

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 8 July 2021 14:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Building Healthy, Nutritious and Affordable Food Systems for Rwanda through Innovations
CONVENED BY	Mr. Musabyimana Jean Claude, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/28293/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Rwanda

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

124

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18 50 19-30 70 31-50 4 51-65 66-80 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

74 Male 54 Female Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops	7	Education	5	Health care
Fish and aquaculture	5	Communication	47	Nutrition
Livestock	4	Food processing	7	National or local government
Agro-forestry	14	Food retail, markets	Utilities	
6 Environment and ecology	17	Food industry	Industrial	
7 Trade and commerce	Financial Services	5	Other	

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

11 Small/medium enterprise/artisan	2 Workers and trade union
7 Large national business	Member of Parliament
5 Multi-national corporation	Local authority
13 Small-scale farmer	8 Government and national institution
7 Medium-scale farmer	Regional economic community
3 Large-scale farmer	2 United Nations
10 Local Non-Governmental Organization	International financial institution
11 International Non-Governmental Organization	7 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
Indigenous People	4 Consumer group
17 Science and academia	17 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

For the dialogue to incorporate the principles of the engagement, we engaged all the stakeholders that we need to act together from all levels to build and sustainable food systems which will make healthy and nutritious foods available in Rwanda. With the support from the government of Rwanda, the private sector, civil societies organizations representing all groups including women and youth, taking into consideration our distinct roles in food systems, all agreed that we will put in action, all recommendations from the summit and dialogues. Through different workshops that were organized on the side of the dialogue, participants were respectfully exchanging their experiences and innovative solutions that can make healthy and nutritious foods available in Rwanda. The Food System Innovation Hub was supported as one of the key solutions to existing challenges for food entrepreneurs in Rwanda.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

During the dialogue and all the workshops that followed, the diversity of stakeholders was very encouraging. As one of the principles of engagement, we had representatives from all groups, from senior government officials, academia, representatives of research institutes, small holders' farmers, consumer's rights representatives, students, women representatives in different cooperatives, international NGOs working in Rwanda and beyond. During the discussions, views from diverse backgrounds enriched the dialogue and the recommendations that came from the workshops.

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

From the dialogues, we learned that there is a need to bring all stakeholders in the same room, to discuss practical and innovative solutions, which in most cases are not put in action due to lack of dialogue/ communication between all involved.

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

Our Dialogue focused on the role technology and innovation can play to make sure safe, healthy, and nutritious foods is available and accessible to all people regardless of their economic status. Through Food Systems Innovation Hubs (FSIH). FSIH looks to stimulate investment in resilient and responsive food systems and facilitate relevant technology transfer and knowledge from high-income countries, who benefit from large consumer markets and large pools of venture capital to test and try innovations to make food systems nutritious and sustainable, to LMIC. Through partnerships, government collaboration, impact investors, philanthropies in the context of local entrepreneurs, the hubs will catalyze a transformative change for society-wide dietary shifts towards more efficient, healthier, and more environmentally friendly food systems. The focus of our dialogue was in relation to action track # 1.

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

The Dialogue Building Healthy, Nutrition and Affordable food systems in Rwanda through innovations was divided into four breakout sessions: innovation, food safety, creating demand for nutritious food and advocacy and policy.

The "Innovation" session aimed to answer two main two questions: what innovations are needed for smallholder farmers and small and medium enterprises to sustainably nourish Rwanda now and in the future? Aggregation is the answer identified for small-scale farmers and SMEs. Individual small food system actors confront far too many challenges, such as financial access and insurance. These issues can be mitigated when individual SMEs or farmers are brought together. Indeed, policymakers will be more aware of cooperation, and banks will be more willing to invest in innovative ventures.

The second question was, what innovations make nutritious food accessible, affordable and desirable to all Rwandans? The answer to the second question focuses on the necessity to find out an innovation that makes healthy and nutritious food aspirational for consumers. This will lead to opportunities to market healthy food and guide consumers towards healthy foods. Overall, the FSIH will play a critical role in addressing all of these issues.

The 'Food Safety' breakout group aimed to answer the following question "How do we address the issue of aflatoxins and its effect, mitigation options, and traceability"? The participants raised identified few key areas of interest which serve as a starting point to answer the problem statement, namely technology transfer and knowledge dissemination. In terms of technology and transfer, although it was mentioned that the Rwandan FDA is putting a lot of effort into mitigation (e.g., Government purchased mobile dryers and contracted entrepreneurs to support cooperatives), mycotoxin testing capacity remains a challenge (e.g., rapid test for aflatoxin is far from adopted). Indeed, farmers' lack of access to these technologies needs to be addressed. Additionally, although affordable technology does exist, farmers are often not aware of it. It was agreed that both government but also entrepreneurs have a key role to play to promote this technology transfer. With regards to knowledge dissemination, it was underlined that communication between government and cooperatives must be improved and that this improved communication should be supported by universities as well as entrepreneurs.

The breakout group "Creating Demand for Nutritious Food" emphasized the need to take actions to change consumer perceptions of healthy foods; one example given was the consumption of orange sweet potatoes, which has been related to a rise in diarrheal episodes in children. Furthermore, private-public partnership (PPPs) was pointed to an important role in increasing demand for healthy and nutritious foods. The government should take the lead in this process and give incentives for the private sector to participate. For example, given that plastic is prohibited in the country, how can the government assist SMEs in the preservation and management of healthy foods? Finally, the government should educate consumers on what constitutes nutritious food while also ensuring that such food is readily available and affordable. In few words, without awareness of health and nutritious food, there are not investing opportunities.

In the "Advocacy and Policy" breakout session, it emerged the need to establish two key connections among the food systems. Policies should link food production to healthy food production in order to avoid the availability of unhealthy foods on the market. The government should improve the connection between academia and agribusiness entrepreneurs to mind this gap.

Secondly, because entrepreneurs have the ability to influence the food environment, policy should connect entrepreneurs to the upcoming food dietary guidelines in order to engage the private sector with healthy and nutritious food. Lastly, it was pointed out that Government should implement further research to study the local healthy diets which are part of the culture but are not anymore visible to consumers.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

Advocacy and Policy

Youth represent the backbone of the country. new policies should provide them with access to finance and training, as well as build capacity to engage youth in agriculture sectors. Young agro entrepreneurs should be given grants and training by FSIH.

As the Rwanda government is willing to provide funding to youth, these strategies should be reviewed. The findings should be more accessible for youth, otherwise, money will not be used.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

Reactions by panel

What resources are most important for entrepreneurs to produce nutritious foods?

1. Infrastructure for post-harvest activities for example in storage and processing
2. Transportation is also another key area
3. There is the need for laboratories to test the nutrition of the foods being processed

Entrepreneurs are creative but without the help of nutritionists and laboratories, it will be difficult to produce good food. Premixes are also needed and SMEs look up to the private sector to supply premixes and other specialized processing inputs.

Advice for entrepreneurs:

1. Entrepreneurs are advised to reach out to the academic institutions for help
2. Collaborate with researchers and innovators and also engage with farmers
3. Graduate training at factories will go a long way to help them gain knowledge to produce nutritious foods.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

Reactions by panel

What are the most significant challenges entrepreneurs struggle with and how can the FSIH help lift across the hurdle?

There are several hurdles faced by entrepreneurs these are:

1. Lack of resources to trial new ideas the Food System Innovation Hub (FSIH) can help surmount this hurdle.
2. Inconsistencies in energy supply render most small-scale enterprises not able to deliver goods and services on time. The FSIH can help by clustering entrepreneurs.
3. Good quality raw materials. It has to do with economies of scale as they cannot buy in bulk, again through clustering on entrepreneurs this can be solved
4. Cash flow constraints might hinder sustainable businesses, small companies will lose out on orders after their first or second deliveries if payments are delayed.
5. The FSIH must link entrepreneurs to dietary guidelines to help improve the quality of diets being produced by SMEs as they produce new foods.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

Innovation

What are the key factors that help drive innovation? It takes more than one key factor for innovations to scale in an emerging economy like Rwanda. For innovations to be successful in LMIC's there needs to be the 3 C's. They are:

1. Creativity
2. Capacity Building
3. Collaboration

Entrepreneurs are extremely creative and market savvy but in emerging economies with the enabling system is so sub-optimal, entrepreneurs have to create the conditions that will enable their venture to operate successfully, and these enablers will often include capacity building with other players along the value chain that affects their business whether their vendors, customer or retailers. They have to collaborate with the social sector such as NGOs, the government to make sure their venture functions smoothly. Unlike entrepreneurs in high-income countries, the 3Cs are the foundations to be successful in LMIC's.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

Reactions by panel

There is a systemic shift in food systems to suit the urban class we are seeing more distance from the farmer to consumers and the middleman is controlling the safety of our food. consumption of aflatoxins, for example, have a big impact on public health responsible for liver cancers and are also linked with negative growth.

In March 2021, there were challenges with trade between Uganda and Kenya due to aflatoxins contamination, this means we need entrepreneurs to help solve the commercial challenges.

Grain losses due to aflatoxins are between 14 to 35% annually. How can we reduce losses and rejects? We need innovation but must be affordable for smallholder farmers otherwise it will not be successful.

For example, hermetic storage bags which has been around for about a decade but there has been a low adaptation level by farmers. Probably the key solution will be to engage entrepreneurs who will reach the farmers to educate them and supply them with his packaging at affordable prices.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The Innovation track in the UN FSS focused on Building Healthy, Nutritious and Affordable Food Systems for Rwanda through Innovations. The key discussions were on the Innovations that are needed for smallholder farmers and small and medium enterprises to sustainably nourish Rwanda now and in the future. The participants identified the following innovation gaps in the food system and suggested ways in which they can be addressed.

1. Infrastructure - Nutritious value chains require sophisticated technology to sustain that smallholder farmers cannot afford. There is a need for post-harvest storage and process technologies and an effective logistic distribution system.
2. Access to Funds and Investments – Most financing companies are willing to provide either huge funds or nothing. But smallholder farmers need access to small-scale financing as they cannot afford high risks.
3. Knowledge – Farmers should be able to collaborate through one platform or a network such as an innovation hub that enables them to address concerns as well as share resources and knowledge that can add value to their produce.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Official Request to Host Independent Dialogue from Government of Rwanda**
- **White Boards from Breakout Sessions of UNFSS Independent Dialogues**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Food-Systems-Innovation-Hub-Breakout-Sessions.pdf>

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Independent Dialogue Recording**
<https://youtu.be/9oneYD-jhQE>
- **Food System Innovation Hub Launch Webinar**
<https://youtu.be/4jxRRy2bjw>
- **Food Systems Innovation Hub Blog Series**
<https://sightandlife.org/blog/#food-systems>
- **Food Systems Innovation Hubs in Low-and-Middle-Income Countries**
https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FSS_Brief_Food_Systems_Innovation_Hubs.pdf