

Outcome Document of the 4th Global Conference of the One Planet network's (10YFP) Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme

THE TRANSFORMATION WE NEED

Emerging from global crises by shaping sustainable, resilient, healthy, and inclusive food systems

April 28th, 2023

On 24-27 April 2023, more than 350 participants¹ gathered in Ha Noi (Viet Nam) with the **aim to make a substantial contribution to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit's (UNFSS) follow-up process up to 2030**. Participants included Ministers and Vice-Ministers from eight different countries from four different global regions, other members of the One Planet network, National Convenors and further actors involved in the UNFSS follow-up process, as well as multiple stakeholders from all world regions. Building on the outcomes of the UNFSS, and the SFS Programme's expertise and tools as well as the outcomes of its previous three global conferences, the conference functioned as a major milestone towards the first Stocktaking Moment organized by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, taking place on 24-26 July 2023.

The **objectives** of the conference were:

- To **present transformational actions**, tools and initiatives that have emerged since the UNFSS with a view to promoting their uptake and upscaling in national and local policy-making processes;
- To **further promote the food systems approach and inclusive governance** and collaboration at all levels – including multilateral and particularly Rio Conventions – to foster their uptake for the development of multi-sectoral action plans towards sustainable consumption and production in food systems; and
- To **provide a space** for National Convenors, UNFSS coalitions and other relevant multi-actor initiatives as well as other food systems actors, **to build capacities and deepen their collective efforts towards sustainable food systems pathways**, in view of the UNFSS 2023 Stocktaking Moment.

The conference looked at successes and opportunities as well as main barriers and bottlenecks concerning food systems transformation, with a focus on five key levers of change:

- Global, regional, national, and sub-national inclusive governance to lay the foundation for applying a holistic/integrated approach towards sustainable and healthy food systems;
- Collaborative, multisectoral, integrated policies based on a holistic approach to advance the transformation we need: improving consumption and production patterns in our food systems;
- Mobilizing means of implementation, including science, finance, human rights and innovation;
- Monitoring and accountability frameworks to measure transformation, supported by metrics and data; and
- Research and innovation, including in collaboration with the private sector.



When discussing these key levers of change, the conference participants:

- Shared experiences and identified specific needs and actionable solutions, in support of the National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation, as further summarized in this document.
- Recalled the call from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit to mainstream the food systems approach – a holistic approach towards more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and equitable food systems, delivering nutritious and safe foods for healthy diets while considering all relevant causal variables of a problem and all social, environmental, and economic impacts of the solutions.¹
- Further recalled the Secretary-General's Chair Summary and Statement of Action on the UN Food Systems Summit that called on Member States to drive action at country-level in their local contexts including through mechanisms that develop and implement national pathways to 2030 that are inclusive and consistent with countries' climate commitments.
- Further recalled the Ministerial Declaration of the 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), calling upon all actors to implement the voluntary commitments of the UNFSS including the national pathways and coalitions of action, as appropriate, building on regional and national priorities and respecting national policies and priorities; as well as the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration recognizing the One Planet network as an important implementation mechanism for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and calling upon all stakeholders to adopt a sustainable food systems approach to promote sustainable consumption and production.
- Further recalled the Ministerial Declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session, where Member States affirmed they will “promote sustainable food systems by encouraging the implementation of sustainable and resilient agricultural practices, improving value generation, and significantly reducing waste and energy use along the food supply chain to help ensure food security and ecosystem functions and services.”
- Further recalled the 2021 G20 Matera Declaration, emphasizing the need for collaborative multisectoral action to strengthen and support resilient and sustainable health, social protection and food systems, and address risks emerging from the human-animal-environment interface.
- Further recalled the 2022 OECD Agricultural Ministers Declaration, emphasizing the urgent need for a transformation towards more sustainability and resilience to address the triple challenge facing agriculture and food systems of ensuring food security and nutrition for a growing global population; addressing environmental challenges, including climate change and biodiversity loss; and providing opportunities for livelihoods for all farmers, including family farmers, and others employed along food supply chains.
- Further recalled the final communiqué of the 2023 Global Forum on Food and Agriculture, in which Ministers committed to promote sustainable, inclusive, efficient and resilient food systems by enabling the agricultural and food sectors to produce sustainably, adapt to new conditions, enhance their ability to deal with risks, close the inequality gap, and recover quickly and better from crises.
- Further recalled the Report of the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), in which members called on leveraging the convening power of the CFS to strengthen coordinated global policy responses to the multiple dimensions of the global food crisis.
- Stressed the urgency to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030, the Paris Agreement, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, highlighting the important contribution that the implementation of National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation can make in that regard.

¹ For definitions of terms sustainable food systems and food systems approach, refer to: Sustainable Food Systems Programme. 2020. Towards a Common Understanding of Sustainable Food Systems. Available at: https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/sfs_programme_glossary_towards_a_common_understanding_of_sfs_2020.pdf (Accessed: 27 April 2023)



The following three overall conference conclusions were highlighted throughout the different sessions of the conference:

- 1) *The importance of food systems transformation for coping with multiple challenges*: sustainable, resilient, healthy and inclusive food systems are urgently needed and are a precondition to address the interrelated crises of food insecurity, malnutrition, health, climate change, biodiversity loss, conflict, as well as high energy and consumer prices;
- 2) *The need to link short-term and long-term efforts*: while it is sometimes necessary to take short-term action to tackle multiple crises, such action should be conducted in the framework of a long-term strategy and a holistic and inclusive approach to food systems governance and policy making; and
- 3) *The need for inclusiveness, participation and meaningful collaboration at all levels*: food systems transformation is a whole-of-society task that requires engagement and effective participation of all actors across all sectors, leaving no one behind.

Conference sessions chairs' summaries

This section reflects speakers' key messages and discussions during each of the conference sessions as summarized by session chairs and rapporteurs. The conference sessions were conceived with the aim to make a substantial contribution to the UNFSS follow-up process up to 2030, in view of the first Stocktaking Moment taking place on 24-26 July 2023. Thus, these messages are addressed primarily to high-level political leaders, decision-makers, business leaders, but also to food systems stakeholders at large, who are involved in the development and implementation of National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation.

Rethinking the global governance architecture for food systems

- The current global governance architecture for food systems is fragmented, as it has grown over time and in the absence of a systems lens. The future global governance architecture needs to be rethought in order to consider a food systems approach.
- To avoid unintended consequences, global policy instruments should be implemented at the national level with a coherent and holistic perspective.
- Trade can be supportive of sustainable and resilient food systems, by creating global market opportunities and enhancing food security, particularly for countries that rely on imports. However, trade liberalization can also bring new trade-offs, such as a decline of local production and longer supply chains.
- Investments in sustainable food systems should become part of the standard portfolios of financial institutions. The National Pathways should be used as a basis for anchoring investment expectations to help shift global finance towards food systems transformation.
- Both Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework should consider a food systems approach and include ambitious targets, reaching from production to consumption.
- The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub acts as a catalyst and connector inside the UN system to support countries in translating their commitments into effective actions to reach sustainable food systems by 2030.
- As an inclusive intergovernmental policy forum on food security and nutrition, the CFS and its High-Level Panel of Experts, have a role to play in ensuring coherence, coordination and policy convergence across the different global policy processes that shape food systems at national and sub-national level.



- Through its new Global Strategy on Sustainable Consumption and Production, the One Planet network provides a UN backed multi-stakeholder platform that links to the Rio Conventions and other relevant multilateral processes.

Revisiting national and sub-national governance and policies

- Inclusive multi-stakeholder governance collaboration, in all its different forms and levels, is essential to ensure integrated policy-making in face of our joint and urgent goal to meet the 2030 Agenda for all, and to address the environmental crises that are worsening inequalities in food systems.
- In most parts of the world, adoption of a systemic policy framework that considers interrelated environmental, economic, and social outcomes of food systems is still a pending task, and it requires sustained awareness-raising and capacity building.
- At the same time, there is an increasing number of countries and cities that are promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms (e.g. food councils or committees, food dialogues) as a way to move towards a food systems approach, and to create food strategies or actions that simultaneously benefit food security, environmental and socio-economic goals. Good practices include the presence of a champion, as well as the provision of funding and institutionalization of these mechanisms for their sustainability in the long term.
- Coordination among and active participation of different government departments and various food systems players, both horizontal or vertical, are essential to achieve a shared vision. Success of this participatory process requires dedicated resources, in particular time, patience, data, and long-term funding.
- Multi-level governance may require national governments to develop regulatory and legislative reforms that support decentralized governance and strengthen coordinated decision-making on food systems.
- Effective leadership is paramount for fostering multi-actor engagement. Funding and institutionalization of multi-actor mechanisms is key to prevent and manage power imbalances and conflicts of interest.
- Decision-making mechanisms should include well-defined procedures to build the trust, accountability, transparency, and confidentiality needed for managing diverging views and priorities and reaching agreements.
- Meaningful participation of stakeholders who have often been excluded from policy-making processes, such as Indigenous People, small-scale farmers, women, youth, informal food systems workers, etc. is essential and needs dedicated procedures, advocacy and capacity-building mechanisms for them to articulate their knowledge, concerns, and needs, and to make sure they are taken into account.
- Supporting the private sector on a sustainability journey is central to multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Changing consumption and production patterns

- There is an urgent need for governments and actors to implement measures to shift away from unsustainable food consumption and production. Interventions must be developed in synergy, with a focus on co-benefits, community by community.
- Governments and other actors must embrace collaboration across all levels. National Pathways can be important tools to promote coordination mechanisms among stakeholders in addressing the complexity of food systems transformation.
- An important step in the transition to sustainable food systems is to provide a fair distribution of value along the chain and ensure marginalized farmers have secure land tenure rights, which incentivize sustainable investments.



- Formal land rights alone cannot guarantee more sustainable practices. Performance-based finance has a strong role to play in rewarding good players.
- Subsidies should be reoriented to support the transition to more sustainable food systems, including through agroecological practices and other innovative approaches. Farmers must be compensated to shift towards nature positive practices.
- Governments must make sure that agri-food actors are held accountable for the negative impacts of their actions, including on the supply chain, and adopt regulations that prevent unsustainable practices and promote sustainable ones.
- Consumption behavior is currently strongly influenced by the global increase in food prices, causing growing inequalities. The global price crisis is also raising input prices for farmers. Both production challenges and consumer behavior are obstacles to diverse diets.
- Major efforts are needed to strengthen consumer awareness and understanding on the link between sustainable consumption and production, promoting interest in healthy diets from sustainable food systems.
- Inclusive business can also enable food systems transformation and should be a guiding principle in the effort towards changing food consumption and production patterns.

Promoting the transformation through science, finance, human rights and innovation

- Human rights are of central importance for equitable food systems. However, progress is not happening fast enough.
- Science, innovation, human rights, and finance should be jointly promoted. Science, finance and innovation for food systems transformation should all be promoted with a human rights based approach.
- There is a need for concerted efforts to strengthen capacities and increase knowledge on how to implement human rights based approaches.
- People need to be put at the center of food systems transformation by including a focus on ensuring decent incomes, protecting human rights and providing nutritious and affordable food, while addressing climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Rather than charity, the poor require an enabling policy environment with access to market systems and opportunities.
- When it comes to innovation and investment, broad and inclusive efforts are needed, including from the public and private sectors as well as academia. Ambitious public and private finance is necessary to meet the challenge.
- Women play a major role in each and every part of the food system. However, women are often engaged informally in the value chain, and therefore do not always have the same rights and tend to have more limited access to finance.
- Solutions need to be adapted to specific national contexts, with more innovation needed in terms of technologies that are customized to smallholders and the poor, while overcoming gender inequalities.
- There is a need to link National Pathways with investment strategies and pipelines with concrete business cases and clear roles for public and private finance.
- There is an urgent need to focus on implementation and action.

Strengthening the UN Food Systems Summit's ecosystem of support: Mobilizing UNFSS coalitions to advance a food systems approach for more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems

- Coalitions of Action, which were one of the major outcomes of the UNFSS, have a significant role to play in advancing a food systems approach.



- Many coalitions focus on single aspects of transformation, without explicit consideration of interconnections of food system drivers or broader impacts. Adopting a food system lens can help link single agendas.
- By working together, coalitions can leverage their efforts to advance a holistic, inclusive food systems approach and support countries more effectively in long-term systemic change.
- Coalitions are progressing and maturing. As a collective force, they have potential to support food systems transformation, but greater efforts must be made to avoid working in silos at all levels. Duplications need to be addressed and used as opportunities for collaboration and creating synergies.
- Several countries are members of different coalitions. They can play a role in helping to build synergies for supporting transformation, including through their National Convenors.
- Efforts towards increased collaboration among coalitions must continue towards the Stocktaking Moment in July and beyond. By adopting a food system lens, the collective group of coalitions should tell a story that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Measuring transformation

- Accountability is critical for food systems transformation and to the UNFSS follow-up process; as such, national efforts must be strengthened to include adequate accountability provisions in planning around National Pathways, as well as globally to link to the global biennial Stocktaking Moments, and to annual SDG progress reviews.
- In addition to monitoring frameworks, instruments need to be put in place to assess and track the progress of financial flows and actions taken by the public and private sector, including development cooperation.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement is vital for designing adequate, context-relevant accountability mechanisms.
- Governments, the private sector, civil society, and development partners all have a crucial role and responsibilities in transitioning towards sustainable food systems.
- Progress measurement can only be achieved once a baseline level is defined. Data collection and disclosure are essential to inform the key measurement priorities for each stakeholder.
- The Stocktaking Moment should be used as an opportunity to further explore how progress will be measured and which criteria, including as related to inclusivity, are essential to assess food systems transformation.
- Data and evidence on food systems transformation are critical to strengthening accountability.

Dialogue of National Convenors

- Food systems need to be transformed to prevent and overcome interlinked crises risking to derail action to implement the SDGs, which are currently off-track.
- To do so, it is critical to:
 - i. establish multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder processes at different governance levels, where relevant sectors are represented and stakeholders, including civil society and private sector, women, farmers, youth and Indigenous Peoples have a voice;
 - ii. strengthen policy coherence, ensuring that sectoral efforts are integrated in a systemic way to optimize synergies and identify and manage trade-offs;
 - iii. measure progress and developing accountability mechanisms to ensure alignment of efforts and that transformation goes in the desired direction;
 - iv. ensure that transformation efforts allow addressing the four “Cs” holistically: COVID-19, climate, conflict and cost of living crises;



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- v. put human health and sustainability in all its dimensions at the core of food system transformation efforts so that it effectively contributes to the SDGs.
- UN Country teams through the UN Resident Coordinator systems must be engaged and provide a space for action, deepening collective efforts towards implementing sustainable food systems pathways.
- Empowering youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, and smallholder farmers is essential to accelerate policy change more equitably and effectively, ensuring long-term transformation at the local and global levels.
- Harnessing science, technology and innovation improves the chances of countries to create a conducive policy environment leading to long-term food systems transformation.
- National Convenors and multiple stakeholders should adopt a whole-of-society approach to keep strengthening National Pathways with a rights based approach. Challenges related to allocation of budgets for cross-cutting food systems transformation objectives need to be addressed through improved inter-ministerial coordination.
- Opportunities for peer-learning among National Convenors and other stakeholders need to be strengthened, as well as science-policy interfaces, to deepen their collective efforts towards National Pathways and to report on progress made at the national level since the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

The organizers invite all relevant stakeholders to take into account the above key messages in the context of their National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation, and to highlight them in relevant forums and policy processes, including the 2023 Stocktaking Moment.

Furthermore, the organizers invite all members of the One Planet network's Sustainable Food Systems Programme to promote these key messages through their respective activities.