

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Monday, 28 June 2021 21:21 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Building Healthier, Sustainable and Equitable Food Systems for a Better Malawi
CONVENED BY	Honourable Lobin C. Lowe, Minister of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Malawi
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/39717/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Malawi

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

128

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

25

19-30

88

31-50

15

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

91 Male

37 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

50 Agriculture/crops

9 Fish and aquaculture

6 Livestock

6 Agro-forestry

12 Environment and ecology

2 Trade and commerce

9 Education

5 Communication

3 Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

3 Health care

Nutrition

22 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

2 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

13 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

13 Small-scale farmer

9 Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

14 Local Non-Governmental Organization

12 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

9 Science and academia

1 Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

8 Local authority

38 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

3 United Nations

2 International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

1 Consumer group

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

This was the second regional dialogue session to be conducted following the launch at national level. The multi-stakeholder Task Force and the facilitation team comprising the curator, facilitator and the note taker facilitated this dialogue. In this region, the dialogue was carried out in Zomba City, Mangochi and Balaka districts from the 28th -30th June 2021. These dialogues were held through a face-to-face approach. In total, 128 people participated representing different sectors such as the public sector e.g. Ministries of Agriculture, Natural Resources and health and others, the academia, development partners, non-governmental organizations, food producers, processors, consumers, women, youths and health experts. The regional dialogue was held with financial support from the Government of Flanders and the United Nations while the district dialogues were funded by the UN and the civil society. The dialogue was officially opened by the Convenor, Hon Lobin C. Lowe, Minister of Agriculture in Mangochi whilst his representatives officially opened the Zomba and Balaka district dialogues. Afterwards through presentations, breakout sessions and plenary, participants discussed the current situation and challenges, drivers, opportunities, enablers, game changing priorities and actions to transform food system for Malawi based on the five action tracks from a regional perspective.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Act with Urgency: The Malawi Government recognize the urgency of sustained and meaningful actions at all levels to achieve the 2030 SDGs and the recently launched national Malawi 2063 Vision which will be implemented through the Implementation plans. The dialogues will therefore inform the upcoming 10-year implementation plan of the national vision and the review of the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) and the National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP). **Commit to the Summit:** The Government of Malawi is committed to contributing to the vision, objectives and the final outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit. The Convenor attended the UN Food Systems Pre-Summit in Rome in July 2021 and the national dialogues provided content for the event. **Be Respectful:** The national dialogue ensured genuine discussions without undue influence of any kind. The diversity of stakeholders that included youth and women were given equal opportunities to speak and engage freely in framing the future of food systems. **Recognize Complexity:** The task force acknowledged that food systems are complex, and are closely connected to, and significantly impact upon, human and animal health, land, water, climate, biodiversity, the economy and other systems, and their transformation requires a systemic approach. **Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity:** The participation of multi stakeholders, working across the food system from production to consumption ensured that no one is left behind and maximize outcomes on the different sectors. **Complement the work of others:** The dialogue was held with recognition that issues related to food systems are being addressed through several other global, regional and national governance processes. **Build Trust:** The dialogue put in place a conducive environment in the groups and during plenary sessions that promoted trust and this increased motivation for stakeholders to participate constructively. The dialogue was curated and facilitated in a way which created a "safe space" and promoted trust, encouraging mutual respect.

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

- **Think global but act local:** The regional dialogues provided an opportunity for location-specific engagement with diverse stakeholders on issues that are emanating from the global level to spur local actions. Hence, the facilitator needed to ensure that participants understand that the global issues have local significance and that local voices are also critical in shaping the global agenda.
- **Appreciate location-specific game changers:** The experiences at the regional and sub-regional levels revealed the need to be cautious and cognizant of specific location-specific game changers that would need to be driven by local resources and decentralized development plans.
- **Pre-dialogue engagements are crucial:** Engage as organizers on the nature and expectations of the dialogue, as well as the Dialogue Principles of Engagement prior to the event. The invitations to the delegates also needed to make clear the expectations and outcomes to be achieved during the dialogue session.
- **High level government leadership and commitment is a key driver for serious participation of all stakeholders.** At the regional level, involvement of key political and government leadership was key to ensure commitment for decentralized structures to embrace the dialogues and be ready to implement actions thereof.
- **Be as inclusive as possible:** The participation from government officials, academia, private sectors, food system actors, and civil society organizations including youth and women was key to a national dialogue process as it motivated interest and participation in the dialogue.
- **Be clear on expectations and objectives during the dialogue session.** The facilitator of the dialogue dedicated some time to highlight the objectives and expectations of the Dialogue, and outlined the outcomes expected of the dialogue sessions.
- **Use of local language to ensure that peoples' voices are heard.** This helped people to bring out issues.

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

The regional dialogue was held under the theme “Building healthier, sustainable and equitable food systems for a better Malawi”.

The objective of the dialogue was to share information on the UNFSS and reflect on the status of Malawi’s food systems, identify challenges and constraints, potentials and opportunities, and game-changing solutions and ideas for its transformation, including defined roles and responsibilities from local voices at the regional level. Based on the guidelines, the dialogues were organized around the five action tracks of the Food Systems Summit:

- Action Track 1 – “Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all” – participants examined whether all Malawians currently have access to safe and nutritious food. If not, what is it that makes it difficult for Malawians to access safe and nutritious food?
- Action Track 2 – “Shifting to sustainable consumption patterns” – dialogue participants had conversations about what were the key issues affecting healthy and sustainable food consumption in Malawi.
- Action Track 3 – “Boosting nature-positive production at scale” – participants examined how Malawi’s food production systems can be transformed to ensure sustainable food and nutrition security for the people.
- Action Track 4 – “Advancing equitable livelihoods” – dialogue explored inequalities within the Malawian food systems.
- Action Track 5 – “Building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stresses” – participants examined actions to ensure the resilience of the Malawian Food System.

The representative of the Convenor also emphasized the need to analyse the food systems issues in consideration of existing national policies and strategies including the national aspirations as enshrined in the Malawi 2063 Vision.

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

Action Track #1: Ensuring safe and nutrition food for all

Current challenges

1. Low crop productivity and limited dietary diversification;
2. High rates of unemployment resulting in more people migrating to neighbouring countries;
3. Covid-19 related challenges for example government directive restricting meetings has affected tourism businesses;
4. Unorganised and unstable food markets thereby affecting availability of food in both time and space; and
5. Poor sanitation and hygiene among the people and poor health-seeking practices.

Drivers (Causes and Activities)

1. Limited knowledge and use of appropriate practices on crop and diet diversification;
2. Fish production has gone down due to overharvesting, overpopulation, overfishing;
3. Limited income generating activities and high unemployment levels;
4. The region practices matrilineal system of marriage hence men normally are not willing to invest where they marry; and
5. Environmental degradation - and wanton cutting down of trees in Machinga and Balaka districts for charcoal burning and in Zomba for timber.

Action Track #2: Shifting to sustainable consumption patterns

Current Challenges

1. Inadequate incomes, knowledge and skills affecting food budgeting, food preparation, food processing and preservation hence consumption of unbalanced diet;
2. High postharvest losses and food wastage due to some extent, wasteful cultural and religious practices, poor storage capacity and facilities;
3. Low funding in nutrition sector affecting implementation of relevant programmes and strategies;
4. No reliable cash crops thus the majority of the population resort to selling food crops hence affecting long-term food and nutrition security; and
5. Food aid is more prevalent in the region, hence people deliberately sale their harvest or produce because they know that the Government will provide relief aid for their survival.

Drivers (Causes and Activities)

1. Cultural values, beliefs and practices fuelling wastage, for example, during cultural ceremonies and traditions;
2. Increased population impacting on production – there is high land pressure which affects both levels of investment on that land as well as forcing people to encroach onto marginal lands;
3. Poor road network – this contributes to reduced availability of and access to nutritious and safe foods; and
4. Negative perception towards local nutritious foods, with improvement in levels of income-most people switch to ultra-processed and imported foods at the expense of highly nutritious local foods.

Action Track #3: Boosting nature-positive food production

Current challenges

1. Pests and diseases for crops e.g. fall army worms affected the region (24,437 ha affected out of 59,676 ha in all the EPAs);
2. Frequent natural disasters e.g. dry spells, floods etc.;
3. Inadequate agricultural diversification, the region is more suitable to production of livestock due to climatic and environmental factors.
4. Increased cases of malnutrition due to inadequate intake of animal proteins, legumes and oils (at 30% access currently); and
5. Soil loss and land degradation due to deforestation for charcoal production and opening new farm land.

Drivers (Causes and Activities)

1. Unfavourable weather conditions and low arable land holding sizes;
2. Low adoption of improved production technologies;
 - a. Poor access to extension services resulting from: poor quality extension service delivery; and
 - b. Conflicting extension approaches to issues for example livestock vs land resources.
3. Mind-set and perception, that is, fishing culture along the lake which the fisher folks are preoccupied with and not attending to other livelihood options; and
4. High dependency on rain fed agriculture.

Action Track # 4 Advancing equitable livelihoods of people involved in food systems

Current Challenges

1. Market failures affecting household incomes;
2. High levels of unemployment;
3. Youth related challenges which have forced most young people migrating to South Africa for greener pastures;
4. Natural resource degradation – deforestation, poor farming practices, population pressure etc.;
5. Low utilization of existing infrastructures like marketing facilities built by the State marketer across the country including the region; and
6. Gender inequalities.

Drivers (Causes and Activities)

1. Cultural practices and beliefs and gender inequalities;
2. Climate change that result into unpredictable rainfall patterns, floods and droughts;
3. High input prices especially fertilizers leading to low production;
4. Lack of technical expertise in crop standards and qualities, especially cash crops – extension system failure; and
5. Inappropriate use of chemicals and marketing standards – lack of know-how.

Action Track # 5 Building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stresses

Current challenges

1. Climate change related shocks such as disturbed rain patterns and increase in natural disasters e.g., Cyclone Idai;
2. Diminishing biodiversity (species of plants and fishes) e.g., fish species in Lake Malawi;
3. Increased poverty levels; and
4. Negative coping strategies to shocks and stresses, e.g., child marriages.

Drivers (Causes and Activities)

1. High poverty levels;
2. Lack of cleaner and sustainable renewable alternative energy sources; e.g., Gas, electricity, solar;
3. Unreliable markets – high input prices, low commodity prices;
4. Climate change leading to increased dry spells, flooding, pests and diseases; and
5. Poor market systems and lack of structured markets e.g. dysfunctional nature of ADMARC.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/8

1 Action Track #1 Outcomes

The opportunities for Action Track #1 to ensure safe and nutritious food for all were identified as follows:

1. The region is endowed with natural resources such as water bodies (Lakes Chilwa, Malawi and Malombe) and Shire River hence availability of fish, potential for irrigation;
2. Good road and rail network among the districts in the region, this provides an opportunity for improved transportation and logistics;
3. Migration and cross boarder markets leading to availability of goods being brought to the region;
4. Tourism activities in the region e.g. L. Malawi National Park, KuChawe, Liwonde National Park etc. for income and employment;
5. Low rainfall areas good for livestock production hence can promote diversification;
6. Availability of companies in the region e.g. fertilizer company, cement and lime companies in Machinga and Balaka districts;
7. Business opportunities - factories to process fish to ensure consistent supply and reduce food waste, and an opportunity for fish feed production;
8. Presence of government extension workers and organisations – government structures are there to support transformation; and
9. Availability of stakeholders-NGOs supporting food systems-provide food, inputs, irrigation facilities and livestock.

The major enablers identified under Action Track # 1 were as follows:

1. Fisheries by-laws and community fisheries committees that help to control fishing, all what is needed is to enforce laws; and
2. Good road network and railway lines. The region is the hub of major transport systems in the country.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/8

2 Action Track # 2 Outcomes

The opportunities identified towards shifting to sustainable consumption patterns were as follows:

1. Availability of stakeholders willing to finance development programs across the value chains;
2. Presence of local knowledge in food preservation and traditional nutritious foods such as Luni, Molinga, Amaranthus;
3. Availability of nutrition and health experts;
4. Availability of natural resources - water bodies e.g. Lake Chilwa, Lake Malawi, Shire River, National parks and other natural minerals (gold); and
5. Availability of land suitable for small stock (livestock) production.
6. Food aid.

The enablers that can allow the country to advance sustainable consumption included:

1. Available policies and strategies;
2. Political will;
3. Good national security;
4. Good environment for livestock production; and
5. Local leadership.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/8

3 Action Track # 3 Outcomes

The opportunities identified under Action Track # 3 were as follows:

1. Availability of nature positive production interventions such as climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, soil improvement and watershed management e.g., MWASIP project sites like Chingale and Masaula, agroforestry and water harvesting technologies;
2. Availability of natural resources that can trigger nature positive production such as Lake Chilwa, Lake Malawi and Shire River and rich arable land;
3. Existence of locally available botanicals for pest and diseases controls;
4. Good transport system e.g. railway line to ferry produce to Blantyre for sell and good road network connecting Mangochi, Zomba, Blantyre and Lilongwe districts;
5. Favourable environment for livestock production and cotton production, mineral resources that provide alternative income sources;
6. Presence of a lot of food security stakeholders with a lot of resources and research expertise;
7. Availability of markets i.e., the population and presence of tourist attraction centres (lodges);
8. Availability of strategic grain reserves e.g. National Food Reserve Agency (NRFA) silos; and
9. Existence of community structures e.g. committees protecting natural resources e.g. Lake Chilwa.

Enablers identified included the following:

1. Communities are committed to issues of development and sustainable management of resources; and
2. Government policies e.g. stringent policies to protect forests, availability of policies that promote sustainable agricultural production.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/8

4 Action Track # 4 Outcomes

The opportunities that were identified under Action Track # 4 included the following:

1. Free primary education and adult literacy learning opportunities including access to bursary. With increased literacy, the population is bound to benefit from livelihood opportunities around them;
2. Existence of family planning methods if well harnessed can contribute to reducing population and improving livelihoods;
3. Availability of other non - farm income sources e.g., fishing opportunities in the Lakes, rivers and utilization of existing ponds for aquaculture;
4. Availability of abundant natural resources e.g., lakes, forest reserves, grazing land, fisheries and minerals;
5. Availability of marketing structures such as cooperatives, farmer organizations and infrastructures (National Association of Smallholder Farmers Association of Malawi and Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation);
6. Availability of on-going nutrition programs such as school feeding programs by both NGOs and government;
7. Processing of fish so that when the lake is closed, they can sell the processed fish;
8. ICT based extension approaches e.g. video extension, extension helper application etc.; and
9. Enforcement of farm gate prices in place.

Enablers that can support the attainment of the opportunities included:

1. Availability of funding by donor agencies; and
2. Availability of conducive policies such as land policy, extension policy, gender act, free primary education.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/8

5 Action Track # 5 Outcomes

The opportunities under Action Track # 5 were as follows:

1. High labour availability in the region due to high population of youths in Mangochi and those that are incarcerated in prisons (Mikuyu, Zomba), as well as soldiers (Cobbe barracks, Chungalume) – utilize these in community development, farming, infrastructure development projects, vocational skills training;
2. Presence of natural resources – mountains (e.g., Zomba mountain for bee keeping), water bodies for irrigation intensification (Shire River, Lake Chilwa, Lake Malawi, Lake Malombe), Zomba plains full of water and good soils which are potential for irrigation and fish farming, Namizimu and Phirilongwe forests, Mangochi Forest Reserve and Liwonde National Park, potential for mining – cement and lime production in Zomba, Mangochi, limestone in Balaka, gold and other precious minerals;
3. Availability of raw materials for agro-processing including availability of organic and inorganic wastes for fertilizer production, e.g., water hyacinth in Shire River and Lake Malawi for fertilizer production;
4. Closeness to Mozambique – the region borders with Nacala – potential market for agriculture produces;
5. Availability of many projects largely driven by development partners and government e.g. resilience building projects;
6. Good weather for livestock production and fertile arable land conducive for production;
7. Upgrading of Mangochi to a city status;
8. Infrastructure investments – rail, water transport on the lakes, road network, cold chain facilities for fisheries, livestock, farm fresh commodities; and
9. Market facilitation and contract farming-assist farmers to embark on contract farming.

The enablers under Action Track # 5 were as follows:

1. Political will – encouraging export-based production;
2. Trade regulations – flexibility of laws;
3. Promote activities run by faith-based organisation e.g. Catholics, Islamic community, ensuring that government and the faith community work collaboratively in identifying and implementing game changing strategies for the growth of the region;
4. Land tenure system – needs to be reviewed to accommodate prevailing practices; and
5. Speed up Mining Act and related regulations to provide structure to the industry.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 6/8

6. Game Changing Priorities

The eastern region dialogue session identified game changing priorities that apply across all the five action tracks. These include the following:

1. Enterprise diversification and rebranding:
 - a. Enhance agricultural diversification through increased investment in research and extension, adoption of good agricultural practices including climate smart agriculture e.g. green house production, conservation agriculture;
 - b. Promote integrated household farming e.g. diversified crop production (vegetables, fruits, legumes and livestock);
 - c. Increase youth participation in agriculture through rebranding of agriculture to make attractive to young people;
 - d. Strengthen production capacity of farm inputs locally – Malawi fertilizer company in Liwonde, more investments of the same kind and value addition capacity for commodities – e.g. ADMARC rice processing in Liwonde (not being used).
2. Farmer organization and cooperative development:
Organize farmers into cooperatives-farmers growing to sale (have high bargaining power on prices) and enhance value addition.
3. Nutrition and Food Systems Education:
 - a. Enhance nutrition education and civic education which lead to behavioural/mind-set change amongst communities to implementing technologies e.g. good agricultural cultural practices accompanied; and
 - b. Adapt school curricula to train pupils in food systems – encompassing production, processing, distribution and utilization;
4. Food Systems Coordination Structures:
Ensure better coordination and collaboration in food systems among actors across all levels and sectors by setting up structures and systems to move the agenda forward;
5. Transport System and Logistics Hub: Improve transport network infrastructure e.g. rail (Nacala, Balaka – Blantyre – Lower Shire and Mozambique, Balaka, Salima – Lilongwe – Mchinji – Zambia) and water transport systems on Lake Malawi and Shire River – vessels on these water bodies to reduce cost of transport and roads – Zomba to Liwonde, Mangochi – Monkey Bay, Ntaja – Nayuchi, Liwonde – Chingeni, Mangochi – Makanjira, Chingale – Lirangwe, access to Lake Chilwa. In addition, make Balaka a logistics hub for the country and this will transform the district's economy base and skew it towards logistics and transport; and
6. Market infrastructure: Improve market infrastructure through structured markets for commodities other than tobacco, resuscitate ADMARC, organize farmers into mega cooperatives – land consolidation, decentralization of the provision of training and capacity building for cooperatives, improved market information systems.

ACTION TRACKS

✓	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 7/8

7 Cross cutting outcomes: Changes to be made within 3 and 10 years

This section provides areas that have to be considered in the short term (3 years) and medium term (10 years) based on the regional dialogues.

The participants recommended that in the first 3 years, the region and the nation should focus on the following actions:

1. Promotion of diversified crop production and productivity with a business mind-set in the region through use of good agricultural practices such as soil fertility improvement programs, increased mechanization;
2. Government should provide balanced support to all food crops and stop politicizing maize crop;
3. Ensuring stable and structured markets e.g. resuscitate ADMARC by reviewing its operations and injecting in capital;
4. Improving road network across the region;
5. Review school curriculum to address food consumption issues e.g. home economics;
6. Food fortification and improve processed food labelling;
7. Harmonization of programs/messages that go to farmers e.g. in most cases NGOs and Government go to communities with different/conflicting information (like incorporation of residues in gardens and others say don't incorporate give to livestock);
8. Ensuring that systems of communication among actors in the food system are functioning;
9. Improving infrastructure and telecommunications with reduces costs – digital technology is key to transforming food systems in the country; and
10. Enhancing natural resource regeneration – plan new trees, regenerate natural forests.

In terms of expectations of the food systems in the next 10 years, the participants at the dialogue identified the following areas:

1. Recruitment and capacity building of extension workers to facilitate implementation of food systems;
2. Enhancing cooperatives approach: a plan of 60% of producers to be members of cooperatives;
3. Implementation of catchment conservation management approach to curb environmental degradation and improve natural regeneration;
4. Increasing food diversification, food distribution, food processing and preservations through providing a conducive environment for the growth of secondary processing factories;
5. Investing in alternative energy sources e.g. subsidizing gas, this is extremely important if the country is going to curb the problem of natural resource degradation; and
6. Promoting value-added products in Malawian shops by Malawians; and
7. Consolidating farm lands in order to support farm mechanization at community level.

ACTION TRACKS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 8/8

8. Cross cutting outcomes: Productive partnerships

The regional dialogue also explored how stakeholders can work well together for collective action and forge powerful partnerships towards transformations of food systems.

The participants noted that currently, the region has several partners working in the food systems including NGOs both local and international, faith based organizations, farmer based organizations including cooperatives, government departments, private sector players and other food industry players but they rarely work together to share lessons and best practices. This was linked to lack of proper coordination at regional and district levels including between and among ministries, departments and agencies of the government despite existing structures in the decentralized system of governance.

The participants noted that the opportunities, enablers and recommendations to transform food systems are multi-sectoral in nature, hence deliberate efforts need to be put in place for a coordinated approach at the regional and district level to ensure impact. Food systems transformation require working together among several stakeholders such as those responsible for agriculture, nutrition, environment and climate change, infrastructure development, energy and trade.

As such, the participants explored and suggested mechanisms that will allow stakeholders to work together for a collective action and forge powerful partnerships as follows:

1. Strengthen decentralised structures in both extension and nutrition programs and set standards on food systems initiatives for all stakeholder operating in the district;
2. Enhance coordination and collaboration of food systems actors at district level.
3. Improve implementation and monitoring mechanisms for agreed actions – less meetings, more implementations;
4. Improve capacity of local councils to coordinate development partners and projects – Development Partners to work hand in hand with Government towards common goals; and
5. Improve private sector involvement in development planning and implementation e.g., commercial banks, transporters, commodity traders.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The government supported subsidy programme (Agricultural Inputs Programme - AIP) was a contentious issue with some thinking that it is a necessary evil that meets the nations’ food self-sufficiency goal. In the current season, the yields are at highest levels compared to the average of the last five years. Other members felt that AIP as a social protection instrument has outlived its life span and the nation needs to graduate from it despite all the positive restructuring it has gone through over the years. Still others noted that the subsidy program is good and it needs to diversify beyond focusing on maize-centric to other crops such as legumes and livestock so that it contributes fully to Action Track #1 in providing safer and healthy foods. Other views bordered on its net negative effect on the agricultural sector budget vote since other critical services such as research and extension suffer low allocations though the overall agricultural budget is able to meet the Malabo target of 10% of the national budget.

The Eastern Region also brought about the contradicting discussion on the benefits of fishing as a major source of income in the region. Others argued that overreliance on fishing affects production of crops since most men are busy with the fish business, hence not putting much effort to produce other foods to enhance diet diversification.

Another interesting scenario came out on the issue of the tourist attractions in the region such as Lake Malawi and Liwonde National Park which positively affect the economic choices in the district such as offering employment to young people. Other participants felt that the tourists’ attraction are bringing about diseases in the region.

Another interesting phenomenon was high migration of young people to other countries especially South Africa due to high unemployment rates that give them livelihood options whilst on the other side, it also triggers shortage of labour in the district.

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 |