

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 27 May 2021 16:48 GMT +13:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Samoa Food Systems Dialogue
CONVENED BY	Mr David Hunter, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/25374/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Samoa

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	40	19-30	144	31-50	33	51-65	9	66-80	80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

122	Male	120	Female	16	Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

23	Agriculture/crops	7	Education	5	Health care
9	Fish and aquaculture	2	Communication		Nutrition
5	Livestock	4	Food processing	124	National or local government
2	Agro-forestry	6	Food retail, markets		Utilities
3	Environment and ecology	5	Food industry	6	Industrial
4	Trade and commerce	2	Financial Services	30	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

8	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
2	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation	5	Local authority
5	Small-scale farmer	124	Government and national institution
5	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
4	Large-scale farmer	30	United Nations
34	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
2	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
11	Indigenous People	8	Consumer group
7	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

A multi-stakeholder / sector wide participatory approach was used in organizing the dialogues to ensure the principles of engagement were observed and used during stakeholder exchanges. The National dialogues were organized as follows: 1. The First Dialogue (Part 1) was 5-half days (9am to 1pm) Focus Group sessions based on the Food Systems Summit's 5 Action Tracks. Each group had 10-15 persons from relevant Government agencies, private sector, farmers and fishers' organizations, civil society, and research organizations and academia. The aim of the first dialogue was to consider the initial set of ideas for game-changing and systemic solutions to achieve the goals of the 5 Action Tracks of the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in the context of Samoa. The groups were tasked to identify gaps/challenges, solutions and areas of divergence based on a rapid assessment of the current situation of Samoa's food system. 2. The Second Dialogue (Part 2) was a half day (9am to 1.30pm) with an expected audience of 70-100 participants. The discussion groups for the second dialogue were divided into 5 thematic areas – Government / Private Sector / Farmers and Fishers Organizations / Civil Society / Research Organisations and Academia. Guiding questions developed from the FSS's 5 action tracks were grafted for each of the groups. 3. The Third Dialogue (Part 3) was a half day (9am to 12.00pm) dialogue with development partners. This was an open dialogue between key national actors of the food system in Samoa (government, private sector and civil society) and key development partners (e.g. DFAT, China, MFAT New Zealand). This was important given that a lot of the development programs/projects in Samoa are implemented with technical and financial assistances from donor/development partners. This was a plenary format session with participants provided with a Synthesis Report (analyzing the current status of the food systems in Samoa) and an outcome report of the national dialogue based on the completion of First and Second Dialogues (as mentioned above).

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The rationale for dividing the groups by thematic areas in the dialogues was to allow members to discuss issues without fear, complement each other's work within the same genera, the urgency of required actions and recognizing the complexity of food system issues. The dialogues also recognized and used the Government's sector wide approach to build stakeholder buy-in and commitment, embracing inclusiveness and meaningful engagement.

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

Keep the approach simple and context relevant to social and cultural nuance for effective and meaningful engagement.

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 involved a three-fold process: i) focused group discussion; 2) national dialogue; and 3) SFSSD committee and development partners dialogue.

1. The first part of the dialogue was a focused group discussions of key stakeholder organisations with a significant role in the national food systems. The stakeholders were organized as members of the different five Action Tracks, based on their areas of work and interests, with two members selected as lead discussants. The purpose was for participants to explore each of the five Action Tracks, identifying the current status in Samoa, the key issues and challenges and game-changing solutions. The five action track group discussions were held for five days (3-7 May 2021), with one day dedicated to each of the focused group dialogues discussions on each of the five-action tracks. Briefing meetings were held with the lead organisations of the Five Action Tracks to prepare them to lead the group discussions. Participants were all provided with a background information paper - so that they have the necessary background about the purpose of the group dialogue discussions, and how they can better contribute to the dialogue. The dialogue programme included an introduction of the dialogue and its purpose, an overview of the Action Track under discussions at the forum, and the group discussions. It concluded with a wrap up of the day's session and presenting on the next steps of the overall dialogue. A total of 100 participants representing various stakeholder organisations attended this first session of the dialogue.

2. The second part of the dialogue was the wider National Dialogue, which took place on the 27 May 2021. At the completion of the first part (i.e. the five-action tracks focused group discussions), a meeting of the dialogue working committee and the National Multi-sectoral Coordinating Committee was held to provide feedback and learnings from the implementation of part one, to inform the preparations of the wider national dialogue. Lessons learnt from part one were discussed to arrive at a more suitable structure and format of the wider national dialogue. Participants from across different sectors of the food systems were grouped into five group discussions based on their areas of work or interests: Government ministries/agencies, Private sector, Farmer, livestock and fishers organisations, Civil society, and Research organisations and academia. A group of two facilitators and note takers were selected for each of the groups and were given a methodology, format and guiding questions for the group discussions, with presentation of group findings to the whole audience, followed by a plenary session. A total of 90 people participated in this second part of the dialogue.

3. The third part of the dialogue was a dialogue with key development partners. Findings or key thematic areas from the synthesis report (desktop and literature review) and dialogue report (based on Parts 1 and 2) were used as the basis of the plenary discussion at this forum. A total of 52 people participated in this third part of the dialogue.

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

Samoa is committed to exploring its Food Systems characteristics to further identify key bottle necks requiring focused action to enhance the nation's food security and nutrition status. Specific aspects of the food systems deemed as requiring closer inspection and focused action, include the country's high dependence on food imports and the inconsistent supply and access of locally produced foods for healthy diets. The lack of incentives for the agriculture and fisheries production sectors need further review. Food safety was also a core challenge identified as requiring further attention.

Unhealthy diets due to consumption of highly processed imported foods and the lack of access and consumption of local food especially fruits and vegetables has led to high levels of NCD's, with the country now holding a place in the top ten countries in the world with the highest rates of NCD's. The food culture and food preference of Samoans which is influenced by accessibility and affordability factors was deemed as contributors to unhealthy diets. Whilst data was limited on the topic, food waste was considered a key issues that required addressing given the need to enhance food supply and ensure optimum use of food available therefore preservation techniques and options of utilizing food in the food cycle needs to be a key focus of Samoa's actions.

Specific attention is needed to address the lack of evidence-based and shared understanding about the status of sustainable management of key natural resources underpinning the sustainability of the food systems (e.g. soil health, available fish, water and land resources, control of invasive species, and use of chemicals), in order to boost production which is centred on nature and biodiversity conservation. Under- utilised traditional knowledge to boost nature-positive production needs to be explored. Whilst the country's focus on increasing food supply will depend a great deal on commercialisation of the agriculture sector, the impacts this will have on nature- positive production and consumption needs to be at the forefront when planning for this under the supply sector.

There is limited support for vulnerable groups to be able to expand and contribute more to food system. There are institutional and systematic barriers (access to land, social norms about roles stereotyping, traditional divisions of labour, etc.), preventing women, youth and persons with disabilities from accessing the needed resources to pursue better livelihoods in the food sector. Capacities and incentives are limited in order to garner interest from youth to entertain the food sector as a livelihood option. Coordination of community programmes targeting food supplies is lacking and there is programme and project fatigue at the implementing village level.

Samoa needs its food systems (nature, environment, people, etc.) to be regenerative and circular and be more resilient to shocks. Efforts should empower everyone to prepare for, withstand, and recover from instability, and to continue to participate in the sustainable development and management of their food systems, despite shocks and stressors, so that there is a consistent delivery and maintenance of food security, nutrition and equitable livelihoods for all. Inconsistent access to safe and nutritional food is further compounded by the nation's fragility due to its isolation from the global markets, shortage of arable land and other resources required to encourage local production (e.g. limited local seed supplies and feed supply) and it's being prone to the impact of climate change. The need to further research and identify key risks to its food systems with the necessary response planning is missing. COVID-19 and its impact on Samoa's food systems displayed the nation's susceptibility and lack of preparedness to shocks and stressors.

The dialogues stressed the need for a multi-sectoral approach to addressing the concerns listed above regarding Samoa's Food System. The lack of communication and coordination between partners was viewed as a key step towards improving the accelerating the nation's food and nutrition security. Utilizing existing platforms and sector plans as a basis of coordination was identified with key players expected to suggest ways in which to ensure a multi-sectoral response. Data was a key gap identified for all of the five action tracks. Evidence based policies is essential to guide the nation's planning. Despite the fact that there is a numerous policies covering the different parts of the Food , there is a need to ensure that these policies complement one another and all involved are aware these policies exist, including committing resources and time to implement, enforce, monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Based on the discussions at the dialogue, the following were the key solutions identified to respond to the key issues and challenges identified under B) above:

Transformation of the agriculture sector to boost local production. Consistent local supply of healthy foods to be addressed through incentives for farmers and fishers and encouraging commercialization. Government to lead specific interventions targeting capacity training for value chain actors and addressing of key issues facing production including, high labour costs in agriculture production, water, transport and infrastructure challenges and facilitating local and overseas markets for farmers and fishers.

Strengthening food safety and standards practice and systems through better enforcement, awareness and coordination between relevant partners, as well as strengthening the food safety policy and regulatory system in Samoa.

Food literacy and targeted consumer awareness to ensure consumers make informed decisions to purchase and prepare healthy tasty and affordable meals. Clear messaging and programmes using attractive and easily understood awareness materials for both urban and rural populations.

School nutrition education and school food programmes within the governance and support systems of the community and village institutions starting from early childhood education across to senior school form healthy eating behaviors at a young age. Parents and food vendors to be involved in the formulating, implementation and monitoring of these programmes.

School food programmes that encourage consumption of locally available foods with linkages to local producers.

Promotion of the consumption and availability of local traditional foods, made from locally available produce for healthy diets. Ensuring products are available for convenient consumption by the public.

Strengthened food waste data and evidence base to inform policy and awareness programme development and implementation. Capacity building at both household and retail level to build awareness and capacities on limiting as well as handling food waste.

Revitalise and promote the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge in agriculture for sustainable land, marine and terrestrial management production practices to go in parallel with conventional methods of production.

Strengthen research and development, and extension services for improved knowledge sharing and capacities among partners and users, especially for information such as status of food resources (soil, forestry, weather etc.) to ensure practices undertaken by farmers and fishers are emphasizing conservation and biodiversity.

Strengthen policy and regulatory roles for the sustainable management of the different aspects of the food systems related resources. Coordination and dissemination of information from responsible Ministry to ensure the relevant policies and regulations are shared with, and understood by relevant stakeholders.

Strengthen the effective engagement of everyone including the vulnerable groups in the discussions confronting institutional and systematic barriers for equitable participation in the sustainable development of livelihoods within the context of the food systems.

Promote the role of women and youth in agricultural activities including providing the needed support (access to land and finance, capacity building, networking etc.). Improve the image of agriculture and fisheries as career options and provide a clear pathway for students to capture their interest in studying food related curriculum from a young age.

Role of communities and culture in developing the food systems and equitable livelihoods needs to be strengthened through more research and coordinated awareness programmes, as well as customized civic education.

Climate resilient practices and resources for agriculture, fisheries, livestock strengthened through research and development, seeds and stocks availability, and capacity building.

Strengthen social protection measures in response to impact of shocks in food supply and consumption.

Explore opportunities in digital and technological innovations to boost local production and strengthen value chains

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The following were key areas of divergence identified from the dialogue:

- Trade-offs in public policies promoting the development and regulating of the food systems. For instance, while health advocates policy responses promoting reduction in unhealthy supply and consumption food items (e.g. alcohol, tobacco, imported turkey tails), other public authorities are more concerned with employment and food supply development and security (hence may take commercial industry interests into account) which conflict with the nutritional health push from health advocates given the rising burden of NCDs in Samoa.
- Trade-offs during policy implementation - there are clearly contradicting targets usually identified at implementation stage of policies. Hence proper coordination and dialogue at the policy development stage is important in order to have shared understanding of these contradictions and how they can be managed.
- Push for commercialization versus nature-positive farming. Given inconsistent local food supply, there has been a push for improved commercialization. This requires commercial farmers opting to use more chemicals especially given the decreased labour (but increased labour cost) in agriculture. On the other hand, there is also a promotion of organic and farming pushing for the reduction and/or ban of the use of chemicals in farming.
- Trade-offs in the push for strengthening livelihoods opportunities versus ongoing impacts on the environment (e.g. soil degradation, ongoing killing of native species such as the manumea bird, flying foxes and pigeons).
- Trade-offs in reducing importation of unhealthy foods and free trade agreements under WTO agreements.
- Trade-offs in the regulating of unhealthy products versus the economic development that are needed to boost economic growth, employment and income generation.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Food-system-Dialogue-complete-Feed-Back-Form.docx>