

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Tuesday, 18 May 2021 15:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Mountains and sustainable food systems – Drivers of sustainable development
CONVENED BY	Rosalaura Romeo, Mountain Partnership Secretariat, FAO
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/9095/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	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

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18	12	19-30	73	31-50	32	51-65	3	66-80	80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

72	Male	48	Female		Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

7	Agriculture/crops	8	Education	2	Health care
1	Fish and aquaculture	3	Communication		Nutrition
6	Livestock	2	Food processing	7	National or local government
9	Agro-forestry	3	Food retail, markets		Utilities
32	Environment and ecology	1	Food industry	1	Industrial
	Trade and commerce		Financial Services	38	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

5	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
1	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
5	Small-scale farmer	13	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer	1	Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer	28	United Nations
15	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
17	International Non-Governmental Organization	1	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
6	Indigenous People		Consumer group
19	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The 8 breakout rooms ensured active participation by all participants and created a space for free expression of ideas and perspectives. The participant assessment criteria ensured diversity among the group, taking into consideration the following: Areas of Expertise, Stakeholder group, Organization, Country, Gender and Age Group.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Our aim was to have a balanced discussion where everybody has a say. Each facilitator from the breakout rooms created a safe space where everyone could confidentially express their opinion, which fostered a fruitful discussion amongst participants from diverse areas of expertise, sectors, stakeholder groups and more.

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

Any advice to future or fellow Dialogue Conveners would be to ensure diversity across the participants within the breakout rooms during the discussion session. Be sure to leave at least one hour, and more if possible, for discussion about sustainable food systems.

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

This dialogue, organized by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, aimed to show the specificity of mountain food systems as well as generate innovative and diverse solutions for more sustainable mountain food systems – solutions that could be useful for shaping more sustainable food systems worldwide. The major focus was the exploration of what would ideal sustainable mountain food systems look like in 10 years. Participants discussed the features that make mountain food systems sustainable or unsustainable and the relevance of some of the solutions proposed under Action Track 3 and 4, as well as some cross cutting issues particularly relevant for mountain people and environments, such as gender, innovation and technology.

The only UN alliance that promotes the sustainable development of mountain areas and works towards building the resilience of mountain peoples worldwide, the Mountain Partnership counts more than 400 members among governments, intergovernmental organizations and major groups (e.g. civil society, NGOs and the private sector).

Mountains cover more than one-quarter of the Earth's land surface and are home to 1.1 billion people, almost 15 percent of the world's population. More than 90 percent of the world's mountain dwellers live in developing countries, including 648 million people in rural areas, where a vast majority live below the poverty line and one out of two people faces the threat of food insecurity.

This dialogue aimed to draw attention to:

1. the disproportionately high level of food insecure people living in mountain areas;
2. sustainable food systems' role as drivers of mountain development due to their potential for small- and medium-sized enterprises, and their links with tourism and niche markets;
3. the globally relevant ecosystem services and goods provided by mountains, such as water provision and regulation, erosion control and disaster risk reduction as well as biodiversity and agrobiodiversity conservation; and
4. the need to discuss inclusive policies and governance systems in mountains.

The dialogue has been an opportunity for Mountain Partnership members and relevant stakeholders to raise their voices about the relevance of developing more sustainable food systems in mountains during the consultation process. leading to the Summit and to propose solutions to achieve these goals.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
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MAIN FINDINGS

Mountain ecosystems are globally relevant for sustainable food systems. Mountain food systems are extremely diverse, both culturally and biologically. Mountain areas are highly vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards. Mountain people are custodians and managers of this high diversity and ensure the provision of ecosystem services to the lowlands, such as water regulation. Women in mountains are holders of agroecological knowledge and agrobiodiversity conservation for food systems and are often the heads of households, but in certain areas lack access to basic services such as credit and training.

The international community and policy makers need to recognize mountains as vulnerable ecosystems. Mountains' role in supporting sustainable food systems is still neglected and must be acknowledged.

Mountain peoples have shaped mountain landscapes and food systems over centuries, but this equilibrium is being destabilized. There is a trend towards a simplification of mountain food systems, with a preference towards commercial and fast-growing crops. Many varieties are disappearing, not only leading to biodiversity loss, but also causing a shift toward unbalanced diets due to the abandonment of traditional diets.

Mountain food systems are often for self-consumption and are less dependent on external inputs. Landholding is small and most practices are traditional with low chemical inputs and not mechanized. Traditional crops have much lower yields than their lowland counterparts do, and there is a lack of research on how to sustainably improve production. Intensive production systems are not feasible or sustainable in mountain ecosystems and should be avoided. High quality, highly biodiverse and low-impact products should be given priority.

Pastoralism is a key economic activity in mountains, and access to pastures is important. Policies are needed to secure pastoralists' rights to pastures and migration routes.

In some mountain areas, the population growth has passed the carrying capacity threshold while in others the issues of outmigration are causing a serious depopulation with irreversible loss of culture and knowledge.

The reduced access to services and education as well as the need to create alternative livelihood options in mountains need to be taken into consideration to increase income generation activities and youth engagement. Diversification of activities in the field and on the farm is crucial for building the resilience of mountain people's livelihoods, and agroecological approaches can help at different scales.

Mountain products are often high quality and low impact and have a potential to lift mountain people out of poverty. Most mountain products are climate resilient and have high nutritional value, but they are often neglected as policies do not support their production. Distorted and inequitable value chains are a serious problem for mountain producers. Public policies have a role in incentivizing direct investments to support private action and guaranteeing access to markets through adequate infrastructures. Public sector can have an important role in raising awareness as well as promoting consumers' understanding of the value, culture and quality behind each product.

Mountain agriculture needs participatory innovations to address the disconnect between producers, industries and consumers. Technology can be key in connecting mountains and markets as well as connecting communities in mountains. The organization of farmers through cooperatives and different associations is crucial to strengthen value chains, ensure fair compensation and increase mountain producers' voices in the political debate. Collective marketing and product aggregation are necessary to support mountain value chains.

Policies, technologies and innovations in agriculture have largely been designed for men and lowlands. They need to be tailored to mountain environments and people, including women and youth. The narrative, representation, visibility (i.e. through data) and role of women is essential for their agency and access to resources. Social protection is essential and should be considered in view of the frequent occurrence of disasters and risks in mountains.

The role of mountain communities, institutions and the Mountain Partnership is to:

- Develop programmes that focus on watershed management creating alternative livelihood opportunities for mountain communities.
- Strengthen and maintain cultural diversity and identity, documenting indigenous knowledge.
- Promote capacity building as a coping mechanism for indigenous communities and women in mountain areas.
- Ensure that mountain people have the same access to services and infrastructures as lowland people and that their human rights are respected.
- Preserve the local breeds that pastoralists rely on.
- Develop indigenous seed banks within communities, possibly with the help of governments.
- Compile a database on climate-resilient mountain crops and try to influence the use and adoption of these crops.
- Promote mountain products and raise awareness of their value.
- Identify and map biodiversity hotspots.
- Promote cooperation between institutions.
- Build local agribusinesses.
- Conduct regional consultations that include mountain communities to give mountain people the opportunity to express their own desired development trajectories.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

Action Track 3, Action Areas PROTECT, MANAGE AND RESTORE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS:

- Develop and support mountain-specific research and innovation.
- Mainstream mountain crops and livestock in policies and research to protect traditional and indigenous food systems including neglected crops and native livestock, local knowledge and practices.
- Set up participatory research and innovation mechanisms, as well as multi-stakeholder incentive-based mechanisms. Support the alignment of mountain food systems with national policies, and the alignment of national policies with local potential and farmers' priorities, addressing land rights and tenure issues.
- Map agroecological potential in mountains, and establish mountain-specific crop and livestock databases, to promote understanding of the ecosystem services they provide to upstream and downstream communities, to address trade-offs and promote opportunities for mountains in regional and global fora.
- Promote climate services and early warning systems as key tools to mitigate degradation of natural resources in mountains and better respond to climate change impacts.
- Include the impacts of climate change on mountains in policy, and create opportunities for climate resilient crops and for mountain-specific technology.
- Promote the leadership of local people as a strategy to restore degraded ecosystems by integrating them in policy-making processes and promoting cooperative work to achieve better results and negotiation prices and increased resilience.
- Focus on alternative income sources and the natural diversity of mountain ecosystems.
- Bring youth back into mountains and restore degraded ecosystems by creating enabling economic conditions using traditional knowledge provided by older generations and farmers
- Study and document the traditional knowledge of mountain communities. Promote the engagement of a broader set of actors.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Action Track 4, Action Areas FAIR AND INCLUSIVE VALUE CHAINS AND LOCAL MARKETS:

- Promote capacity development to contrast distorted, unequitable value chains, bringing education and training on production, technologies, processing, commercialization and certification to remote areas.
- Support agrobiodiversity to reduce risk and maintain genetic diversity at field level; income diversified livelihoods through off-farm activities, agrotourism, heritage-based artisanal products, and nonagricultural products at the farm level; recognition of and payment for ecosystems services at landscape level.
- Develop public-private partnership to promote and implement necessary policies, investments and incentives on mountain areas at national and regional level, focusing on specific sectors such as processing and food loss reduction.
- Market mountain food as “smart food” due to their not depending on intensive and harmful agricultural inputs.
- Increase consumers' awareness and understanding of the importance of mountain products through narrative labels, traditional production certification and organic certification, moving from the “commodity” approach to products with a face, story and heritage.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Cross-cutting issues TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION and GENDER:

- Tailor technology and innovations in mountain food systems to all people, including women and youth, and develop the capacity of local people on best agricultural practices in mountains.
- Promote participatory approaches to develop technology and innovations that accommodate traditional and indigenous food culture and knowledge.
- Support the engagement of Mountain Partnership members, and facilitate their linkages to decision-making structures.
- Ensure inclusivity, equality and equity in all processes, decision-making and representation.
- Examine opportunities to build women's capacity on all levels, recognizing women as holders of agroecological knowledge and agrobiodiversity conservation for mountain food systems.
- Develop solutions that take the specific, local context (including trade-offs) into account, and acknowledge the diversity in mountain regions.
- Improve social protection in mountains. Facilitate women's access to insurance and health services.
- Build the capacity of elected women members of local councils in mountainous regions to protect natural resources.
- Promote the concepts of "justice" (i.e. social and environmental) and solidarity (i.e. lowlands-highlands, taxation, redistribution of economic wealth).

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

When discussing food systems in mountains, participants held different opinions on:

- Economic sustainability of mountain food systems: Some saw the high costs of agricultural production in mountain as unsustainable. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions, and an approach that can work in one mountain environment will not necessarily work in all contexts. For example, using tourism as a tool for improving livelihoods was viewed by some as potentially contributing to the dispossession and marginalization of pastoralists and benefitting only the local elite and/or external stakeholders.
- Market development: Developing markets does not automatically mean that the most vulnerable will benefit, and it can compromise authenticity and diversity.
- Outmigration: There was not agreement on whether outmigration should be opposed or organized and structured, as – for example – from a young mountain farmer’s perspective, migrating could be the best option.
- Increasing access to technology: There is uncertainty whether the introduction of technology is compatible with maintaining traditional values and cultures, and whether this is feasible in rural mountain areas where all young people have left. Traditional knowledge is not static and not necessarily manifesting the same way in young people, who are intermittently migrating to cities and collecting other types of knowledge. Technologies and infrastructural developments may also not be coherent with local needs. For example, afforestation in mountains with drones spreading one species could be in conflict with local biodiversity needs.
- Power relations: There are power dynamics within mountain communities as well as between the highlands and plains that cannot be ignored. Social norms, access and infrastructures need to be worked on.
- Social protection for mountain women: The issue of social protection and gender equality is locality and context specific. There cannot be a blanket approach to addressing access to resources, women’s agency, decision-making regarding the use resources, and creating advantageous economic opportunities.
- Issue of social justice: Mountain people have the right to decide their own development trajectory. It is necessary to give voice to mountain people so that they can express their idea of development. This can create divergences, for example, with how mountain indigenous food systems could change: will they have a market driven trajectory, or will other elements (conservation of identity, cultural-based decisions, etc.) be considered?

Conflicts among stakeholders and conflicting interests

Conflicts of interest between institutions: Ministry of Environment vs. Ministry of Agriculture, vs mining rights etc.

Research institutions often focus on national priority crops, which are in conflict with traditional crops. At local level, there is more research on indigenous local products. In some mountain areas, private sectors are coming out with product diversification, which conflicts with the main crops being promoted by the public sector.

Conflicts also exist between policy makers and local farmers. Mountain people can be considered a burden to governments because it is expensive to support them. Mountain people and ecosystems, however, should be viewed as a positive value. If mountain farmers are given the necessary tools, they could scale up their agriculture production.

The challenge is to create a multi-stakeholder platform including all stakeholders to ensure that all interests are represented and discussed together to identify how can they complement each other.

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KEYWORDS

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✓	Innovation		Data & Evidence
	Human rights		Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Highlighting sustainable food systems in mountains for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 - Infosheet**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Mountain-Partnership-Infosheet-2021.pdf>
- **Including mountains in the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Mountain-Partnership-Biodiversity-Policy-Note.pdf>

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Vulnerability of mountain peoples to food insecurity: Updated data and analysis of drivers**
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb2409en>
- **Mountain farming is family farming**
<http://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/273812/>
- **Mountain agriculture: Opportunities for harnessing Zero Hunger in Asia**
<http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/publications/publication-detail/en/c/1204781/>