

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 9 March 2021 14:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Africa Vice-Chancellors' Regional Food Systems Dialogues: Stakeholder engagement to discuss future pathways for sustainable food systems in Africa
CONVENED BY	Prof Lindiwe Majele Sibanda, Director, ARUA Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Food Systems, University of Pretoria
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/4137/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

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

311

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

Male

Female

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 dialogue was organized based on all the principles of the UNFSSD engagement. Invited stakeholders were food systems experts and leaders, including policy research institutions, universities, farmer organizations, agri-business, agricultural financiers, civil society, policymakers, oversight bodies, and the media from the African continent and beyond. The curators and convenors emphasized the importance of respect throughout all processes and chose prominent leaders to be the facilitators at each table.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogue reflected the urgency, respect, diversity, trust, and other principles. This manifested in the feedback we received during and after the dialogue, which was very positive, and a wish to continue the dialogues and implement the solutions.

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

We would advise following the principles of engagements and the UNFSD method. We have realized it helps create a very positive and productive process.

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 African Vice-Chancellors' regional food systems dialogue was convened to provide a multi-stakeholder platform for stakeholders to explore various existing and emerging approaches that have the potential to deliver sustainable solutions at scale and encourage collaborative action in to directly inform the United Nations Food Systems Summit proces.

The Africa Vice-Chancellors' regional food systems dialogues were represented in the following regions of the African continent:

- East Africa
- North Africa
- Southern Africa
- West Africa

The Food Systems Dialogue program featured a plenary session and four parallel African geographical regions (East, North, Southern and West Africa) break-away sessions. The dialogue provided time and space for informal discussion groups, enabling participants to engage fully. Social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, formed part of the communications strategy to promote the dialogue as well as disseminate proceedings and outcomes.

The Vice-Chancellors were joined by selected representatives of the scientific committee, food systems academics, policy experts, and the participants from the regional food systems dialogue to craft the message and shape pathways to sustainable food systems that will inform African universities' contributions to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

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

The Africa Vice-Chancellors joined the Sustainable Food Systems discourse to ensure that Africa does not only feed itself but feeds the world.

The African University Vice Chancellors committed to driving the sustainable food system transformation agenda not just from the faculties of agriculture but university-wide in partnership with governments, development partners, private sector, civil society, consumers and international university partners in order to ensure healthy food, healthy people and a healthy planet. In addition, the Vice-Chancellors committed to reimagining the role of our universities for transdisciplinary knowledge co-creation and in particular the role of science and innovation in defining the food systems that Africa wants.

The Vice-Chancellors emphasized the following:

- Seek transformational approaches and solutions for broad societal interest and the common good;
- Embrace collaboration and transdisciplinarity, ensuring the right skills and talents are around the table to address the challenges at hand;
- Mobilise resources and harness partnerships for greater leverage, innovation, and impact;
- Adopt a systems thinking approach to deal with the complexity inherent to sustainable food systems;
- Co-design and co-create research and initiatives;
- Embrace diversity and inclusivity to enrich research project design and expected outcomes;
- Harness technology, ICT and Big Data as critical enablers;
- Ensure ongoing relevance of our research, in line with changing societal needs, with appropriate translation into practice for sustainable and resilient food systems; and
- Maintain a continuous pursuit of quality and excellence.
- Frequently test our guiding principles against the evolving issues (new pandemics and shocks) we need to grapple with.

The Vice-Chancellors envision an opportunity to bounce back better through:

- Transformed African agriculture and food systems for improved health and livelihoods with shared prosperity.
- Sufficient, safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate and consumer-driven food for 21st century Africa.
- Empowered graduates, researchers and demonstrated research excellence.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

In the food systems within which your university is embedded, what are the key constraints that prevent transformation towards a more sustainable system?

- Multi-stakeholder engagement

- o No organized structures for linkages between the various actors in the food system
- o Lack of coherent linkages among stakeholders
- o Youth restlessness not only an African problem, but a global challenge
- o Silos between universities and other institutions and within our universities between departments agriculture, education, and research institutions due to lack of knowledge on systems as a whole and in their diversity.

- Political Support

- o Poor links with ministries. Contributions of universities is seen as not important
- o Political red tape especially at municipality level, redirecting food waste, include industry in repurposing food waste, food waste at farm level is more streamline but logistically difficult

- Capacity Building

- o Skills gap – we need to train students to address the problems of the past and train them to be practitioners in the food system - need to be trained to address problems of the future.

- Resources

- o Inadequate funding for implementing programs- priorities of funders and government do not merge the major issues that need to be addressed in the food system
- o Inadequate capital to cope with rising costs of inputs, especially in livestock production
- o Unsustainable resource mobilization

- Knowledge / Information gap

- o Poor identification of leakages along the food systems – data gaps e.g., what is the scale of food wastage in our region?
- o Uncoordinated resource mobilization
- o Poor flow of information, including agricultural advisories

- Markets / Infrastructure

- o Logistics for small-scale farmers to move agricultural products
- o Limited storage and processing constraints and difficulty in accessing export market as well as lack of knowledge on quality of diet and nature of food regimes.
- o Economic constraints- poor technology and pricing system; Environmental constraints include poor soils and water system; Social constraints include, poor business networks and Governance constraints include poor policy support, poor market infrastructure and

- Shocks

- o Climate change and unpredictable conditions is a challenge
- o Negative impact of climate change which has resulted in serious need for irrigation systems

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

In the food systems within which your university is embedded, what are the key opportunities for transformed, sustainable food systems?

- Infrastructure / markets

- o Leverage on ICT infrastructure that is already in place to develop solutions to community problems
- o During Covid-19 many lessons were learnt. Food tunnels at universities were used to feed students and teach them that sustainable food systems start at home. Food gardens are an important component.
- o Displaced people during Covid started food gardens successfully
- o Look at foods that are lacking in the diets such as fresh fruits and vegetables. More fruits and vegetables are needed to increase nutrients of concern in the diets of the continent. Production, processing, distribution and education integration to achieve solutions in the future
- o Innovation and digitalisation to increase resilience and productivity of small-scale farmers
- o The Covid19 crisis indeed could be an opportunity to think of more locally rooted food systems (what foods I can get from my environment?)

- Stakeholder engagement /collaboration / partnerships

- o Opportunities for change through forums such as this dialogue
- o High percentage of young people in the region. They are creative and yet have not been given the opportunity to explore in sustainable food systems
- o A critical mass of people interested in business
- o Identify where the main leakages occur along the food system, which will create opportunities for research, collaborations as you fill the leakages.
- o There is immense opportunity for collaboration locally, regionally and internationally to advance understanding, strategize, build capacity and harness opportunities
- o Invest in diversification of agricultural production and consumption to curb the double burden of malnutrition
- o Emerging structure to break silos between institutions but also within an institution. Often the focus is on a particular commodity - rather than on a food system including all multidisciplinary aspects and all stakeholders

- Resource mobilization

- o There are opportunities for funding

- Research opportunities / Capacity Building

- o Transdisciplinary research teams from different departments within Universities Public health problem is a problem that needs to be solved in real life and not only by research and academics, focus on production to consumption, include all the different departments to work on food system
- o Universities can share and learn from each other in regards to developed online courses and resources
- o Global nutrition summit is important as research is needed from higher education systems
- o Opportunities for business, research and collaborations
- o Availability of skilled and unskilled labour for farm activities; abundant fertile land, tropical ecology and grass lands and huge local markets due to adequate population, which translates into potential demand for all foods from agriculture
- o Emerging attempts at new forms of cross-disciplinary training focused on food supply chains & production systems together, so that agricultural extension and marketing, processing and digital innovation can be brought together.
- o Some attempts to link universities with agricultural colleges and ATVEs so that innovations will flow through the whole system and have impact

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

What partnerships are needed to unlock these food system transformations?

- Partnerships

- o Sustainable partnerships that have equal engagement and benefits –Partnerships should be mutually beneficial to all
- o Partnership with private sector, government (at national, regional and global level) community and academia– to ensure sustainable food systems (Mess problems require multiplicity of partnerships to get solutions)
- o strengthen our partnerships for better and richer learning and knowledge creation across global regions (North-South) as well as strengthen the south-South collaborations
- o Public private partnerships with support from government
- o Partnerships with civil society
- o South-South-North partnerships
- o Partnerships with all stakeholders in the FS, including policy makers local institutions- they would have to develop policies based on evidence and have strong political commitment and be more coordinated
- o Universities should balance, population increase, which is at a progressive rate whereas food increase is at an arithmetic rate
- o Partnerships in the 'green education column': university - colleges – ATVET; there is a need for Universities to build synergies and multi-disciplinary approach to solving problems
- o Universities need equitable partnerships with a training focus as well as research
- o Needed Partnerships are in the areas of research and innovations so as to increase agricultural productivity; mechanization and technology-driven value chain

- Stakeholder engagement

- o Universities must leave the ivory tower mentality - universities to should connect with communities to address food system challenges
- o Universities (in the cities) must connect with farmers in rural areas to ensure relevant research

- Research / ICT

- o Linking research, extension and the end users
- o Leverage technology to enable connection

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

Given that food systems are typically comprised of many different actors, what are the challenges to traditional university governance systems?

- Political / Socio responsiveness

- o Slow to respond – have culture that they are not to provide solutions for community problems
- o Most universities are public institutions; therefore, their policies are aligned towards the political agenda of the sitting governments therefore have no absolute academic freedom
- o The structures are generally not responsive to food system challenges
- o Interference by government
- o Lack of/weak policies on partnership, collaborations and linkage building.
- o Civil societies can be helpful in unlocking governance systems
- o Supportive policies for farmers as they are the providers of food, economic incentive for farmers, how universities approach policy agendas

- Inclusivity

- o Lack of academic freedom which affects creativity and innovation
- o Silos of disciplines within universities

- Strong Institutions

- o Innovative in the way we think and approach problems, policy challenges are a real problem, deepen governance and practicality of it
- o Create strong African think tanks and support government think and innovation, CoE's is important

- Capacity Building

- o Skills for trades in all the major areas need high tech facilities on campus but finance is limited so rote learning remains the main option
- o University staff have limited time /opportunities do research. Most of the time is spent on education
- o University system does not focus much on skills of the students they produce to be agile interdisciplinary professionals
- o Minimum effort to move towards sustainability science, which put a variety of actors at the same table to actually define research questions and go together to try and answer them would help end up with agreed upon solutions

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

What are the skills and capabilities that Universities need to provide to its researchers and students to navigate, trigger and steward complex food system transitions?

- ICT
 - o Application of technology to tackle complex problem
 - o Innovation in technology to scale-up agricultural productivity and accelerate food security such as solar, wind, water energy and agro-processing
 - o Digital innovation
- Entrepreneurial Skills
 - o Co-create innovation/solutions that respond to community needs
 - o Hands on skills
 - o Critical thinking, Problem solving and Communication skills
 - o People (Soft) skills
 - o Entrepreneurship for the youth, young women and mothers to be involved in the food system
 - o Entrepreneurial skills within different stakeholder groups connecting different universities
- Networking
 - o Collaboration skills (for private sector engagement)
 - o Critical thinking skills and communication skills
 - o Open-minded and receptive to informed change
 - o T-shaped skills- possess excellent knowledge of and skills in specific areas and are good at working with others in a collaborative way
- Research
 - o Translation of research results to inform policy and practice
 - o Curriculum must be relevant to the needs of the society
 - o Agricultural Sciences is important to sustain and improve the food system
 - o Researchers and students should be strongly encouraged to embrace practical, on-farm skills
 - o Skills in interdisciplinary work and transdisciplinary (working with all stakeholders), graduates should be able to have meaningful conversations with all
 - o Both soft and hard skills that allow management of people, materials and processes in the agricultural value chain. In other words, build skills in sustainability science, which means being solution-oriented / multi-actor and inter-disciplinary focused research as well as teaching.
 - o Build skills on how to integrate teaching, research and service to community better close the loop to enhance sustainable food systems; skill at public policy analysis skills is also very important
 - o Focus on applied research rather than basic research, in view of the transition we want to achieve.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **University of Pretoria Africa Week**
<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/forums/southernafrika/2021/agenda/>