

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Monday, 8 March 2021 15:00 GMT +08:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Linking Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Forest based Livelihoods: Towards an Outlook of Inclusive Foods Systems in Asia to 2030
CONVENED BY	Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihood SIANI Expert Group and the NTFP Exchange Programme
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/36136/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Viet Nam

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

343

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

106 Male

154 Female

74 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?

The week-long virtual forum held in March 2021 on wild foods, biodiversity and livelihoods was organized as a culminating dialogue to a series of dialogue events convened by the Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihood SIANI Expert Group led by the Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) Asia - see <https://www.siani.se/expert-groups/wild-foods-biodiversity-and-livelihood/> - over the course of four months in 2020 and a virtual regional outlook session in January 2021. By design, the composition of the Expert Group (EG) and the dialogue it convened, extended to a broader network of individuals and organizations from multiple sectors as dialogue partners. All participants, from the EG convenor, to the dialogue partners, were tied together by a common interest to consolidate knowledge about wild foods in Asia and its links to food security, poverty reduction and sustainable forest management. The group was diverse; the breadth of the discussions also reflected the appreciation of the dialogue participants, of the complexity of food systems as they would relate to the current state of wellbeing of people and of biodiversity, and peoples visions and aspiration about the same. The dialogue process provided multi-disciplinary perspectives from grounded experience, indigenous knowledge, and not just technical expertise. We organized the virtual forum as an urgent response to the need for a dialogue that would focus on wild foods and the role of indigenous peoples and local communities, highlighting their unique and important perspectives often not heard or given adequate space in policy discussions about food security, eradicating hunger and poverty. Indigenous peoples and local community, and civil society visions do not figure very prominently in current discussions on food systems transformation. We wanted to document, gather evidence and learnings on the subject, as well as to develop strategic collaborations that would raise awareness and strengthen support for work on forests for food and livelihoods security, and inclusive food systems in Asia.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

In organizing the virtual forum, we designed sessions in a way that enabled participants to share their experiences, keeping in mind that these can lead to synergies and complementarity of actions or interventions, and moreso that they can contribute an important perspective and key messages to the Summit. The diversity of voices that were involved in the dialogues was a key contributing factor to the richness of the discussions. Given this plurality of views, we also made it a point to emphasize respect and openness to receiving ideas and views. The forum concept and agenda can be found in <http://www.wildfoodsasia.com>. The outputs of the dialogue series that preceded this culminating dialogue forum can be found here too. These show the collective knowledge and perspectives that were shared and committed in what we considered as a dialogue process rather than as a one-off dialogue event. The process truly embraced inclusivity in its mixed format, diversity in the forum's program content and participation. The virtual forum format was interactive and also incorporated spaces for personal (eg. women and youth, indigenous peoples) and community reflection and sharing. We used mixed methods of presentation and program formats. Designing the virtual space to be welcoming and inclusive was very important for us because we wanted to foster learning exchanges and interactions that would help build relationships and trust, which is important for collective action and advocacy. It also helped that in 2020, we held four webinar discussion series on the subject. Participants from those sessions were also involved in an earlier food systems outlook session in January, and the culminating March 2021 virtual forum. This helped forge stronger partnerships between and among interested parties who were involved in the dialogue. The Forum was forward looking as it also provided space to share participants' vision about inclusive and transformative food systems - and their particular outlook for the region with concrete recommendations and mechanisms to realize or act upon them.

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

Communication is very important and translations of the sessions in various languages are very helpful in increasing stakeholder engagement and participation. Since the dialogue was mainly conducted virtually, it is important to pay close attention to the methods and format of the dialogue that would be most suited to keep diversity and inclusion. Virtual sessions do not lend well for community participation, both in terms of language and digital connectivity. Organizing break out rooms or discussion groups would not necessarily address breadth and diversity; the technical logistics would need to be prepared for and this entails additional costs to allow for maximum diversity not just across sectors but also across stakeholder groups - with particular attention to community and grassroots representatives, indigenous peoples and local CSOs. So instead of having break out/discussion groups in a one day event; we organized a number of short 1.5 hour plenary sessions in a course of five days with a different format of each session. This enabled us to address breadth, deepening of context (country discussion), targeting of participants (eg. youth, women, science and community, etc) providing also more meaningful interactive value. Use of other resources such as complementing with a website as landing page of the event provided us a repository for various resources to accompany the dialogue pre, during and post-event. Creativity and use of different media tools added to the interactive and content value of the dialogue. We also invite you to see the concept, agenda, and knowledge products produced from of the Virtual Forum and the events and activities preceding it in

<http://www.wildfoodsasia.com>. Having a set of principles of engagement is a useful guide in designing and executing the dialogue program. It is also useful in post-event reflection about the method, format and ultimately in assessing the value of the contribution produced from 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

In organizing the dialogue, we did not follow the standard format as prescribed but we believe that our dialogue process, up to the culminating virtual forum that was convened, covered the essential elements of an Independent Dialogue: from the welcome, to the opening and framing of the dialogue, and the discussion sessions to examine the topics in greater depth and inclusion, ie from challenges to solutions and recommendations, to finally, the synthesis and closing. The over-all curation of the dialogue process was strong particularly in the preparation, development of the agenda, identifying the participants and resource persons, speakers and presentors up to the moderation of the virtual forum itself. However, since the virtual forum was not originally envisaged and formalized as an FSS Independent Dialogue, the dialogue format was not standard and the curation did not originally include the compilation of feedback about the dialogue in the official form and was not published within the recommended time soon after the event. Instead, the feedback form was published at a much later schedule. In any case, the dialogue process has been documented and a report is available in the wildfoodsasia.com online platform and landing page of the dialogue. Furthermore there are several knowledge and communication products produced throughout the dialogue process that contribute well to a vision and outlook of the future of food systems particularly in Asia, and which to contribute to the action tracks and the global FSS. This has been much appreciated by the dialogue participants during the dialogue and beyond. The highlights of the virtual forum that represent the core elements of an Independent Dialogue was 1) an Opening Session to frame the discussion about inclusive food systems to 2030 in Asia as fundamentally to be capturing local realities, contexts and voices, in particular the context of the lesser visible forest foods or wild foods and indigenous peoples and local communities that continue to thrive and depend on these, 2) various Discussion sessions to go into greater depth and to illustrate the different facets about wild foods and indigenous food systems as they link to various thematic issues and stakeholders such as - a) the state of wild foods in south and southeast asia; b) creative and interactive sessions that depict the uses and values and revitalization of traditional food and wild tastes in Asia; c) conversations with women and youth and capturing their specific insights, experiences and key messages about wild foods and indigenous food systems; d) dialogue among policy and practice stakeholders about what makes for an enabling environment to promote, protect and enrich wild foods system, traditions and management; and e) networking around wild foods innovations and partnerships such as slow food and the future of food that is more sustainable and enriching for people and communities. It is worth mentioning that prior to the virtual forum held from March 8-12, 2021, we also organized 2-hour online discussions from June-September 2020 on the subject of wild foods, biodiversity and livelihoods which had breakout rooms to facilitate smaller group discussions. Another pre-session in January 2021 was held to recap and synthesize the key messages emerged from the discussion series and to develop a collective regional outlook about wild foods and the future of food systems in Asia. The emerging outlook about wild foods and transformative and inclusive food systems was the take off point of the virtual forum. Outputs from the dialogue series collectively fed into and were presented during the virtual forum, and which were enriched and validated by the diversity of the virtual forum plenary sessions (7 in total), in content and in terms of the participants. While we can point to an area for improvement in session time management, in general we believe that the method we used in the virtual forum as well as the pre-event activities, enabled well the surfacing of convergent views and insights about positive future actions of different stakeholders and their key messages, more than there was divergence.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

This virtual Independent Dialogue was convened by the Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihoods SIANI Expert Group (EG) led by the Non-Timber Forest Products - Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP) Asia. It built on the outputs of an online discussion series held from June-September 2020 which explored wild foods and its links to customary tenure rights and traditional knowledge, biodiversity, and sustainable livelihoods, and an EG discussion of an emerging regional outlook on inclusive systems in Asia to 2030 held in January 2021.

The objectives of the virtual dialogue / forum on March 8-12, 2021 were to:

- 1) Provide a platform to reflect on policy inputs, recommendations and insights from the expert group members, dialogue partners and contributors towards an indigenous peoples and local communities' (IPLC) agenda on wild foods in the South and Southeast Asia region
- 2) Provide a venue for IPLCs and civil society to engage policy actors and donor institutions and stakeholders to support wild foods initiatives
- 3) Increase awareness, support and recognition on the role of IPLCs and wild foods for food security and community resilience towards an enabling policy environment for food security, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, and enlivening a community of conscious practice.

It was envisaged that the dialogue process that culminated with the virtual forum, will be able to provide a vital contribution to ongoing regional to global processes including the FSS. Collectively the dialogues surfaced the perspectives of multi-sector experts (including indigenous and local communities) about wild foods and traditional food systems, explored their current status and practice among thriving indigenous and local communities, and their future in the face of present day barriers and challenges. Our major focus was to convene and facilitate a:

- sharing of experiences, cases and best practices in relation to wild foods work
- a discussion on the challenges and threats to wild foods
- recommendations on ways forward
- an outlook on wild foods, biodiversity, livelihoods, and inclusive food systems
- documentation and communication of key messages, insights, and lessons about transforming local to global food systems to be more inclusive; and
- visioning of the future role of a wild foods, biodiversity and livelihood network towards a transformative and inclusive food systems to 2030.

We had three (3) main sessions during the forum: (1) Opening Session: A synthesis of the key messages captured in the 2020 dialogue series that helps to frame the Virtual Forum, an outlook on wild foods and inclusive food systems in Asia towards 2030; (2) Country perspectives on the situation of wild foods in South and Southeast Asia; and a (3) Regional dialogue on wild foods, biodiversity and livelihoods: Enabling and enriching policy and practice. Side events on women and youth engagement and wild food stories in the region, including recipes and innovations on local ingredients, were also featured, and their distinct perspectives were also captured.

The dialogue was directed towards an outlook of a more inclusive food system in Asia - covering the diversity of populations that will govern, manage and benefit from it, to the knowledge, culture and science combined that drive it and the biocultural resources that have been neglected or taken for granted that contribute to its vitality, resilience or sustainability. The group was able to identify the important issues that intersect with wild foods that are critical to be addressed in policy and practice. The dialogue produced holistic recommendations of collective and participatory future actions.

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

Common threads across the region on the state of wild foods and factors affecting them:

1. There is much knowledge about wild foods among indigenous and rural peoples. Most of them use wild foods to supplement their diets; many foods as well as their methods of preparation, storage or harvesting techniques are a part of their identity and culture.
2. Alongside, there is an overall decline in the knowledge regarding wild foods. The reasons can be traced to national policies that affect foods grown and their harvest (mainly due to import policies and subsidies), as well as an official oversight about the role of wild and traditional foods in rural diets; the expansion of monocultures and other changes in land uses .
3. Mainstream agriculture has delinked food from nutrition and culture/identity. Both of the latter are important components of indigenous food ways.
4. Across the region there is a need to establish and publicize the links between food and health. While statistics on health may be easily available within government/intergovernmental agencies and international organizations, what needs to be examined are the correlations between wild food, access and consumption.
5. It is important to include all food ways prevalent in the region, including rotational farming, gathering, fishing, trapping, food gardens and cultivation. Even some of these traditional systems focus on non-mainstream crops. Their strengths and vibrancy should be known better in the local contexts, as also the threats that they face
6. The work on wild foods requires continuous updating, with new foods and the knowledge/status around them documented; this also includes the gaps in knowledge observed within communities during workshops and the appropriate interventions to be designed to fill them; and also to make clear the traditional uses and the link between wild foods and their nutritional values.
7. Field work and observations are encouraged to be explored in relation to various other predominating issues such as biodiversity, climate change, food security and tenure rights.
8. Indigenous knowledge do not have to be validated by science particularly when they stand on a position of strength through demonstrated practice.

Challenges and Threats to Wild Foods:

- 1) Sustaining community practice - The sustainable consumption of wild foods necessitates the passing on of traditional knowledge, mainly through actual practice. However, due to economic constraints, sustaining wild foods extraction and consumption is challenged by livelihood shifts, changes in cultural preferences, and the decreased willingness of people to spend time to collect or hunt wild food.
- 2) Environmental destruction - Wild foods are significantly found in forests and other natural environments. Thus, activities that cause destruction of natural environments or limit people's access to their natural resources negatively impact the availability and consumption of wild foods. Such activities include deforestation, mining, monocropping, chemical inputs, and infrastructure projects.
- 3) Tenure issues - Tenure ensures food security, especially for indigenous peoples. It ensures people's access to wild foods and in making community-based management plans for their forests. Tenure related problems, such as lack of recognition of ancestral lands and commons, land grabbing and encroachment endanger food security
- 4) Market-driven economy - A market-driven economy can cause over-exploitation of wild foods for selling or abandonment of wild foods in favor of cash crops or commercial species.
- 5) Unfavorable laws and policies - The lack of policies that enable the tenure of indigenous peoples and local communities to their lands poses challenges to the sustainability of wild foods. Supportive policies can empower people to manage their lands and capitalize on their resources for food security.

Recommendations and Ideas to Sustain Wild Foods:

- 1) Awareness-building and knowledge transfers - Build awareness about the benefits of wild foods; hold activities that will facilitate knowledge and skills transfer
- 2) Sustainable trade - Impose trade restrictions that ensure sustainability; remove barriers to market access due to limited market information, inhibitive taxes, lack of transportation, etc.
- 3) Sustainable farming, aquaculture, and wild foods conservation - Support community seed banking, rotational farming, observance of fallow periods, and guided fallows have the potential to improve forest quality; establish community-managed fish hatcheries and forest gardens; pursue multiple-use strategies and community-based management plans that are environmentally-sound and food-focused
- 4) Advocacy and protest actions - Dialogue, workshops, research, legal actions; advocate for tenurial and management rights of indigenous peoples for their lands; hold protest actions

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/6

Exploring wild foods and wild foods systems: why they matter?

What are wild foods?

- Wild foods refer to edible non-timber forest products (NTFPs) usually uncultivated plant species, fungi, and animals that are not consciously domesticated but collected from the forests, or on the edges of forests, and also on traditional gardens and agricultural lands. These food are customarily included in the diet of local communities in different ways or forms. Some examples of wild food are leaves, seeds and nuts, shoots and stems, root crops, fruits, flowers, fish, meat, and insects.

Wild food are important for food security and nutrition. The intangible aspects of wild food are also deeply related to the culture and identity of indigenous peoples and local communities. Harvesting and utilizing wild foods requires knowledge on identification of plant and animal foods. These are often passed down across generations in both active and passive ways.

The problems facing wild food availability and consumption include:

- issues and concerns on tenure security and recognition
- the continuity of inter-generational knowledge
- cultural changes brought about by migration, urban influences
- market can be a double-edged sword (rejuvenation of food vs. exploitation)
- deforestation and forest degradation
- use of chemicals
- extractive industries and changes in land use - monocultures threaten wild foods and indigenous knowledge, systems, and practices related to food

Other points to note when discussing wild foods in inclusive food systems:

- The matter of time should be factored in. Experience from villages have shown that many available food are missing from diets because people now have less time to dig, make and set traps, and all the other related activities and traditions connected to wild food.
- The more biodiverse an area, the more protection is needed for wild foods to ensure sustainability.
- The relation between the shrinking of world languages and wild food biodiversity is worth exploring.
- Research and inquiry on wild foods and indigenous food systems can look into the aspect of conservation initiatives that are food-focused and conduct studies that explore how wild foods are conserved, restored, revitalized and if there are types of wild food that remain in the wild versus those that are already being cultivated.

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KEYWORDS

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Finance | ✓ | Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Innovation | ✓ | Data & Evidence |
| ✓ | Human rights | ✓ | Governance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Women & Youth Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trade-offs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | ✓ | Environment and Climate |

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/6

Wild foods and tenure, traditional knowledge, systems and practices

- We looked at how customary tenure supports diverse food systems and arrived at the conclusion that tenure security is essential in ensuring food security and threats to tenure undermines biodiversity and traditional knowledge, including systems and practices related to food. It is essential that we work together in reducing threats to tenure to ensure continuity of traditional, communal food systems.
- Indigenous peoples' lands are the last frontiers for biodiversity. It is important to recognize the sacred relationship they have with their territories and their role as stewards and guardians of forests and natural resources. How do we ensure that traditional food systems are able to continue
- We need to look at the ways in which indigenous peoples and local communities manage their areas and understand the system so as to be able to adapt our ways of thinking about rights, power dynamics, and all these other important issues that need to be discussed.
- Indigenous practices on agriculture and food are related to their spirituality and identity. A lot of the knowledge within this spirituality relate to conservation, such as how to preserve the ecosystem, how to maintain ecology for the long-term.
- Rotational farming is important but is often viewed as a negative system compared to other processes. Community-led research and documentation to raise awareness and build evidence help in policy lobbying and advocacy efforts towards greater appreciation for the contributions of traditional food systems to food security and resilience.
- ICCAs (indigenous and local community conserved territories and areas) are a complementary way of establishing their tenure and ownership in their ancestral territories. ICCAs or Territories of Life that are governed by indigenous peoples and local communities all over the world demonstrate that communities who pursue the conservation of their own traditional areas are also able to take care of the biodiversity within that area. This contributes to their food security.
- There are various tenure modalities available in different countries across the region. Countries and communities can learn a lot from each other based on exchanges of experiences on certain policies and actions on the ground. A thematic network on wild foods can help to facilitate regional, as well as in-country, learning exchanges on the topic.

There are numerous challenges to wild foods in the context of tenure insecurity:

- land grabbing
- changes in land use
- difficulty in securing government support - e.g. slow titling process, overlapping policies, conservation exclusion, etc.
- differing world views on tenure - tendency for the state to see these lands as "idle" and not see its cultural and ecological value
- market forces impact customary control and practices and has an effect on culture and traditions

Recommendations and lessons:

- Identify entry points for tenure and wild foods for partnership and policy
- Highlight the economic benefits of tenure to food security and poverty alleviation
- Recognize women and youth as purveyors of wild foods and continue to support them through capacity building
- Multi-platform approach to engagement
- Organizing learning exchanges that encourage sharing of regional perspectives that can provide ideas on potential models and best practices
- Conduct research to deepen understanding and build evidence

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/6

Wild foods and biodiversity

- The sustainable use and harvest of wild foods and other natural resources supports biodiversity. Rich biodiversity in turn supports forests and other life systems. Wild foods and agrobiodiversity are important resources that contribute to systems resilient to climate and market shocks.
- Communities that are strong and have sustainable practices on natural resources governance and management have areas where biodiversity thrives and is kept intact. However, threats to biodiversity endanger a food secure future.

Challenges to wild foods and biodiversity

- decline in knowledge on wild foods and harvest practices at the local level
- missing data on the nutritional aspect of wild foods and its conservation at the regional/global level
- the lack of data also means that contributions of wild foods are not counted and are at best, mere estimates
- conservation exclusion affecting IPLCs' access to territories
- blanket bans on wildlife consumption, for example, undermine cultural practices - There is a need for a deeper dialogue to consider various perspectives on the issue
- development aggression has led to conversion of forests at a massive scale and has encouraged monocultures, affecting habitats of species and biodiversity
- Corporate farming has marginalized smallholder farmers and IPLCs
- an orientation towards foreign markets for production and overreliance on cheap imports has undermined self-sufficiency of nations/localities, putting them at greater risk of food insecurity during times of crisis, such as pandemics
- food production and diets as well are not diverse and are concentrated only on major crops
- mainstream or popular food, which are usually processed and unhealthy, is preferred over traditional diets, which are more nutritious. Cultural perceptions and behavior also impact on wild food knowledge and practices - what does not get eaten gets forgotten, and with that, much knowledge and potential sources of nutrition, are lost

Recommendations and lessons shared:

- Document lessons, best practices and models and share these information with the network for learning exchange and possible applications and/or innovations
- Continuously consider ways on how wild foods can be used and conserved for the long-term
- Multi-stakeholder consultations and dialogue on wild foods and biodiversity can be organized - inclusive approaches and utilization of regional and local platforms help break silos and facilitate collaborations
- Develop food-resilient communities by supporting capacity development for smallholder farmers and IPLCs and supporting self-strengthening processes that enable local groups to organize themselves
- See wild foods as both an economic and an ecological system
- Propose bills and pass laws that support tenure security and biodiversity sustainability

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/6

Wild foods and sustainable community-based livelihoods

Wild foods are important sources of income for forest-dependent communities. Apart from subsistence, wild foods provide livelihoods for locally-driven social enterprises, supplying markets at a local, national and at times even global scale. It was discussed during the dialogues that there is an observed hesitation on the part of communities and support groups in engaging markets because of various concerns, but the link between wild foods, communities and markets is an important one to understand.

How do we make markets work for indigenous food systems and biodiversity conservation? What are the lessons to be learned in upscaling to other markets while at the same time, achieving balance on the things that matter such as food sovereignty, ecosystem integrity, and cultural values? These were just some of the questions that were brought forth during the discussions.

Through an exchange of personal experiences, case stories and an open dialogue on the link between wild foods and livelihoods, we were able to identify best practices and recommendations that can help address the threats to wild foods in the context of livelihoods and market engagement.

Challenges to wild-foods based community enterprises/livelihoods:

- Policies are put out by people who have limited understanding and perspectives on IPLCs, traditional food systems, mountain systems, etc. As a result, there is a tendency to leave out other groups and their voices do not get to figure in in discussions.
- Products are undervalued and the time, effort and knowledge applied in harvesting of wild foods are not considered in its pricing. Middlemen tend to buy at lower price points and sell for higher profits.
- Migration and modern education impacts food systems tradition and knowledge
- Market demand can lead to overharvests, exploitation - it is important to be able to strike a balance and to be clear about terms or principles of engagement with markets, especially as they tend to be very dynamic

Recommendations and lessons shared:

- Policies and markets drive the state and conditions of global biodiversity, forestry and agriculture, affecting what is produced and what is eaten. It is important to review policy frameworks that affect wild foods and consider ways on how policies can also be designed to support the revitalization and restoration of wild foods and local food systems.
- Storytelling is important and placing emphasis on the understory of wild food products can help highlight and optimize its value. Health and nutritional values of wild foods can be emphasized.
- Engage the right kind of markets - i.e., markets that are respectful and understanding of IPLCs and the value of their wild foods and forest harvests
- It is very critical to keep a balance between selling and consuming.
- To alleviate demand-driven pressures on certain products, communities can diversity their supply and also package various products as part of a collection
- Support the establishment of community producer companies, cooperatives and local enterprises.
- Food festivals help revive interest and appreciation for wild foods and also encourage ideas on sustainable community-based enterprises
- Recognize women and youth as agents of change and innovation - they are able to lead in both conservation and economic aspects
- Strengthen local markets for food resilience
- Explore collective marks and participatory guarantee systems that ensure sustainable harvests of wild foods marketed for trade
- Capacity building and training are important to help communities have successful enterprises. Nurture the agency of IPLCs and provide encouragement
- Policy level changes have the potential to bring wild foods back in people's diets

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/6

Emerging outlook on wild foods and inclusive food systems in Asia

The right to food is a universal human right and inclusive food systems would ensure that this right is accorded to and enjoyed by all. During the dialogue, several conversations revolved around the discussion of a vision towards 2030 on inclusive food systems in Asia, particularly one that considers the perspectives of indigenous peoples and local communities who rely on wild foods and traditional food systems. The discussion on outlooks are meant to provide a frame in which we can begin to identify pathways and ideas in transforming our present food systems.

The following key policy issues and suggested areas of engagement were identified:

- Respect and recognition of traditional livelihood and food systems of IPLCs
- Involving scientific community appropriately in wild food knowledge documentation and innovation
- Production and consumption and mainstreaming of wild foods
- Diversification
- Health
- Food distribution
- Agriculture, biodiversity and environment

What needs to be done towards the vision of inclusive food systems, including wild foods, to 2030:

- Bottoms-up and inclusive policy making
- Advocate for wild foods and sustainable food systems, including respect for collective rights of IPLCs
- Build strong foundations for awareness raising, research and documentation
- Invest in improving wild food education for youth
- Secure tenure for IP and forest based communities
- Develop wild foods harvest and management guidelines
- Safeguard indigenous knowledge on wild foods from biopiracy
- Harness digital tools to have a stream of technical support to policy making and practice or ground-level action
- Scale up dialogues on food diversification and inclusive food systems

The role of networks and support groups was also highlighted as an important facilitating factor in ensuring that knowledge is restored back to the people. A network on wild foods, biodiversity and livelihoods can facilitate learning exchanges and foster meaningful engagement across countries, regions and generations. This can lead to a better understanding and appreciation on the value of wild foods work in relation to its contributions to food security, livelihoods, cultural heritage and biodiversity conservation.

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- ✓ 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
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 6/6

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to strengthen and sustain wild foods practice, traditions and knowledge through local and global action. Likewise, the need to establish and publicize the links between food and health should be made a priority. Co-relations between wild foods and access and consumption need to be further examined. As we envision a more inclusive food system, it is important to keep in mind all food ways prevalent in the region –this means including rotational farming, gathering, fishing, trapping, food gardens and cultivation in the conversation. The strengths and vibrancy of these systems should be known better in various local contexts, along with the challenges that are faced. This implies the need for continuous updating of our work, with learning exchanges and interventions facilitated that would contribute to the documentation of the knowledge and status of wild foods, as well as addressing observed gaps and needs identified from our field work and studies.

Other emerging recommendations from discussions led by the Expert Group include:

- Bottom-up/locally-based strategies and solutions to address challenges and sharing these in appropriate and strategic platforms
- Need for better and stronger messaging, especially when it comes to encouraging engagement of the youth (to counter-message other influences)
- Nurturing the agency of communities so their voices are heard and they understand the policy arenas that impact their lives
- Organizing local groups for them to have their own economic identity
- Forging partnerships and exploring multi-stakeholder and multi-platform avenues for interventions
- Engaging in future research and action that encourages co-production of knowledge; involving communities and letting them lead these actions
- Advocacy and protest actions for better policies
- Awareness-raising and knowledge transfers across generations
- Supporting and upholding traditional systems and recognizing their contributions
- Sustainable farming, aquaculture, wild foods conservation and revitalization
- “Food-focused conservation” - protect, revive, restore wild foods
- Sustainable trade and market engagements; engaging the right kinds of markets
- Increase value of wild foods and raise awareness through storytelling
- Linking our work to post-2020 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) discussions, climate change, food summits and tenure rights. It is important to include wild foods in the dialogue so it isn't “missing from the picture
- Respect IPLCs management of forests, lands – include them and see them as stewards, leaders – custodians and guardians; respect aspirations of communities and the rights of IPLCs
- Develop and strengthen partnerships and capacities; facilitate multi-stakeholder interactions and dialogues, collaborations
- Further explore linkages of wild foods to agroforestry, agroecology, permaculture, etc.
- Identify factors that make the environment conducive for inclusive food systems. Look at the socio-ecological factors that enable best practices
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- Identify factors that make the environment conducive for inclusive food systems. Look at the socio-ecological factors that enable best practices
- Diversification of diets and including wild foods in meal planning and meal food distribution programs; Scaling up dialogues on food diversification
- Think about safeguards to protect from overexploitation, biopiracy, negative effects of commercialization
- Creative alternative discourses and also create spaces so that narratives on wild foods and traditional food systems are made visible, leading to increased awareness on its importance
- Sharing messages of resilience and hope, along with lessons and best practices

ACTION TRACKS

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The dialogue surfaced certain tensions that need to be considered in the discussion of wild foods within the context of local to global food systems. The areas of divergence identified during the dialogue were expressed as concerns that require further reflection, especially on its implication towards future interventions and its potential impact overall.

The following were noted:

- 1) Wild foods are primarily used by forest-dependent communities for subsistence, personal consumption as well as livelihoods. The question of just how much of these wild foods should be traded and opened up to wider markets emerged. Some feel that wild foods are best valued for their contributions to local community resilience and food security and as an additional source of income, but should stay within a reasonable scale for it to be sustainable. Another point of view was opening up these wild food sources to a wider market for trade to increase income of communities. On the one hand, certain communities also have aspirations of scaling up their wild foods-based enterprises. Safeguards must be ensured to mitigate risks of commercialization which might lead to overharvests and undue stress. There was a call to be more cautious of this so we avoid the situation where indigenous peoples themselves who produce these food do not lose control over their products.
- 2) Raising awareness on wild foods and traditional food systems are important to gather support and to advocate for more conducive environments in support of indigenous peoples and local communities. Documentation of these species are also important and should be ensured. However, alongside this increased attention is the threat of overexposing these indigenous and local food to outside threats and communities losing intellectual property rights over their food and cultural heritage and practices. Carelessness can lead to endangering indigenous intellectual property rights.
- 3) The view that there is a dearth of information about wild foods that are available and easily accessible and the view that there actually is a lot of information and knowledge about wild foods and traditional food systems but perhaps not just in the format mainstream society is used to. In relation to this, there were also discussions on having the need for traditional knowledge and practices to be 'validated by science' in contrast with speaking from a position of strength with regards to indigenous food systems, knowledge and practices.
- 4) It was observed that there are diverging views on wild food. For some, there is a certain stigma attached to wild foods because people who depend on these sources are viewed as 'backward' or 'primitive'. More attention and value is given to the dominant and more 'socially acceptable' food sources such as rice, wheat, etc. On the other hand, there is the view that people with strong indigenous food systems like rotational farming and wild food gardens are far better off and are more affluent in terms of food security and resilience. IPLCs should take pride in their rich food heritage and change the narrative.
- 5) Policies on self-sufficiency tend to concentrate on certain species only, encouraging uniformity vs. diversity in species, thereby ignoring healthier and nutritious food options and placing stresses on the environment and threatening biodiversity. There are often well-meaning policies which have negative socio-ecological impacts on the ground. Policy making should be more holistic in its approach, taking into view as well agroforestry and how forests figure in the discussion on food systems.
- 6) The view that regional and international policies are important to push for versus concentrating efforts on strengthening local initiatives which often require customized or tailor-fitted intervention designs and strategies. What is the added value of regional/global policies, considering that local contexts have varying requirements? There is a need to recognize that not all communities are in a similar position as far as wild foods are concerned and thus require separate strategies. Consider further reflections on possible local-to-global-to-local and global-to-local-to-global actions that impact food systems.
- 7) During the onset of COVID-19 pandemic, wildlife consumption bans were endorsed and imposed left and right, prohibiting consumption and trade of wildlife to prevent further spread of zoonotic diseases. Dissenting opinions about this were surfaced, with some fully supporting a blanket ban on this, while others called for a more culturally-sensitive view, noting that certain communities have wildlife as part of their local diets and this practice is tied to their cultural beliefs and traditions. A call to co-craft potential solutions and deepen the dialogue on this was suggested.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Wild Foods Asia - an online resource and event page of the virtual forum**
<https://www.wildfoodsasia.com/>