

# The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit

## Outline of the Programme for Food Systems Summit Dialogues convened by UN Member States



### Introduction

In the run-up to the UN Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit 2021, it is expected that many UN Member States will focus on how their national food systems can, in the coming decade, align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a core component of the Summit process, each Member State is invited to shape a national pathway towards sustainable food systems. This implies an approach to food systems that reflects connections with all the SDGs and pays special attention to people who might otherwise be left behind.

To support Member States in developing their national pathways towards sustainable food systems in the coming months, they are encouraged to initiate **multi-stakeholder Food Systems Summit Dialogues**. These Dialogues will take place in three stages, within different sub-national settings as well as nationally. The Dialogues will be open to participants from all stakeholder groups with an interest in the relationships between people, food and the planet and who are involved in national food systems. Dialogue participants agree to work together in ways that reflect the principles of engagement in the Summit. It will not just be group leaders in the dialogues: the leaders will invite individuals from within their groups (especially those who are younger or under-represented) to become involved.

Dialogue participants will explore options for contributing to the national pathways for sustainable food systems. If individual stakeholders who want to have their say are unable to take part in their Member State Dialogues programme, they may be able to participate in Independently organized Dialogues. Given the impact of COVID-19 on gatherings, arrangements are being made for the dialogues to be run virtually where conditions permit. This limits the numbers of people who can be involved and may exclude those in isolated locations or with limited resources.

### Expected benefits of participating in the Dialogues

Member State Dialogues will enable national governments to engage in the issues of constructing sustainable food systems in their totality. First, the Dialogues will contribute to national efforts for sustainable food systems by 2030. Second, the Dialogues will be an opportunity for exploring propositions from the different Summit workstreams (especially the independent Scientific Group and the Action Tracks) within the national context. Third, during the Dialogues, participants that represent different stakeholder groups will work out how they intend to contribute to the sustainability of national food systems and, ideally, make commitments for which they are accountable. The Dialogues are taking place at a time when COVID-19 outbreaks are revealing multiple vulnerabilities and fragilities in food systems.

### Stage 1 of the Member State Dialogues – Initiating national engagement in the Summit

The *purpose of stage 1* of the Member State Dialogues is to initiate an inclusive process through which different groups of stakeholders start to identify the aspects of food systems that need to change. They are encouraged to do this from multiple perspectives, going beyond the positions that they, and others within their stakeholder groups, usually hold.

*During stage 1 Dialogues* the leaders of national stakeholder groups start to explore options for national food systems to be inclusive, sustainable, and resilient by 2030. They are identifying emerging issues on which there is consensus as well as those where major disagreements exist. They look across action tracks and levers of change of the Summit process, as these jointly comprise holistic aspects of a food system. The feedback from this first stage of Member State Dialogues will summarize what came out of stage 1 and indicate areas that the stakeholder group leaders expect

to explore more deeply in the second stage of the Dialogues. All Official Feedback will be posted publicly on the Dialogues Gateway website.

*By the end of stage 1*, stakeholders are fully aware of existing national plans for sustainable food systems. They have started analyzing the current state of national food systems, including their purpose, the ways in which they function, and their potential (as well as their vulnerabilities). They are all focusing on the pathway through which national food systems will align with the SDGs by 2030.

## **Stage 2 – Extensive explorations everywhere**

The *purpose of stage 2* of the Member State Dialogues is to create an opportunity for engagement and interconnection among an even broader set of stakeholders through multiple Dialogues first sub-nationally and then at the national level. They explore their food systems from a wide variety of perspectives, identifying promising options and considering ways in which different groups of stakeholders can advance them together as contributions to the national pathway towards sustainable food systems. They receive propositions from the Summit's independent Scientific Group and Action Tracks and consider these within the stage 2 Dialogues.

### *Process for Member State Dialogues at sub-national level*

National authorities will encourage local administrations to convene stage 2 Dialogues in several sub-national locations (including different ecosystems, cities, provinces, and other territories), requesting that each Dialogue includes a wide diversity of different interests. Sub-national Dialogues can also be organized around specific themes (e.g. women's and children's access to nutritious foods) linked to the Summit Action Tracks. Actors are enabled to explore options for transformation in their local context: they will be encouraged to connect actors from different contexts and to make a point of including participants from stakeholder groups who do not normally engage with each other.

### *Process for the stage 2 Member State Dialogue at national level*

The sub-national Dialogues are followed by one stage 2 national Dialogue where the promising approaches that emerged sub-nationally are further explored, harvested, and then synthesized. Participants of the stage 2 Dialogue at the national level include the leaders of different stakeholder groups. The insights and suggestions that emerged sub-nationally, and that are seen by participants to have potential, are collected together and then explored by participants in the national event. During the Dialogue, they consider whether these high potential approaches might be synthesized into the evolving pathway for sustainable national food systems by 2030.

*By the end of the stage 2 Member State Dialogue*, stakeholders will have identified promising approaches and potential commitments as contributions to the development of the national pathway. Official Feedback for the stage 2 Dialogue is published on the *Dialogues Gateway*.

## **Stage 3 – Pathway, intention and commitment**

The *purpose of stage 3* of the Member State Dialogues is for national authorities and stakeholder leaders to exchange views about the pathway towards sustainable national food systems by 2030, and to identify the intentions and commitments of different actors.

The stage 3 Dialogues are working sessions where participants receive the consolidated outputs from the stage 2 Dialogues, together with propositions from the Scientific Group and Action Tracks. In the first part of the stage 3 Dialogues they assemble the emerging suggestions for the national pathway towards sustainable food systems within the coming decade. Participants agree on issues where consensus exists, identify issues where further Dialogue could be fruitful and set out the issues that appear to reflect unresolvable differences. The Dialogue Convenor provides a draft pathway to aid discussion: participants build on the draft to develop the national pathway. They seek to reach agreement at least on the scope, outline and general direction of this document. It is

anticipated that actors will continue working on the pathway, in line with their intentions and commitments, beyond the Summit.

In the second part of stage 3, participants discuss the actions that different stakeholder groups can be expected to take in coming years, and how they align the pathway with the 2030 Agenda. They also explore some of the commitments that stakeholder groups are expected to make to carry through on their intentions. These will be presented in a format that can be sent through to the Summit Secretariat, which will maintain records of intentions and commitments. Participants will identify promising initiatives (“flagships”) for more widespread implementation.

*By the end of stage 3*, there will be enhanced connectivity and relations among national food systems actors. The actors will have a more profound understanding of their food systems and how they can be transformed. Official Feedback from the stage 3 Dialogue posted on the Dialogues Gateway, will include a summary of the national pathway, as well as intentions of support and commitments from different stakeholder groups from the Member State to the Summit. The Dialogues that led to the development of the pathway will continue to be used by national actors as they advance their food system transformation.

## Support

- Support for the Convenors of Member State Dialogues, as well as for Dialogue Curators and Facilitators, will be available through the *Dialogues Gateway* website.
- Guidance materials and hotline support will be available through the *Dialogues Gateway* website. Propositions for the Member State Dialogues from the independent Scientific Group and Action Tracks will be posted on the *Dialogues Gateway*.
- Dialogue Convenors are asked to submit Official Feedback to the Food Systems Summit from their Dialogues onto the *Dialogues Gateway* using the online form: the contents of this feedback will be synthesized to provide an overall assessment of the outcome from the different stages of Member State Dialogues.
- There will be training opportunities, provided by experienced Curators and Facilitators of Dialogues, available for national and sub-national Convenors, as well as nominated Curators and Facilitators.
- In countries with UN presence, UN Resident Coordinators and Representatives of UN system entities as well as summit Champions, in-country scientists, and food systems partners (including development partners) are committed to support Member States to develop and implement their Dialogues programme.

November '20 - December '20

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**DIALOGUES STAGE 1**

**INITIATING NATIONAL  
ENGAGEMENT IN THE  
SUMMIT**

At the Stage 1 Dialogue, diverse national food systems stakeholders are connected together. First, they examine the purpose, functioning, potential and vulnerabilities of their food systems. Second, they consider how best to engage in and contribute to the Summit process.

January '20 - April '21

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**DIALOGUES STAGE 2**

**EXTENSIVE  
EXPLORATIONS  
EVERYWHERE**

The Stage 2 dialogues are in two parts. First there are several sub-national Stage 2 dialogues where participants explore food systems in different settings using a variety of perspectives. They are followed by the national Stage 2 Dialogue where promising approaches are examined and harvested.

May '21 - June '21

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**DIALOGUES STAGE 3**

**PATHWAY,  
INTENTIONS AND  
COMMITMENTS**

At the Stage 3 Dialogue, participants first contribute to shaping directions of the pathway to sustainable national food systems for the coming decade. Then they elaborate their intentions for future action to improve the functioning of food systems in-country. They set out their commitments for collective action, including flagship projects.

**BUILDING A PATHWAY TOWARDS NATIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATIONS IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**