

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Wednesday, 26 May 2021 12:00 GMT +00:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	"Re-imagining Africa's Food Systems Transformation through Data, Advocacy, and Leadership"
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Professor Amos Laar [School of Public Health, University of Ghana, MEALS4NCDs/FERN]. Co-Conveners/Partners - APHRC, REPSAO, ANS, FANUS, CAPHA, A4NH/IFPRI, Rockefeller FS-TIP; ANH Academy, DFC Program, CDIA, AUDA-NEPAD
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/6387/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/6387/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Independent
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	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

82

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

2 0-18

20 19-30

40 31-50

12 51-65

5 66-80

3 80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

31 Male

51 Female

0 Prefer not to say or Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

3 Agriculture/crops

0 Fish and aquaculture

0 Livestock

0 Agro-forestry

2 Environment and ecology

3 Trade and commerce

36 Education

2 Communication

2 Food processing

1 Food retail, markets

2 Food industry

0 Financial Services

17 Health care

8 Nutrition

4 National or local government

0 Utilities

0 Industrial

2 Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

0 Large national business

0 Multi-national corporation

2 Small-scale farmer

1 Medium-scale farmer

0 Large-scale farmer

3 Local Non-Governmental Organization

5 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

34 Science and academia

1 Workers and trade union

0 Member of Parliament

4 Local authority

20 Government and national institution

2 Regional economic community

3 United Nations

0 International financial institution

2 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

1 Consumer group

2 Other

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The organization of this Africa Region Food Systems Dialogue "Re-imagining Africa's Food Systems Transformation through Data, Advocacy, and Leadership" was largely adherent to the Food Systems Summit Principles of Engagement. First, deliberate efforts were made to ensure diversity (regional/geographic representation, as well as food systems stakeholder/sector representation). In this regard, Dialogue participants were identified through the following approaches. • Vigorous publicity about the Dialogue, open dissemination of Dialogue details and registration portal for parties to express interest. This included wise use of social media like Twitter with the announcements being retweeted several times • Deliberate/purposive solicitations sent to key food systems stakeholders/actors using a maximum variation sampling (stakeholder, sectors, region/geography, demographics, etc). • Purposive identification of facilitators from all regions of Africa (West, South, North, East, and Diaspora), as well as key partners from the Global North whose work relate to food systems in Africa. On the day of the Dialogue, Dialogue Conveners, Curators, and Facilitators reiterated and reinforced the Food Systems Summit Principles of Engagement – as detailed below.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

We summarize below the specific actions taken to ensure our Dialogue is response to the Principles communicated in the Dialogue Conveners' Manual. • "Act with urgency": Recognizing the urgency with which food systems transformation actions needed to be taken, the Dialogue Conveners and Facilitators deliberately requested specific policy asks, and critical practice changes required to transform the African food systems as soon as now, and by 2030. • "Commit to the Summit": Dialogue Conveners, Curators, Facilitators and Participants received orientation at different phases of the Dialogue preparation and execution on Dialogue Principles as well as on how to, and the need to practice what we preach personally and professionally. Including for example "leading from where you stand", or "advocacy requires all voices, loud or not". As part of the concluding remarks to the dialogued participants were called upon to seek opportunities to contribute to the UNFSS processes in their respective countries and also during the multiple public engagements that are announced from time to time. • "Be respectful": Dialogue Conveners incorporated into the facilitation guidelines the need to be respectful of nature, of natural resources, of African traditional cultures, and contexts. Dialogue Facilitators reinforced these during the Dialogue. Participant choices on which breakout sessions they wished to contribute to were respected by allowing them to choose freely which session they wanted to join. • "Recognize complexity": Cognisant of the fact that food systems are complex and are impacted largely by the actions and inactions of humans, Dialogue Facilitators engaged participants in discussions that facilitated identification of multiple-duty innovations/actions that can influence different parts of this complex system. Addressing data needs for monitoring and evaluation of food systems transformation, and for the related advocacy and strategic leadership to foster positive transformation recognized the complexity of food systems.

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

The Conveners of this Regional Independent Food Systems Dialogue would like to share the following to other Dialogue Conveners (especially those who are yet to implement their Dialogues) • Pre-dialogue engagements are crucial: - Engage potential participants on the nature and expectations of the Dialogue, as well as the Dialogue Principles of Engagement prior to the event. • Dedicate time to highlight the nature and expectations of the Dialogue, as well as the outlined principles of engagement on the day of the Dialogue • Plan ahead of time but be prepared to think on your toes and act on the spur of the moment. Our Dialogue initially planned to hold 3 parallel discussion sessions on the day of the Dialogue. Upon assessing the number of registrants/dialogue participants on the day, the Dialogue Conveners innovatively duplicated the discussion rooms from 3 to 6 – to accommodate all interested participants without violating the group size (of 8 – 12) communicated in the Dialogue Manual. This was possible because each group had originally been allocated to facilitators and a notetaker all of whom received facilitation orientation. • Have the required background information for the 'Official Feedback Form' recorded via the online registration portal • Remember "photo taking" or screen shots can be done via Zoom. We found the shots taken helpful.

# 3. METHOD

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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

This Regional Dialogue convened by the Measurement, Evaluation, Accountability, and Leadership Support for NCDs (MEALS4NCDs) Prevention Project/ African Food Environment Research Network (FERN) – in partnership with the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Réseau de Recherches sur les Politiques et les Systèmes Alimentaires en Afrique de l'Ouest (REPSAO), African Nutrition Society (ANS), Federation of African Nutrition Societies (FANUS), Coalition of Actors for Public Health Advocacy (CAPHA), IFPRI-led CGIAR-Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH), Rockefeller Foundation's-led Food Systems Transformative Integrated Policy (FS-TIP), Drivers of Food Choice Program (DFC), Agriculture, Nutrition and Health Academy (ANH Academy), Chronic Diseases Initiative for Africa (CDIA), & the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) examined how "Data, Advocacy, Accountability, Governance, Leadership, and Leadership Support" can be exploited to help "Transform the African Food Systems". The discussions covered all areas and were organized around three questions:

- a) What policy actions or critical practice changes do we want various food system actors (e.g., governments, private sector, academia; farmers, etc.) to adopt to transform the African Food Systems – by 2030?;
- b) How do we use Advocacy, Accountability Science, Governance, Leadership and Leadership Support to facilitate these transformation of Africa's food systems?
- c) Who will need to be involved and what specific actions do we require of them?
  - Participants examined the current African Food Systems – identifying gaps in, and impediment to data availability, timeliness, quality, data management and overall usability. These are crucial for Food Systems Transformation.
  - There was consensus on the need to integrate national or regional data, build stronger data repositories, communicate and interpret data in ways that could translate into policies and also "leaves no one behind".
  - Emphasis was placed on transparency in relation to the kind of data, data curation, data custodianship, access to, storage, and use of data.
  - On advocacy and accountability science, participants deliberated on important tools that could prompt national agricultural and food systems transformation, trade policies, food and nutrition security policies to meet the nutritional demands of the population and support livelihoods while protecting the environment.
  - Participants favored advocacy strategies that are consumer driven, demands transparency and accountability, and co-create knowledge that translates into the right policy actions for lasting food systems change.
  - Furthermore, leadership, , and collaborations were emphasized as key in harmonizing, and regulating, all aspects of the food systems that could foster policy implementation to deliver sustainable healthy diets to both human and planetary health.
  - Participants examined the value of inclusive leadership in addressing inequities. Provision of liability protection to vulnerable farmers, especially, small and medium holder farmers who form a large percentage of Africa's agriculture was highlighted.

### 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
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- ✓ Environment and Climate

## MAIN FINDINGS

The breakout sessions were ably facilitated and yielded rich insights. Facilitators effectively managed the sessions such that all participants could ask questions and contribute to the discussion questions. The discussions produced the following key findings:

The need to establish a clear strategic plan for food systems data. Data is “the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability”. A clear road map for data is needed in Africa. At the moment, there’s an ad hoc approach to data collection and use across Africa. There should be institutionalization of data, where various Government agencies and the private sector can share data on what is happening in the food system. This is important to effectively monitor and direct the transformation in a positive direction.

Data financing. Government agencies and the private sector need to find resources to build local capacity for data.

Measurements/data generation is costly.

The use of technology in gathering data. Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to link “producers”/“sellers” in the food systems to “consumers”/“buyers” in the system so that consumers can contribute to the production decision-making. Second, AI can be used in drone farming to enhance agriculture operation, to monitor movement of cattle, and facilitate vertical farming.

Transparency and accountability in sharing of data. Data should be made accessible to all the actors along the food systems and the private sector should share their rich sources of data for food systems decision-making.

Bridging the advocacy gap. All food systems actors should be involved in creating the needed awareness to transform food systems. Awareness and sensitization of what exists in Africa for Africa is important in promoting advocacy and accountability.

Advocate for strong regulation of the food environment. Governments need to have tighter control in the food system. We need to advocate for countries to link trade policies and food and nutrition security policies to the nutritional needs of the population.

Advocate for legislation and harmonization of standards that are transparent and accountable to control the markets and promote healthy lifestyle changes related to food consumption patterns.

Advocate for transparency of the food environment. Inequities in the food environment should be corrected to allow access to fair marketing, competition and capital investment for SMEs.

Consumer driven advocacy. Industry often responds to public demands or the demands of the consumer. The current “Transform the Food Systems Movement” could learn from that. Involvement of Celebrities in building demands for sustainable, healthy and safe diets should be considered.

The need for Champions/Food Systems Heroes. Participants believe that in every leadership situation, there should be key actors such as the government leaders, community actors, nutrition champions, policy entrepreneurs, academics and other relevant stakeholders who will contribute to a holistic food system.

Inclusive leadership from government, media, civil society, and public health experts is needed. This should involve the community and the people at the grassroots levels from all sectors of the food system to enhance ownership and sustainability. Farmers are often left out in the formulation of policies that affect agriculture, yet they are the major stakeholders.

Collaboration among Food Systems Actors: Important factors brought up multiple times is the need for innovation, transparency, accountability, and stronger partnership between science, the private and public sectors, farmers and other various stakeholders across food systems.

Network all food systems actors. Food systems actors do not know they are in the same system with others. Networking among actors from various sectors and levels of the food chain will enhance sharing of ideas and also facilitate collaboration.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/7

- Topic 1. Finding a clear roadmap for gathering quality data: Data financing; use of technology in gathering data; and transparency and accountability in sharing of data
- The need to establish a clear strategic plan for data. Data is “the lifeblood of decision-making and the raw material for accountability” and for leading the changes required. A clear road map for data is needed in Africa. At the moment there’s an ad hoc approach to data collection and use across Africa. Africa needs a model that takes from an unstructured approach to data to a prepared, demonstrated, intelligent proven model. Moving from ad hoc to prepared data model could take 10 years. When this is realized, there should be institutionalization of data, where various Government agencies and the private sector can share data on what is happening in the food system. Participants agreed it was important to engage and explore with national statistics agencies to improve data collection strategies. These are the institutions through which Food Balance Sheet Data on agriculture, Demographic and Health Surveys and Income and Expenditure Surveys are currently collected
- Data financing. Government should allocate both institutional and financial resources; and the private sector must put together mechanisms of contributing resources to building local capacity for data. Measurements/data generation is costly.
- The use of technology in gathering data. Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to link “producers”/“sellers” in the food systems to “consumers”/“buyers” in the system so that consumers can contribute to the production decision-making. Second, AI can be used in drone farming technologies to enhance agriculture operation, to monitor movement of cattle, and facilitate vertical farming.
- Transparency and accountability in sharing of data. Data should be made accessible to all the actors across food systems and the private sector should share their rich sources of data for food systems decision-making.
- There should be a clear and deliberate roadmap for food systems data collection. This involves the use of data to guide actions and policies (on all components of the food system). The role of data in informing policies for better food systems cannot be overstated. Food systems actions, practices, and policies must be evidence-informed. Advocacy informed by data can play a role in promoting development on positive policy instruments.
- All food systems actors (including SMEs) should be involved in the data value chain. They need data to help monitor actions or inactions of food systems actors, and to help facilitate the transformations that we request of our food systems.
- Diets are primary endpoint in food systems. But there is scarce data on diets, in national food systems and sub-national food systems. The following questions are important: Can we track with robust indicators of diet quality? Can we monitor diet quality on ongoing basis? How do we know that the population is eating? How do we know that the population is healthy? We need data to answer all these questions. We need data for planning, and also for decision-making at every level of the food systems.
- Data can give voice to the voiceless.
- Also, data is very important in influencing politicians. For instance, the moment food insecurity data is released, politicians get so involved because the data can influence their votes. So if there is data on how many people have access to healthy foods. They will be very much involved/interested.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/7

Topic 2. Collaboration among the government sectors, academia, and the private sectors should be fostered:

- Such collaborations can help address gaps that currently exist between these actors due to differences in their approaches.
- In the past, policies drafted left out farmers meanwhile food security is guaranteed by farmers.
- All stakeholders have unique and important roles to play. Policy makers and researchers should work together to have more evidence build a better understanding of food systems. The academia will do research, the private investor will invest, but we need the farmers as well. If the small-scale farmers who are important players of the economy are left out in foods systems decision making, this will perpetuate current inequities.
- Private sector must be more engaged by working closely with researchers and policy makers to improve food systems. They have valuable consumer insights that are effective in promotion of their products (whether healthy or not). Such insights should be leveraged to bring about improved food consumption patterns for better nutrition and health and environmental sustainability.
- Food environments are changing - but so are built environments, cities and food supply systems. Collaboration and synergizing can help generate the near real-life data needed to appreciate and respond to these changes.
- Food environments are gendered. For example, the role of informal food environments where women are the majority who are selling and buying. Policies must account for the gendered components in food environments.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/7

Topic 3. Use of important technological application is crucial:

- The use of technological application is crucial in transforming food systems.
- The Group identified different ways in which technology use can be critical.
- Technology to preserve the nutritional values of food either by processing foods through freezing or drying,
- Use technology to increase the shelf life of certain perishable products like fruits and vegetables through the use of some technological means.
- There was a suggestion for artificial intelligence to be used, e.g., AI can be used to link farmers to producers and sellers. It can also be used to track data.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/7

Participants from the breakout rooms highlighted the following action areas:

- Making use of incentives: What are the incentives for doing the right thing? Smart incentives and disincentives need to be created to align actors in sectors of the food system.
- SMEs play large role in Africa food systems and should be provided with incentives for producing healthy, safe and sustainable food.
- Perhaps there needs to be a combo of incentives and disincentives.
- Disincentives such as making plastic bags expensive so people bring their own cloth bags can also be created. Strategic Policies that will enable SMEs to compete with multilateral organization should be formulated.
- Food retailers equally need to understand their role in the food system. When adequately informed, their decisions may influence the food industry to churn forth better products.
- The government should regulate the food retail environment. There should be regulatory standards for the food retail environment. For instance, its tax incentives, etc. in order to increase access to healthy foods.
- Enforcement of legislative instruments: We do not have strong regulations and standards on food safety and types of additives. Laws should be enforced to ensure food safety standards and apply labelling regulations on food items. There should also be stronger regulation around food advertisement, media, including billboards.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/7

### Topic 5. Building demand for advocacy:

It is the responsibility of all of us to create the needed awareness to transform the food system.

The following actions were highlighted:

- Regulatory organizations need to actively be involved in communication, dissemination of information to support advocacy efforts.
- Use consumer driven advocacy: Often industry responds to public demand or the demands of the consumer. Advocacy efforts could be used to change food consumption preferences by consumers.
- Make consumers aware of the health and nutrition benefits.
- Use evidence and science to advocate to consumers: industry would respond to science by making highly nutritious foods available because that is what consumers prefer. An example was shared about the demand for organic traditional foods in Egypt by "high class" individuals.
- Industry could lead advocacy of organic foods. Avoidance can also be a strong advocacy strategy, e.g., avoid certain foods.
- Re-discovery of lost foods and cooking methods; undiscovered traditional foods ways of cooking that are healthy can be promoted. Recipes with high nutritional value e.g., Quinoa, Fonio and healthy cooking methods could be used as advocacy tools and not only scientific data.
- National agricultural transformation: we need to advocate for countries to link national agricultural transformation, trade policies, food and nutrition security policies to the nutritional needs of the population;
- Because agriculture is so seasonal, there is a need for a type of policy investment that can be made to find ways to either process foods through freeze drying and other types of technology that preserve the nutritional values.
- Need to create awareness by both producers and consumers regarding seasonality of foods. You cannot expect to eat certain products when they are off season.
- Build demand advocacy: building demand within the marketplace- the consumer demand for healthy foods; there can be social marketing with celebrities to promote particular products or types of food. Any food system transformation will involve a certain shift in public perception and demand in certain foods. So more of a higher-level strategy to build demand for healthy sustainable diets that align with some of the policy instruments that might be used to improve what is available in the market.
- If you need Governments to act, you have to speak in the language that the Government understands. Until governments see the food system issues as having a significant positive or negative impact on the economy, they may not act. Food systems issues are economic issues for governments; food systems issues must be health issues. We need to talk about food systems in terms of people, in terms of dollars, in terms of lives lost or saved.
- We need to rationalize, empathize, and humanize the food system conversation/narrative
- Healthy foods are not always

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 6/7

Topic 6. Sustainability of programmes and projects for food system:

Programmes and projects at all levels and sectors along the food systems need to be sustained.

The discussions identified certain solutions that will ensure sustainability;

- Build capacity of local leaders on various actors of the food systems value chain.
- Local experts and community food systems actors should be linked to the state institutions in a way that engages them in various planning and execution of food systems actions. The government, the private sector as well as the academia need to support this process.
- Advocacy for sustainability: Farmers, Civil society, and other food systems actors need to create awareness regarding seasonality of foods. The UN food systems summit dialogues should evolve into a permanent entity/forum or ongoing advocacy that is inclusive (comprising all food systems actors and not just CSOs) to bring voices from food systems toward private and public sectors
- Climate change and sustainability framing - in US and Europe, humans are told they are the cause of climate change, in terms of their excessive consumption behaviors. In Africa, natural disasters/water shortages/stresses/low rainfall/environmental problems affect food systems. Thus, framing plays a role in how food systems have to be reimagined and how data should be collected, because dialogues relevant in one setting may not be relevant in other settings.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 7/7

### Topic 7. Inclusive leadership and networking

There should be a responsible and inclusive leadership so that people at the grassroots are included in policy making and also educated on the existence of these policies.

- Inclusive leadership from government, media, civil society, and public health experts is needed. This should involve the community and the people at the grassroots levels from all sectors of the food system to enhance ownership and sustainability.
- Farmers are often left out in the formulation of policies that affect agriculture, yet they are the major stakeholders.
- Leaders need to network and share ideas to collaborate on projects.
- Communication must be bi-directional, from leaders to stakeholders and the grassroots members.
- Leaders must be attentive and build capacity so the populace can be competent and independent.
- Government leaders should ensure capacity building and knowledge dissemination; community actors can engage in building capacity, e.g., Chiefs can provide storage facilities for farmers, while nutrition champions and policy entrepreneurs need to be supported.
- To monitor food systems transformation in Africa, Africa needs to develop a national or regional index/classification of countries based on their food systems transformation efforts.
- We need a platform for leaders to speak to each other and understand each other.
- For continuity and sustainability, leaders do not have to be political leaders. All Food systems actors can play leadership roles. Leader from where you stand.
- Inaccessibility to land for women and youth are leadership failures: Government policies on land ownership, and use are discriminatory. It would take bold leaders to change this.

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## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There were some points of divergence:

- On the question of who is in charge of collecting data? Two strong opposing views were advanced. One was that Leadership/government is responsible for overall strategy for data collection, data protection, and the financing of it. Governments have to buy into the vision and be held accountable to it. They have to put policies in place across different levels of their countries. They are ultimately responsible. The second view on the contrary indicated that private sector is also responsible for collection of data. Government sector alone cannot do it.
- A participant suggested that a disruptive advocacy (for example non-importation of certain foods) should apply to foods that are produced in or available in African countries. Advocating for this could serve to encourage the consumption of local foods. Overall, the future for Africa is to depend on itself for food supply. Another participant fervently disagreed, indicating that disruptive advocacy is not the solution, but what needs to be advocated for is for countries to link national agricultural transformation, trade policies, food and nutrition security policies to the nutritional needs of the population.
- The tension between the proponents of technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) by farmers and the opponents. The proponents advanced the view that technology will help with data capturing, e.g., AI could link farmers on the ground to food producers and buyers to help them know what is selling and what is not. But the opposing view intimated the use of AI could be very bad especially if not used properly – especially when it is not clear who/what/when/how data should or could be used. Would need to have that information upfront.
- The trade-offs regarding the role celebrities could play to help promote the Food System. There was a suggestion for celebrities to use their influence to promote food system transformation. However, some participants felt involving celebrities may only lead to popularization which is not necessarily transformation.
- Finally, there was the question of why the private sector is not engaging as expected, and yet they have too much data that they cannot even manage. They should be more open in sharing data. However, others noted that the private sector actors are business minded; they are interested in the bottom lines, or their profits and so if engaging will not lead to this why should they? Others felt that was their responsibility to engage and serve not just their board of directors, but their clients- all humans. The participant mooted the idea of decolonialization of data and destabilization of information asymmetries if we need to truly transform our food systems.

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