

Convergence Initiative Touchpoint

29 April 2025

Summary Report

View the Concept Note ([link](#))
View the Hub Presentation ([link](#))

Introduction

On 29 April 2025, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (the Hub) convened a [Convergence Initiative Touchpoint](#). It was designed specifically for National Convenors and their teams, as well as for representatives of the UN system, to explore how to accelerate the advancement of national convergence processes. Participants were able to connect, share progress, discuss challenges, and exchange their experiences. The nationally-led processes on aligning food systems transformation and climate action were presented by the pilot countries: these presentations were followed by an interactive discussion among participants. This is a summary report of the combined discussions from the morning and afternoon sessions that took place on 29 April. The key messages derived will be used to inform future convergence processes, including national workshops, UNFSS+4, and COP30.

Setting the Scene

Each Touchpoint opened with framing remarks from Khaled Eltaweel, Senior Programme Coordinator at the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, and representatives from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who emphasized the importance of the initiative supported by the Government of the Netherlands.

Khaled Eltaweel outlined the context of the Touchpoint, which comes at a critical point just 90 days before the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS+4) taking place July 27–29, 2025, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It will serve as the second stocktake to assess progress since the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit ([UNFSS+2](#)). Its objectives are to 1) reflect on national progress with food systems transformation, 2) track partnering and account for commitments, and 3) mobilize finance and unlock investments. Convergence of policies, action and governance among sectors, stakeholders and scientific disciplines are essential elements of the transformation of food systems. The Convergence Initiative contributes to all three objectives of UNFSS+4.

The Convergence Initiative was launched by the UN Deputy Secretary-General at COP28 in 2023, to accelerate sustainable development by encouraging the integration of food systems and climate action. The initiative, supported by 4SD, aims to support national governments in their ongoing efforts to encourage more integrated working across sectors that influence food systems – specifically agriculture, food, climate, environment, health

and nutrition – and greater attention to the lived experience of relevant stakeholders. The initiative encourages the creation of spaces that enable meaningful engagement and collective exploration with a view to realizing more sustainable and resilient food systems. It helps stakeholders identify synergies through working together more effectively and efficiently.

The Convergence Initiative accelerates the adoption of more effective *policy integration*, more inclusive *governance* and more coordinated *implementation*. It encourages the development of a national action plan – the Convergence Action Blueprint – that sets out a vision for convergence, the arrangements for encouraging the process, a timeline of key milestones (UNFSS+4, COP30) and expected next steps.

The representatives from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Stineke Oenema, Senior Policy Advisor for Food Security and Nutrition, and Naomi Sterk, Policy Officer – stressed that the Convergence Initiative encourages ways of working on food and climate issues by connecting people and ideas for systemic change. They emphasized the value of dialogue in advancing food systems transformation and contributing to changes in local settings. The initiative increases the potential for food systems transformation to draw on the collective expertise of a broad range of stakeholders, including women, indigenous communities and youth.

Countries joining the Convergence Initiative are supported throughout by the Hub and UN Country Teams with strategic guidance, as well as technical and financial support. They are accompanied by the 4SD Foundation. Through this initiative, the Hub offers two approaches for the national convergence process, based on the country's needs: Deep dive countries and Dialogue countries. Deep dive countries have been invited to organize national inception workshops with support from the Hub. So far, seven of them have used national workshops to develop Convergence Action Blueprints. They are Brazil, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, and Türkiye. Upcoming workshops are planned for Egypt, Thailand, Somalia and Samoa. Ten to twelve other countries are initiating *Convergence Dialogues* ([link](#)) through processes led by the National Convenor, with the support of the Hub, the 4SD Foundation, and the UN country teams. Dialogues are expected to start in the coming months.

Key Insights from Convergence Initiative countries

Government representatives from seven countries shared their experience of implementing the Convergence Initiative, as well as offering practical advice to others at the early stage of the process. This segment was moderated by David Nabarro, Strategic Director, 4SD Foundation.

Each country in the Convergence Initiative is setting up a Convergence Action Group that will coordinate national dialogues and actions. It is intended that these groups will build on and complement existing national processes and mechanisms, and that duplication is avoided.

The countries that convened National Inception Workshops described how they have brought together National Convenors, climate focal points, representatives from key government ministries, scientific experts, local community leaders, academia, private sector representatives, and UN Country Teams. Most of them have developed [Convergence Action Blueprints](#).

- **Brazil** described how the national inception workshop revealed the need to have an effective communication strategy to raise awareness on the linkages between food systems and changing climate. It is crucial to frame the convergence initiatives as a common opportunity to accelerate commitment. He highlighted that participation in the Convergence Initiative has influenced the decision by the Brazilian Presidency to have food systems as one of six action areas at COP30. Brazil's experience revealed the importance of embracing a territorial lens in order to reflect the local context and include the views of indigenous communities.
 - **Cameroon**, located in the Bassin of Congo, identified nutrition and biodiversity as key areas. To fit local needs, the national workshop encompassed the alignment of not only food systems and climate action agendas, but also nutrition and biodiversity. The workshop resulted in the selection of three priorities of convergence: mitigating emissions in the rice value chain, developing agroecological practices, and implementing the national import-substitution plan. Bankable projects will be developed by the country to present at COP30. Complementing the Convergence Initiative, Cameroon included a day focusing on strengthening the science-policy-society interface to facilitate contributions of youth, women, civil society groups and scientists to food systems transformation. ([Link to presentation.](#))
 - The **Dominican Republic** shared plans to build on an existing mechanism to establish the Convergence Action Group, and to convene a series of three convergence dialogues. They will connect with actors from the private sector as well as decentralized government to discuss convergence of food and climate policies, as well as governance issues and concrete convergence actions. Useful Principles of Engagement have been defined for the convergence dialogues.
 - **Indonesia** described how the national inception workshop started by agreeing on a vision for converging food systems and climate action by 2045. This vision will align with the new President's national development plan priorities. ([Link to presentation.](#))
 - **Jordan's** national inception workshop concluded that the Convergence Initiative is a strategic means to access new finance for food systems transformation. Given the country's context, nutrition was added as a key area to align with, in addition to food systems and climate action. Acknowledging the importance of governance, it proposed the establishment of a committee for convergence under the umbrella of the National Food Security Council with stakeholders from nine different ministries, the private and the finance sector.
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- **Kazakhstan** proposed the establishment of a Convergence Working Group (CWG) at its national inception workshop. The proposal has been submitted to legislators in the expectation that it will be endorsed by a special decree and become a legal entity. This will ensure that the work of the CWG group will have an impact on decisions taken at sub-national (or state) level. The country representative put a particular emphasis on smallholder farmers.
- **Türkiye**, facing water scarcity, rising temperatures and other climate impacts, recognizes the need for a more integrated approach of food systems and climate action. The national inception workshop recognized that the Convergence Initiative can make a powerful contribution to food systems governance, and is already catalyzing partnerships among government entities and other stakeholders, especially at subnational levels.

Insights from the presentations and discussions with National Convenors

The exchange of experiences between countries engaged in the Convergence Initiative reinforced shared learning and action towards integrated food systems and climate solutions. Learnings that were shared by participants in the discussions included:

1. Convergence across sectors and stakeholders is an essential part of food systems transformation and achieving the SDGs.
 2. Convergence work:
 - Helps to increase the contribution of relevant stakeholders (including women, young people, farmers, and indigenous communities) in reducing fragmentation.
 - Should build upon existing policies, programmes and institutional arrangements.
 - Is context-specific and approaches will vary from place to place.
 3. It is helpful if the vision for convergence, and Principles of Engagement, are defined when initiating support for convergence processes. Potentially useful Principles include having human rights at the centre, promoting equity, advancing with urgency, and being inclusive.
 4. The process of the convergence of food systems transformation and climate change is complex. It can be challenging to initiate because sectors and departments tend to work in silos. It should be advanced step by step, always with the vision in mind and with the help of the UN system.
 5. It is more likely to be successful if those concerned:
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- Invest in capacity building.
- Use a holistic systemic lens.
- Introduce convergence working at local levels.
- Have strong political backing;
- Get moving quickly as time may be needed to socialize its utility across different institutions.
- Invest in preparatory work including stakeholder mapping and deep analysis of food systems and climate related policies.

6. Participants requested support from the Hub and the UN system as follows:

- Standard Terms of Reference that define roles and responsibilities for individuals and institutions in Convergence Action Groups.
- Means for supporting the operationalization of Convergence Action Blueprints.
- Means for strengthening capabilities of technical specialists so they appreciate the contributions of food systems transformation to climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Means for accessing finance, especially climate finance, to support food systems transformation.

7. Participants suggested that the urgency of the issues being addressed means that there should be continued focus on the progress of convergence within countries.

During the discussion, several government representatives shared ways in which their country is implementing the convergence of agendas, and expressed interest in joining the Convergence Initiative. Country interventions from the floor included:

- **El Salvador** institutionalized convergence in the food systems roadmap, but closing the gaps between the urgency of the funds and their availability remains a challenge. Given the commitment from the public and private sector, the country is asking for support from the Hub to access additional funds.
 - **Madagascar** noted that the process of convergence is currently being prepared within the Ministry of Environment, and will be implemented through the National Task Force on Food Security as the convergence action group. The country will take the opportunity of drafting the roadmap to UNFSS+4 to ensure a multisectoral approach across ministries. Priority areas in Madagascar are dietary diversity and biodiversity protection.
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- **Mali's** roadmap will soon be finalized with recognition on the need for environmental and climate action, with 50% of resources already mobilized. The country's approach sets itself apart with the prioritization of decentralized solutions to enhance food security at the village level. Leveraging science and engaging youth and women are also central elements.
- **Nepal** was inspired by the country sharing, and will initiate the convergence of agendas in Nepal by calling a meeting for the creation of a sub-committee.
- **Sierra Leone** shared their experience on how the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Initiative can become a key enabler/base for convergence. Due to the previous work on aligning political agendas with nutrition, the convergence around food systems was easily achieved. Key successes are a joint delegation preparing to attend UNFSS+4, and the strong mechanisms led by the President to streamline convergence across ministries.
- **Sri Lanka** shared that a high-level committee on food security has been established, and is organizing regular dialogues to enable convergence. In order to boost these activities, the country is requesting support from the Hub such as Terms of Reference for the convergence groups, and support for unlocking finance for implementation.
- **Sudan** highlighted the impacts of the crisis in the country: a lot of assets were destroyed, undermining agriculture and food systems. Recovery is a political priority, which can be achieved through green recovery and mobilizing finance. The country is asking to join the Convergence Initiative.

The Way Forward

At the end of each Touchpoint session, the Hub's Senior Programme Coordinator, Khaled Eltaweel, stressed that the Convergence Initiative contributes to changing institutional mindsets. It encourages more systemic approaches that will both increase efficiency through the alignment of policies, and deliver more inclusive ways of working. He thanked those who shared their experiences and appreciated the degree of interest in the initiative from all who took part. He indicated that the Hub and the UN System, accompanied by 4SD, will continue to support convergence work in countries. He suggested that national progress with convergence work – and its contribution to both sustainable development and climate action – be shared by country delegations in two milestone events: UNFSS+4 in July 2025 in Ethiopia, and COP30 in November 2025 in Brazil.
