

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 17 June 2021 15:00 GMT +08:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Civil Society and Sustainable Food Systems in Mongolia
CONVENED BY	European Union Delegation to Mongolia
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/27876/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Mongolia

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

62

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

10

19-30

40

31-50

12

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

12 Male

40 Female

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

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

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?

For the organization of the Dialogue, the handbook for independent dialogues was used, adapting it to the local context. To contribute to the vision, objectives and final outcomes of the Food System Summit, the dialogue was structured around the 5 Action Tracks, using the same thematic tracks that the National and sub-national dialogues were focusing on. The purpose for this was to complement and further enhance the work that was being undertaken through the Member State Dialogues in the country to feed in to the Government's policy-making and planning, to contribute to the outcomes of those dialogues to the Global Food Systems Summit, as well as to inform future programming and project implementation of the European Union, FAO and other donors and implementing partners. This purpose was also outlined prior and during the event to the participants, who were, thus, more engaged and committed to the discussions. The dialogue invited representatives from the national and international CSOs working in Mongolian food, agriculture, environment and development sectors.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Recognising the complexity of food systems, during the opening of the dialogue a presentation was made to explain the different aspects of food systems that would be discussed by the National Development Agency to further point out the need of the voices of the CSOs in the long-term policy planning and integration of the food systems in it. The facilitators and note-takers of the three thematic sessions were trained prior to the Dialogue to understand the principles of engagement and the context of the dialogue. Given their expertise in the area, they managed to bring in guiding questions that triggered many exchanges and ideas, which further showcased the interconnectedness of food systems and impact to different areas of nature, life, and economy, and why the sustainability and transformation of food system is key and requires a systemic approach. In addition, to ensure inclusivity and have everyone bring in their diverse perspectives, simultaneous sign language interpretation was available, as well as Mongolian-English simultaneous interpretation.

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

Understanding well the principles of engagement and communicating them further to the facilitators, participants is key to ensure that the dialogue is contributing to the local context and the Global Food System Summit, that there are complementarities and synergies created, and that the dialogue is inclusive and transparent, with a purpose. Participants' understanding of why this Dialogue is needed, can really increase the level of engagement not only during the dialogue but also after it.

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

Civil society dialogues were organized around the main three action tracks that were used in the Mongolian Member State Dialogues, which are: 1) Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for the population and promote sustainable consumption; 2) Advance equitable livelihoods and wealth distribution; 3) Boost nature-positive production and build resilience to vulnerability, shocks and stress.

The participants were invited to share their views and ideas on each area of discussion during the break-out rooms with the following set of questions for each thematic area.

Thematic area I: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for the population and promote sustainable consumption

I. At present:

1. Does Mongolia's food system enable all people to access sustainably produced healthy and nutritious food? If does not, what are the incentives and solutions ? It also includes imported of foods.
2. What are the main challenges to food security due to the Covid-19 epidemic and opportunities to overcome?

II – In 10 years ahead:

1. Where would you like to see Mongolia in ten years from now in terms of food security, nutrition, health and loss of food ?
2. What do we want in terms of health and nutrition; the well-being of women and children?

III – In the 3 years ahead:

1. What must Mongolia do in the coming three years for food systems to meet the expectations?
2. What actions need to be taking to reduce wasteful and over-consuming habits and to increase knowledge and awareness for healthy diet and sustainable food consumption?

IV – In the Future:

1. How can stakeholders work well together for collective action in pursuit of these objectives?
2. How do we facilitate practices and policy choices that contribute to sustainable food systems?

Thematic area II: Advance equitable livelihoods and wealth distribution

At Present

1. How can Mongolia shape its agriculture and food sector in a way that contributes to job creation and raises incomes across the food value chain?

In 10 years ahead:

1. Where would you like to see Mongolia in ten years from now in terms of job creation, poverty levels, food security and etc?

In the 3 years ahead:

1. How to leverage young people for championing the innovative, game-changing movements towards promoting decent jobs and equitable livelihoods for all?

In the Future:

1. How can stakeholders work well together for collective action in pursuit of these objectives?
2. Who might support the change, who might oppose it and who might deserve the benefit of them?

Back Up Questions

- a) What sub-sectors (e.g. livestock, other) in the agriculture food sector are the most potential to bring equitable livelihoods? How can be ensured that the growth in the food systems sector is sustainable from an environmental perspective?
- b) How can CSOs and other stakeholders contribute to introduce green business practices/circular economy practices in the food systems?
- c) What can be done to create a more conducive business environment for MSMEs and other market actors to invest in sustainable practices in agriculture and food sector?
- d) What is the role of digitalization in bringing about equitable livelihoods and more inclusive value chains in the agriculture and food systems sector?

Thematic area III: Boost nature-positive production and build resilience to vulnerability, shocks and stress

I – At present:

1. What are the main risks affecting and/or threatening Mongolian Food Systems ?

What are system weakness, people's needs and vulnerabilities, existing coping mechanisms, and long-term and structural causes for continuing degradation of natural resources and vulnerabilities in response to social, economic and climatic risks?

2. What are the key challenges faced by food value chain's stakeholders (i.e. agricultural, herding, MSMEs, industries)? What are the harmful food production and processing practices that deplete natural resources and accentuate risks? How to discourage them and how to encourage a shift towards adoption of more sustainable & resilient practices?

3. What are the specificities, strengths and opportunities of current Mongolian Food Systems on which could be drawn a sustainable, healthy, resi

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

MAIN FINDINGS

Participants in the civil society dialogues of organizations determined that there are the following pressing problems regarding the above topics.

- Due to the lack of implementation of the legislation on the food system, food security is not properly ensured.
- Many projects and programs are being implemented to develop food value addition chains along the lines of foreign states and donor organizations, but due to their poor connection, the desired results are not achieved.
- Family farms, engaged in farming, have the status of unofficial employment and their registration and information about them are not fully collected and therefore they remain outside the state support.
- Control over the quality and safety of schools and kindergartens feeding is not open and transparent.
- The level of development of the production of healthy food and food for children is low.
- It should be noted that sweets are excessively used in children's sanatoriums.
- The quality and safety of food products is lost at the stage of transportation and storage. The safety of food packaging is weak and the labels of imported food products are in foreign languages without translation.
- The control of professional control organizations over the use of pesticides in agriculture is weak.
- The level of security and maintenance of independent laboratories, which analyze and confirm the quality and safety of food products, is low.
- The incomes of herdsmen and farmers as primary producers are lower than those of intermediate traders. As products pass through intermediate traders, the price of food products increases, their quality and safety is lost, and income inequality is formed.
- The knowledge of farmers about pesticide residues in food products and the knowledge of herdsmen about drug residues is weak.
- The expansion of the mining industry has an increasingly negative impact on livestock breeding and agricultural production.

They have proposed following recommendations and actions to tackle the existing issues:

- Comprehensive updating of legislation related to the food system and the formation of an institution and a mechanism for its effective implementation; Ensure the action of the Food Security Council in the form of a unified platform and increase the sustainability and efficiency of its activities;
- Formation of a mechanism for the constant involvement of civil society organizations in the process of working out policy for the development of the food systems and making decisions;
- Increasing the provision of independent and licensed laboratories and strengthening their capacity to improve the assurance of control over the quality and safety of food products;
- Creation of a new warehouses for storing vegetables and expanding its capacity;
- Formation and development of a system of delivery to the market and effective sale of products of herdsmen and farmers through Agriculture exchanges;
- Improving food service standards for school and kindergarten children and strengthening implementation control;
- Ensuring real financial and investment support to entrepreneurs of organic agriculture and food production;
- Supporting private sector initiatives for the creation and development of processing enterprises for milk and dairy products;
- Supporting private sector initiatives for the creation and development of specialized enterprises for the production of diets and food for children;
- Produce at home the main inputs, which are used in the production of the basic assortment of food products and packaging items to reduce import dependence;
- Adoption of the application of mobile phones, which translates labels of imported food products in foreign languages into Mongolian;
- Create a special television channel to disseminate information on food security and food production and consumption to consumers and provide science-based information and training through it;
- Increasing the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring cooperation between preschool education organizations, secondary schools and families to instill healthy nutrition habits in children from an early age.

Advantages of the Mongolian food system

- Because of underdeveloped heavy industry, Mongolia has a broad opportunity of producing, consuming, and exporting organic, traditional, and eco food. Therefore, it is possible to produce innovative products by empowering the herders.
- Since herders also connected to the urban centers, there are a wide range of opportunities to deliver their produces to the market, and the products can be marketed using smartphones
- Mongolian production industry can be clustered. There are broad opportunities to develop non-mining productions.

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		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

The key challenges faced in ensuring the healthy and nutritious food for all in Mongolia are described by the participants as follows:

- “The law of Mongolia on Procurement of goods, works, and services with state and local funds” requires to procure from “business entities,” restricting herders and producer’s participation in the school or kindergarten food tenders.
- Food safety is the most challenging matter amongst the food system issues. If the food safety matter is not resolved, soon it will become a national and social issue.
- Because the food production volumes of the household farms are not recorded, import quotes on vegetables are estimated higher.
- Overconsumption of sweets and sugary products within children. Lack of environment for producing healthy meals and food for children. A comprehensive baby food production system has not been established. No workshops and factories that produce children’s food and baby formula.
- It is likely to affect the genetic fund of Mongolia. Specifically: the number of young cancer patients is increasing.
- Food safety is specifically disturbed in transportation and storage phases in the value chain of food production. Primarily, the safety of the food packaging.
- Stores merchandise various types of colored and poisonous candies and foods at children’s eye level.
- Lack of knowledge amongst the farmers on pesticides and herders on injections and drug residues.
- The income level of the primary manufacturers or the farmers and herders is particularly inequitable to revenues of the speculators /changes/ and retailers. There is a large gap between the income levels of the stakeholders.
- The “Organic product” labels are not monitored and do not guarantee product origin.
- Imported products sold with foreign language labels, without translation.
- Lack of consumer knowledge on healthy and nutritious food.
- Consumer knowledge is deficient in reading and referring to the food label.

Following actions are proposed to tackle the challenges:

In the coming 10 years:

- Enable herder’s and producer’s participation in the tenders under the provisions of “The law of Mongolia on Procurement of goods, works, and services with state and local funds.”
 - Establish an accredited and independent third-party laboratory /to monitor the quality and safety of the imported products/
 - Increase the capacities of the vegetable warehouses and build new warehouses
 - Establish factories that produce primary food ingredients, ceasing their import. This includes the establishment of national food packaging factories.
 - Promote the use of wooden, cast iron, paper, and cotton utensils for cooking, support producers with policies, and increase the employment rate.
 - Establish food security management and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) systems in food factories.
- Introduce ISO framework in the food industry
- Gradually replace carbonated drinks, such as Coca-Cola, chips, and food products with high sugar content.

In the next 3 years and further:

- Enforce the implementation of the “Law on food safety,” Activate “Food safety council” operation
- Enable opportunities for rural farmers and herders to sell products
- Introduce local best practices in the value chain
- Implement a “healthy raw material” on products manufactured in Mongolia. Require product labels to contain information on the origin
- Develop a mobile application to read labels printed in foreign languages
- Establish a new TV channel that promotes information and knowledge on healthy food to the public
- Organize training and campaigns to educate the public on healthy an
- Depending on the damage caused in food safety, impose different sets of penalties on business entities and individuals.
- Provide government support in establishing milk and dairy product processing factories in the rural area
- Establish an integrated central platform in charge of food safety that resolves accessibility, safety, and waste matters.

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		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Thematic area II: Advance Equitable Livelihoods and Value Distribution

Following challenges were mentioned during the discussion:

- While herder women work in harsh conditions, their access to social services is limited, e.g. pregnant women are not provided with support, and elders are not covered with a pension.
- Although the vegetable demand can be 100% supplied domestically, storage conditions and market regulations are unsatisfactory
- Due to competition of the imported vegetable, prices of the domestic producers are reduced, further reducing farmer's income.
- In vegetable production, chemical substances (pesticides) are used without control and limitations. There is no equipment to control the use of chemical substances.
- Investment is another challenge faced by the vegetable production sector.
- Vegetable seeds are a challenge. The genetic roots of seeds are being lost. Irrigation systems and greenhouses are provided by donations, but those are disorganized, inefficient, and some of the spare parts are unavailable in the local market.
- Household productions are implemented well at the project level; however, due to lack of policy support, the producers face obstacles in further development.

Some actions proposed:

- Government support is mandatory for the producers of healthy food products. It is essential to provide policy support by establishing an agricultural exchange for trading produces and product certification laboratories and government procurement policy support by the independent purchase of domestic products for the school lunch program.
- Reduce and control the import volume of the locally produced products.
- Mandatory to improve product quality by introducing a raw material certification classification system that supports competition.
- There is demand for continuous capacity building of herders and farmers, the producers of primary agricultural products.
- Establish an independent laboratory that conducts pesticide residue analyses
- Establish an integrated exchange market of the agricultural products in the bag, soum, and aimag centers.
- Reduce GMO production

In the 3 years:

- Educate teens on basic concepts of food, e.g. basic principles of producing healthy food
- To enforce policy change, it is necessary to change the attitude of this group of society, which requires government focus
- Support agricultural product sales at market rate and healthy food production,
- Establish primary agricultural product market in UB
- Establish integrated labor tariff of the labor market
- Necessary to establish a government support scheme for youth involved in the primary agricultural productions, such as various social services benefits and scholarships
- Concerning the youth involvement: recommended to conduct a survey amongst the youth regarding their expectations on animal husbandry, agriculture, and food production and potentials of contribution.
- Innovation and production of the agricultural products that are attractive to youth are insufficient, and policy support is required in the agricultural sector to support youth employment.

Partnerships and roles of stakeholders:

- Government to conduct Food safety assessment
- Establish a mechanism that regulates food-related matters
- Sell food products at fair market price
- Provide various types of support to civil organizations, for example, discounted rent, etc.
- The vegetable farmers are most vulnerable period in the autumn season, and the Government must support in terms of labor supply and market to sell their products

- Herder, farmers, and consumers are the supporters of the goal and beneficiaries of the changes in the system
- Opponents are large chains, political figures engaged in agricultural production, and large importers.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Thematic area III: Boost nature-positive production and building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress

Some challenges and actions proposed:

- The most adversely affecting factor to the consumption of the traditional domestic products /strategical food: meat and dairy products/ are the business operations of the mining sector. For example, the mining operations in the gobi region are besides extracting, with floating, concentrating, and transportation operations of the raw materials on the dirt road adversely affecting the wellbeing of several aimags and sums and ways of consuming strategically significant traditional food. This circumstance is principally due to land allocation overlapped with the pasture land.
- Lack of knowledge on coping the climate change induced by human factors.
- Lack of training and financing for lifelong learning, especially for women herders
- No policy support on supplying the market with food and preparing safe food
- Organic food production is underdeveloped. Since food additives are gaining popularity, there is a broad opportunity to develop organic food production at the sum level.
- Slaughterhouses produce a considerable amount of meat in the winter season, and a large number of intestines are wasted. These can be processed to produce semi-finished products. But, due to the restrictions to have previous market experience, youth face financial difficulties.
- Although lots of plastic waste are produced, there are no recycling facilities in the rural area. Thus, it is possible to establish small-scale workshops to recycle plastics. Possible to disseminate waste management information to the high school students
- Ensure CSO involvement in the food chain, ensure transparency of information, and organize face-to-face meetings by the MOFALI and other government entities. Change present negligent practice, improve customs control on food shelf-life and involve CSO in control and monitoring activities.
- There must be a balance and boundary between agriculture, animal husbandry, and mining. Cattle ratio has been disturbed as well /goat headcount, which should be roughly 15% of the cattle, is now takes almost 70%/, which adversely impacts the meat safety and pastureland overgrazing; further, leading to desertification.
- Improve cooperation amongst the ministries, state organizations, CSOs, and citizens
- Empower herder, enable equitable allocation of benefits, and develop a long-term policy
- Establish a food system that reflects human rights and public interest
- Take measures against the use of chemicals in the mining and food processing sector
- Make Mongolian pasture land an eco-friendly zone
- Develop a veterinary service system and control the use of the antibiotic in the cattle

What actions could be done in the three years?

- Reduce the speculations in the food system, protect the market, and provide the consumer with safe food
- Establish an independent laboratory and certification system
- Protect food market and reduce import
- Provide financial support in the organic food production
- Improve food policy and food system based on the people's participation and CSO
- Organize educational campaigns and disseminate information to the herders and population concerning food safety and health
- Establish waste recycling workshops in the rural area

How can stakeholders work together?

- The government of Mongolia shall establish a food supply chain and a system that focuses on human rights and public interests and improve cooperation between CSO and public
- Improve production operations, train the public on the production of eco-food, and organize campaigns
- Improve monitoring of chemical substances used in the mining and food processing industry

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

In all the three thematic discussions there was not really areas of divergence. Participants were aligning their views and concerns in relation to the key challenges, triggers, suggested solution and recommendations for the way forward.

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