

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 1 June 2021 09:30 GMT +04:30
DIALOGUE TITLE	Consolidated Report of Afghanistan's Dialogues for Food Systems Summit
CONVENED BY	The Coordination Unit of the Afghanistan Food Security & Nutrition Agenda (AFSeN-A)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/33606/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Afghanistan

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

298

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

60

19-30

203

31-50

35

51-65

0

66-80

0

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

248 Male

50 Female

0 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

30 Agriculture/crops

6 Fish and aquaculture

17 Livestock

5 Agro-forestry

10 Environment and ecology

18 Trade and commerce

20 Education

10 Communication

9 Food processing

6 Food retail, markets

5 Food industry

0 Financial Services

25 Health care

12 Nutrition

50 National or local government

0 Utilities

10 Industrial

65 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?

The organizers of the dialogues took careful considerations in ensuring that the Principles of Engagement of the Summit, was implemented both at the subnational and national levels.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Despite the difficult situations on the ground, we recognized the importance of the dialogues. As such, we acted with urgency and care by rapidly and effectively planning and mobilizing resources. During discussions and dialogue, there was respect to varying ideas and mutual understanding and respect among participants. It was mutually recognized by the facilitators and participants that food systems are complex, multisectoral, and multistakeholder issues. Consultations included participants from a wide range of relevant stakeholders. The dialogues highlighted the linkages between different sectors as well as the rural, national, and global aspects of the food systems. Convenors ensured that participants trusted the process and objectives of the dialogues in order to ensure the best possible outcomes. Overall, the principles of engagement as per the Food Systems Summit guideline were respected and reflected throughout the national and subnational dialogues. Measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 INCLUDING using online consultations were applied in some instances.

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

We encouraged all convenors and facilitators to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders in particular vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled, and those deprived of opportunities or undermined in the Food Systems such as retailers and street food providers. This will allow diverse participants to engage in meaningful discussions and draw a comprehensive picture of the country's food systems leading to generating high-level policy and programmatic recommendations.

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

A core team composed of key government ministries, the UN, and development partners agreed to organize consultation in Afghanistan around track #1 and track #5 and to mainstream the other action tracks into discussions under the above two tracks. So, it means other tracks were deemed important, but for the reason of simplicity and interlinkages topics relate to tracks 2, 3, and 4 were touched upon under tracks 1 and 5.

The following core discussion topics were identified under track 1 and track 2:

Action Track # 1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all.

1- Reducing hunger, poverty, and inequality:

Participants discussed the key factors and drivers of hunger, poverty, and inequality in Afghanistan and how they can be addressed through the food systems in the coming 10 years. Discussions focused on the production and consumption of agricultural crops that are available in different areas of Afghanistan. Questions on how to reduce food waste and food loss, and how livelihood can help reducing hunger were explored.

2- Increased access to Nutritious Food:

Access to nutritious food was discussed in general but more specifically in line of local nutritional food and their production. There was discussion on the dietary habits of communities, and how access to nutritional food and traditional nutritious food could be made easier. Finally, measures to improve the current situation in the next 10 years and the role of nutritious and healthy food in food systems were discussed under this topic.

3- Food Safety:

Food safety is critical for ensuring sustainable and healthy food systems. Participants explored food safety hazards and challenges, as well as measures to address these challenges. Issues such as personal hygiene, the partnership between the government, the private sector, and consumers to improve food safety. Overall, the long-term and irreversible impacts of food born hazards on human health and communities were conversed.

Action track # 5. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shock, and stress.

4- Conflict and instability:

Participants discussed the adverse effects of conflict and instability on agriculture, food production, and consumption of food. Conflicts and instability are the main drivers of poverty, hunger and malnutrition, the loss of livelihood, and social problems in Afghanistan.

5- Climate/Environmental Extremes Economic Shocks:

Discussions occurred around natural disasters and diseases that adversely affect agriculture and contribute to hunger, malnutrition, and loss of income. The relationship between root causes of disasters and crises and food systems was highlighted. Existing coping mechanisms to mitigate shocks, as well as the gaps in the coping strategies were also discussed.

6- Pandemics & Agricultural Negative Impacts:

Discussions took place on various types of plant diseases pests that affected the food systems, measures to protect natural resources, and biodiversities such as soil, water, and animal species. Additionally, the harms posed to the food value chains and the lack of pesticides and professional staff to protect against such harms were highlighted.

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
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MAIN FINDINGS

Participants highlighted numerous factors that act as challenges to the current Food Systems in Afghanistan. These challenges and findings are categorized around the following seven categories.

1. Contributing factors to low production (quantity) of agricultural and livestock origin food
 - o Food waste and food loss (plant and livestock diseases, cultural issues)
 - o Traditional irrigation methods
 - o Misuse and underuse of agricultural land (house construction in agricultural fields)
 - o Poor local, provincial, and regional connectivity
 - o Imbalance btw demand and supply in production and use of food items
 - o Lack of local food markets and accessibility to these markets
 - o Insufficient number of resistance agricultural and animal varieties
 - o Little use of modern and innovative technology in food systems
 - o Poorly and insufficiently established infrastructures to support food production
2. Factors contributing to low quality of locally produced and imported food products
 - o Absence of nation-wide strong food safety and control system
 - o Lack of agriculture and livestock varieties with high nutritious values
 - o Less number of quality food processing plants
 - o Lack of input, knowledge, and skills at the farmer, producer, and consumer levels
 - o Illegal and sometimes legal entry of low-quality food products
 - o Low quality of pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, and other inputs used for agriculture
3. Social-political and economic factors: Conflict, Political, and Economic Instability
 - o Protracted conflict
 - o Political instability
 - o Economic instability
 - o Corruption
 - o Poor execution of rule of law
 - o Low income and employment opportunities
 - o Modest financing and resource allocation to the agriculture and Food Systems
 - o Population growth that is difficult to control
4. Factors related to policy, strategy, programmatic, and capacity dimensions
 - o Presence of weak policy and legal frameworks (e.g., absence of FSs document)
 - o Weak enforcement of available laws and regulations (e.g., food fortification)
 - o Absence of well-established center of excellence-research, innovation, and technology
 - o Poor farmer and producer knowledge and skills
 - o Absence of strong food safety and control systems (e.g., laboratories)
 - o Low coverage of health, veterinary, and extension services particularly in rural areas
 - o Limited scale, and duration of food and agricultural projects
5. Factors related to Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices
 - o Gender discrimination in employment and food consumption
 - o Child labor throughout food systems
 - o Low public awareness on healthy diets and nutrition
 - o Absence of food diversity at production and consumption levels
6. Factors related to market
 - o Poorly regulated domestic markets and food imports
 - o Inadequate local, regional, and global connectivity including roads
 - o Inadequate support to private sector those engaged in various aspects of food systems
 - o Low number of public-private partnership cases for example for large agricultural projects
 - o High food prices for nutritious food, particularly during crises such as COVID-19.
7. Factors related to climate change and resilience building.
 - o Drought
 - o Soil erosion
 - o Soil erosion
 - o Global warming
 - o Lack of coping capacities particularly in the rural setting
 - o Poor early warning and response mechanisms
 - o Rapid deforestation
 - o Water scarcity and poor water management

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/10

The discussions among the participants resulted in a set of tangible suggestions for all previously identified challenges mainly with the following STRATEGIC FOCUS around 6 Ps:

People:

The food system dialogues in Afghanistan recognized the importance of people's knowledge, experience, and engagement in shaping, implementing, maintaining, and improving the food systems. Therefore, the GoIRA, donors, development partners, UN, NGOs, CSOs, and the private sector, should concentrate on people as the core focus area of the food systems in their policies and programs.

People's interests, needs, and demands to be considered in all policies, plans, and regulations. People's voices to be heard and reflected throughout the decisions making processes. To do so, people and groups, and segments representing people should be actively involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of food systems-related interventions.

Production (quantity + quality + safety):

Due to high rates of food insecurity and malnutrition, food production is still a priority for Afghanistan. However, national, and subnational dialogues emphasized on quality and safety of what is produced or imported to Afghanistan. The nutritious value and safety of food should be the paradigm shift in the future of the Afghan Food Systems. Quantity without quality and safety simply is not and should not be acceptable.

Policy:

Afghanistan needs to develop, update, and implement laws, regulations, standards, multisectoral policies, and plans to address the urgent, unmet, and long-term needs of its growing population in a sustainable manner. The enforcement of law and efficient implementation of large-scale programs that can result in visible changes in the situation of the food systems has been suggested. Policy framework to be gender, nutrition, and climate-sensitive and as mentioned should have a focus on people.

Planet:

People are not disconnected from the planet we live on. Their actions affect the planet either positively or negatively. People's actions and their consequences bounce back to people affecting their lives and livelihood. Afghanistan is currently being affected by the effect of climate change and it seems it will suffer more and more from drought, flood, avalanches, and other shocks in coming years. So, people, the GoIRA, and development partners have two big challenges ahead. How to cope with shocks and their negative consequences and how to pursue its development agenda. Both require capacity, resources, and strong management. Therefore, the need to link actions across Humanitarian-Development and Peace Nexus is more than ever evident. The scale of financing and actions to be sufficient enough to respond to the current climate-related challenges, but also to improve resilience at all levels to mitigate future shocks and stresses.

Peace:

Peace is the number one agenda for the people of Afghanistan. War and protracted conflict not only take lives but also destroys systems, infrastructures and diminish people's hope for a better future. Therefore, peace is not only a political imperative, but it is a social, development, and human necessity. If lasting peace will be obtained, Afghans will witness rapid and positive changes in their food systems. Production will grow, organizational and system capacity will improve, the trade will expand, export, and import balance will get better, employment opportunities will increase, and people will invest in food system-related activities.

Politics:

There are also issues called cross-cutting such as good governance, gender, anti-corruption measures, and rule of law. The below-suggested interventions that should be future detailed and turned into programs and projects will hopefully lead to the reduction of hunger, poverty, and inequality. They will improve access to nutritious food, food safety, reduced conflict and stability, and climate-related distress.

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KEYWORDS

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	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
			Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/10

Following are the key suggested areas and interventions for coming 3 to 5 and then 10 years summarized from the national and subnational dialogues in Afghanistan. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that beneath proposed interventions supporting all SDGs in direct or indirect ways. (Please also see the ToC)

Safe agricultural land and improve soil health (SDG 5)

Agricultural land is reducing due to urbanization and improper urban expansion planning, thus, reducing domestic agricultural production. It requires urgent actions such as:

- o Law or other regulatory actions to stop using agricultural land for construction and urbanization.
- o Use water and other sources to grow food (fishery, other local solutions). Go for blue food.
- o More funding to soil friendly input distribution and extension
- o Fund large scale programs to expand arable land for production

ACTION TRACKS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/10

Safe water (SDG 6)

Afghanistan faces a serious scarcity of potable and irrigation water. The available water is not well managed and there is water loss despite its scarcity. Introducing innovative technology will help to address both issues.

- o Introduce smart and innovative water management and irrigation systems
- o Create and implement Water-Food- Energy Nexus
- o Manage groundwater through social learning interventions

Safe Food (SDG 12)

Food quantity is an issue. Today more than 45% of people in Afghanistan are food insecure and above 54% of the population live below the poverty line. But, despite that, we see food loss and food waste on many cultural occasions and across the value chains. Therefore, we need policies, laws, and actions to address these underlying factors to improve food availability but also to reduce inequality as well:

- o Prevent food waste at homes, offices, society
- o Prevent food loss across the value chain
- o Produce food keeping in mind the equilibrium between demand and supply
- o Build more cold-rooms and storage facilities to save and store food
- o Improve transportation, roads, and connectivity to improve access and availability of food.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/10

Invest and use innovative, green technology to modernize food systems (SDG 7)

In Afghanistan, we still use primitive technology in food systems. Farmers, producers, and traders are not equipped with the resources, equipment, knowledge, and skills to use modern technology to improve production and reduce waste and loss.

This is the area of more investment and opportunities. Particularly:

- o Introduce a new and efficient method for irrigation (drip water)
- o Promote solar and green technology in agriculture
- o Use of locally adapted machinery to improve product quality and quantity
- o Promote business and entrepreneurial activities in bringing innovation and local solutions
- o Establish and strengthen local technology institutions and innovation projects
- o Use of Agricultural Biotechnology to boost production, quality, and resilience.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/10

Educate and offer skills to farmers, producers, and consumers:

Farmers, producers, traders, and consumers' education, skills development are highly needed to promote production, trade, and consumption of nutritious food. Therefore, we must:

- o Equip farmers with knowledge and skills to produce more nutritious food
- o Educate consumers on healthy diets and nutritious food to reduce malnutrition
- o Educate producers and traders on corporate social responsibilities in Food Systems
- o Generate demand for healthy & sustainable food and challenge meat consumption
- o Maximize the use of consumer information for healthy diets.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 6/10

Prioritise food safety and nutrition value (SDG 2, 3)

Today food safety is not only public health but also an economic and trade-related issue in Afghanistan. Improving food safety will improve health, reduce the burden of food-borne diseases and open up new economic opportunities.

- o Stop producing and importing unsafe food items
- o Go for nation-wide food fortification, bio-fortification, and Future Smart Food projects
- o Strengthen national and subnational food safety systems (labs, standards...).

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 7/10

Nature-positive food production, fight extreme shocks, and build resilience (SDG 13, 1)
Drought, seasonal floods, earth quakes, and other climate challenges are prevalent in Afghanistan that affects production and livestock in Afghanistan causing displacement and pushing people further down to poverty and food insecurity. Therefore,

- o Implement large scale resilience and coping programs to be designed and implemented
- o Implement large-scale social protection, food assistance, and asset creation programs are needed.
- o Strengthen National Early Warning System
- o Provide affordable high yielding climate-sensitive varieties of staple crops
- o Stop deforestation, invest in artificial reforestation, and promote gardens
- o Reward regenerative farming practices for environmental services provided.

ACTION TRACKS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 8/10

Save forests (SDG 15)

Afghanistan is a mountainous country but has foresters too that are at risk of disappearing. This forest can become of great national importance to support Food Systems.

- o Stop cutting forests. This to become a national priority
- o Start artificial forestation.
- o Plant trees (one/person/ year). Fruit trees can greatly support local food systems.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 9/10

Cross-cutting:

Peace, good governance, anti-corruption measures, gender, population growth, capacity/skills development, and rule of law are cross-cutting issues that to be considered at all (political, policy, program, and operational) levels. This includes:

- Create jobs and economic opportunities (SDG 8)

Food Systems offer enormous job opportunities and thus reduce poverty and improve people's purchasing power for nutritious food.

- o Create more jobs through food systems
- o Create more jobs through the agriculture and livestock sectors
- o Develop more Small and Medium Size Enterprises in Food Systems
- o Support women smallholders and women Food Systems related business

- Promote gender, nutrition, and climate-sensitive multi-sectoral policies, laws, regulations, and programs (SDGs 5, 13, 2,3,)

Afghanistan needs a paradigm shift from sole sector to multisectoral policies and programs. It also requires policies and actions to be made more gender, nutrition, and climate-sensitive. Therefore:

- o Revise current policies, laws, and regulations to transform the food systems
- o Strictly enforce laws and regulations
- o Local food market regulation must be endorsed and implemented
- o Introduce school feeding programs using local food products
- o Prioritize consumption of local healthy food products in policies, programs, and budgets
- o Work on province-to-province contracts and agreements on food trade and food safety
- o Go for large scale contracts and public-private partnerships in Food Systems e.g. farm modality
- o Plan national scale women economic empowerment programs in Food Systems
- o Apply Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in Food Systems
- o Introduce policies to support the informal food sector to deliver safe, and affordable diets
- o Develop Afghan Agriculture and livelihood Acceleration Policy

- Strengthen institutions, systems, and infrastructures (SDG 9, 16)

Without strong structures, food systems can't thrive. These systems and structures are to be established, strengthen, and make them sustainable. Therefore, we must:

- o Strengthen Food & Drug Authority
- o Establish Centers of Excellence and Research on Food Systems across the country
- o Expand the scale and number of cooperatives and agricultural networks
- o Invest in creating local production plants for fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides through Public Private Partnership.
- o Invest in creating local plants for producing animal medicine, vaccines, hormones, semen
- o Train more researchers, academic professionals, and experts in food systems to be developed
- o Establish, expand, and support local/territorial food markets
- o Enhance multisectoral approach and coordination for FSN and Food Systems

ACTION TRACKS

- | | |
|---|--|
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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 10/10

Cross Cutting ...

- More finances to produce more and better (SDG 17)

Financial resources are key to improve on various aspects of the food systems. Afghanistan is spending limited amount of its public budget on the agriculture. The spending in private sector is unknown but undoubtedly less than required. Therefore, we need more domestic and foreign investment from public, governments, and private sectors.

- o Advocate and attain more domestic and donors funding to the food security and nutrition
- o Offer subsidies to farmers, private sector producing agreed nutritious food
- o Offer low tariffs and financial incentives on nutritious food, innovative technology, and system innovation
- o Improve banking systems, loan, and other financial provisions to those investing in food systems and in actions such as food production, trade (import and export).
- o Improve public procurement mechanisms in the FSs. For example, loan provision
- o Control and regulate food prices particularly during crises
- o Award large scale contracts and public private partnership in FSs
- o Invest in public sector marketing social marketing for healthy diets

- Sustain long term Political Will and Commitment

Enabling environment and long-term political commitment is crucial to achieve Food Systems related goals. However, these commitments should not remain in words but to be translated into concrete and SMART objectives and actions.

- o Demonstrate political will in more resource allocation to Food Systems
- o Create and be member of national, regional and global level Food Systems coalitions and networks
- o Prioritize food security, nutrition, and Food Systems in all policies
- o Promote strong leadership in FSs particularly women leadership in FSs
- o Take seriously the Rule of law and anti-corruption measures
- o Improve the role of data sharing and transparency & develop best practices

- Peace (SDG 16)

- o End war and keep working on bring lasting peace and stability to the country
- o Consider eradication of poverty and improving the food security and nutrition as key driver to peaceful and productive nation in all policies.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There were no critical areas of divergence between participants.

ACTION TRACKS

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Consolidated Report of Afghanistan's Dialogues for Food Systems Summit**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Consolidated_Report-of-Afghanistans-Dialogues-for-Food-Systems-Summit.docx
- **Theory of Change for Afghanistan's Food Systems**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Theory-of-Change-for-Afghanistans-Food-Systems.xlsx>