

**Table for Tomorrow: Innovation for a Sustainable Food Future  
An Independent Food Systems Summit Dialogue at Davos 2024  
Convened by Bayer and Clim-Eat**

**PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT**

**HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED, AND ENHANCED?**

This dialogue is part of a series co-hosted by Bayer and Clim-Eat, seeking to identify priorities and next steps to implement the innovation agenda. Planning was conducted in a series of substantive discussions among the two hosts—Bayer and Clim-Eat. Diverse stakeholders were consulted for their input. Planning focused on achieving the SDGs by 2030 – requiring a deep and bold transformation to produce food systems that are inclusive, efficient, nutritious, and healthy. With 2030 on the horizon and food systems globally reeling from the impacts of COVID-19, geopolitical conflicts, climate change, and the increase in food prices, achieving this transformation will depend on our ability to innovate in a way that is broad, inclusive, and encompass all of society. The UN Food Systems Summit identified four innovation areas: societal and institutional, national, and regional, data and digital, and knowledge and technological innovation. This interactive, high-level dialogue convened 70 participants from various stakeholder groups (including farmers, researchers, international organizations, and businesses) and regions (Africa, Asia, Americas, and the EU). The objectives of the dialogue were to explore innovative solutions, promote transformative investments, and foster accountability through innovation. Speakers involved in planning, presenting, and facilitating the dialogue included leaders from NGOs such as the Food Systems Summit (David Nabarro, Strategic Director, 4SD Foundation); Clim-Eat (Dhanush Dinesh, Founder and Executive Director, and Leanne Zeppenfeldt, Collaboration & Learning Architect); the Innovation Commission at the University of Chicago (Paul Winters); the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) (Jennifer Baarn, Head of Partnerships); the World Farmer Organisation (Arnold Puech d’Alissac, President); executives from Bayer (including Rodrigo Santos, Global President of Bayer Crop Science, and Gabriela Burian, Global Partnerships, Multi-Stakeholder Platform Lead); and global business leaders (including Paul Polman, former CEO, Unilever).

**HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?**

Each breakout group facilitator was provided guidance in advance of the Dialogue regarding the principles of engagement: to **act with urgency, commit to the Summit, be respectful, recognize complexity, embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity, complement the work of others, and build trust.**

These principles were stressed by all speakers: David Nabarro, Strategic Director of 4SD; Jennifer Baarn, Head of Partnerships, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA); Arnold Puech d’Alissac, President the World Farmer Organization; Dhanush Dinesh, Founder and Executive Director, Clim-Eat; and Rodrigo Santos, President, Bayer Crop

Science. They emphasized the vital importance of building trust – long term trust, working in collaboration, and the urgency of action, in addition to the value of having and respecting diverse views, and the opportunity to listen and learn in order to find synergies and the most effective solutions. Speakers stressed the goal of ecosystem transformation to the last mile, which often means partnering with governments; financial and risk protection for farmers; and the imperative for investment in innovation and systems change. The Summit principles were also reflected in the facilitators’ reports back to all participants in the last segment of the Dialogue.

### **DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?**

It is important for hosts and conveners to engage with diverse stakeholders from the outset - particularly in determining the theme and breakout group topics, as well as groups and individuals to be invited. This ensures that a variety of perspectives are considered in planning a meaningful discussion that respects the urgency, complexity, and multi-stakeholder nature of solutions, actions, and collaboration, as well as the importance of building trust. It is also necessary to be clear in all communications with co-hosts, facilitators, and participants about the importance of acting with urgency, committing to the Summit, recognizing the complexity of food systems, embracing multi-stakeholder inclusivity, complementing the work of others, and building trust.

### **DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES**

#### **MAJOR FOCUS**

Hosted by Bayer and Clim-Eat, at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2024 in Davos, this Dialogue brought together seventy global leaders representing diverse stakeholder groups, including farmers, researchers, international organizations, and businesses from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the European Union. Participants came together for high-level interactive discussions to plan next steps in implementing the actions that were established at the UN Food Systems Summit. Following brief opening presentations, participants split into seven groups for intensive, facilitated discussions to plan next steps to advance food systems transformation.

#### **The dialogue’s objectives were to:**

1. **Explore innovative solutions:** Delving into the private sector’s innovative strategies and pioneering initiatives to transform food systems.
2. **Promote transformative investments:** Examining the challenges and achievements in scaling up transformative private sector investments in food systems. Emphasizing the importance of effective public resources and incentive frameworks, guiding discussions on how these investments can be harnessed for substantial social and environmental impact.
3. **Foster accountability through innovation:** Discussing the implementation of robust accountability mechanisms, inspired by voluntary commitments from leading

companies and associations. Exploring how these mechanisms, rooted in innovation, can ensure that private sector investments deliver desirable social and environmental outcomes, paving the way for a responsible and sustainable food future.

**The MAJOR FOCUS topics from the group discussions were:**

- 1. Leadership:** What are our roles, from CEOs to each and every one of us?
- 2. Investment:** How do we get more investment into innovation?
- 3. Collaboration:** What are the most effective models of collaboration?

**MAIN FINDINGS**

**ACTIONS**

1. Scale innovative private sector investments in food systems transformation.
2. Recognize the need for robust public resources and incentives.
3. Recognize the power of innovation to ensure that investments yield impactful, socially desirable, and environmentally sustainable outcomes.
4. Understand that collaboration can mean giving up some power in order to combine efforts.
5. Put farmers at the center; they must be partners from the outset.
6. Partnering with governments is necessary in order to foster ecosystems transformation that reach the last mile.
7. Recognize that everyone can lead and/or innovate.

**OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC (the 7 groups) (<4,200 characters each)**

**Discussion Topic, Group 1:** Leadership: What are our roles, from CEOs to each and every one of us?

**ACTIONS**

Orchestrate the right group of people to work together to

1. Drive systemic change, by fostering conversations, convening all members of the value chain from farm to fork, scaling solutions fast, and providing risk capital where it needs to go.
2. Train and develop new leaders, coach them to work together, and enable them to set a joint vision and targets.

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

Drive systemic change by:

1. Leading transformation together, rather than individually, to accelerate the race towards sustainable food systems.
2. Scaling existing solutions fast. We have the technology.

**Discussion Topic, Group 2: Leadership:** What are our roles, from CEOs to each and every one of us?

### **ACTIONS**

1. Balance profit and sustainability.
2. Drive a bottom-up approach.

### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

The importance of gaining insights through on-the-ground experiences, including by C-suite executives; sharing across sectors and players more inclusively; redesigning processes; learning from the bottom up by connecting with multi-stakeholders; recognizing the value of storytelling & narrative; acting swiftly.

**Discussion Topic, Group 3: Leadership:** What are our roles, from CEOs to each and every one of us?

### **ACTIONS**

1. Define the goal/vision. Agree on a North Star that will help facilitate a transition away from unhealthy and unsustainable food sector systems; align strategically.
2. Encourage innovation by embracing failure, including by celebrating failure in companies.
3. Apply systems thinking: Map and clarify the roles for players in the food system to work together to drive systemic change.
4. Recognize that every employee can be a leader, and if not a leader, then an innovator.

**Discussion Topic, Group 4: Investment:** How do we get more investment into innovation?

### **ACTIONS**

1. Get innovations into the hands of SMEs.
2. Improve distribution models.
3. Provide educational resources to help farmers make the necessary transition.
4. Build trust across sectors.
5. Understand farmers' needs.
6. Test, trial and prove the business case – for farmers, entrepreneurs, and innovators.
7. Look at systems solutions for scaling.
8. Accelerate the adoption of individual innovators/innovations.
9. Integrate systemic overlay to address complementary gaps.
10. Create tools to encourage consumers to pull innovations from supply chain.
11. Provide information to consumers on product attributes.
12. Understand that LDC consumers are not willing to pay premiums (like for organic).

**Discussion Topic, Group 5: Investment:** How do we get more investment into innovation?

### **ACTIONS**

1. Continue driving innovation – with venture capital; social impact funds supporting transition to a sustainable food future, using impact and return metrics, including SDGs and GHGs; managing risks.
2. Drive systemic change across the whole food chain; looking at pain points to support the roll out of innovations; technology transfer; government can fill gaps.
3. Address the challenge, which is the need to convince investors of market opportunities.

**Discussion Topic, Group 6: Collaboration:** What are the most effective models of collaboration?

### **ACTIONS**

1. Leverage the role of philanthropy to be the catalyst for collaboration.

- Avoid the traps to focus on low hanging fruit/best bets.
- Choose the “funder”/model with care.

2. Build TRUST in these partnerships.

- Trust of Intent
- Trust of Delivery
- Trust of Strategic Alignment
- Never have we had so many partnerships/coalitions.

Identify the MUTUALITY of contribution/benefit. This will strengthen unusual cross sector collaboration.

Respect each other – a fundamental factor in advancing collaboration.

3. Goals that companies have set can drive greater collaboration.

- Unlock venture capital to pilot innovations that can then be replicated.
- Advance partnerships that are more strategic, less transactional, by making it about learning, co-creating, and collaborating.
- Institutionalize a partnership culture.

4. Encourage C-suite executives to go in the field to learn from what is happening on the ground.

**Discussion Topic, Group 7: Investment:** How do we get more investment into innovation?

### **ACTIONS**

1. Open licensing – open some data while allowing business models. Consider the spectrum of open to proprietary models.
2. Create platforms for collaboration.

3. Create vertical partnerships to share value through systems – to share equitably.
4. Encourage context-specificity.
5. Drive collaboration by market demand.
6. Start with a positive image of collaborative outcomes.
7. Align collaboration around market demand and conditions.

### **AREAS OF DIVERGENCE**

Differences in focus and emphasis were mostly related to each person's personal experience and expertise – depending on their institutional affiliations and perspectives. For example, people in the business sector emphasized the importance of accelerating investments in innovation. People who work with farmers focused on their interests, including the variations depending on regions. People who work more closely to communities on-the-ground stressed the importance of solutions being developed *with* groups that are local and adapted accordingly. This was in fact the value of having people from diverse sectors present concerns and potential solutions from their respective perspectives. Throughout, however, participants adhered to the summit principles of engagement, including recognizing complexity, embracing multi-stakeholder inclusivity, complementing the work of others, and building trust. The in-person nature of the Dialogue helped to foster respect among participants.