

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Friday, 16 July 2021 10:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	EU Dialogue for the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit High-Level Event
CONVENED BY	Ladislav Miko, EU Dialogue Convenor for the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/38785/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	European Union

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

150

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

26

19-30

50

31-50

28

51-65

1

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

40 Male

61 Female

4 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

47 Agriculture/crops

22 Fish and aquaculture

34 Livestock

8 Agro-forestry

14 Environment and ecology

9 Trade and commerce

13 Education

16 Communication

18 Food processing

13 Food retail, markets

33 Food industry

7 Financial Services

11 Health care

16 Nutrition

11 National or local government

1 Utilities

4 Industrial

13 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

3 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

10 Multi-national corporation

1 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

3 Large-scale farmer

9 Local Non-Governmental Organization

11 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

17 Science and academia

3 Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

3 Local authority

12 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

20 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

3 Consumer group

10 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

DG SANTE organised the online high-level meeting on 16 July 2021, from 10.00 to 17.00, to discuss the outcomes of the Citizens' Dialogues held on 12 and 13 July. This discussion was followed by two panels on addressing global hunger and malnutrition, and the transformation of food systems in practice. The event was first advertised in June 2021, giving interested parties enough time to prepare their contributions. It was advertised on Facebook and European Commission, ensuring that a wide audience of potential participants was reached. A total of 105 registered participants took part. They represented a broad spectrum of sectors (see tables above) covering the 18 sectors. They came from a diversity of sectors, the top three being: agriculture/crops (47 participants), livestock (34 participants) and food industry (33 participants). All in all, the high-level event was attended by 164 participants including representatives from the European institutions, business organisations, NGOs and other undefined sectors. The 164 participants identified their gender in 3 categories: 69 men, 91 women and 4 'prefer not to say'.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

All the Principles of Engagement of the Food Systems Summit were followed. In particular, the principles of recognising complexity, embracing multi-stakeholder inclusivity and complementing the work of others were reflected in the dialogue. After each panel, the online audience had the opportunity to submit questions or comments via the pre-moderated chat function, some of which were put to the panellists by the moderator. The outcomes of the Citizens' Dialogues were presented by each session's moderator and a representative of the citizens group.

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

I would recommend to organise these events more often and engage the wider community to this important topic.

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 event was the culmination of the EU Citizens' Dialogue process, to discuss the outcomes collected during the dialogues on 12 and 13 July and to address two additional topics: the European contribution to addressing global hunger and malnutrition, and the transformation of food systems in practice.

In the first session, held in the morning, moderators and six citizen representatives from each of the breakout sessions of the citizens' dialogues presented the results of their discussions on six topics: green claims and sustainable food labelling; the views of young people on sustainable and healthy diets; sustainable food production; sustainable and healthy diets; prevention and reduction of food waste; and antimicrobial resistance. Representatives from the European Commission responded to the findings and provided further detail on the EU's work in these areas.

The second session, held in the afternoon, explored the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) action areas and the EU's role in addressing global hunger and nutrition. The five panellists came from the European Commission, WHO, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and the International Centre for Climate Change & Development.

The final session looked at the transformation of food systems in practice with examples of ongoing initiatives at EU and international level. This featured five speakers from the European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization, European Economic and Social Committee and Nestlé. All 10 panellists presented their work and responded to questions from the moderator and the online audience.

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

Panellists agreed that the UNFSS is a solutions summit, and should be just the starting point for real change. The European Commission representatives welcomed and agreed with most of the points raised during the citizen dialogues and stated that citizens need to be at the centre of actions to be taken. Young people are the ones who will benefit the most from a successful transition and will also face the biggest challenges in the event of failure, so it is vital to give them the chance to speak and be heard.

Business as usual is not an option, one speaker said, because business as usual is not sustainable. What society expects from farmers today is not just simply food and fibre, but also landscapes, climates, biodiversity and healthy food.

There is a need to identify the opportunities and risks associated with transitioning to sustainable food systems, and to make use of the best available scientific knowledge. Binding regulatory initiatives should go hand-in-hand with a social impulse that influences business and politics to move towards sustainability.

While the comprehensive legal framework for sustainable food systems is still a work in progress, scheduled to begin in 2023, the EU has taken a first step with the EU Code of Conduct for businesses and marketing practices. This is one of the first deliverables of the Farm to Fork strategy and an integral part of its action plan. It sets out the actions that food processors, food service operators and retailers can voluntarily commit to undertake to tangibly improve and communicate their sustainability performance.

The EU's Farm to Fork strategy makes it clear that research and innovation are key drivers in accelerating the transition to sustainable, healthy and inclusive food system, from primary production to final consumption, the strategy policies, research and innovation activities across the entire food system, and compensating all environmental, social and economic aspects. The Commission agreed with the need for clear food labelling and a level of uniformity in the way those labels are used, to help consumers make a sustainable choice. Animal welfare is another element of sustainability to be considered in legislation on food labelling.

For food waste and other issues, there needs to be flexibility across Member States, with regulatory authorities in each state working effectively with food chain operators, farmers, manufacturers, retailers and consumers.

It is not sufficient to look at food production, consumption or waste in isolation. A holistic and integrated approach is necessary but challenging to implement. This approach should build a sustainable production system that ensures improved ecosystem services, food security and human welfare as well as opportunities for decent employment. Agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture can play an important role in sustainable healthy food, and social partners can play a key role in making fisheries and aquaculture sustainable.

It is essential that there is good quality food available for all, whatever their socioeconomic background, and those involved in food production should be reasonably remunerated for their work.

Across the world, largely in Africa and Asia, there are 149 million children under five suffering from stunting, 45 million with wasting, and 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet. Addressing this emergency calls for coordinated action among humanitarian – development - peace actors, for helping people with resilience to climate shocks and economic downturns, for tackling structural inequalities and for a profound transformation of food systems to get safe, healthy and sustainably produced food to the world.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Food labelling is an area where the EU wants to improve transparency and the value of information given to consumers, through using technology such as QR codes. In parallel, there needs to be education to ensure consumers are more aware of the nutritional and environmental impacts of foods, and are better able to exercise choices.

The EU has committed to reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goal of halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and reducing food losses along production and supply chains by 2030, and will come up with its own proposal to set legally binding targets for 2030.

It was noted that the functioning of the food chain has had problems in the past. The price signal from consumers has not always reached farmers, and farmers have not always been able to find the right way to supply what the market required. In the last 10 years, the EU has done a lot to improve the way the supply chain functions, improve business-to-business relationships and eliminate unfair trading practices. There is now increased transparency in the food chain, particularly for better price information. Within the EU's Farm to Fork strategy, the Green Deal and the human capital strands are key, it was said, but they could be more closely integrated.

Globally, tackling hunger and malnutrition requires a doubling of investment in 10 key areas, mainly related to on-farm investments, food value chain and social protection. Two major areas of urgent concern are wasting among children and anaemia, especially among women.

The latest projections are that we will not achieve the 2030 SDG target before 2130. A transformation of the food system solution needs to be combined with a health system solution and environmental vector solution, alongside a framework for women's empowerment. There is also a need to focus on food safety along the supply chain. The panel highlighted the need to make safe food a universal human right, not just a commodity.

It was suggested that there is a need for global policies because of globalisation, driven not only by the market but by public investment. In a globalised world, global standards and global mechanisms are required for issues such as biodiversity, nutrition and corporate governance.

In providing support to third countries, it is necessary to look beyond emergency food aid and look at the root causes of hunger and food insecurity more broadly: these are linked to the economic and social situation and frequently to conflict. All these elements must be viewed together in a systemic perspective. As well as dealing with an acute food crisis in parts of the world, it is necessary to consider the longer-term perspective and increase resilience. Investing in rural and smallholder farmers results in significant poverty reduction and positive impacts not just for farmers but for the entire economy.

Fisheries and aquaculture is an important sector to be considered in a sustainable food system, producing a much smaller carbon footprint than a lot of land-based types of farmed animals, in some cases by orders of magnitude. Aquaculture and fisheries can be sustainable but fisheries face two big challenges: managing fish stocks in a sustainable way, and managing the impact that fishing has on the whole marine environment, such as bycatch and damage to marine mammals.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The main divergence between speakers and the citizens involved in the dialogues was on the issue of taxes and price interventions to promote, incentivise or reward the production or consumption of sustainable foods.

This was an issue that was raised in various contexts during the citizens' dialogues as a potential option to encourage sustainable consumer choices; however, when put to the European Commission representatives, it was not seen as a solution. It was pointed out that previously, price fixing has led to overproduction and proved to be economically unsustainable.

Price support has been replaced since the early 2000s by direct income support to producers, which is said to be better aligned with the objectives to ensure a fairer standard of living for agricultural workers.

One speaker raised the issue of the EU's development cooperation programme, saying that while it helps people in developing countries, EU and EU Member States' domestic policies have major consequences for people all over the world when it comes to trade, environment and other issues. They called for the EU to examine its policies and how they affect food systems within the EU and elsewhere.

A speaker disputed the idea that consumers need to be educated about sustainable diets, saying that they know what is sustainable and are able to make informed choices.

It was suggested that despite best efforts towards resilience, it's impossible for food systems to be truly resilient, as has been demonstrated by the COVID-19 crisis, which has placed extreme pressure and uncertainty on the global food system.

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