

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 21 April 2021 08:30 GMT +03:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Reconstructing our food systems
CONVENED BY	Ms Tiina Huvio, Convenor, Programme Director at Food and Forest Development Finland
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/7431/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Finland

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

70

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

2

19-30

48

31-50

20

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

22 Male

48 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

2 Agriculture/crops

2 Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

8 Agro-forestry

4 Environment and ecology

3 Trade and commerce

10 Education

2 Communication

Food processing

1 Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

1 Health care

Nutrition

7 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

32 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

3 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

36 Local Non-Governmental Organization

3 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

13 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

14 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

1 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?

As we organized the dialogue, we recognized the urgency of actions and wanted to come up with solutions that could be implemented within a reasonable time frame and we recognize that farmers in developing countries need our help now due to climate change and other challenges. The sooner we can shift to more sustainable practices globally, the sooner we will start to see positive changes and effects. We commit to the Summit and hope that our outcomes will be useful in the Summit. We are respectful and with our own work strive to improve health and well-being of individuals. We also recognize the complexity of food systems and that's why we wish to continue the discussions throughout the year and next year. We embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity as we invited participants from different fields and different backgrounds to our Dialogue. We will continue with this approach in our future webinars and discussions in order to gain a more diverse and wide perspective on the food systems. We mentioned that the outcomes of our Dialogue are part of the Food System Summit and that our outcomes will be sent to the FSSD. We built trust by opening the event to anyone who is interested in the topic and by sharing the group discussion outcomes at the end of the webinar. We also shared a summary of the webinar with all the participants and also on our website.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue participants understand the urgency with our actions and want to be part of the solution. Participants were from different industries and fields representing a wide range of stakeholders. This enabled lively discussions regarding each Action Track and took into account a variety of perspectives. The Dialogue facilitators were chosen based on their facilitator experience and their knowledge of each topic. This enhanced participants' trust and increased their participation in the discussions. Each participant was respectful of other people's comments and other cultures. Complexity of the food systems was recognized in group discussions as well as in the opening and closing speeches. Many participants and speakers emphasized that there's no easy solution for well-functioning food systems globally but with awareness and discussion, we can start to form solutions to the complex issues.

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

When planning who to invite to the Dialogue, include a diverse pool of participants from different sectors, industries and backgrounds. This will make the event and the discussions more inclusive and interesting. Recognize the complexity of food systems during the Dialogue but bring awareness to the urgency of meaningful actions. Even though, finding solutions to well-functioning food systems require much discussion, planning and cooperation globally, actions should be planned urgently so that steps can be taken towards food security. Bring participants' awareness to this and ask participants to give suggestions and advice on actions that can be implemented swiftly.

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 dialogue was a comprehensive exploration of food systems covering the five Action Tracks. The focus was on the developing countries and the dialogue studied how the Finnish actors could support partners in South in the transition process of food systems. The event was used to bring awareness on the challenges that food systems in developing countries face, how diverse the situation can be, and to identify game changing ideas.

The dialogue complemented the Finnish national dialogue, which was held in the beginning of April and the national convener facilitated the organization of the event. Among the participants, we had representatives of NGOs, ministries, private sector, researchers but also journalists. FFD made an effort to invite people who have practical experience from the field and having worked with smallholders in the south, to ensure that the debate could be taken from the global figures to grassroots level issues.

In a developed country like Finland, many people don't think about where their food comes from, what kind of challenges farmers, especially, in developing countries face and how our consumption affects food systems. It is easy to go to the supermarket and buy any type of food at any time of the year. Dynamics, risk levels and what it can mean to a household or even to a country, is not well understood. However, farmers in developing countries are on the forefront of challenges caused by climate change. Whether we talk about having access to food or to being able to produce enough food, are two sides of a coin. While not taking a stand on the need for national food sovereignty, both the possibility to look for solutions for enhancing purchasing power to buy food or to enhance productivity allowing farmers to provide for themselves, were debated.

While the debate on food systems in Finland is strongly focused on dietary choices and on the linkages between the consumption in Finland its consequences, in the south the questions are very different. Food waste happens at the different stage of the value chain, mainly in field and in storages. Animals are not only kept for meat or dairy but they have many other functions within a household.

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
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- Women & Youth Empowerment
- Policy
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- Governance
- Trade-offs
- Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

More discussion is needed in order to create viable solutions for the challenging topic. FFD will host more webinars related to food systems to continue the discussion. Topics will be more focused and will concentrate on a specific field such as nature positive food production or the role of forests in food production.

Main findings of this webinar include the following: (1) Cultural methods and norms should be respected and used as a foundation when looking for a transition in food systems. (2) The role of schools can be pivotal in providing nutritious meals to children but also educating children on sustainable food production and systems. (3) Trade and legal policies should support sustainable and ecological production. (4) Supermarkets and retailers could have a strong role in helping consumers to make sustainable consumption decisions, but they need to be supported by other actors and lean on predictable rules. (5) If we want lasting change, the process needs to start at the grassroot level and be gradual to be effective. (6) Local and nature positive production should be favored but some products will still need to be imported because it's impossible to produce everything locally and export revenues are important for many countries. (7) The proportion of plants in diet needs to be promoted but this doesn't exclude animal husbandry which has multiple roles for many households. (8) Smallholders should get organized to have more support, more resilience and have a stronger position in food systems. (9) Co-operation between actors within food systems (research institutions, companies, farmers, government) should be increased to build practical solutions. (10) Increasing women's resilience via transformative approaches that strengthen women's confidence, knowledge and skill, relations and improve their rights to earn livelihoods (11) Youth's engagement in agriculture should be promoted via a decent income and increased access to technology, digital tools and mechanization to ensure decent income.

In particular, the webinar stressed the need to support locally tailored solutions which are based on the understanding of local context, supported and promoted by actors which have organized themselves, while taking into account the needs of vulnerable groups or groups with special needs such a women and youth.

Many important aspects came to light through group discussions and they highlighted the complexity of global food systems.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

The discussion was organized through the following questions: (1) How to ensure access for all to sustainably produced food? (2) How to ensure that everyone can afford (sustainably) produced food? (3) What is the role of development / humanitarian work now and in the future?

As the discussion started, the group pointed out that in order to avoid confusion or misunderstandings, it's important to clarify the terms: food security vs food safety.

Even though we have a wide array of information regarding nutritious food, problems regarding access to nutritious food still exist and need to be identified. Lack of nutritious food may be caused by poor soil that does not contain important minerals or iodine. Along the same lines, vitamin deficiencies can be caused by poor diet. Within households, the level of food security can vary, which is a reminder that the nutritious needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as pregnant women, children and the sick, should be focused on. They are often neglected due to their inferior position in society, lack of influence and lack of knowledge.

Understanding local traditions is important as food is linked to culture. These traditions should be valued and their continuation should be strengthened while adjusting for towards more sustainable food systems. Because children spend a lot of time at school, school meals are an essential part of strengthening children's nutrition. In addition, role of the school, for example through home economics and school gardens, can affect the food security of the whole household as children learn how to grow crops and understand the importance of a healthy and nutritious diet.

Advice and extension should be provided to everyone on safe and nutritious food. Training of trainers, for example through universities or organizations, can play a key role in sharing knowledge and best practices. The group called for a stronger focus of development policy on supporting food security and related interdisciplinary research. Support should be directed towards long term social safety nets instead of short-term humanitarian aid. NGOs in developed countries should use their direct connections with communities in developing countries to look for viable solutions together.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

The discussion started with the question on how to find balance between safe and nutritious food and environmental planetary capacity. The group discussed how enough protein can be secured in diets, especially in poorer countries, where diets are more plant-based. Increasing vegetables in diets might be easier and more accepted as a narrative than requesting people to reduce meat. Both malnourishment and obesity need action.

Discussion continued and centered around who should be kept accountable for our consumption – consumers or legislation? It was felt that consumers shouldn't solely be accountable for sustainable consumption. Trade, food industry and legal policies should also play a role in ensuring more sustainable consumption patterns. This would help consumers with their consumption decisions and ensure that they can choose food that has been produced in a sustainable and ecological way.

Politics, for example EU's deforestation legislation, could play a role in mitigating negative effects of consumption. On the other hand, it is challenging to filter out simple, comparable metrics from a complex food system when forming a basis for consumer consumption decisions. Of all the products that cause deforestation, EU's share is 36%. On the other hand, it is estimated that the consumption in the EU is responsible for around 10% of tropical deforestation.

Food losses occur in different parts of the food system in different parts of the world. Smooth logistics and market connections are in a key role in reducing food waste in the northern hemisphere and in the south. Harvesting, handling and storage improvements are needed, especially in the south, to reduce losses. Poverty and food insecurity are closely linked.

The group also discussed the role of culture and farm animals in different countries. Culture impacts food and consumption decisions. Farm animals have an important role, for example in East-Africa where they are financial safety nets. Keeping small farm animals is important especially for women in terms of supporting their economic independence and domestic food safety net. It is important to note that measures should be implemented to promote sustainable and climate positive animal husbandry practices.

In addition, the group discussed how to increase knowledge and communication at the grassroots level. In order to engage farmers in sustainability, the change process must be subtle. Gradual processes which advance by small steps carry further than major changes introduced suddenly. Improving production is central in mitigating deforestation. This should be achieved without impoverishing the soil.

Lastly, the growing global population is straining food systems. Population growth should be slowed down by educating women and girls and increasing awareness of family planning and contraception methods.

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KEYWORDS

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

The group structured its discussion into the following topics: (1) A linked global food system, (2) Food production and producers in the global south, (3) The need for knowledge, skills and education, (4) Consumers and international trade.

The group noted that local production is generally more sustainable than importing products but it is difficult to produce everything locally. Some crops and food items will still need to be imported due to local conditions not being suitable for some crops. It has to be borne in mind that local production doesn't always equal sustainability and in many countries it has led to soil impoverishment. Nevertheless, local production and food systems have a key role in many regions. Effects of developed countries' consumption in developing countries were recognized and the group thought about how we can ensure global environmental sustainability and food safety.

One should pay attention to what is produced and how it is produced in order to save natural resources and species. For example, could new species replace rice, and could animal protein be replaced with plant-based protein? Encouragement towards agroecological and other environmentally friendly methods should be increased in order to reduce environmental damage. These are often location-based and require strong know-how to invest in. As any change in methodology is a potential risk for the farmer, the change processes must be supported and de-risked for sustained transition to take place.

It's important to increase know-how and peer support between north and south as well as between southern partners. Practical advice and involving farmers in trialing new methods are essential in the change process. The key role of women as food producers in the south is to be highlighted and their training and extension is to be increased. Whereas women tend to produce crops for local consumption, men are more interested in growing highly profitable vegetables. Women tend to make decisions on what kind of food a family eats (local or imported) and that's why it would be important to educate especially women on sustainable production methods and healthy nutrition.

Increasing communication and involving farmers globally in discussions would be important in achieving changes. Education and communication regarding food systems should also be increased in developed countries so that consumers are aware of food related issues.

Sustainable production is linked to many other development questions and inequality: women's status, land ownership and resource availability. As previously stated, reducing inequality and poverty as well as changing food systems to become more climate resilient are part of the same process.

The group suggested that global trade and value chains should support nature-friendly production. The environmental impact of a product/food item should be reflected on its price.

At the global level, a shift to a more plant-based diet should be encouraged and the Western diet should shift towards more environmentally friendly and sustainable food so that food security could be achieved elsewhere. This, however, doesn't exclude animal production because it has an important and diverse role in the south.

The group believes that Fairtrade has managed to support local, social sustainability and thus they were wondering if similar systems would have the potential to support environmental sustainability as well?

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

The group identified many challenges in the present food systems including: i) challenges for smallholders to develop their practices due to lack of knowledge, services, small plots and women's position; b) lack of support in food chains such as quality of inputs, lack of processing, storages, energy solutions; c) weakness of governments to support the sector through legislation and law enforcement; and d) weakness of private sector actors to provide services and finance. Especially in the south, legislation, regulations and their enforcement do not support the system and even less its transition towards enhanced sustainability. Corruption hampers development and transition to a better functioning food systems. Weak supply chains, low level of expertise, low productivity, production and product quality, lack of inputs and low level of technology also hinder development. Smallholders need development training, advise, innovation, finance and market information services.

Many agricultural projects focus on farmers and their production and productivity. Without processing industry and more developed markets, improving production and quality doesn't change the system. Action needs to be taken on the systems as a whole and competence development is necessary on all levels. It's important to increase jobs opportunities in the whole food system, not just in farming. Project support that progresses in 3-5-year cycles doesn't give enough support for long-term change.

Smallholders should organize themselves, for example into cooperatives, to have a united voice, support each other and gain a stronger position in the food chain. Women should be given special consideration and preconditions to strengthen their livelihoods. However, cooperatives are not always equal or inclusive and their position may depend on political actors.

As a solution, the group proposed cooperation among food system actors (research institutions, companies, farmers, government institution) to resolve prevailing and concrete challenges in a process where every actor brings in their own expertise and point of view. Legislation and global regulation aiming for private sector due diligence will enhance decent livelihood possibilities and wellbeing of the ecosystems in the global south. Multinational enterprises could have a role in solving the problem. Funding was proposed to enable spontaneous cooperation aiming at product development necessary for a stronger market position, and to contribute to the long-term development process of smallholders.

The main suggestions are summarized below:

- Strengthen smallholders' formation into groups and organizations that support resilience of all the members equally.
- Support transformative approaches that strengthen women's confidence, knowledge and skills, relations and transform structures that withhold gender-based discrimination and improve their rights to earn livelihood.
- Long term cooperation among actors within food systems (research institutions, companies, farmers, government) to improve quality and productivity of farming, access to productive inputs, product development and food safety, and to promote industrialization.
- Legislation and global policies based on measurable outcomes. Big enterprises like MNEs could be involved also through mandatory due diligence legislation
- Financing directed to cooperation and local product development as well as to the development process of smallholders.
- Finance instruments that advance practical problem solving, development and enable long-term multi-actor cooperation

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

The group started the discussion on the different dimensions of resilience (social, economic, infrastructure, natural resources and human skills). Cooperatives were seen as promoters of equality, know-how and extension. They also enhance stability and participation increases wellbeing.

The role of women and youth was raised as an important factor in increasing resilience. Women need to be informed about their rights and their resilience needs to be increased. In order to attract young people to the food sector, a decent income and livelihood should be secured. Youth engagement could be enhanced through digitalization and options in food system providing for decent income.

The group also considered efficiency and small-scale production as a means for more resilient production but there's not enough land for everyone. Small-scale production is easier to control and divides the risk and reward among a larger pool of producers. Diversification was seen important for resilience, but it was noted that market demand is more specialized and focuses on single products.

Currently only 1.7% of climate financing reaches smallholders and thus the group suggested that more climate financing should trickle to the producer level. If financing was increased on the producer level, smallholders' and food systems' resilience would increase. Farmers could come up with better solutions against the effects of climate change and increase food security.

Development of better food storage methods and facilities was mentioned as a way to avoid food spoilage and to reduce waste. If food could be stored for a longer period, it would allow for better food security and less vulnerability to climate related hazards.

The group also discussed the role of energy and water and their key position for resilience. It's important to understand the different actors and their dynamics. Aspects such as land ownership, collateral land use, local solutions, and the power of big companies surfaced as factors that should be taken into consideration. Sustainable solutions need to be based on local solutions and local ownership.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The role of farm animals and diets brought up diverse views. Whereas one group promoted a plant-based diet, another group brought up the varying roles of farm animals in different countries. Whereas in developed countries, farm animals are often seen as meat (beef, pork, chicken) or providers of food such as milk or eggs, in Eastern Africa cattle are seen more as pets or financial safety nets. Therefore, reducing cattle in cultures and countries where they represent more than meat, may be difficult. Nevertheless, even if cattle and other farm animals play different roles in different cultures, it would be good to seek sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions to keeping cattle and other farm animals. Practical solutions could be formed when exchanging ideas with the farmers on the grassroot level in developing countries.

Another discussion was on how nature-based production methods should be defined, by whom and which actors should be involved in this process. This part of the dialogue will be continued later.

Finally, there was some debate on what kind of legislation for due diligence processes is relevant and how this system could be built so that it would provide comparable and verifiable information without becoming too expensive. There was a fear that a transparent and verified system would become too pricey and the costs and extra work would be carried by smallholders.

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