

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 17 June 2021 14:00 GMT +04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	National Dialogue on Food Systems
CONVENED BY	Honourable Maneesh GOBIN, Minister of Agro Industry and Food Security
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/39347/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Mauritius

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

700

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

5	0-18	20	19-30	50	31-50	25	51-65		66-80		80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

57	Male	42	Female	1	Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

35	Agriculture/crops	19	Education		Health care
4	Fish and aquaculture		Communication		Nutrition
10	Livestock	15	Food processing	10	National or local government
	Agro-forestry		Food retail, markets		Utilities
2	Environment and ecology	2	Food industry		Industrial
	Trade and commerce		Financial Services	3	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

20	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
4	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
10	Small-scale farmer	40	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer	3	United Nations
5	Local Non-Governmental Organization	3	International financial institution
	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People		Consumer group
15	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

Food Systems Summit provide an opportunity for diverse, purposeful and respectful exchanges between food systems stakeholders, at all times taking into account the Principles of Engagement of the Food Systems Summit. Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity: We support inclusive multi-stakeholder processes and approaches within governments and communities that bring in diverse perspectives, including indigenous knowledge, cultural insights and science-based evidence to enable stakeholders to understand and assess potential trade-offs and to design policy options that deliver against multiple public goods across these various systems. Both at the launch and during the various phases of consultations with stakeholders, all participants respected the principles of engagement defined for the UNFSS.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Act with urgency: We recognize the utmost urgency of sustained and meaningful action at all levels to reach the respective 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Commit to the Summit: We commit to practice what we preach personally and professionally to contribute to the vision, objectives and the final outcomes of the Food Systems Summit. Be respectful: Within our respective capacities and circumstances, we will promote food production and consumption policies and practices that strive to protect and improve the health and well-being of individuals, enhance resilient livelihoods and communities and promote good stewardship of natural resources, while respecting local cultures, contexts. Recognize complexity: We recognize that food systems are complex, and are closely connected to, and significantly impact, human and animal health, land, water, climate, biodiversity, the economy and other systems, and their transformation requires a systemic approach. Complement the work of others: Recognizing that issues related to food systems are being addressed through several other global governance processes, we will seek to ensure that the Food Systems Summit aligns with, amplifies and accelerates these efforts where practicable, avoiding unnecessary duplication, while encouraging bold and innovative new thinking and approaches that deliver systems-level transformation in line with the Summit's principles and objectives. Build trust: We will work to ensure the Summit and associated engagement process will promote trust and increase motivation to participate by being evidence-based, transparent and accessible in governance, decision-making, planning, engagement and implementation. We – from member states to private businesses to individual actors – will hold ourselves accountable for commitments made with mechanisms in place to uphold this accountability.

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

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

1 Launch of the National Dialogue A ceremony marked the launching of the National Dialogue under the chairmanship of the Honourable Maneesh Gobin, Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security, designated by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius as convener, and her Excellency Christine Umutoni, United Nations Resident Coordinator for Mauritius and Seychelles, whose office is responsible to facilitate the consultation. The launching, organized jointly by their services, was done simultaneously with the launch of the Green Recovery Fund of the PAGE coalition. 2 Preparation of the Dialogue In the days following the launching, a series of working meetings between the organizers and facilitators of the Dialogues: • members of the team of the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Republic of Mauritius and Republic of Seychelles, in charge of facilitating coordination, starting with the Consultant recruited for this purpose • executive of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security • representative of the Food and Agricultural Research & Extension Institute (FAREI) and the main executives in charge of sectoral development within this body, in charge of the technical assistance of the Dialogue 2.1 Themes of the sessions: - Waste (special workshop as part of launching) - Crops - Livestock - Agro processing value addition - Whole value chain along the food system (production, storage, transformation, transport distribution, reuse) - Fisheries - Youth Innovation (online symposium for International Youth Day : Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health) 2.2 Cross-cutting issues : - Links to or dependence on imports (e.g., supporting local production, but in the same time importing competing products). Import substitution - Link between the situation, prospects, and policy - Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and the Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) for Rodrigues Island as a strategy for local development - Food waste - Sustainability - Adaptation and mitigation to climate change - Youth and community engagement - Gender dimension - Poverty attenuation - Labor issues 2.3 Groups of stakeholders (Mauritius and Rodrigues) at all levels of the food chain - Assemble list of stakeholders of producers, consumers, policy makers that include selected producers, agro-processors, association of Mauritian manufacturers, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chamber of Agriculture, NGOs, other civil society organizations (including youth organizations), academics (including students in agriculture) ... 3. Consultation sessions Roadmap for the different consultations: • An explanatory and engaged speech by the Minister concerning the challenges linked with the transformation of food systems. Focus was placed on reducing dependency on agricultural imports to meet food self-sufficiency, with the motto: "We have to produce what we eat and to eat what we produce" • An introductory word from the representative of the UN RCO; • A presentation by CEO of the FAREI executives on the actual situation and strategic issues of the sector as well as elements of the Mauritian food system specific which the session of the day. It should be noted that these presentations are fully aligned with the priorities established by FAO in the latest version of the Country Programming Framework • Moderation and facilitation of the dialogue was conducted jointly by the Assistant Director of the FAREI and the Consultant of the UN RCO

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

1. Crop Production

Crop Production in Mauritius was described as being a difficult sector. All were agreeable that the high dependency on food imports need to be reduced and there was need to boost local production through government incentives, grants and schemes to promote crop production. The numerous constraints and challenges of the sector were enumerated. Participants also voiced out their frustrations and expectations from government authorities. Organic agriculture and production our own seeds should be among government priorities.

2. Agro-processing

Actually, the agro-processing sector is facing many challenges including the irregular supply as well as the quality of raw materials at competitive prices. Other constraints include the high cost of production and equipment, difficulty to comply with food safety and quality assurance system, limited market access, especially during the covid pandemic, the tourist market (hotel and catering industry) is dire. Eventually, our food needs is satisfied by local production (55%), of which only 50% uses locally sourced raw materials.

The entrepreneurship spirit, the know-how, and the technical and financial support are available. However, much more need to be done. Agro-processing has been performed since a long time, mostly at a small and medium scale, targeting niche markets in some instances. But nowadays there is an urgent need to boost up this sector at the same time creating new jobs for entrepreneurs/youth. There is need to have a strategic plan for the sector. Focus should be on local products and for the different value chains, have "accords de filiere". The sector is likely to expand and it is important to remove all barriers/hurdles and it is therefore important to continue the dialogue on a regular basis to know growers'/entrepreneurs grievances and difficulties.

3. Livestock

The livestock sector in Mauritius was described as being one with numerous constraints and challenges. Stakeholders voiced out their frustrations and their expectations from the authorities on how to improve the sector. Those involved in the sector were however willing to stick to their activities to expand them further and persevere in this direction in order to cut down our high dependence on import products. A complete review of the livestock sector was proposed after discussions with the stakeholders, need to adopt Good Animal husbandry practices; need to relocate farmers from residential areas, need for better waste management; with government support and better incentives, more attention to safe safety, become more demand oriented, as well as requirement for an improved market information system and value chain facilities, and to have a sustainable production system.

4. All Value chain

There was a need to review the food system in order to make it more fair to planters. Access to markets was a major issue. There was need to promote more local production and address the difficulties faced by planters. Issues related to seeds in particular potato seeds and other inputs were discussed. Farmers expressed their concern with regard to their vulnerability in the light of shocks such as Covid19 and climate change. The possibility of having an online marketing platform would be a useful tool for agro-processors to market their produce directly to consumers.

ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

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

MAIN FINDINGS

Waste

In complement of its work on food systems, the UN is organizing a global dialogue to strengthen the capacities of governments and other stakeholders across food systems to measure and reduce food waste. Mauritius has been selected to be part of the dialogue based on its Government's political will. Beyond food waste, this will contribute to on-going initiatives on circularity in Mauritius' food systems. Discussions during the NDFS were on:

- Priority challenges to be tackled and questions to be answered in the global dialogue on food waste, and of technical assistance that could be needed
- How to collaborate to gain useful answers and assistance to meet the priority challenges through the global dialogue as well as through local discussions

Crop Production

Problems of thefts, labour shortage and its high cost, high cost of inputs, need for proper agricultural planning and monitoring, regular updating of APMIS, need for land and crop suitability maps, need for light machinery, access to fine derocking/mechanization facilities, improved facilities for longer cold storage (for storage of seeds and commodities), need for modernizing agriculture to make it more attractive to youth. Support was needed for organic agriculture. There was a need for an equipped soil laboratory and an independent certification body.

Agro-processing

Following the discussion, some major points need to be considered:

- The agro-processing sector should be professionalized and one should shift from small scale to large scale, provided all necessary facilities, equipment tax exemption and support are given by the Government, FAREI and other stakeholders involved.
- There is also shortage and lack of inadequate processing, storage (capacity/duree de stockage et volume) and distribution facilities
- Technical assistance should be provided for proper implementation of HACCP and other quality systems.
- High rent paid/high freight
- Training and awareness should be done among growers to encourage Good Agricultural Practices. Vulnerable groups should be taken on board.
- Promote development of new products and encourage value addition for example producing flour from local starchy crops.
- To come up with new environment friendly packaging materials, these could be made available throughout the year.
- There should be more experts in agro-processing to train the entrepreneurs and more certification body should be set up.
- There is an urgent need to establish a "coin pour produits mauriciens" in supermarkets and hypermarkets. Should encourage the local entrepreneurs to move forward in their business.
- Creation of one-stop shop for SMEs.
- Survey to know the exact number of growers and their cultivation to avoid over and under production.
- Regular Meeting with growers and entrepreneurs to know their grievances.
- To provide more facilities and undertake advanced research and development on new systems of preservation of local produce.
- Regrouping of fishermen, developing of aquaculture for sustainable production and supply to the customers.
- Creation of a seed bank with all local seeds and provide training on all steps required on seed production.
- To minimize cost of production entrepreneurs to use solar panels for dehydration procedures.

Livestock

- Need to review sector, high cost of feed and overdependence on imports for feed availability;
- Limited access to land for livestock grazing; limited access to finance;
- Inadequate animals of improved races for breeding purposes, consanguinity problems affecting progeny quality, waste disposal and effective waste management issues,
- Production to be demand oriented and policy to import livestock products should not be disadvantageous to local farmers,
- Marketing difficulties and need for updated market information systems,
- Access to veterinary services, thefts of animals and fodder,
- Labour shortage, inadequate investment for modernization of farms,
- Request for regional composting facilities, access to quality water supply,
- Food safety and food standards requirements, slaughterhouses to be upgraded and relocated, need for training, support from authorities, and more schemes and incentives to give a boost to the sector.

All value chain

There was a general interest of planters to promote local production and there was a need to promote market access for small and medium producers/entrepreneurs. The agro-processors would need assistance to meet required norms and standards so as to compete with imported produce. There should be a dedicated space in shopping malls and other retail outlets for locally processed food items.

In order to deal with the ageing planting community, there is a need to engage more youth in agriculture. This can be achieved by giving free training to youngsters especially drop outs from schools. Land should be dedicated for agricultural purposes so as maintain a certain level of food crop and livestock production with a view of achieving a certain level of self-sufficiency.

Fisheries

- Finding ways & means to secure raw materials and thus decrease reliance on EU Vessels
- Looking into the Quota system imposed on Yellow Fin tuna

- Working with Ministry of Tourism to promote Artisanal Fishermen
- Pension system for fishermen to be put in place

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Action 1: Sustainable Production

1. Move towards organic agriculture.
2. Create enabling environment for the adoption of sustainable production systems.
3. Shift toward agroecological production systems.
4. Reduce chemical inputs.

Action 2: Local Crops

1. Develop local seed industry.
2. Encourage production and value addition of local crops.
3. Diversify crop base

Action 3: Climate Change Adaptation/Mitigation

1. Sensitize/involve farmers on climate change: adaptation and mitigation strategies.
2. Develop the small ruminant sector.
3. Develop climate and health resilient agriculture.
4. Reduce energy expenses and promote use of renewable energy.
5. Adopt farming practices that prevent land degradation.
6. Further promote Agroforestry.
7. Integrated management of pests and diseases.
8. Water/irrigation efficiency.
9. Soil health management.

Action 4: New Technology

1. R & D for the introduction of new technologies to increase productivity.
2. Digitalisation of local agriculture
3. Use of ICT tools for improving extension and training services.
4. Develop Information Systems to align production and marketing.
5. Acquisition of new technologies e.g. vertical farming, controlled environment agriculture.

Action 5: Land

1. Identify and reconvert abandoned agricultural land.
2. Building permit to be restricted.
3. Agricultural land to be considered in land planning.
4. Facilitate access to land and other production resources.

Action 6: Livestock

1. Assist farmers in acquiring new breeds adapted to local conditions.
2. Develop fodder production, produce quality fodder.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Areas of divergence

Crop production

Import permits for specific vegetables should not be delivered by authorities when the same crops are being grown locally.

Agro-processing

Competition exists between locally produced products and imported products. Hence collaboration of all partners concerned is very important to sort out this issue.

Livestock

Fodder production and availability. Some farmers mentioned its limited supply and need to produce more, while someone mentioned he has fodder for sale but has frequent thefts of the fodder; import of livestock by authorities is disadvantageous to local production.

Issues we need to explore further

Crop production

- Land suitability map
- Crop suitability
- Exact amount of cultivated lands.
- Agricultural planning and volume to produce to avoid overproduction
- Production to be linked with agro-processing
- Need for regular liaison meetings between different partners

Agro-processing

The Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security along with all stakeholders concerned to provide all the necessary supports and facilities to restructure the agro-processing sector. This includes training, loan schemes with low interest rate, grant schemes, equipment, tax exemption/removal of customs duties, experts in the field of agro-processing, recognition of the identity of the local entrepreneurs and gives value to their locally produced products. There is also a need to gather data/market information to ensure that the right products are being manufactured. Also identifying and linking of producers to markets (local and international).

Livestock

- Access to land
- access to finance
- theft of animals
- adoption of good animal husbandry practices

All value chain

- Planned Production system to be put in place
- Soil health card so as guide planters on fertiliser requirements
- Registration of Planters
- Proper Guidance on processing and marketing (e.g. access to markets).
- Promoting good agricultural practices and organic agriculture
- Storage capabilities needs to be enhanced for agro processors and relevant institutions such as the Agricultural Marketing Board and cooperative societies.
- Made in Moris label should be promoted for agro industrial products
- Access to finance to set up the agro-processing business

Differences do we have that seem to be currently unresolvable

Crop production

- How to tackle theft problems?
- The need to import foreign labour.
- How to solve the problem of overproduction?

Agro-processing

- How to solve the problem of overproduction?
- The price of all raw materials.
- Storage capacity and duration.
- Exportation of locally processed products to other countries.
- Creating links among producers, processors and retailers.
- Food quality and safety standards.

Livestock

Relocation of farmers from residential areas

All Value Chain

- Determine on what to produce for processing
- Thefts in plantations seems to be the most problematic area for almost all planters.

- Not all locally grown food crops can be used in agro-processing. There is a need to introduce specific high yielding varieties to promote the value chain towards agro-processing.

Cross sector approach

• Cross border initiative level

Given limited resource availability for staple foods (rice, wheat and maize; meat and milk) and huge resources available in the neighbouring countries, joint ventures and contractual arrangements for its production in friendly countries is to be given the highest priority. Besides providing for food security, the region could also produce raw materials for agro industry purposes thus ensuring development of this sector.

Government will invest in the agricultural sector by providing the right environment (fiscal, financial, security of investment) at the disposal of investors to materialise such regional cooperation initiatives.

With the support of development partners like FAO, investment opportunities for agricultural production have been prospected.

Our country can benefit to some extent if research ventures could target maize as a large-scale crop. This would be to start collaborative research ventures with African countries with industrial capacity.

• Food security, environment stability and health benefits

For sustained food security it is also a critical prerequisite that Mauritian consumers change their food habit so as to reduce staple food import. Consumers should adapt to locally produced food items (cassava, potato, breadfruit, eddoes), while also taking initiatives at household level in terms of kitchen and roof gardening, urban agriculture, and diminishing food wastage. In line with the Government vision of sustainable agricultural production, the Ministry has initiated several actions to encourage the farming community to adopt sustainable farming practices to ensure long term environment stability and health benefits.

Food loss and food waste is a major concern. Postharvest treatment to improve shelf life of fresh produce such as carrot, litchi, butternut to improve their marketability and reduce postharvest losses are being developed.

Support is being given to agro-entrepreneurs in the development of value-added products from local fruits and vegetables such as gluten free breadfruit and cassava flour, ginger paste, turmeric paste, lime paste, guava fruit paste, dehydrated papaya and fruit paste sorbet.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Food Systems National Dialogue Mauritius Report**
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sie5tAFNQiJolPN2ABCKK9iBleWk24Ps/view>