

**FOOD SYSTEMS
SUMMIT**



DIALOGUES

MARCH 2022

Member State Dialogues Synthesis

REPORT 4



**UNITED NATIONS
FOOD SYSTEMS
SUMMIT 2021**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This synthesis describes and analyses the work led by the National Convenors of Food Systems Summit Dialogues in the immediate period after the UN Food Systems Summit held on 23-24 September 2021. It is the fourth synthesis related to the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues.

[Synthesis 1](#) published in May 2021 covered the initiation of the Member State Dialogues process.

[Synthesis 2](#) published in July 2021 summarised progress in advance of the pre-summit in Rome.

[Synthesis 3](#) published in September 2021 summarised progress in advance of the summit.

This synthesis covers the period from the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021 through to March 2022. This period has been characterised by Member State activity in developing, validating, endorsing, and beginning implementation of their national pathways to equitable and sustainable food systems by 2030.

The synthesis has the following sections.

Introduction – this section includes an overview of the UN Food Systems Summit and the place of the dialogues within this context. It outlines the Secretary-General's five Action Areas. It describes the data sources for the synthesis and includes a breakdown of the dialogues that have been held since the closing date for the submission of Official Feedback Forms for the previous synthesis.

1. Pathways – a route to the future – This section describes the characteristics of the pathway documents. Most present a **vision for food systems of the future** and identify **priority themes for food systems transformation**. Many include **workplans with defined implementation measures** and activities for each theme and indicate arrangements for **working across sectors and with multiple stakeholders**.

The section also contains an analysis of the national pathway documents to appreciate the spectrum of thematic issues covered. The analysis uses the Action Areas of the UN Secretary-General's statement at the Food Systems Summit as the analytical framework. The analysis reveals both the themes that are priorities for action within national pathways and the proposed means through which priority actions will be implemented.

Most pathways include priorities from several Action Areas. The **themes that are most frequently prioritized** are Shifting to Healthier diets, Ending Hunger, Sustainable growth in productivity, and Food System Resilience in the face of climate change and disasters.

Most pathways refer to specific **means of implementation**. The most frequently mentioned of these means are a) adapting policies and regulations, b) investing in innovation and knowledge, c) strengthening human resource capabilities, d) mobilizing finance and investment, e) accessing better data and f) cross-border food trade. Other means identified include g) improving infrastructure, h) building partnerships, i) information, j) better food system governance, k) food systems digitalization, and l) emphasising human rights.

Combinations of themes and means of implementation are explored by regions.

The section also includes a brief overview of the statements made by Heads of State or government at the UN Food Systems Summit in respect of their announced priorities and their dialogues and pathways.

2. Actions underway - This section describes ways in which pathways are being used to guide and inform action within different countries (in multiple settings). It identifies activities that are taking

place, quantifies these actions where possible, and provides examples of how these activities are evident in practice.

In particular, it explores how pathways are used when **engaging decision-makers** on food systems:

- 75% of the convening teams report that pathways are **connected to and used within political processes**
- 70% report that the visions and priorities of pathways are being **incorporated within national policies and strategies**
- **Milestones and mechanisms for review** are being developed.
- More than half of the convening teams report **more systematic cross-sector working**.
- **New forms of food systems governance** emerge.
- **Investment plans and strategies** for long-term technical, commercial, and financial cooperation are being developed.

The section also explores how pathways are used to **guide food systems transformation within different settings and at multiple levels**:

- In at least 26 countries, the pathways are advanced at **sub-national level**.
- Pathways encourage cooperation between nations on specific priorities within **geographic sub-regions**.
- Pathways are used to integrate food systems transformation with **other major issues** including recovery from COVID-19, climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience, promoting biodiversity, digitalisation, education, employment, energy, migration, social protection, and access to water. This is receiving more attention particularly in relation to biodiversity COP15, Climate COP 27 and the Education Transformation Summit planned for September 2022.
- Food systems transformation becomes a new priority for **UN-Member State Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks**.

In addition, the section looks at **how dialogues and pathways help to engage widening circles of stakeholders**:

- In at least 42% of countries, pathways serve as **living documents** that are reviewed and revitalized when they are used.
- 45% of convenors plan to continue conducting **multi-stakeholder dialogues** seeking to include communities that are hard to reach and often left behind, especially small-scale producers, agricultural workers, Indigenous Peoples, women, youth, small and medium enterprises, as well as both traditional and modern inter-disciplinary experts.
- Several pathways draw on and contribute to **inter-disciplinary research and development**.
- Several Convenors also describe how pathways are used to encourage **public debate** on food systems transformation as part of wider discourse on the SDGs.

3. Needs to sustain the momentum and support actions – this section identifies urgent financial and human resource needs to sustain the momentum, shares requests for clarity on the shape of the post-summit process, describes the need for peer-to-peer connection opportunities and an ecosystem of support, and points to the need for longer-term external finance.

4. Commentary and conclusions – the key messages from this synthesis are as follows:

- The scale and breadth of the Food Systems Summit Dialogues programme have exceeded expectations.
- The national pathways approach food systems from a wide angle, with links to all SDGs and emphasise working across sectors, interdisciplinary approaches, multi-sectoral engagement



and the need to work at all relevant levels including local, sub-national, national, and regional.

- The Dialogues Support Service has maintained contact with over 130 of the 148 national convenors since the summit.
- The pathways are now being used to guide food systems transformation both in countries and regionally.
- There are urgent needs to be met if the momentum of food systems transformation is to be maintained:
 - Finance to support the transformation process is urgently needed in at least 36 countries;
 - Clarity on the shape and rhythm of FSS follow-up work is sought to guide action at country and regional levels
 - Convenors are eager to connect amongst themselves and to examine, and perhaps join, different Coalitions of Action.
 - There is an urgent need to mobilize longer-term financing of food systems transformations.

