

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 22 October 2025 08:00 GMT +06:30
DIALOGUE TITLE	Food Systems Forum 2025, "Building Resilience for Uncertainties"
CONVENED BY	Myanmar Innovative Life Sciences (MILS)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/53297/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Myanmar

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

420

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 Food Systems Forum 2025 was organized as a dialogue-first platform (not a conventional conference) to reflect the UN Principles of Engagement. Inclusivity and respect were built in through broad representation—SMEs, producer groups, CSOs/CBOs, humanitarian agencies, researchers, youth and women-led networks, development partners, and regional actors. Burmese–English interpretation enabled meaningful participation across local and international stakeholders. To embrace complexity and systems thinking, the programme intentionally linked food safety, nutrition security, climate resilience, digital tools, and finance across plenaries and breakouts, avoiding siloed conversations. Participatory formats (especially fishbowl and roundtable discussions) created space for multiple viewpoints and real-time exchange rather than one-way presentations. Equity and power-awareness were reinforced through facilitation guidance: hosts were asked to actively draw in voices from smaller enterprises, community practitioners, women, and youth, so discussions were not dominated by institutional authority. Sessions also acknowledged Myanmar’s fragile operating context, allowing lived realities to shape priorities. To strengthen openness and trust, the Forum maintained a neutral, non-prescriptive environment—focusing on shared understanding, practical constraints, and what is feasible under uncertainty. Finally, the Dialogue was action-oriented: rapporteurs captured practical recommendations from each session, consolidated into cross-cutting findings and follow-up pillars to guide continued collaboration beyond the event.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Food Systems Forum 2025 reflected the UN Principles of Engagement through both its design choices and facilitation practices. Inclusivity and mutual respect were reflected in the diversity of participants and formats. SMEs, farmers’ organizations, CSOs/CBOs, humanitarian actors, researchers, youth and women-led networks, and development partners engaged on equal footing. Dialogue formats emphasized listening and exchange, rather than formal presentations, reinforcing respect for lived experience alongside technical knowledge. The Principle of embracing complexity was reflected by applying a food systems lens throughout the programme. Dialogues intentionally connected food safety, nutrition, climate resilience, finance, and digital innovation, highlighting interdependencies rather than isolated solutions. Fishbowl discussions and cross-sector panels allowed participants to explore how shocks cascade across value chains and communities. Equity and power-awareness were addressed through facilitation approaches that prioritized voices often underrepresented in formal policy spaces. Facilitators were guided to actively invite input from SMEs, community practitioners, women, and youth, and to recognize structural constraints faced in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The Dialogue emphasized openness and trust-building by maintaining a neutral, non-prescriptive environment. Rather than aiming for consensus or policy declarations, sessions focused on shared understanding, practical constraints, and honest reflection—creating space to discuss sensitive issues such as regulatory gaps, market breakdowns, and donor contraction. Finally, the Principle of action orientation was reflected through structured synthesis. Key insights and recommendations were documented by rapporteurs and consolidated into follow-up pillars, providing clear pathways for continued collaboration, learning, and pilot action beyond the event.

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

Yes. From our experience, the Principles of Engagement are most effective when treated as design disciplines, not abstract values. First, design for listening, not presenting. Choose formats that prioritize exchange—such as fishbowl discussions, roundtables, or facilitated small groups—so participants contribute as peers rather than audiences. This naturally reinforces respect, inclusion, and openness. Second, embrace complexity deliberately. Avoid organizing sessions around narrow themes or sectors. Food systems challenges are interconnected; structuring dialogues to surface linkages between production, nutrition, markets, climate, and trust leads to more honest and useful conversations. Third, be conscious of power dynamics. Convenors should brief facilitators to actively invite voices from SMEs, community practitioners, women, youth, and frontline actors. Without this, discussions tend to default to institutional or technical authority, unintentionally undermining equity. Fourth, create psychological safety. A neutral, non-prescriptive environment—where the goal is understanding rather than consensus—encourages participants to speak candidly about constraints, failures, and trade-offs, especially in fragile or conflict-affected contexts. Finally, plan for continuity. Dialogue should not end when the event closes. Assign rapporteurs, synthesize insights, and translate them into clear follow-up pathways or collaborations. This reinforces the principle that dialogue is a process, not a one-off event. In short, appreciating the Principles of Engagement means embedding them into how dialogue is structured, facilitated, and carried forward—so they shape behaviour, not just intent.

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 Food Systems Forum 2025 was designed as a comprehensive exploration of food systems, with a strong emphasis on examining linkages across multiple Action Tracks and levers of change, rather than addressing any single track in isolation.

The Dialogue applied a food systems lens to Myanmar’s current realities, recognizing that nutrition insecurity, food safety risks, climate shocks, market fragmentation, and institutional weakness are deeply interconnected. Rather than organizing discussions strictly by Action Track, the Forum focused on how different parts of the food system interact under stress, and how resilience can be built through coordinated, trust-based approaches.

Key areas of focus included:

- Nutrition security (Action Track 1), particularly the deterioration of household diets, child malnutrition, and constraints in delivering safe, nutritious foods in conflict-affected and climate-vulnerable areas. Dialogues examined the role of local production, SMEs, community networks, and market-based mechanisms in sustaining nutrition outcomes when humanitarian pipelines are constrained.
- Food safety and quality systems (Action Track 2), explored not only as a public health issue but as a foundation for market confidence, competitiveness, and nutrition. The Forum examined gaps in regulatory enforcement, testing capacity, certification costs, and consumer awareness, and how trust-based and peer-driven quality systems are emerging to fill institutional voids.
- Climate resilience and primary production (Action Track 5), with a strong focus on how climate shocks cascade across crops, livestock, and aquaculture. Dialogues emphasized integrated and circular production systems, low-tech climate-smart practices, soil health, organic inputs, and localized service provision as scalable resilience pathways.
- Market systems, digital tools, and enabling environments (levers of change), including the role of digital platforms, data, finance, and coordination mechanisms in improving extension services, market transparency, risk management, and inclusion of smallholders, SMEs, women, and youth.

Across all themes, the Dialogue explicitly examined linkages between Action Tracks, highlighting that progress in nutrition, climate adaptation, and sustainability is not possible without parallel improvements in food safety, markets, trust, and coordination.

A unifying focus of the Forum was the concept of trust as an enabling infrastructure — how, in fragile and low-institutional contexts, trust-based relationships, peer monitoring, and multistakeholder platforms are increasingly sustaining food system functions and enabling resilience.

In summary, the Dialogue did not seek to prioritize one Action Track over others. Instead, it focused on understanding and strengthening the interdependencies between Action Tracks and levers of change, generating system-level insights and practical pathways for building resilient, nutrition-secure, and climate-adaptive food systems under conditions of uncertainty.

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

The Food Systems Forum 2025 revealed a food system under severe and overlapping stress, yet one that continues to function through adaptive relationships, local innovation, and informal coordination. Several clear findings emerged across dialogues.

1. Fragmentation—not lack of effort—is the core systemic constraint. Stakeholders across nutrition, food safety, primary production, markets, and digital services are actively responding to crisis conditions, but largely in isolation. The Dialogue highlighted an urgent need to reconnect actors who have been operating in silos, including SMEs, community organizations, humanitarian agencies, researchers, and market actors. Participants consistently emphasized that resilience depends less on new standalone interventions and more on stronger coordination mechanisms and shared operating spaces.

2. Nutrition security is deteriorating rapidly, and local solutions are now indispensable. Participants confirmed accelerating malnutrition, especially among children and women in conflict-affected and climate-vulnerable areas. Humanitarian pipelines are increasingly constrained by access limitations, funding contraction, and reliance on imported products. A key finding was that local production and localized delivery of safe, nutritious foods—supported by SMEs and community networks—are no longer optional but essential for sustaining nutrition outcomes.

3. Food safety has shifted from a compliance issue to a national resilience and competitiveness priority. Dialogues revealed that weak enforcement, high certification costs, and limited testing capacity undermine both public health and market confidence. At the same time, producers who prioritize food safety early tend to sustain quality, nutrition, and consumer trust over time. Participants agreed that food safety is a foundational enabler, linking nutrition, markets, and long-term resilience, and requires pragmatic, trust-based approaches in low-institutional contexts.

4. Climate shocks cascade across interconnected production systems. The Forum confirmed that crops, livestock, and aquaculture are deeply interdependent. Climate-induced disruptions in one sector rapidly transmit risks to others—through feed quality, disease, prices, and nutrition outcomes. The Dialogue identified integrated and circular production models, soil health, organic inputs, and low-tech climate-smart practices as viable, scalable responses when supported by coordination and extension.

5. Trust has emerged as a functional substitute for weakened institutions. In contexts where formal regulation and oversight are constrained, participants described how trust-based relationships, peer monitoring, shared standards, and transparent information exchange are already sustaining food system functions. These informal mechanisms act as transitional governance structures, enabling coordination, quality assurance, and market continuity.

6. Digital tools can enable coordination, but only if grounded in trust and local realities. While digital innovation remains underutilized due to connectivity gaps and low trust, the Dialogue identified clear opportunities for offline-first tools, youth intermediaries, cooperative data governance, and practical value delivery (e.g., advisories, market information, traceability).

7. Dialogue must translate into continued collective action. Rather than consensus declarations, participants converged on the need for ongoing collaboration, pilots, and shared learning pathways. This resulted in agreement around follow-up pillars focused on multistakeholder convergence, trust-based quality systems, circular and localized production loops, and sustained Forum-to-Field engagement.

Overall, the Dialogue concluded that resilience in Myanmar’s food systems is emerging not from stability, but from adaptive, trust-enabled coordination. Strengthening these connections now is critical to preventing humanitarian stress from hardening into long-term systemic failure.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

As Food Systems Forum has more than 20 dialogues in the form of roundtables, panels, fishbowls etc. to have more concised entry for this feedback form, the discussion topics are clustered according to the Forum 3 tracks (Food Safety, Nutrition Security and Climate Resilience + Mekong CREATES Agri-food Systems Forum).

Outcomes of discussions under the track: Food Safety

Discussions under the Food Safety track converged on the recognition that food safety in Myanmar is no longer a narrow compliance issue, but a foundational pillar for public health, nutrition security, market confidence, and system-wide resilience. Several key outcomes emerged.

Urgently needed actions

Participants emphasized the need to shift from a certificate-driven approach to a practice-based food safety culture, particularly among SMEs. Priority actions include: strengthening Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) at factory level; improving access to affordable, context-appropriate testing for chemical, physical, and microbiological hazards; enhancing food labelling literacy; and embedding food safety considerations earlier in product development rather than as an afterthought. Given institutional constraints, dialogues highlighted the importance of trust-based and peer-supported quality systems as transitional solutions.

Who should take these actions

SMEs and food processors are central actors and must internalize food safety as a business and ethical responsibility. Technical institutions, laboratories, and service providers should support this shift through advisory services, testing, and capacity building. Retailers and buyers play a critical role by clearly communicating requirements and supporting gradual compliance pathways. Development partners and industry associations were identified as key enablers, particularly in reducing cost barriers, supporting shared infrastructure, and facilitating coordination where regulatory oversight is weak.

How progress could be assessed

Participants agreed that progress should be measured not only by the number of certificates issued, but by observable improvements in practices and outcomes. Suggested indicators include: adoption of basic GHP/GMP practices; frequency and transparency of product testing; reduction in food safety incidents and recalls; improved consistency of product quality; increased acceptance of local products by modern trade and institutional buyers; and growing consumer confidence in locally produced foods.

Anticipated challenges

Key challenges include the high cost of certification and testing, limited availability of accredited laboratories, shortages of skilled food technologists, and low consumer awareness. SMEs face particular difficulty balancing compliance costs with thin margins. Inconsistent enforcement and fragmented governance further complicate implementation. Participants cautioned that without pragmatic, staged approaches, food safety requirements risk excluding small producers rather than improving overall system safety.

Overall, the Food Safety dialogues concluded that investing in practical, trust-enabled food safety systems is one of the highest-impact interventions for strengthening nutrition outcomes, market resilience, and long-term competitiveness in Myanmar's food system.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

Outcomes of discussions under the track: Nutrition Security

Discussions under the Nutrition Security track highlighted that Myanmar is facing a rapidly deepening nutrition crisis, driven by the convergence of conflict, climate shocks, market breakdowns, and shrinking humanitarian space. Participants consistently emphasized that nutrition outcomes can no longer rely solely on traditional aid delivery and must be supported by local production, market-based mechanisms, and community-level coordination.

Urgently needed actions
Key actions identified include strengthening local availability of safe, nutritious foods, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant and lactating women, and displaced households. Participants stressed the need to support SMEs and community producers to supply nutrient-dense foods that meet basic safety and quality requirements. Improving linkages between primary production, processing, and institutional buyers (e.g. school feeding and community nutrition programmes) was identified as critical. Nutrition-sensitive approaches—integrating food safety, affordability, and cultural acceptability—were seen as essential, alongside better nutrition awareness at household and community levels.

Who should take these actions
Local SMEs, producer groups, and community organizations were recognized as frontline actors in sustaining nutrition delivery under constrained conditions. Humanitarian agencies and development partners were seen as key enablers, particularly in setting standards, providing technical guidance, and facilitating market-based pathways where feasible. Multistakeholder platforms and networks were identified as important coordination mechanisms to align actors across production, processing, distribution, and consumption.

How progress could be assessed
Participants agreed that progress should be tracked through practical and outcome-oriented indicators, including improved availability of affordable nutritious foods in local markets; increased participation of local suppliers in nutrition programmes; improved consistency and safety of locally produced nutrition products; and qualitative improvements in household diet diversity. Where feasible, monitoring of child and maternal nutrition trends was also highlighted as important, while acknowledging data constraints.

Anticipated challenges
Key challenges include declining purchasing power, rising input and logistics costs, limited technical capacity among local producers, and strict requirements for institutional procurement that are difficult for SMEs to meet. Donor contraction and access constraints further limit scale and continuity. Participants cautioned that without adaptive approaches, there is a risk of widening gaps between humanitarian standards and local production realities.

Overall, the Nutrition Security dialogues concluded that resilient nutrition outcomes in Myanmar depend on combining local production, localized delivery, and coordinated support, rather than relying on fragmented or purely external solutions. Strengthening these linkages was seen as urgent to prevent further deterioration of nutrition outcomes.

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 |

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

Outcomes of discussions under the track: Climate Resilience

Discussions under the Climate Resilience track confirmed that climate change is now a systemic risk multiplier across Myanmar’s food system, affecting primary production, food safety, nutrition outcomes, and livelihoods simultaneously. Participants emphasized that resilience can no longer be addressed at the farm level alone, but must be built across interconnected crop, livestock, and aquaculture systems, and along value chains.

Urgently needed actions
Priority actions identified include scaling climate-smart and nature-positive production practices that are practical, affordable, and locally adaptable. These include improved soil health management, organic and circular inputs, integrated crop–livestock–aquaculture systems, better post-harvest handling, and low-tech risk-reduction measures to address climate-induced quality losses (e.g. aflatoxin and disease). Participants also highlighted the need to strengthen localized extension services, farmer-to-farmer learning, and access to timely climate and market information to support adaptive decision-making.

Who should take these actions
Primary producers and producer groups are central actors, but cannot act alone. Local service providers, SMEs, and input suppliers were identified as key enablers for scaling climate-resilient practices. Technical institutions, researchers, and development partners were seen as critical for validating practices, supporting capacity building, and facilitating access to tools and knowledge. Multistakeholder platforms were highlighted as necessary to coordinate actions across sectors and avoid fragmented interventions.

How progress could be assessed
Participants agreed that resilience should be assessed through tangible and practice-based indicators, rather than abstract commitments. Suggested measures include adoption of climate-smart practices, improvements in soil and water management, reduced production and quality losses during climate shocks, stabilization of yields and input costs, and improved continuity of supply across seasons. Cross-sector indicators—such as reduced feed quality risks and more stable availability of animal-source foods—were also highlighted.

Anticipated challenges
Key challenges include limited financial capacity among smallholders, high upfront costs for some practices, weak extension coverage, and inconsistent access to inputs and services. Climate volatility itself makes planning difficult, while fragmented markets reduce incentives for long-term investment. Participants also noted that without coordination, isolated climate interventions risk shifting risks from one sector to another rather than reducing system-wide vulnerability.

Overall, the Climate Resilience dialogues concluded that resilience must be built through integrated, localized, and coordinated approaches, combining nature-positive practices with market and knowledge support. Strengthening linkages across production systems was seen as essential to prevent climate shocks from cascading into broader food and nutrition crises.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

Outcomes of discussions under the track: Mekong CREATES Agri-food Systems Forum

Discussions under the Mekong CREATES Agri-food Systems Forum highlighted the importance of regional learning, cross-border cooperation, and innovation exchange in strengthening national food system resilience. Participants emphasized that Myanmar’s challenges—climate stress, market fragmentation, SME capability gaps, and nutrition insecurity—are shared across the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), and that regional collaboration offers practical pathways for adaptation and scale.

Urgently needed actions

Key actions identified include strengthening regional knowledge exchange on climate-resilient production, food safety practices, SME upgrading, and digital agri-food solutions. Participants emphasized the need to document and adapt proven approaches from across the Mekong region—such as inclusive business models, farmer–SME linkages, and market-oriented resilience strategies—to Myanmar’s context. Piloting cross-border learning initiatives, joint capacity-building activities, and innovation showcases was seen as a priority to accelerate adoption while avoiding duplication.

Who should take these actions

Regional institutions, such as Mekong-level platforms and research organizations, were identified as key convenors and knowledge brokers. National partners—including private sector actors, SMEs, producer organizations, and technical institutions—were seen as critical implementers and adapters of regional insights. Development partners play an enabling role by supporting coordination, learning exchanges, and pilot initiatives that bridge regional expertise with local implementation.

How progress could be assessed

Participants agreed that progress should be assessed through practical collaboration outcomes, rather than policy alignment alone. Suggested indicators include the number and quality of regional knowledge exchanges, joint pilots or demonstrations launched, SME participation in regional learning initiatives, and evidence of adapted practices being applied locally. Improved linkages between regional innovation providers and national actors were also identified as an important marker of success.

Anticipated challenges

Key challenges include differences in policy environments, market maturity, and institutional capacity across Mekong countries. Limited resources, language barriers, and travel or coordination constraints may also slow exchange. Participants cautioned that regional models cannot be transferred wholesale and must be carefully adapted to Myanmar’s fragile operating context.

Overall, the Mekong CREATES dialogues concluded that regional collaboration is a strategic enabler of resilience, offering Myanmar access to tested ideas, networks, and innovations. When combined with strong local ownership and adaptation, Mekong-level engagement can significantly strengthen Myanmar’s agri-food system transformation under uncertainty.

ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
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- ✓ 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 |

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The Food Systems Forum 2025 surfaced several important areas of divergence, reflecting the complexity of Myanmar’s food system and the diverse realities faced by different actors. These differences were constructive and helped clarify where further dialogue, evidence, and experimentation are needed.

1. Speed versus rigor in food safety and nutrition standards
Participants shared divergent views on how quickly food safety and nutrition standards should be applied. Humanitarian agencies and large buyers emphasized the non-negotiability of strict standards to protect public health, while SMEs and local producers highlighted the risk that rapid enforcement could exclude smaller actors due to high costs and limited technical capacity. This divergence underscored the tension between safeguarding consumers and ensuring inclusive market participation, pointing to the need for phased and adaptive compliance pathways.
2. Localization versus scale in nutrition delivery
There were differing perspectives on how far nutrition interventions should rely on local production. Many participants stressed that local SMEs and community networks are essential to sustaining nutrition outcomes under access and funding constraints. Others cautioned that local systems may struggle to meet volume, consistency, and safety requirements at scale. This divergence highlighted the need to better define where localized solutions are most effective and where complementary external supply remains necessary.
3. Climate adaptation priorities at farm versus system level
Participants broadly agreed on the urgency of climate resilience but differed on where to prioritize action. Some emphasized farm-level practices and inputs, while others argued that without improvements in markets, storage, extension, and coordination across sectors, farm-level gains would not be sustained. This revealed a divergence between intervention-focused and system-wide approaches to resilience building.
4. Role of regulation versus trust-based mechanisms
Views differed on the extent to which informal, trust-based coordination should substitute for weakened formal institutions. Some participants saw peer monitoring and voluntary standards as practical transitional solutions in fragile contexts, while others warned of risks related to uneven quality, accountability, and consumer protection. This divergence highlighted the need to explore hybrid models that combine trust-based practices with gradual institutional strengthening.
5. Digital transformation versus accessibility and trust
Participants diverged on the readiness of digital tools to support food systems coordination. Technology providers and younger actors emphasized the potential of digital platforms for extension, traceability, and finance. Others stressed constraints such as limited connectivity, low digital literacy among older farmers, and mistrust of data use. This pointed to the importance of inclusive, offline-first, and value-driven digital solutions.
6. Prioritization of stakeholders under constrained resources
There were differing views on which stakeholders should be prioritized when resources are limited. Some emphasized the most vulnerable households and conflict-affected communities, while others stressed sustaining SMEs and market actors as a means of preserving system functionality. This divergence reinforced the need for balanced approaches that protect vulnerable populations while maintaining productive capacity.

Overall, the areas of divergence did not signal disagreement on goals, but rather different perspectives on pathways, sequencing, and trade-offs. Participants broadly agreed that these differences warrant continued exploration through pilots, evidence generation, and sustained multistakeholder dialogue.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance		Policy
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	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Executive Summary of the Proceedings of Food Systems Forum 2025**
https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Executive-Summary_FSF2025.pdf

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Official Website of Food Systems Forum 2025**
<https://www.foodsystemsforum.com/>