

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 11 March 2021 13:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Arab Stakeholders Dialogue on Food Systems
CONVENED BY	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO),
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/7080/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon

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

55

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

24 Male

31 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

8 Agriculture/crops

1 Fish and aquaculture

2 Livestock

5 Agro-forestry

2 Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

11 Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

3 Food industry

Financial Services

1 Health care

Nutrition

2 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

20 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 Dialogue was organized according to the set principles of engagement of the summit. Participants were introduced to the summit vision, objectives, and the current status of the region in the introduction. An open discussion followed encouraging all participants to participate in providing their proposals. Four challenges were identified in the context of the Arab and participants proposed "Live" their proposals using the Mural application. Key stakeholders from Arab regional and national organizations, academia, private sector, civil organizations, research institutions, union, federations and others were invited to the dialogue.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Holding as virtual Dialogue necessitated the use of different approaches for engaging participants during the zoom session. Dialogue conveners encouraged active participation by recording the session, making it available for all participants. It also used the "Mural" application which allowed direct input from participants onto the board, allowed to see input from all participants simultaneously and allowed voting to prioritize issues and identify benefiteres and actors for change. Furthermore, many were provided the opportunity to provide input directly from the floor or in the chat box and questions in relation to the action tracks were asked to trigger comprehensive input from all.

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

It is recommended to present the Summit objectives and vision and action tracks with some facts and evidence-based information linked to the action track at the beginning of the session. This may promote further intervention from participants especially if these facts are related to the region/country. Using an application that is visual and allows direct input from participants showed to be efficient in collecting further views and addressing hot issues that may arise such as identifying responsibilities for each game changer proposed and prioritizing issues based on relevance

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

Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, the dialogue was organized as a 90-minute online meeting using the Zoom platform. The dialogue modality allowed for active participation of stakeholders using a combination of tools including an interactive online platform "MURAL" where participants were invited to write their proposals live while broadcasting. Time was allocated for active discussions and interaction. The Arab Stakeholder Dialogue was divided into two parts: Part I presented the objective of the present dialogue, provided background information about the food system summit in general and the three types of anticipated dialogues. A review of the selected five action tracks and main drivers affecting food security within the context of the Arab region were presented. These drivers included conflicts, water scarcity, and climate change. Part II used an interactive online discussion platform MURAL to allow participants to identify game changing solutions. Using "MURAL", participants could review key and relevant facts, discuss and propose actions needed, and identify actors responsible for implementing these actions in each of the areas of interventions selected. As a result, Game changers actions were proposed on each of the four identified issues related to the action tracks namely Transitioning to Healthy Food, Advancing Equitable Livelihoods, Optimizing Sustainable Production, and Responding to Risks and Hazards. Afterwards, participants voted to identify the most relevant and impactful action from the proposed list and then identify the stakeholders concerned with implementing proposed and immediate beneficiaries. Following, time was allocated for oral discussions in relation to the actions.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The dialogue aimed at addressing four priority issues were identified as most relevant to the Arab Region namely: Transitioning to Healthy Food, Advancing Equitable Livelihoods, Optimizing Sustainable Production, and Responding to Risks and Hazards. For each priority issue, key challenges and facts in the region were identified and game changing actions were proposed including actors and beneficiaries.

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

The game changing actions identified across each of the four issues that were discussed and voted upon as priority based on experiences.

(a) Transitioning to Healthy Food

1. Provide incentives for healthy consumption and buying healthy food
2. Use innovative methods for food production (research - preproduction) (Most voted on)
3. Enhance marketing strategies (Identification of food groups for vulnerable groups)
4. Promote and establishing decentralized local markets, in partnership with small farmers, to ensure access to healthy food in light of crises
5. Train young men and women to be involved in sustainable land and agriculture.
6. Organize workshops on the benefits of organic farming and limiting use of chemicals
7. Promote incubators to increase technical expertise and scientific information
8. Increase awareness on post-harvest losses
9. Raise awareness on nutrition and promote the education on nutrition
10. Harmonize regulations within the region to improve exchange of commodities (2nd most voted on)
11. Provide a special platform for marketing sustainable agriculture products (3rd most voted on)
12. Consider access to healthy food a basic right whereby states need to ensure safe and affordable access to healthy food
13. Enhance coordination with all stakeholders to focus efforts on improving situation

(b) Advancing Equitable Livelihoods:

1. Enhance accessibility of farmers to technology mainly small farmers (most voted on)
2. Support and promote agro-processing in rural areas
3. Invest in solar energy and renewable energies especially in rural areas (2nd most voted on)
4. Increase awareness on the role of women in food systems and agriculture sector
5. Raise awareness on water consumption challenges by responsible ministries
6. Enforce land registration systems to help financial access (3rd most voted on)
7. Protect local food systems from dumping
8. Promote entrepreneurship and innovation for youth and women to improve job creation, increase income and improving livelihood in rural areas
9. Enhance land management systems that protect access to land
10. Promote use of efficient water management systems that are accessible to small farmers

(c) Optimizing Sustainable Production

1. Increase budget (public and private) provided for research on agriculture production
2. Enhance reliance on agricultural and industrial incubators
3. Invest in agricultural extension programs and staff
4. Better assess and understand limitations of existing natural resources to better respond to these challenges
5. Encourage innovation in the field of green biotech crops
6. Study potential of transforming desert plants to edible foods
7. Protect agricultural lands and reviewing national policies for land use
8. Support agriculture and ecology and limiting the use of chemicals
9. Promote agricultural research and improve access of producers to it
10. Increase interest in agricultural research and extension
11. Use of on modern technologies in irrigation to conserve water resources
12. The use of modern technologies in agriculture, water harvesting, and supplementary irrigation are important factors in sustainable production
13. Use of drought resistant crops in pilots and scaling up its use in arid areas
14. Awareness and capacity building in the use of modern and appropriate technologies

(d) Responding to Risks

1. Need for more agricultural insurance institutions
2. Improve knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences between governments and organizations
3. Adopt the triple nexus approach (Humanitarian/ Development/ Peace- HDP) in a participative manner during crisis contexts
4. Resolve the underlying causes of vulnerability to risks and drivers of crises
5. Provide social safety nets and risk prevention mechanisms
6. Adopt emergency policies, plans, and programs
7. Enhance risk-based decision making among populations
8. Enhancing capacities to cope with risks and Hazards as during these times challenges should be faced together and everyone should contribute
9. Engage women in agriculture and food production

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

- Access to healthy and sufficient food at all time is a right and requires intervention from governments. Promoting and establishing decentralized local markets, in partnership with small farmers, enables the access to healthy food in times of crisis.
- Importance of role of the national private sector as it has a direct impact on the local markets. Having the private sector more involved in enhancing food security to enhance balancing between expectation and reality.
- Importance of Transfer of technology importance to empower small and to better empower entrepreneurs to come up with new initiatives, piloting them, recording their work modality and benefits so that farmers are encouraged to scale them up.
- Collaboration and cooperation between all stakeholders. Governments are the primary stakeholders to many of the actions related to enhancing productivity as any sustainable production process requires relevant policies and providing the needed infrastructure that enables stakeholder make use of needed technologies for sustainable production processes.
- Implementation of National emergency plans however due to instability in the region these plans are not being implemented. Also, a need for enhancing national reserves as they should be distributed across the country and are not supposed to be stored only in one area to reduce risks.
- Need to link between humanitarian response, sustainable production in times of conflict. Managing the root causes of vulnerabilities and investing in stopping conflicts and wars based on human rights are primordial. Humanitarian aid needs to be focused and promote locate food systems and that governments are required to make sure that the aid received considers national priorities that protect the most vulnerable people.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The participants were knowledgeable of the main challenges in the region and stressed on the need to have urgent action and implementation.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Arab Stakeholders Dialogue on Food Systems**
<https://www.unescwa.org/Arab-Stakeholders-Dialogue-Food-Systems>