Sustainable Food Systems for All
Catalyzing Change through Multi-Stakeholder Action

1st Global Conference of the 10YFP Sustainable Food Systems Programme

Pretoria, South Africa (21-23 June 2017)
Department of International Relations and Cooperation
O R Tambo Building
460 Soutpansberg Road
Rietondale, Pretoria, 0084

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Background

The Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme is one of six thematic programmes of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns (10YFP). The 10YFP is a global framework of action that aims to promote national, regional and international cooperation that accelerates the shift towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in developed and developing countries.

The SFS Programme was launched in October 2015, based on preparatory work by FAO and UN Environment. The Co-Leads of the SFS Programme are South Africa (Department for Trade and Industry), Switzerland (Federal Office for Agriculture), Hivos and WWF, with the support of a 23 member Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee (MAC). In addition, the SFS Programme currently has over 95 partners worldwide.

Purpose

Despite the fact that the world is producing enough food to feed its entire population, almost 795 million people are going hungry and about two billion are malnourished. At the same time, the number of overweight people has reached more than 1.4 billion adults globally, and around one third of the food produced worldwide is lost or wasted. Furthermore, irrigated agriculture accounts for roughly 70 percent of water withdrawals globally, and food production and consumption patterns as well as disposal are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, estimated between a quarter and a third of total anthropogenic emissions. Current pressures on the planet’s natural resources will further increase unless consumption and production patterns become more sustainable.

In short, the main challenge for the food and agriculture sector today is to simultaneously provide enough nutritious food to everyone while conserving the natural resources for present and future generations. This requires a systems-based approach that takes into account the necessary linkages between food production
and consumption, nutritional health as well as the underlying social-economic, biophysical, cultural and institutional elements that ultimately affect the quantity, quality and accessibility of food, as well as health and wellbeing. Such a systems-based approach to change requires multi-stakeholder participation involving actors across the food production and consumption chain.

Conference Theme

The theme of the conference is “Sustainable Food Systems for all – Catalyzing Change through Multi-Stakeholder Action”. The conference will explore innovative multi-stakeholder approaches to tackle food systems challenges in general, and discuss the need of ensuring sustainable food systems in the face of a changing climate and growing urbanization in the African context more specifically.

Objectives of the Conference

The purpose of the conference is to build new partnerships and create synergies among stakeholders to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable food systems. In this context, the objectives of the conference are to:

- Offer a dialogue platform to share experiences and exchange ideas;
- Encourage participants to transition into a crafting and decision-making mode, by proposing concrete collective actions and initiatives, and highlighting relevant tools, approaches and good practices;
- Underline the importance of a multi-stakeholder, systems-based approach to make food systems more sustainable; and
- Lay the foundations to kick-off cooperation on collective action(s) and initiative(s) to address the critical challenges in food systems and accelerate the shift to sustainability.

The conference will provide a spring-board to jumpstart new collaborative initiatives and consolidate existing alliances, and empower organizations to take action and achieve a real impact to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable food systems.

Under the framework of the 10YFP SFS Programme, the conference will be a forum for match-making, allowing participants to join a collaborative community of practice and to identify opportunities as well as allies to address the pressing challenges in our planet’s food systems.

Participants

The conference is open to all SFS Programme members including the Co-Leads, MAC members and Programme Partners, as well as further interested food systems stakeholders upon invitation, particularly entities from less developed or developing countries as well as countries under the category “economies in transition”. It will be organized back-to-back with a face-to-face meeting of the SFS Programme MAC.

The organizing team

The South African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) responsible for the organization of the conference in close collaboration with the SFS Programme co-leadership team, and with the support of some key Programme members including UN Environment and FAO. In addition, a number of regional and national stakeholders are supporting the organization of the conference, including Food Lab Southern Africa, University of Cape Town, City of Tshwane and City of Johannesburg.

Dates

The conference is scheduled to take place on 21-23 June 2017.