

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Friday, 1 October 2021 15:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	How to make nutritious diets more affordable, accessible and adequate?
CONVENED BY	Nestlé and Tufts University
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/43676/
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

57

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 discussions at this Independent Dialogue were facilitated in a respectful, holistic and pro-active approach. While put in place, the event was constantly reviewed in order to provide Facilitators, Curators and Participants with the maximum comfort, assistance and voice.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders, covering different industries, geographies, and expertise. All Participants, Facilitators and Convenors included, had a direct field expertise in the main topic, to secure the legitimacy of the debate and the quality of the recommended outcomes. All details of the events were shared beforehand in a pre-read to ensure transparency. The questions for debate in the breakout rooms were also shared ahead of time. The organisers remained available to questions the whole length of the event preparation, during the event and afterwards. The organisations also provided pre-session rehearsals with the Facilitators, speakers and Curator in order to enhance coordination and fluidity of information flow. During the Independent Dialogue subgroup exchange, Facilitators made sure to present themselves, and asked everyone in their respective breakout groups to present themselves. Cameras on Zoom were up all the time, allowing a friendly and open discussion. During the debates, the Facilitators made sure every voice was heard from, asking for precisions and wrapping up main arguments to ease the continuity of the argumentation. The organisers also ensured that they had one Rapporteur per breakout room to ensure that all important comments were noted for the outputs document.

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

- Conduct training sessions and dress-rehearsals so that all participants feel comfortable and ready - Share as much information as possible with participants ahead of the event for greater transparency and better discussions - Have a diverse range of speakers, facilitators and participants

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

Major focus

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has described the right to food as: "The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement." Yet many people are left behind with no adequate access to food. Approximately 840 million go to bed hungry and an estimated 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy nutritious diet. With the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, livelihoods have been compromised and affordability of healthy, nutritious diets is likely to become an even bigger issue as prior to the crisis.

This and the UN FSS roadmap were the backdrop of the recent invitation-only stakeholder dialogue jointly organized by Tufts University and Nestlé on October 1st 2021.

In total, 57 external participants from academia, NGOs, private sector, and UN leading organizations convened together. Setting the scene for the discussion were Prof. Eileen Kennedy, former dean and current professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, and Prof. Stefan Palzer, CTO at Nestlé.

Systemic and local considerations

Key speakers stressed that there is an imperative need for an evidence-based approach to policy and program development and implementation. They emphasized that these types of dialogues are important in making this happen and to focus on three key areas: (1) 'what works?': how do we prioritize the solutions and commitments set forward by the UN FSS dialogues in the short to medium term?; (2) 'under what context?': solutions need to take the local context into consideration to take decisions and the related tradeoffs; (3) 'at what cost?'.

Creative solutions to complex problems

There is a need for a systems approach and a wide range of solutions to tackle this complex issue. This should include education of consumers, farmers and other actors. There is also a need to invest in technology which should include packaging and delivery, to avoid nutrient and food losses. Creativity, passion and pragmatism are integral in making this happen.

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

Throughout the online dialogue, panellists, facilitators, as well as participants shared their insights on how to make nutritious diets more affordable, accessible, and adequate. This provided a powerful opportunity for participants to have a seat at the table and have their voices heard. Given the importance of including a diverse group of stakeholders in the discussion, we broke out into smaller groups for attendees to engage actively with each other and dive deeper in conversations to explore options for transforming food systems. Here are the main findings.

The participants first discussed what the major barriers and corresponding levers were to making healthy diets affordable, accessible and adequate for everyone.

1. There is a lack of consumer knowledge around what constitutes a nutritious diet which presents a major barrier to placing value onto healthy foods. Education around nutrition is required across the value chain, from consumers to farmers. This can connect consumers to the value of food and thus the nutritional quality.
2. Socioeconomic considerations present a further barrier. For many people (3 billion people, 40% of world population), healthy diets remain beyond reach. Perishable and bulky foods (fish, veg) are more costly to produce, store, and transport, vs. starchy staples. Healthy foods are often more expensive, and many consumers do not have the time or resources to research healthy food choices. Participants stressed that the true price of food must be promoted throughout the value chain to provide better prices for farmers. In many supply chains, average earnings are far below a living income or wage. Women are by far the furthest from a living income/wage. Additionally, a lack of gender empowerment, inequality, and a gender pay gap in all countries present a major barrier. Women and underrepresented pupils need to be put at the forefront of discussions. Small-scale farmers, food workers and their communities should have greater influence over food value chains and receive a fair share of value.
3. While some consumers simply cannot afford more healthy options, other choose not to. This is furthered by the marketing and attractive packaging of unhealthy products. Companies can align nutrition commitments with commercial policies and portfolio management. For example, by making healthy varieties their main/star products. Healthy products should not be premium but the norm.
4. Supply chain actors have a role to play as well. There is a need for more appropriate farming knowledge as basic research in agriculture remains rooted in old paradigms. Supply and distribution inefficiencies can lead to food waste, which is felt keenly in poorer populations. Further development of sustainable packaging can tackle food waste and reduce environmental impact. Sector-wide KPIs would give stakeholders a sense of direction and performance, incentivising business to prioritise bringing the consumer healthy and nutritious food.
5. Participants also delved further into political, local and cultural considerations. One size does not fit all and it is important to take into account local and regional differences. Each will have a different starting point and there is a need to understand local barriers, habits and cultures better. The role of cultural and religious practices needs to be taken into account and differs with each local context. Policies should stimulate local innovation, solutions, sourcing, entrepreneurship. Market led nutrition and the understanding of local consumers are important to provide relevant solutions.

There is a need for cooperation between all actors and stakeholders, from smallholder farmers to those working with the public and consumers in ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all and collectively move towards the 2030 SDGs.

- Policymakers must take into account local and regional differences. Local barriers, habits, cultures and religious practices must be considered when legislating.
- Government must lead and frame appropriate policies, ensuring that incentives are aligned, improving education and acting for cities and rural areas.
- The private sector has a key role to play in providing access to information for consumers, and should not wait for regulations.
- Academics must research trade-offs, food environments and consumer behaviour change, and universities should build on community engagement to bring academic expertise to programs.
- In consumer engagement initiatives, it is important to include those who are directly affected by nutrition deficiencies, and who may not have a seat at the table: e.g. consumers in low-income countries and the Global South.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/2

What are the major barriers and corresponding levers to making healthy diets affordable, accessible and adequate for everyone?

Barrier: Lack of knowledge/ access to info

There is a lack of knowledge around what a nutritious diet entails to consumers. Further, at universities, academics focus on teaching and research, but neglect community engagement, so that huge expertise is lost on the subject.

Levers: Close the information and knowledge gap through better education.

Education across the value chain from farmers to consumers; clear and transparent labelling on nutrition; encouraging companies to share their data so that approaches can be standardised; understanding local consumers and their knowledge of food, so as to adapt processes and products accordingly.

Barrier: The socioeconomic resource gap

Healthy foods are often more expensive, whilst affordable products are less healthy. Some consumers do not have the time or resources to inform themselves around healthy food choices. There is a lack of accessibility to nutritious and healthy foods, furthered by urbanisation. Women are disadvantaged in this area due to lack of empowerment, inequality, and pay gap in all countries.

Levers: closing the income gap through financial levers.

Lowering the price of healthy foods, or raising income for lower income groups; merging these measures would be better still. The true price of food must be promoted throughout the value chain to provide fair income for farmers. SMEs, small suppliers and farmers should be given easier access to capital, at low interest rates to enable proper investment.

Barrier: Lack of demand for healthy items:

Consumption habits are hard to change - this would require education and social innovation. A large proportion of consumers can afford a healthy diet, but opt against it. The marketing and packaging of unhealthy products is often more attractive, whilst the taste of affordable and nutritious foods can act as a barrier.

Levers: engaging and incentivising consumers through better marketing and communications.

Companies can align nutrition commitments with commercial policies and portfolio management. Communications with consumers must be gradual in order to successfully change habits. Manufacturers should work more closely with sales and distribution partners to better reach consumers with healthy and affordable products. Behavioural science should be used to reach consumers.

Supply side and production barriers

There is a lack of appropriate farming knowledge - basic research in agriculture remains rooted in old paradigms. There is a lack of alignment in nutrition and commercial policies within companies, whereby nutrition commitments are not always aligned with portfolio management. There has been a significant decline in new entries into the agribusiness. Supply and distribution inefficiencies lead to food waste which is especially felt in poorer populations.

Levers: shift procurement and supply chain models.

To tackle food waste, inefficiencies must be reduced, and sustainable packaging further developed. Supply chains should be shorter and less complex, and regional food systems must rely less on multinational corporations. Clear KPIs are needed for the 'Food Transition' for climate change. Procurement models must shift to consider local contexts - local sourcing could increase the affordability of nutritious proteins at the local level. There is a clear opportunity for private sector action, regardless of policies.

Barrier: Political, local and cultural considerations

Local and regional differences must be considered, as areas have unique local barriers, habits and cultures. Cultural and religious practices must be considered in local contexts. Developing countries are often under-represented in the international food trade system.

Levers: Policy incentives and role of government.

Incentives for all actors across the food value chain must be aligned. Better data and policies are needed to manage the food environment, and to apply to local contexts. Policy makers can integrate nutrition into agricultural policies, to ensure farmers are incentivised.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/2

Area for discussion in breakout rooms: What is the role and the responsibility of the different stakeholders in ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all and collectively move towards the 2030 SDGs?

Government:

Must lead and frame appropriate policies, ensure incentives are aligned, provide better education, act at city- as well as rural-levels. Government must set standards to protect the most vulnerable. Often, government does not have the knowledge. There is a need for a road map to study the food system in specific countries and how we define what people should be eating. The role of government is to gather knowledge and generate evidence based national plans.

Private Sector:

Industry has a key role to play in various stages ranging from portfolio management, R&D investments, micronutrient fortification, to shifting consumer behaviour through labelling and marketing. There is a significant opportunity for public/private sector collaboration to increase farmer access to expertise, skills, land and technology. The private sector can commit to ethical standards and continue the critical work such as improving crops, driving local innovation, optimizing supply chain, sourcing etc. The private sector has a key role to provide access to information for consumers, especially around health information. The food Industry should focus on reformulation.

Academia:

Academia can break down siloes and improve understanding of the true value of food. Academia has a role to play in researching trade-offs, food environments and consumer behaviour change. It can also enable the integration of nutrition into basic agricultural research, plus standardizing data collection and processing. Universities need to have more engagement with the community to bring academic expertise to programs.

Consumers:

Consumers need to be empowered to choose the right foods. It is important to include those who are directly affected by nutrition deficiencies, for example consumers in low-income countries.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

ACTION TRACKS

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