

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Friday, 23 July 2021 08:30 GMT +12:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	NATIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT DAY 3
CONVENED BY	PERMANENT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE-RITESH DASS-MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/41721/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Fiji

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

155

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

25

19-30

94

31-50

32

51-65

4

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

63 Male

92 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

46 Agriculture/crops

8 Fish and aquaculture

6 Livestock

5 Agro-forestry

8 Environment and ecology

2 Trade and commerce

10 Education

5 Communication

0 Food processing

0 Food retail, markets

0 Food industry

Financial Services

9 Health care

12 Nutrition

13 National or local government

0 Utilities

0 Industrial

29 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

13 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

6 Large national business

6 Multi-national corporation

6 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

1 Large-scale farmer

9 Local Non-Governmental Organization

7 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

13 Science and academia

0 Workers and trade union

1 Member of Parliament

1 Local authority

54 Government and national institution

1 Regional economic community

20 United Nations

0 International financial institution

1 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

1 Consumer group

11 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The Fiji National Food Systems Dialogue was held virtually over three days with the overall theme of discussion on “Pathways for local food system transformation”. The dialogue was curated by the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), led by the Fiji Convenor, the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, Mr Ritesh Dass. Technical support for the dialogue was provided by the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) offices in Suva, Fiji. Recognizing and observing the UNFSS Principles of Engagement, a series of highly consultative, inclusive, preparatory meetings were held in the lead-up to the dialogue with key government ministries and partners such as the Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture. The preparatory meetings developed the dialogue themes, agenda, framed questions and topics for discussion, developed group reporting templates to focus and guide group discussions during the dialogue. The theme for Day 3 focused on “Pathways for local food system transformation: the importance of considering innovation” and the programme was officially opened by the Minister of Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, Dr Mahendra Reddy while the closing remarks was made by the Fiji UNFSS Convenor and PS Agriculture, Mr Ritesh Dass. The preparatory meetings highlighted the Summit’s Principles of Engagement and ensured that they were understood and incorporated into the format of the dialogue agenda and the identification of participants. In addition to this, participants were sent a URL to register online where they were required to read and agree to the Principles before being able to register. This ensured that everyone read and understood the Principles and committed to the SDGs before participating in the Dialogue. A group of 179 stakeholders participated in the Dialogue from diverse, multi stakeholder backgrounds consisting of government ministries, civil society, international and regional agencies (including UN agencies), academia and o

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

As highlighted above, the Fiji National Food Systems Dialogue ensured that the UNFSS seven Principles of Engagement were observed throughout the dialogue curation process and its preparatory meetings. They were reflected in the development of the dialogue agenda and in the careful selection of participants from a diverse range of stakeholders. The need to (i) act with urgency, (ii) commit to the Summit and show (iii) respect for all views and individuals were highlighted throughout the dialogue preparatory process, and were endorsed by stakeholders during the dialogue as well. The (iv) acknowledgement of complexity in our food systems was highlighted, particularly in the context of Fiji and the Pacific, where the food we eat not only brings together as families and communities – it also connects us back to the land and sea, where our food is traditionally sourced from. Transformation therefore, would require a systemic multi-stakeholder approach, taking into account the fragility of our food systems and unique vulnerabilities to factors such as climate, environment, biodiversity and food safety challenges etc. (v) Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity (vi) Complement the work of others – This was reflected in the diverse group of 179 participants who were part of the multi-stakeholder national dialogue - from areas of science, business, policy, healthcare and academia, farmers, youth and women’s organisations, consumer groups and environmental activists. The dialogue provided an opportunity to ‘think outside the box’ and share innovative thinking, connect stakeholders and broaden partnerships. (vii) Build trust - The dialogues was curated and facilitated in a way to ensure a “safe space”, promote trust and encourage mutual respect for ideas and discussion.

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

The Summit Principles of Engagement served as important guidance for Fiji in the curation of its dialogues across all the three days. The Principles encouraged Fiji to think innovative, transformative and to draw on the wisdom of a diverse group of stakeholders and partners to explore solutions in our food systems, and to help advance progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, the Principles were used to guide different stages of Fiji’s dialogue preparatory process and assisted in the identification of participants and stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and diversity. The Principles also assisted in facilitating discussions to ensure that all views were heard and respected and that any divergent views arising at any stage of the process were taken into consideration, listened to with respect and recorded.

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

The Fiji National Food Systems Dialogue on Day 3 – “Pathways for local food system transformation: the importance of considering innovation” was held virtually on July 23rd, 2021 at a crucial time as the country battled its second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with restrictive measures and lockdowns. This makes this Food Systems Summit even more crucial to Fiji as it enables the country to study the challenges exposed or exacerbated by the COVID crisis and to find transformative solutions to emerge and build back. Curation and Methodology – In compliance with the country’s COVID-19 restrictions, Day 3 of the Fiji National Food Systems Dialogue was virtually curated on the Zoom platform and created a lot of participatory method of wide, multi-sectoral stakeholder engagement. In addition, interaction and platforms such as Zoom chat box were busily engaged to crowdsource questions from participants throughout the duration of the four-hour dialogue. One hundred and fifty five participants took part in the dialogue that was officially opened by the Minister of Agriculture, Waterways and Environment, Dr Mahendra Reddy. Participants represented government ministries, development agencies, UN agencies, civil society, international institutions, Pacific regional agencies, farmers, women’s groups, youth groups, international NGOs and academia. Prior to the dialogue, participants received the following from the Secretariat: (i) Invitation to participate in the dialogue (ii) Dialogue Agenda (iii) Reporting template identifying questions and topics for discussion groups Dialogue Format for Day 3 - Registration of participants (online in advance and on the day itself) - Welcome address - Official opening address by the Minister of Agriculture, Waterways and Environment - Introduction to the dialogue (Video on the Summit by Dr Agnes Kalibata) Presentations on Day 3 - “Pathways for local food system transformation: the importance of considering innovation.” - Climate change and vulnerability - Role of Digital Technology in transforming the current food systems - Contemporary Cuisine – Use of Local Food – Traditional Knowledge Innovation- - Food and Nutrition - Multi-sector collaboration: opportunities and challenges Questions to speakers Discussion groups focussed on different themes where discussions were reported and recorded by rapporteurs; Breakout Session 1- Women’s Inclusiveness in the Food System - Question 1: What innovations in the food system have we seen in the last 10 years and what impact have they had? - Question 2: For the next 10 years, what innovative transformations do you see as priority actions for the food system? - Question 3: What are the principal challenges in the adoption of the innovations that you have identified and how they can be overcome? Participation and Engagement – Through crowdsourcing, zoom chat, zoom breakout discussion groups, plenary reports/discussions and presentations. Group reporting templates were also shared with participants to review following the dialogue to allow them the opportunity to include any information that may have been missed out by rapporteurs Communications and media – The outcomes of the dialogue and key messages from the Fiji Convenor were highlighted in a Press Release issued to the media which received extensive coverage by local mainstream media and on social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter). UNFSS hashtags #UNFSS @foodsystems #SDGs and #foodsystems were used in all media content to ensure that messaging had a multiplier effect. Links to media coverage are included in the Attachments section at the end of this report.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

1. Climate Change and Vulnerability – Digital Earth Pacific and Climate Science

In 2021 UNCDF and WFP collaborated to support climate risk insurance pilot for Department of Social Welfare (DSW) recipients. UNCDF are already rolling out a parametric insurance product to farming cooperatives in Fiji. Climate risk insurance relies on climate science data and modelling to trigger a payment based on an event for target at-risk populations. The climate risk insurance pilot process could identify geographic risk areas and target population, develop climate insurance product model, agreement on climate shock trigger and data, community and beneficiary sensitisation, climate shock and payment made to target population.

Climate risk insurance have multiple benefits but timeliness is key where parametric insurance payment can be delivered within one month after the shock occurs and so people negatively affected can be assisted very quickly.

2. Digital Transformation in Current Food Systems

Technology plays an important role in the food system in connecting producers straight with consumers. Government with technology partners have enabled small-medium enterprise to be part of an online trading platform to list their products and services and deal directly with consumers. Mobile wallet solution, an integrated payment system where farmers could receive money remotely from consumers, is also helping farmers especially women to build a credit or saving history for loaning purposes.

M-paisa platform provides farmers some security through parametric insurance since Fiji is vulnerable to climate change effects. The use of smart gadgets for “Internet of things in agriculture” by ensuring all online tools used in agriculture are all connected to provide timely information in monitoring farm activities. A database could be built from this information over a period of time to predict the future and alert farmers. There is a need to change mindset, develop capacity and train agriculture scientists who are able to use this technology. Attracting young people into agriculture through technology by creating online food system games to make agriculture more sexy, vibrant, appealing and fashionable.

3. Contemporary Cuisine - Traditional Knowledge Innovation

Chefs and cooks are the innovators and change makers in the food systems. Innovation leads to demand for example edible fern is used in limited way in local cooking. What is happening in our food system that make us not conducive in eating local produce - the key missing link is knowledge not often shared to the grassroot level and need to be addressed through education. We need to teach our people about nutritious diet and local foods since people think food is only available in supermarkets but they have fresh vegetables from the garden and fresh fish from the sea. We need to transform our food system by less reliance on processed foods and eat more healthy local foods. By increasing this knowledge and innovation we will be able to increase demand.

As a way forward, land and sea in Fiji could be used to transform our food to feed the world, with high value produce such as herbs and pharmaceutical products and medicine that could give a pandemic proof market for Fiji.

4. Food and Nutrition Security - The Need for Multi-Sector Collaboration

Challenges identified to progress a multi-sectoral collaboration include non-communicable diseases, population sub-groups with less economic opportunities, inequity, inequalities, competing government priorities, lack of information and documentation and COVID-19 and climate change.

There are opportunities for multi-sectoral collaboration through the Fiji Policy on Food and Nutrition Security, Food Based Dietary Guidelines, breastfeeding, economic opportunities, green food, targeted capacity building programs, blue food, digital technology and innovations, coordination and partnerships, investments, 'solesolevaki', taxation-based approaches and legislations. This multi-sector engagement is required at all levels for partnerships to operate on a digital platform and innovative transformations to impact our local food systems.

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

Digitalisation to be introduced more on the use of mobile phones and online tools for data collection, remote image monitoring for crops, production, early warning, linkages of climate monitoring for trend analysis as well as Geographic information system (GIS) - new techniques, improvements in processes for infrastructure (storage) and improvement in seeds. Digital transformation through digital marketing, digital food system games, providing database access to nutrition information for each food product that is available on the shelf, cooking shows that are educational and entertaining - huge benefits in these areas for research purposes and accessing finances for example.

Climate change has been a challenge in the last 10 years. We have opted for more multiple cropping system looking at local and export market, sustainable farming systems which allows us to look after high value ecosystems which are beneficial to us with significance of environmental, human health protection and more awareness on our local traditional plant biodiversity. Greater focus on traditional foods such as breadfruit in climate change mitigation. Traditional food knowledge (history, ethics, medicinal value) should be taught at schools and integrated at the earliest age, including for pregnant women to understand the importance of nutrition during this critical time and train Fijian chefs on how to cook and use local foods. Revive traditional farming practices and traditional vegetables cultivation that are locally important for the sustainability of economies, human nutrition and health.

Climate smart agriculture for sustainable agriculture practices and e-commerce is a way forward. Regenerative agriculture is paramount to complement reforestation to sustain ecosystem services. Adaptation resilience for farmers as a new way to transform products. Increase agroforestry models to perfect the integration of forest trees and food crops reflecting the appropriate biodiversity for a range of landforms and localities. In times of disaster food security is the main issue.

Strengthen backyard gardens for all levels including high rise flats, more awareness on seeds/planting materials to women groups and maritime areas, gene-banks, identify high value crops for export market like turmeric, drumstick for medicinal purposes, integrating of environmentally friendly commercial productions and need for policy changes as well as promoting importation and usage of suitable innovations for green economy. Circular organic waste management from domestic and commercial entities, development of local facilities for organic fertiliser /soil conditioners and elimination of inorganic and synthetic products. Establishing a Guideline to help farmers on how to access grants, for example: cash flows maintained, book keeping, farm harvest record, sales and plans.

Opportunities for Blue foods on baseline assessment, functional blue food, build on scientific assessment, mineral content of some fish species and nutrient content, strengthening of stakeholders, support the empowerment of coastal fisheries, value adding of tilapia, invest in value adding our local fisheries product, culturing of marine species, more collaboration with research and financial institutions and inclusive engagement with all stakeholders.

School Curriculum to include agriculture and nutrition as core subjects from pre-school through to secondary level and should include fisheries and forest foods, traditional crops in Agricultural Science curriculum and traditional food recipe in Home Economics. Innovative and inter-sectorial- academic introduction of courses linking food science with agribusiness locally at university levels to boost local entrepreneurship, innovation and research.

Addressing NCDs issues on food systems – Fijians have full access to fresh foods and cooking local nutritious foods but it is how you present it to attract Fijians to eat fresh nutrition food from an earlier age. Pathways to food system transformation should also include pathways for collaboration with multi stakeholders, Government and the education system. Exploring of having bar coding system for our agricultural, fishery and forestry products sold to consumers and tag the information from the data sets to assist in marketing and informing consumers on nutrients contained in products for awareness and general information. More technical information such as the nutritional value of foods to be made available in everyday language.

Value adding has played a huge part in having our meals prepared. It would be great to put in more effort on scientific research on value addition. Introduction of tax-based strategies and subsidies to industries that promotes value addition on green and blue foods with less loss and emissions. Chefs and cooks can help showcase how important diversity is in creating a more sustainable and equitable food system by incorporating underutilized and traditional species in their menus. This innovation should then be shared widely across the food system to provide a blueprint for expansion of existing farms or potential future farming projects.

Attitudinal shift in young people to expand the agricultural sector as a viable source of living by promoting in the digital space or projects conducted at the grassroot level. The current system is too focused on getting people into blue-collar and white-collar jobs.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Fiji to transform the land & sea to feed the world with a focus on high value products but the main challenge will be the availability of research grants. More investment into Agriculture, Research and Extension, and increase collaboration and capacity building by working with Partners & Donors to engage in projects that Fiji needs and not what Partners & Donors think is needed. E-commerce through electronic payment gateway has been identified as a barrier in linking producers to the market. Researcher's knowledge on pest and disease management has been enhanced through exposure to various training program.

The existing legislative framework that affects the food systems needs to be reviewed to consider current challenges like climate change and pandemic. More innovative mechanisms on application of new technologies, new principles of change, use of multi-sectoral approach, use of international agreements, learn from other countries, exchange information and develop framework for action of food and nutrition security protracted crisis for now and to the future.

Multi-sectoral collaboration is not well organised since we need to identify correct partners to collaborate with e.g Ministry of Education plays a vital role in the involvement of food systems and curriculum. The country needs to take a more systematic approach which requires us to be multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral in our approaches and decision making. This requires changes in the way institutions are structured to make decisions, and respond quickly and dynamically to changes.

Improved cropping systems using organic fertilizer and efficient use of water in farms. Irrigation system need resources, finance and technology is also key in modernising the use of water in an efficient way. Development of new farming projects has been in isolation and hence many projects have resulted in less demand or having the farmer search for customers after harvest.

Empowerment of youth and women as leaders in the food system and to ensure that women are included in the discussion. We need to develop models including accompanying data to conduct mass demonstrations at community levels to address the slogan of "seeing is believing" in any innovation that we come up with together with incentives to help the adoption rate of the model.

Improve in the aquaculture industry by improve access to market, aquaculture feed, diversification into other commodity, and also promote food security/protein source at the grassroots level. The "FishSmart" awareness campaign is educational and innovative in the blue foods space, it is bringing consumers, retailers and restaurants into the dialogue as part of the sustainable fisheries and blue foods solution. Consumer and buyer demand, can help drive sustainable practices and Ministry of Fisheries could provide people to understand Fiji's fish law and have it integrated in their daily lives. Export of raw and value- added products to new overseas markets enabled growth in specific products development.

Chefs are the innovators and change-makers in a sustainable food system. Kitchenettes are the sites of transformative innovation in the food system where chefs can leverage traditional food knowledge about local food species to create delicious and nutritious dishes. Chefs love the challenge to pioneer and be ground breaking by encouraging excellence at all levels – these pushes chefs to discover and rediscover unique sources of gastronomy by engaging with neglected and underutilized food materials and exploring diverse culinary knowledge that holds potential for productive engagement with food system transformation efforts. Use of Television cooking shows and programs will teach the public innovative ways of cooking and increase the use of local foods in the tourism market.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The dialogue discussed some concerns in schools on the 'Child Labour' definition with ILO that deter schools from taking children out for practical in the development of school gardens which is classified as an occupational health safety issue in Fiji.

COVID has forced people to start back-yard gardening. Public can take advantage of MOA free seeds distribution initiatives for short- and long-term food security that include new varieties of seeds and digital short videos provided on MOA website and Facebook page.

Participants expressed the high cost of doing business, e-commerce is a good option however there are very high fees and charges for transactions by the service providers. Climate smart agriculture would require training and resources which also comes with a cost. Funding for agroforestry is only for a few years but trees could take up to 10 years to grow.

Innovation can be introduced in processes or through technologies, but protection risks must be considered all the time. Innovation in the food system for one stop shop initiative with other basic food items e.g availability of variety vegetables, root crops, whole fish and honey products in the supermarkets or assisting the workforce in saving time after work for cooking by increasing cooked food vendors around major urban centers. Online food delivery concept through curiosity of foods driven by the 'boredom' set by Covid has provided opportunity to deliver food with technology.

Food fortification or enrichment programs to address the nutrient deficiency problems. Consumer's knowledge and understanding on food labels have increased and have allowed regulators to improve their game plan and keep them on their toes in the enforcement of the Food Safety standards and regulatory requirements. There is a need to accelerate innovation in the Fiji food systems since currently we are overwhelmed by products from food industries that is evident through nutrition landscape and translating into poor nutritional status. Lack of local knowledge on the use of our foods could increase our import bills.

Common platform for standardised protocols of information acquisition, and better utilisation of this data supporting adaptation plans. Availability, sharing and access of data and technology transfer to target groups to be encouraged but to ensure the group have a clear understanding of the technology you are promoting and the process of documentation to be followed.

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