

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 4 March 2021 09:30 GMT +05:30
DIALOGUE TITLE	Women, Work and Food Systems - South Asia and South-East Asia Dialogue on Gender and Food Systems
CONVENED BY	1. Reema Nanavaty, CEO Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), 2. Kalpana Giri, Senior Program Officer, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion, RECOFTC, 3. Jemimah Njuki, Custodian for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment UN Food Systems Summit
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/4789/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	India, No borders, Thailand

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

110

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

67 31-50

29 51-65

14 66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

31 Male

79 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

30 Agriculture/crops

2 Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

3 Trade and commerce

15 Education

Communication

8 Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

11 Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

1 National or local government

Utilities

2 Industrial

38 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

3 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

24 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

18 Local Non-Governmental Organization

2 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

11 Science and academia

22 Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

1 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

4 International financial institution

4 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

7 Consumer group

14 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

1. Act with Urgency: Recognizing the urgency to bring voice and visibility to the women workers from Asia and SE Asia region in the discussions and to ensure that they are not left out from the process of food systems transformation, SEWA, IFPRI and RECOFTC organized this Regional Dialogue on "Women Work and Food Systems". 2. Commit to the Summit: Through this dialogue, we intend to bring in the voices of the women workers who are an integral part of the food systems but often left out in decisions making process. 3. Be Respectful: The women workers from the informal economy are a backbone of a countries food systems. And yet their voices are unheard. Therefore, this dialogue was organized to get these workers their due respect in the food systems by giving them a platform to voice their issues and concerns but also their best practices. 4. Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity: Adhering to this principle , various stakeholders from different sectors including grassroots organizations, national level stakeholders, and policy makers were invited. This intentional composition of participants enabled our dialogue to bring diverse perspectives and voices from stakeholders and helped participants to listen and understand different perspective in food systems. 5. Complement the work of others: The dialogue provided stakeholders from various sectors of the food systems an equal opportunity to put forth their points. As the dialogue provided representatives from each sector to share, participants could complement and learn from experiences of each other without any prejudice.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

- The Dialogue was kept within the suggested time frame – 2.5 hours.
- Keynote presentations on the purpose and objectives of the UNFSS and the Summit Dialogues were given to orient the participants, for them to take the opportunity to come together and identify priorities and actions they can take to bring more inclusive, equitable and healthier food systems, while also safeguarding the planet.
- The Moderator provided the context of the Summit Action Tracks, the complexity of food systems, and how the Dialogue could help shape pathways for the future of equitable and sustainable food systems. Members from various action tracks of the Food Systems Summit, including Deputy Special Envoy were also invited and actively participated to ensure that the dialogue sticks to the purpose and objective of the UNFSS.
- Representatives of various sectors in the food systems including the Govt., inter-governmental organizations, Multilateral organizations (Like UNDP, WB), CSOs, Private sector, Academia, Economists as well as most importantly the grassroot women workers themselves including vendors and hawkers, small and marginal farmers, FPOs, members of Milk Cooperatives, Agribusiness enterprises etc. actively participated in the dialogue.
- To ensure effective participation by the grassroot workers, simultaneous translation in 2 local languages (Hindi and Gujarati) as well as in English was arranged.
- Participants were encouraged to share their perspectives on how issues on food and food security could be approached collectively, not through one's own disciplinary lens or own sectoral interest. At the beginning of the dialogue, we encouraged participants to be respectful and carefully listen to each other. The moderator guided the discussion and helped participants to be open to divergent points of view. Post the presentation by the Deputy Envoy and Key note speakers, the participants were divided in break-out rooms with the five themes. Each room had a chair and a rapporteur who guided the discussions and helped each group come-up with specific actionable outcomes.

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

Based on our experience hosting an independent dialogue, we have learned that it is important to present clear objectives and topics at the beginning of the dialogue. It means that you need to explain about the Food Systems Summit and what it means to participants, so that participants would be aware of the purpose of the dialogue and we can also better organize the dialogue to apply the 'commit to the summit' principle. Also, to ensure equitable food systems, there is a need to have a balanced and integrated approach to various aspects of the food systems from Production, Processing, Distribution and consumption. And therefore, the dialogues and discussions on these aspects also need to include stakeholders engaged at all levels in these stages of the food systems. Well designed Registration form with specific questions sent out in advance (at least 10 days) helps ensure the most relevant people can participate in the discussions.

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

Women are the back-bone of an informal worker's household and most commonly shoulder the responsibility of fulfilling the family's food and nutritional needs. At the same time, women play a major role in the Food system – in production, processing, trading of food and in making decisions about consumption and purchase of food at household level. Despite their importance in the food system, women are constrained by their lack of land ownership and access to other resources due to patriarchal farming systems and gender discrimination. Additionally, agricultural support systems in India are mostly composed of men, affecting women's access to resources to increase their incomes.

Therefore, tackling gender injustice and truly empowering women is not only a fundamental prerequisite for food systems transformation but also a goal. Building more inclusive food systems will be key to supporting vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic. Inclusive food systems have the potential for integrating the poor and marginalized into food supply chains, enabling them to escape poverty, improving nutrition, and thereby, reducing national and global inequalities.

To discuss and deliberate on these issues and possible game changing solutions to address these issues, IFPRI, SEWA and RECOFT co-hosted a regional dialogue on Women, Work and Food Systems on 4th March. As the dialogue mainly focused on the Action Track 4: Advance Equitable Livelihoods, this dialogue served as one in a series of regional dialogues to discuss how we can achieve the triple goal of gender equality, sustainable and healthy food systems. The dialogue brought together over 100 participants including economists, academicians, scientists, farmers and farmer organizations, policy makers, consumers, private sector and others from over 10 different sectors.

In order to engage different stakeholders actively in the dialogue, five breakout groups were created based on the five action tracks. The opening remarks about the dialogue theme, Women, Work, and Food Systems, were delivered before the breakout group discussion to provide the context of women in food systems to participants. Each group was encouraged to come up with three game changing solutions at the end of the discussion. Cross-cutting solutions across all breakout groups were identified.

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

At the end of the discussion, each group came up with 3 game changing solutions. Some of these game-changing solutions are as below.

1. Organizing is the key to empower rural women workers and small holder women farmers and make the food systems equitable and just. Promoting their own member-owned and managed supply chain will help building their collective strength, bargaining power and decision-making agencies.
 2. Policies that treat farm as an enterprise, promote women-owned and managed social enterprises and bring in technology and skills to strengthen the decentralized supply chains.
 3. Policies that Explicitly recognize and promote the rights of women who are structurally disadvantaged.
 4. Focus on Affordability and accessibility to enable increased effective reach of nutritious food for all.
 5. Promote traditional food through pro-poor and pro-women farmer policies as well as linking consumer directly to producers through producer-led-value chains.
 6. Reviving, promoting and implementing indigenous practices through technological integration.
 7. Promote local production and distribution to address the issue of food wastage as well as localization of agricultural value chain to generate better, just and equitable livelihood opportunities.
 8. Educate and create awareness about hidden environmental costs of food production to the commons.
 9. Promote eco-regenerative solutions, management of resources and commons by rural women workers.
- Additionally, organizing rural women workers and enabling access to financial services and market linkages came out as a cross-cutting solution across all groups.

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

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- ✓ Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

The first group discussed the first action track, Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for all. Participants discussed how to promote a member-owned food supply chain, member-owned agriculture tool, and equipment library for small holder women. The group proposed three game-changing solutions as below.

1. Organizing poor smallholder farmers and women workers, promoting their own member-owned and managed supply chain and thus building their collective strength, bargaining power and decision-making agencies.
2. Focus on increasing affordability and accessibility to nutritious food for all through women producer food systems and supply chains.
3. Preserving, promoting and practicing indigenous practices through technological inclusion.

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

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

The second group discussed action track 2, Shift to sustainable consumption patterns. Some concerns were raised in this group discussion. The key issue highlighted was “what is being produced is not eaten and instead, is exported. What is being eaten is what has been imported.” Some participants also noted that there is a disconnect between the producers and the consumers due to change in food preferences and consumption patterns. Other issues related to food wastage, hoarding of food grains by traders and middlemen leading to inflation, lack of markets for small surplus produce, government policies around PDS (the government subsidized Public Distribution System) which allowed distribution of low-quality grains, and distribution of non-local grains like wheat and rice were mentioned. Additionally, participants discussed issues related to policies. Current policies do not ensure ownership of land to women, or disassociate access to resources and land ownership, thus leading to women’s inability to access financial resources, extension services, benefits and entitlements from government as a small farmer.

The group proposed three game changing solutions as below.

1. Address the issue of food wastage by training local producers to produce contemporary nutritious food using locally grown traditional food grains and produce.
2. Educate and create awareness about hidden environmental costs of food production to the general consumers. Address the role of media, celebrities and large corporates / brands in promoting harmful dietary habits and junk food.
3. Policies that Promote traditional food through
 - a. Emphasizing on local procurement and distribution through PDS
 - b. Enabling market access and support for small women farmers
 - c. Promoting FPO’s that connect Producers directly to Consumers.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

The third group discussed action track 3, Boost nature-positive production. Farmers from various parts of India shared examples where the development of pasture land, and commons, was taken up focusing on water conservation and plantation and that led to livelihood generation as well as value addition and forward linkages. One of the most discussed solutions was preserving, strengthening and promoting women's traditional knowledge of the bio resources. Participants in the third group proposed three game changing solutions as below.

1. Preserve and promote eco-regenerative food production methods including climate, seeds, traditional methods and knowledge.
2. Policies to encourage and promote management of commons (including but not limited to water, barren and wastelands, grass and forest lands) by local women's collectives
3. Policies to promote decentralized food production systems, thereby promoting affordable and traditional methods and techniques such as local inputs, local seeds, bio-fertilizers and clean energy solutions

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

The fourth group discussed action track 4, Advance equitable livelihoods. The key issues discussed in the group in the context of women and the current food systems include:

- 1) Lack of visibility, identity and recognition of women workers despite them playing significant roles at all stages in the food supply chain
- 2) Women's limited access to resources including land, finance, information - leading to a lack of access to government schemes and subsidies as well as financial services.
- 3) The majority of the women informal workers in the food system are into home based informal enterprises – making them invisible in the food systems.

The group proposed four game-changing solutions, including a cross-cutting solution.

1. Organizing is the key to empower rural women workers and small holder women farmers and make the food systems equitable and just.
2. Policies that treat the farm as an enterprise, promote women-owned and managed social enterprises and bring in technology and skills to strengthen the decentralized supply chains.
3. Policies that promote asset ownership by women farmers, direct procurement from women farmers - thereby facilitate decent and enhance livelihood opportunity.
4. Improved access to finance and Market access has emerged as a cross-cutting solution across all five ACTION TRACKS.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

The last group discussed action track 5, Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress. In this group, participants discussed several issues that prohibit women's involvement in food systems, including patriarchal environment, exploiting women's labor, limited access to markets and loans for women.

The group proposed four game-changing solutions.

1. Explicit recognition of the rights of women who are structurally disadvantaged: mobilizing them, enabling their access and rights to land and finance, and other assets.
2. Policies that 1) treat family as a unit for entitlements and capacity building; 2) bring visibility and recognition to family farming and promote it as an economic activity; 3) create awareness and redistribution of labor across family members
3. Organize access to freedom of association and collective bargaining for women workers and women smallholder farmers; safeguarding the social protection mechanisms, including fair pay, safe and dignified space for women, cash transfers, etc.
4. Promote, Scale and Replicate existing successful models of women owned and managed food value chains.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Participants shared mostly similar views on the issues related to women and food systems. While organizing rural women workers and enabling access to financial services and market linkages was identified as a key game changing solution, other solutions such as promoting local decentralized value chains fully owned and managed by the women farmers / producers / workers themselves also came up across all five discussion groups.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Detailed Report of Women, Work and Food Systems**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Detailed-Report-of-Women-Work-and-Food-Systems.pdf>
- **Background note for Women, Work and Food Systems Dialogue**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Background-note-for-Women-Work-and-Food-Systems-Dialogue-on-4th-March.pdf>

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Summary report of Asia and SE-Asia Regional Dialogue on Women, Work and Food Systems**
<https://www.sewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Summary-report-of-Women-Work-and-Food-Systems.pdf>
- **Voice of Grass-root entrepreneur engaged in the Food Systems**
https://youtu.be/n_eiNhQ6yS4