

Outcome Document of the 3rd Global Conference of the One Planet network's (10YFP) Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme

Achieving the SDGs through food systems transformation On the road to the Food Systems Summit 2021

December 3rd, 2020

More than 700 participants, SFS Programme members and other actors alike, from all world regions gathered virtually from 25th November to 3rd December 2020, with the **aim to provide substantial input and recommendations to the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and beyond**, building on the achievements of the SFS Programme's first five years of implementation as well as the outcomes of the Programme's previous two global conferences.

The **objectives** of the conference were:

- To **strengthen the common vision** that suggests that only through inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration will we be able to achieve the profound transformation, through a set of key actions and implementation mechanisms, that our food systems require;
- To **provide a platform for structured discussion** around the evidence underlying global efforts to characterize and assess progress towards more sustainable food systems; and
- To **raise the political importance** of sustainable food systems among public and private sector leaders.

Building on the priorities that were identified during the 2nd global conference of the SFS Programme¹, this 3rd conference focused on the following **topics**²:

- Aligning **collective action** to achieve the SDGs;
- The **science** of characterizing and addressing the transition towards sustainable food systems;
- Towards a holistic assessment of food systems **policies**;
- **Investing** in food systems transformation;
- Addressing food systems through **consumers** – promoting awareness and behavioral change; and
- Leveraging **public procurement** to accelerate SDG implementation

Conference participants identified specific needs and recommendations with respect to policy implementation, coordination of multi-stakeholder initiatives and financing for the transformation to sustainable food systems, as summarized below.

Furthermore, the conference hosted the first Global Food Systems Summit Dialogue, co-convened by the SFS Programme's co-leads and the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit.

¹ For more information on the priorities identified in the 2nd global conference of the SFS Programme, refer to annex 1.

² For an overview of how these topics relate to the 2021 Food Systems Summit's Action Tracks and other support structures, refer to annex 2.

FINAL VERSION

The conference participants recalled the Ministerial Declaration of the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), 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.

The conference participants 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.”

The conference participants stressed the urgent need to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030, and highlighted the important contribution that a sustainable food systems transformation can make in that regard. In this context, they acknowledged the importance of the UN Secretary General’s first ever UN Food Systems Summit in 2021, to consolidate evidence, knowledge and understanding about interconnections, interactions and trade-offs in food systems and to engage with diverse stakeholders in identifying opportunities for improved collective action at the territorial, national, regional and global levels.

Conference sessions chairs’ summary and recommendations

This section includes recommendations issued by each of the conference’s sessions as summarized by session chairs. The conference sessions were conceived with the aim of providing substantial input to the 2021 Food Systems Summit. Thus, the recommendations are addressed primarily to high-level political leaders, decision-makers, business leaders, but also to food systems stakeholders at large, who should take the opportunity of the keystone 2021 Food Systems Summit to take urgent action on their implementation.

Aligning collective action to achieve the SDGs

- **Food systems should be embedded in all relevant multilateral frameworks** (e.g. from climate change to biodiversity), through relevant and assignable targets that are specific, measurable and time-bound, and acknowledging the need of a holistic approach.
- **Countries and other actors working on different multilateral frameworks that have a nexus through food, should actively coordinate** to ensure policy coherence. A rights-based approach to food systems should serve as a guiding framework.
- All levels of government should seek to **coordinate food systems decision-making and action through the creation of appropriate institutional arrangements** or by strengthening existing governance mechanisms for policy coherence.
- The creation of participatory **multi-stakeholder mechanisms can both support coordination efforts as well as incorporate collective knowledge, demands and perspectives** that may contribute to the assessment of trade-offs and establishment of priorities in food systems transformation.
- Collective action to move towards sustainable food systems should be participatory, inclusive, and broad-based. **Food systems governance should address current power imbalances, and actively work to engage the most marginalized food systems stakeholders** in developing solutions.



FINAL VERSION

The science of characterizing and assessing the transition towards more sustainable food systems

- **Food systems are dynamic** and what we think is sustainable today may no longer be sustainable in the future. **It is important to keep a productive dialogue between scientists, practitioners and policy makers** in order to ensure that constant progress can be made towards more sustainable food systems.
- Standardized **indicators and models to measure sustainability in food systems should be comprehensive, while meeting both scientific rigour and intuitive simplicity** in order to ensure that they will be used in policy and practice.
- **Trade-offs**, at different points in time, **need to be identified and seriously considered in order to inform policy** decisions.
- Successful evaluation and management of trade-offs requires active **inclusion of all stakeholders throughout** the process and policy design.

Towards a holistic assessment of food systems policies

- **Food systems transformation processes require the highest level political commitment** as they are complex and dynamic. Many trade-offs need to be addressed and policy choices made.
- Food systems transformation in support of the SDGs at national and sub-national level requires **policies that promote sustainability along the entire value chain, taking into due account the social** (including culture and health), **environmental and economic dimensions** of sustainable development.
- Such **policies need to be designed with a holistic approach**, linking areas such as agriculture, nutrition, environment, health, trade, etc., at multiple levels. Facts, interests and values need to be carefully balanced in order to successfully address conflicting goals and trade-offs between these areas, within the overall framework of promoting the realization of the right to food.
- Conflicting goals and trade-offs can be best addressed by establishing and/or actively **linking inclusive multi-stakeholder bodies** that are representative of all relevant actors in the system, at multiple levels, **to the policy-making process**.

Investing in food systems transformation

- Private investors, philanthropies, banks, and bi- and multilateral funders should **redirect financial flows away from harmful practices**, use their resources to catalyze opportunities in sustainable food systems and **work together to better align public and private finance**, creating greater impact.
- Financing models and products should be developed to **support viable business models for farmers, cooperative enterprises, and value chain enterprises using or transitioning to sustainable practices** (e.g. through innovative approaches including agroecological approaches and regenerative agricultural practices³).
- **Concepts such as true cost accounting and associated tools (i.e., TEEB_{Ag}Food) should be used** to identify investments that increase positive outcomes in food and agriculture.
- National governments should address systemic barriers to catalytic finance (e.g. governance,

³ For definitions of terms including agroecological systems and regenerative agriculture, 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: 2 December 2020)



FINAL VERSION

subsidies and other policies, balance of power, institutional alignment) and **create an enabling environment for ambitious, integrated capital investment** in their respective contexts, which respond to the needs of all food systems stakeholders, in particular the most vulnerable ones.

Addressing food systems through consumers – promoting awareness and behavioral change

- **Ensure that consumers are engaged as active players in the food system and their perspective is effectively taken into account** in the transition to sustainable food systems.
- **Promoting consumer information and education** are key ingredients for enabling consumer awareness and behavioral change.
- Information should be communicated in ways that consumers can process quickly and intuitively at the moment of making their food choices. Therefore, there is a need to **promote the use of tools to communicate sustainability information on food products and services** in a reliable and clear way, such as the UNEP/ITC Guidelines for Providing Product Sustainability Information or credible (type 1) ecolabels.

Leveraging public procurement to accelerate SDG implementation

- Work with all stakeholders to leverage public food procurement's huge potential for nurturing people and the planet. **Promoting** the production, distribution and consumption of **sustainable and healthy meals while providing a market share to small food suppliers**.
- **Prioritize the education system as a setting for sustainable and healthy food system transformation**. School meals should serve as a triple-duty action to prevent childhood undernutrition and overweight/obesity, as well as protect planetary health. They can achieve sustained impacts on human and planetary health by encouraging children to develop sustainable, healthy food preferences throughout their lives.
- Governments should implement **laws and sustainable procurement policies** that stipulate both nutritional and sustainability procurement requirements for school meals.
- **An important immediate next step would be to confirm joint recommendations, targets and indicators to inform the design of school meal programmes** which serve as a triple duty action to prevent undernutrition and overweight/obesity while protecting planetary health.
- As a **game-changing solution**, the 2021 Food Systems Summit process should **promote the development of a global framework for action to ensure sustainable and healthy school meals for all school age children**, leaving no child behind.

The conference calls upon all countries as well as other relevant stakeholders, to implement the above recommendations in their own national contexts, and to introduce them into other relevant forums and policy processes, including the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and its five Action Tracks and other support structures.

FINAL VERSION

ANNEX 1: Priority areas as identified in the 2nd global conference “San José” Call to Action of the SFS Programme:

- Evidence-based advocacy to promote context-specific and holistic policies including incentives and disincentives for sustainable consumption and production (labeling, taxes, subsidies, etc.).
- Produce metrics and data, and establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess these policies.
- Leverage the potential of public procurement to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable food systems.
- Promote behavioral change and consumer awareness through education and hands-on learning; focusing on school-aged children and youth as key agents of change.
- Encourage a shift towards healthier and more sustainable food environments together with private sector including SMEs, informal market actors and farmers.
- Foster partnerships among food system actors, especially public-private partnerships for more coherent and targeted actions.
- Allocate existing sources of finance and mobilize additional (public and private) investments for food systems transformation, particularly at local level (de-risking through blended finance, more aligned investments and grants).

FINAL VERSION

ANNEX 2: Conference structure and linkage to UN Food Systems Summit

The 3rd global conference of the Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme was structured along the priorities for collective work and multi-stakeholder action that were identified at the SFS Programme's 2nd global conference in Costa Rica in 2019. These priorities shaped the conference's sessions. Each session produced a set of recommendations that aim to contribute to the process of the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 (FSS21).

Each conference session has linkages to the 2021 Food Systems Summit's support structures and bodies, as follows:

- Session titled "Aligning collective action to achieve the SDGs" links to the FSS21 **Engagement & Dialogues work stream**.
- Session titled "The science of characterizing and assessing the transition towards more sustainable food systems" links to the work of the FSS21 **Scientific Group**.
- Session titled "Towards a holistic assessment of food systems policies" links to the FSS21 **Evidence & Policy work stream**
- Session titled "Investing in food systems transformation" links to the FSS21 **Finance "lever of change"**.
- Session titled "Addressing food systems through consumers – promoting awareness and behavioral change" links to the work of the FSS21 **Action Track 2 "Shift to Sustainable Consumption Patterns"**.
- Session titled "Leveraging public procurement to accelerate SDG implementation" links to the work of the FSS21 **Action Track 1 "Ensure Access to Safe and Nutritious Food for All"**.
- Session 8 hosted the first Global Food Systems Summit Dialogue, which is an official part of the FSS21 **Engagement & Dialogues work stream**.