

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 16 December 2021 15:00 GMT +08:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Malaysia and Singapore Food Systems: Sustainable sourcing of palm oil
CONVENED BY	Unilever Food Solutions
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/48705/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Malaysia, Singapore

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

73

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

21

19-30

49

31-50

3

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

32 Male

41 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

1

Education

Communication

Food processing

1

Food retail, markets

64

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

7

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

65

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

1

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

3

Consumer group

4

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The independent dialogue was organized to include panelists from a diverse background. This allows participants to learn more about the role of palm oil and its impact to the environment. Panelist also shared some of the existing initiatives before discussing on the possible collaborations towards a sustainable sourcing of palm oil. The intent is to inculcate the urgency to act on the issues now and explore the options available to meet this goal. Participants can also voice their opinion or questions through the chat box.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogue allows us to better understand how organizations from different industries can play a role in reducing the environmental impacts when using palm oil. Panelist also shared the obstacles that they encountered, and some strategies to overcome the hurdles. Throughout the discussion, there were various methods to tackle the issue, but we deep dived to the topic of partnership.

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

NIL

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 Independent Dialogue was held over Microsoft Teams meeting where we invited professionals from various industries to share their views on this topic. The dialogue was promoted over several platforms, both internally and externally. Apart from the UN Summit Dialogue webpage, the independent dialogue was shared through the company website, Facebook page and Instagram. This is to amplify the importance of this topic to all our stakeholders. During the dialogue, only the Moderator and the Panelists were screened while the chat box remains open for participants to express their views and questions.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

Palm oil was first introduced into Malaysia in 1875 and in 2005, palm oil became the most consumed oils and fats globally. There are some special qualities in the palm oil which makes it difficult to be replaced. For instance, palm oil is used in cooking oil as it is non-GMO, stable in high temperature, nutritionally balanced and many more. The same oil is also present in palm-based oleochemicals, which is the main ingredients for cosmetics products. Till date, the plantation of palm oil imposes several issues, such as the labour involved, and the inefficient usage of fertilizer and herbicides.

The focus of this independent dialogue seeks to understand the importance of palm oil, its impact to the environment, the current initiatives and possible partnerships, towards achieving a sustainable production of palm oil.

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

As the population continues to increase, the global production of palm oil has soared tremendously. These production facilities are often located in tropical countries and usually in areas with high level of poverty. Palm oil is more popular than other cooking oils because of its productivity in output. For instance, palm oil has a yield of 3 tonnes per hectare, as compared to soybean which yield 0.5 tonnes per hectare. If we were to substitute palm oil with other cooking oil, it will shift the same problem to other parts of the world. In the last 40 years, the number of animals living in the forest has decreased substantially, mainly due to deforestation. Even so, the demand of palm oil is expected to continue rising in the coming years.

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, RSPO, has a set of principles and criteria which comprises of legal, economic, environmental, and social aspects that members must adhere to. This defines how the production of palm oil is to be done in a sustainable manner. However, the challenge often, is to incorporate conservation with development. As nations develop, there are bound to have a negative impact to the environment. The objective is to conserve the existing environment as nations progresses.

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<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 type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input 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

RSPO acts as a third-party certification body that links the businesses with the producers that are practicing sustainable production. This is especially helpful as the demand for sustainable palm oil has been growing. With a credited certification body, businesses will be assured that the producers deliver the product as per specifications. Moreover, there is a growing number of businesses who are also working towards 'deforestation-free' supply chain, whereby they only purchase from palm oil producers who no longer practice deforestation.

However, because RSPO is yet a mandatory requirement, it is difficult to prevent the non-RSPO producers from deforesting. As a consumer, we can make the change by supporting sustainably-sourced palm oil, so that producers would be obliged to join RSPO and to adhere to the rules, minimizing global deforestation.

Moreover, government policy on land use can make a huge impact to the industry, especially on palm oil producers who are not a member of the RSPO. This allows the producers to carefully select the areas of plantation under a specific set of criteria, preventing the inferior areas from being deforested and being left unused. In addition, conserving plots of land to protect the endangered species.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

As the RSPO-certified palm oil tends to cost higher, food operators can control their costs by purchasing palm oil in bulk (high volume), achieving the economies of scale. Alternatively, food operators can partner with local suppliers to introduce the sustainable products to the consumers.

Government intervention such as the Malaysia Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) certification, is a regulation in Malaysia. This makes it mandatory for the producers to ensure that they comply to the criteria of the MSPO, otherwise their license will be revoked. Although MSPO may not have the same set of criteria as the RSPO, it is still a step for producers to achieve a sustainable production of palm oil.

In the past, RSPO certification is something foreign to the producers. As the demand for sustainably-sourced products grew, this certification has now become a default for businesses in pitching for projects/contracts. Since the certification requires some operational tweaks for the palm oil producers, businesses can work hand-in-hand with producers towards achieving the RSPO certification.

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