

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 8 July 2021 10:00 GMT +04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	UAE National Dialogue: Special zones for modern farming and access to technology in the UAE
CONVENED BY	HE Mariam Almheiri, UAE Minister of State for Food and Water Security
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/38905/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	United Arab Emirates

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

1 0-18 40 19-30 53 31-50 11 51-65 3 66-80 1 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

59 Male 50 Female Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

43	Agriculture/crops	9	Education	1	Health care
3	Fish and aquaculture		Communication	3	Nutrition
	Livestock	4	Food processing	11	National or local government
6	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets	3	Utilities
5	Environment and ecology	10	Food industry		Industrial
4	Trade and commerce	1	Financial Services	5	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

20	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
6	Large national business		Member of Parliament
2	Multi-national corporation	2	Local authority
0	Small-scale farmer	13	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
3	Large-scale farmer	6	United Nations
1	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
8	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People		Consumer group
26	Science and academia	22	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The national dialogue was organized and guided by the seven principles of the Food Systems Summit: 1) act with urgency; 2) commit to the Summit; 3) be respectful; 4) recognize complexity; 5) embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity; 6) complement the work of others; and 7) build trust. By organizing this dialogue, the UAE is taking one-step forward with a concrete plan through the FoodTech Valley initiative, to create an enabling environment to support the transition towards sustainable food systems. Cognizant of the importance of food security as a cross-sectoral issue, and the need to act with urgency given the specific context of UAE, the UAE is the first country in the world to have appointed a Minister of State for Food and Water Security, with the overall responsibility to streamline all efforts towards the goal of ensuring adequate, safe, affordable and nutritious food for all. This presents a unique position not existing anywhere else in the world. The UAE acknowledges the intrinsic complexity of food systems and the challenges of transformation under national socioeconomic, political, environmental, cultural, compounded by regional and global drivers. The UAE is committed to ensuring inclusive engagement and participation of all stakeholders across all sectors, and in doing so it has conducted a series of stakeholder consultations and established a national committee on "promoting modern advanced farming in the UAE" that serves as an advisory body to the federal government on issues related to food security and sustainability. The committee recommended a series of interventions, which have been identified and prioritized based on their impact and role to facilitate the transformation and adoption of Agricultural Technology (Agtech) and innovation solutions. The Plan has identified (10) intervention areas, prioritized (6) of them and has explicit (26) points of action, entailing the timeline of implementation, responsible government body and the impact on transition towards sustainable food systems. (continued in official attached report)

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The national dialogue reflected the principles of the United Nations Food Systems Summit. It was organized following a series of consultations (multi-stakeholder inclusivity) that led to the development of a comprehensive plan to enable the transformation of food systems in a more resilient and sustainable way in the UAE. The UAE Government at all levels has adopted an inclusive approach of partnership, working closely with all relevant stakeholders (federal government entities, local authorities, the private sector, agri tech companies, food and nutrition experts, international organizations, academia, farmers, youth, NGOs, etc.) throughout the food value chain for meeting the SDGs. The UAE faces significant challenges to producing food domestically and competitively, and imports more than 90% of its food. To meet the current and future food needs of a growing and urbanized population, it is time to act urgently. Cognizant of the importance of food security, the UAE appointed a Minister of State for Food and Water Security to streamline all efforts towards the goal of ensuring adequate, safe, affordable and nutritious food for all. The UAE is developing advanced expertise in integrating technologies throughout the food value in order to facilitate the transition from inefficient food systems to more sustainable ones. The UAE is more than ever committed to the United Nations Food Systems Summit. While the lack of progress in meeting the SDGs is a matter of concern, the call for a decade of action nevertheless provides the UAE a prime opportunity to contribute towards having a focus agenda that will enable us to get back on track to achieve the SDGs. For the national dialogue, 120 invitations were sent out to ensure broad-based consultations and representations of all relevant stakeholders (Government entities, private sector, academia, research organizations, youth, agri tech companies, food and nutrition experts, and farmers' organizations). About 109 participants from a wide... (continued in official attached report)

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

The principles of engagement of the UN Food Systems Summit are key to the success of the national dialogue. They should be embraced from the planning phase to the dialogue itself and post-dialogue. In particular, the identification and participation of the right stakeholders, according to the topic selected for the dialogue, is critical to have successful deliberations and reach the expected outcomes. The UAE has always adopted the participatory approach, as a principle of the planning, designing and implementation of its national agenda. This role of the government serves the nation's wide interest including those of its citizens and residents and acts as a key success factor

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

In the UAE, ensuring food security (current and future) is a high priority. By 2051, the UAE vision is to become a world-leading hub in innovation-driven food security. To realize this vision, the UAE has formulated a National Food Security Strategy anchored upon five strategic directions (agribusiness trade facilitation, technology-enabled food production, reduce food loss and waste, food safety and nutrition and food risks and crisis management) and five enablers (building an effective food security governance model, establishing national research and development agenda, ensuring quality data and information availability, enhancing availability of quality human capital for food, and the food movement) were identified. Guided by the principles of inclusiveness (leaving no one behind), and after a series of stakeholder consultations, the UAE have identified the development of Special Zones for modern Farming and access to agtech as a key strategy to increase local food production in a sustainable way. The UAE, being a leader in the area of agtech, has taken the initial step of piloting its first special zone for agricultural technology in the Emirate of Dubai known as “The FoodTech Valley”. The FoodTech Valley is centered on food, innovation, knowledge, technology and sustainability, and is seen as a catalyst to transform the UAE generally and Dubai specifically to be the hub for future clean tech-based food and agricultural products, and as an economic zone to spearhead innovation and create collaborative networks to lead national and regional transformation for sustainable food systems. This complex development will feature incentives to allocate and provide different modalities for growers who are interested in establishing their advanced modern farming.

The major focus of the national dialogue was on the FoodTech Valley. The objective of the dialogue was to discuss the details of the FoodTech Valley. More specifically, to, obtain holistic feedback through an inclusive process of how to enhance special food production zones and maximize the use of this state-of-the-art development; enable all relevant stakeholders to contribute toward a master plan for development of special food production zones and advises on key success factor in an effort to create a win-win situation for all; and finally strengthening relationships with the private sector to enable a transition towards sustainable food systems through adoption of renewable resources and environmentally friendly approaches.

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

Attendance: 109 participants attended the event. Participants were drawn from a wide and diverse category of stakeholders group and sectors and with a good gender distribution (see part 1 – participation). The event was organized around three plenary thematic discussion sessions:

- Session 1: Role of the Food Innovation Center and lab requirements: three questions were posed for discussion: a) what do you envision the future trend of food innovation will be in the next decade? b) what is needed to effectively utilize the innovation center as a catalyst to transform your idea/innovation, c) Can you identify the required equipment and materials to support your food innovation?
- Session 2: Priorities and Zoning for AgriTech: participants reflected on three questions: a) what are the most significant thematic sub-zones of each main zone? b) what is the recommended plot size for each sub-zone and are they specific zoning needs that must be taken into consideration? and c) Are there any specific infrastructure or regulatory needs for each sub-zone?
- Session 3: Enablers required by subsector: participants discussed and shared viewpoints, expectations and enablers or success factors of the FoodTech Valley initiative.

Summary of deliberations (curator)

Embracing the 7 principles, the dialogue was constructive and has helped participants to share common understanding and value, components of the FoodTech Valley and its potential for contributing towards increasing local food production in specialized zones and thus contributing to the overall agenda to achieving food security. The food tech value is an exciting and futuristic project aiming at transforming food systems in a resilient and sustainable manner.

It was noteworthy to understand that the following comments were instrumental in planning the FoodTech Valley initiative and were shared by the attendees:

- Integrated research and development approach to capitalize on the wide knowledge and expertise of the NGOs, research institutes, academia and private sector.
- The desert farming approach shall enable a higher value proposition for the FoodTech Valley.
- The need to incorporate a digital modern farming zone, which enables many of the fourth-industrial revolution applications.
- When creating subzones, it is necessary to take into account integrated and shared facilities to serve the full food supply chain including marketing and sales channels.
- Food Innovations is a critical component to the success of the initiative, thus the need to enhance regulations around labor law to attract scientists for part time employment during experimentation.
- The need to ease the process of access/import of equipment's utilized in food innovation.
- Provision of natural resources at affordable costs including solar energy, TSE and Carbon dioxide.
- Provision of standard laboratory and equipment's to support cellular agriculture, material testing for CEA, fermenters, 3D food printing, bio-reactors.
- Provision of space for CGIAR research and development institutes.
- Provision of Water Cooling Infrastructure to enable farming during summer period (underground water reservoir).

Key takeaways from the discussions:

- Need to look for means of utilizing water resources in a sustainable manner (be it conventional and non-conventional), as water scarcity is a major constraint to food production in the UAE;
- Use of controlled environment agriculture (CEA), biosaline agriculture, cellular agriculture;
- Engaging youth is a key enabler to making the FoodTech Valley successful;
- Innovation Center: need to look at human capacity, training, guiding start-ups throughout an innovation development cycle; as well standard lab provision, integration with CGIAR research enters, ability to enhance access of specialized food equipment's and finally ease of labor law for scientists during experimentation time
- Ecosystems to enabler innovators to move from idea/concept into piloting to large scale production;
- Resources are needed: i.e. natural gas, hydrogen, storing water, reservoir, using solar energy;
- Ecological impact of the FoodTech Valley should be well assessed to attract investments;
- Need to define sub-zones and adopt an integrated and systemic approach, exploring linkages between different components and zones within the FoodTech Valley using the integrated desert farming approach;
- Innovation Center: not over complicated but establish basic labs to cater for multiple activities, looking at standard things that can be fine-tuned to cater for the different users;
- Enabling technology: should always look at ways of simplifying processes;
- Sub-zones: digitalization is important (e.g. biosecurity, traceability, test food quality, transform to data);
- Alternative feed;
- Enablers: not only reversible funding mechanisms, but also grants and engage the private sector.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Role of the Food Innovation Center and lab requirements

Water scarcity is a key constraint; integration and connection of all stakeholders; holistic assessment of research project; commercial outcomes should drive the FoodTech Valley; funding is needed to ensure sustainability and promote exchange and investments; focus on youth, building capacities, training programmes should be tailored for SME; research in food systems is needed; need to define the topic (ideas and innovation for the center); need standardize labs; incentives for external investments; standardized assets.

Priorities and Zoning for AgriTech

Water, biosecurity, collaboration, vertical farming, integrated and systemic thinking, research into water treatment and treated sewage effluent; quality control areas for products, sustainability goals, different forms of energy, waste recycling, agtech platform, IT and blockchains.

Enablers required by subsector

Funding with direct economic returns, competitive pricing, engaging the private sector, and considering the stage the company is at, to ensure there are no gaps in the process.

ACTION TRACKS

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✓	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
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KEYWORDS

	Finance		Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights		Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

None

ACTION TRACKS

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **UAE National Dialogue Report**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Offical-Feedback-Report-UAE-National-Dialogue-Final-Version.pdf>