In particular, if the topics addressed are specific, it is recommendable to offer the possibility of getting information in advance, in order to put the participants at ease during the dialogue.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Dialogue has been jointly organised by the World Farmers' Organisation and the International Seed Federation, ISF, with the technical expertise of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, UPOV. The aim, in fact, was to explore and discuss the needs, expectations and constraints for farmers around the role of innovation in agriculture, with a focus on new improved plant varieties for the sustainability of food systems.

One round of break-out sessions was organized under the following themes:

- 1) How can new improved plant varieties contribute to sustainable food systems?
- 2) How do we ensure that new improved plant varieties are suitable for sustainable food systems and viable for the farmers?
- 3) What is needed to facilitate the use and access of new improved plant varieties in food systems?

Each discussion that took place in the various break-out sessions was reported back to the plenary by a representative from a farmer and from a representative of the seed sector. At the end of this discussion, in the plenary session, strategies and visions were developed with respect to future steps that could be leveraged through the process.

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:

- A consultation carried out with the farmers' community highlights the farmers' utilisation of new improved plant varieties (71 % of the respondents)
- Farmers look at new improved plant varieties with an innovation lens to ensure better yields, the economic stability of the farms, also ensuring resilience over shocks, but also to make farming easier and less labour/input-intensive;
- New improved plant varieties can be key to tackle the challenges of climate change and for the sustainability of food systems: ensuring resistance to droughts, better pests and diseases management; enabling sustainable use of inputs, getting closer also to consumers demand;
- New Improved varieties can be key to build trust around the farming activity with financial partners (insurance companies), ensuring reliable yields;
- There is a need to ensure access to seeds for farmers (in terms of availability and affordability);
- Organized Agriculture has a key role: Farmers Organisations' are key actors to ensure that farmers of all sizes and everywhere have access to the best available innovation;
- It is important to ensure access for farmers to training, information and knowledge on New Improved Plant Varieties, first and foremost through their Farmers' Organisations;
- There is a need for an enabling regulatory, innovation and scientific framework to encourage the development of, and access to, new improved plant varieties;
- Consumers' education is important in order to build trust around new varieties thanks, among others, to traceability systems;
- Partnership between the private and public sector is crucial to ensure development and access to innovation;
- There's no one-size-fits-all solution and it is key to ensure farmers have the widest possible choice of seeds: providing the right choice to the farmers that they can access, including improved varieties;
- Cooperation in the value chain is essential: only a true involvement of all stakeholders in the innovation process, starting from research, from farmers to breeders and all the actors involved, can ensure that we can develop a product that responds to the farmers' needs;
- Breeders always need to work with farmers to understand their downstream needs. This cooperation should address not only the different agronomic and productivity aspects but also the information needs of value chain stakeholders and consumers to increase transparency and traceability;
- There is a need for a global/harmonized regulatory framework on new improved plant varieties that covers the entire process, starting with intellectual property rights (plant variety protection), in order to encourage investment in plant breeding and seed production, through regulations to ensure good quality seed is available to farmers for completing the food chain to the consumers;
- Predictability and transparency of the regulatory pathway is absolutely essential for sustainable agriculture;
- it is not innovation for innovation sake, but improved varieties targeted to support the farmers in the day-to-day business, to help to achieve sustainable development goals.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

How can new improved plant varieties contribute to sustainable food systems?

On the issue raised, participants emphasized the importance of selecting and developing new plant varieties according to the expectations expressed by both farmers and consumers regarding yields, quality, diversity and nutrition. In order to do this, it is crucial to involve farmers, taking into account the diversity of local systems and communities. In addition, the simplification and streamlining of a coherent policy environment cannot be overlooked. In terms of sustainability, efforts should be made to improve products' quality and reduce perishability for a longer shelf life and better transportability. Therefore, not only improving agronomic traits, but also traits that are particularly important for consumers. There was also a discussion on how to make varieties more available to farmers, which requires a good regulatory environment. This includes intellectual property rights (plant variety protection), to encourage investment in plant breeding and seed production and seed laws that guide and do not hamper regulation for new breeding techniques, which should be science-based and predictable. Finally, the last point is information. Information and dialogue with legislators, policy makers on the science behind latest breeding methods, educating farmers with better extension services and educating consumers to give them a better choice on what to buy.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

How do we ensure that new improved plant varieties are suitable for sustainable food systems and viable for the farmers? The participation and involvement of all stakeholders at the discussion table on product development and on future needs has been recognized as a key point in the spread of new plant varieties. Farmers recognize the need to be partners in the process of developing new plant varieties, with the involvement of the public and private sectors, to provide investment in areas where there is not necessarily a sizeable market return as well as in those minor crops. Also, it is necessary to ensure that farmers' interests are represented and to support the extension and transfer of knowledge necessary to guarantee that new plant varieties are produced appropriately and take advantage of all new technologies, while securing sustainable farm incomes, because without sustainable profitability at farm level, the system collapses. Hence a recognition of risk and reward sharing and fairness in the supply chain is needed to keep the whole system sustainable. This entails a collaboration between farmers, plant breeders and seed producers. Finally, it is important to consider that availability and accessibility are crucial, both to breeders and to farmers, because no sustainable solution is really viable if it is not affordable.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

What is needed to facilitate the use and access of new improved plant varieties in food systems? One of the highlights was that farmers learn from peer groups, so increasing awareness of access to seeds is crucial. However, information is not always fully shared with farmers, so they are not aware of the availability of resources. Therefore, it is very important that farmers' needs and expectations can be included by those (private or public actors) that would like to undertake the research and development work for new varieties in accordance with farmers' demands. Last but not least, the collaboration between the public institution and the private company is a very important process, which can speed up the diffusion of innovation. Such partnerships rely on regulatory systems that enable the public sector, private sector and farmers to meet their objectives.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

All panellists and participants acknowledged the positions expressed and elaborated during this dialogue.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Consultation New Improved Plant Varieties Key findings**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Consultation-New-Improved-Plant-Varieties-Key-findings--15_06-2021_final_-14_06.pdf