

CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE OF FOOD SYSTEMS AND CLIMATE ACTION

HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

8 JULY 2025

Salón Verde, National Palace, Dominican Republic

DIALOGUE REPORT

BACKGROUND

The Convergence Initiative was launched by the UN Deputy Secretary-General during COP28 (2023), merging two major global milestones: the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation (UNFSS+2) and the COP28- UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action. This initiative highlights the urgency of aligning national food systems transformation with climate action to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Paris Agreement.

In the Dominican Republic, this initiative has been embraced to link the National Food Systems Roadmap with the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), aiming to foster integrated and synergistic national actions across sectors. It builds on existing intersectoral processes and strengthens them by identifying policy gaps, enhancing coordination, and reducing duplication.

To guide this process, a participatory and multisectoral dialogue structure was launched in 2025, organized around three thematic areas: governance, policy, and implementation.

These dialogues were:

1. **Private Sector Dialogue** (April 30, 2025): Convened by the Dominican Agribusiness Board (JAD), this session gathered private sector stakeholders, foundations, and academia to explore priorities and collaboration opportunities in sustainable food systems and climate resilience.
2. **Public Sector Dialogue** (May 20, 2025): Coordinated by the Ministries of Agriculture and the Presidency, this dialogue engaged national and local institutions to identify opportunities for policy alignment and integrated implementation.
3. **High-Level Dialogue** (July 8, 2025): Brought together senior decision-makers, including ministers and parliamentarians, to consolidate outcomes from the previous sessions and reaffirm the country's commitment to advancing convergence between food systems and climate action.

OUTCOMES OF THE HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE

Mr. Manuel Robles, Executive Director of SETESSAN (Technical Secretariat for Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security), opened the session by recognizing the critical moment that the Dominican Republic is experiencing in transforming its food systems in alignment with climate action. He emphasized the importance of interinstitutional coordination and highlighted the country's leadership in aligning food systems transformation with the commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Mr. Robles expressed appreciation for the inclusive and participatory approach adopted throughout the dialogue process and underscored the importance of continuing cross-sectoral collaboration to ensure the outcomes of the dialogue are translated into concrete policies and actions.

Opening Remarks

The event began with welcoming remarks from **Mr. Jose Ignacio Paliza**, Minister of the Presidency and President of the CONASSAN (National Council for Food Security and Nutrition), who underscored the logical connection between food systems and climate change. He highlighted that in a world of extremes, countries like the Dominican Republic must face the challenge of proactively planning resilient food systems. Elevating production, technology, and resilience must go hand in hand with planning for the future and allocating resources to align food systems with climate action. He expressed confidence that this dialogue would foster meaningful convergence between these two agendas.

Statement from the Minister of Agriculture

Mr. Limber Cruz, Minister of Agriculture and Food Systems National Convenor, emphasized that climate change is no longer a future threat but a current reality. He stated that the country must now transition to sustainable, resilient, and climate-smart food systems. The Ministry has already undertaken efforts to align sectoral policies with national climate action, including investment in climate-smart infrastructure, efficient water use, agricultural research and innovation, and the promotion of biologically traceable resilient products. He reiterated the sector's willingness to contribute through joint vision and coordinated action.

Remarks by the Director of the National Council for Climate Change

Mr. Max Puig, Executive Vice President of the National Council for Climate Change and Clean Development Mechanism (CNCCMDL), described climate change as the most significant challenge facing current humanity. He stressed the importance of convergence between food systems and climate agendas to protect people, livelihoods, and ecosystems, and to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. He noted that this dialogue comes at a strategic time, as the country is currently revising its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), offering a timely opportunity to incorporate food systems into these commitments.

FAO Representative's Intervention

Mr. Rodrigo Castañeda, FAO Representative in the Dominican Republic, praised the government for adopting and leading the Convergence Initiative. He noted the country's climate vulnerability and the strategic relevance of prioritizing food systems. He called for coherence between the food systems roadmap and environmental objectives and presented the CAB as a forward-looking tool to guide the country's well-being agenda.

Statement by OTCA Representative

Mr. Víktor Rodríguez, Director of the Office of Agricultural Trade Agreements (OTCA), reaffirmed the Dominican Republic's commitment to a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future in line with the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, the National Food Systems Transformation Pathway and the National Climate Action Plan. He reported that both the Nutricional (CONASSAN) and the CNCCMDL are jointly aligning their agendas to improve governance and mobilize resources. He announced the formation of a National Convergence Group, to be coordinated by the Ministry of the Presidency, which will serve as a monitoring and coordination body across sectors, open to participation from civil society, the private sector, and all stakeholders.

Presentation of the CAB (Convergence Action Plan)

During the session, the CAB was formally presented. The CAB is a strategic and practical framework designed to facilitate synergies between food systems transformation and climate action. It builds upon insights from multisectoral dialogues and aligns with national and international frameworks, including the Dominican Republic's Food Systems Roadmap, SSAN Plan (2023–2026), National Adaptation Plan (PNACC), and the upcoming NDC 3.0 revision.

The presentation highlighted the four strategic pillars of the CAB:

1. **Vision and Convergence Objectives:** Alignment of national goals with global commitments.
2. **Key Interventions:** Integrated governance, investment mobilization, capacity development, and inclusive stakeholder engagement.
3. **Milestones:** Finalization of the CAB, formation of the National Convergence Group, launch of pilot projects, and activation of private sector participation.
4. **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability:** National indicators, feedback mechanisms, and alignment with SDGs and the Paris Agreement.

The plan also recognizes the country's diversified food systems, climate vulnerabilities, and the need for coordinated action to promote sustainable, inclusive, and low-emission development. It calls for an intersectoral, adaptive, and long-term approach, rooted in national priorities and supported by strategic investment.

The power point presentation and the draft of the Convergence Action Blueprint are attached to this report.

OPEN DIALOGUE

The dialogue brought together high-level representatives from across sectors, including the Ministry of the Presidency, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment and Natural

Resources, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Office of Agricultural Trade Agreements (OTCA), the National Council for Climate Change and Clean Development Mechanism (CNCCMDL), the National Council for Food and Nutritional Sovereignty and Security (CONASSAN), FAO, as well as representatives from civil society, the private sector, local governments, academia, and members of the National Congress.

During the open discussion, participants emphasized the importance of incorporating existing legislative frameworks into the CAB, particularly the Law on School Meals and the Water Use Law. These were cited as critical elements for ensuring food security and sustainable resource management. Additionally, there was broad support for aligning CAB interventions with local development plans and ensuring strong territorial implementation, especially in climate-vulnerable regions. The relevance of integrating gender and youth participation was also widely acknowledged.

Next Steps

By 10 July 2025, the Ministry of the Presidency will circulate the draft version of the CAB to all participating ministries and institutions for review and feedback. This collective input will support the finalization of the CAB. Following its validation, an implementation mechanism will be established, and the National Convergence Group will be officially launched to oversee coordination and monitoring across food systems and climate action agendas.