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**Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises:
the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions**

From Summits to Systemic Change: Progress in Food Systems Transformation Since UNFSS+2

Report of the UN Secretary-General

Introduction

By offering a synthesis of developments since the 2023 UN Food Systems Summit+2 (UNFSS+2) – Stocktaking Moment, the present report, "From Summits to Systemic Change: Progress in Food Systems Transformation Since UNFSS+2," presents the key takeaways from the UNFSS+2, including the UN Secretary General's Call to Action for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation. The Call to Action signals the collective ambition, determination and vision among the international community to meet our goals on zero hunger, food security and nutrition. Building on this momentum, the report also underscores specific tracks advancements, with significant initiatives and partnerships emerging as critical drivers of accelerated food systems transformation and advocates championing future actions to meet the ambitious goals of the next Stocktaking Moment in 2025.

1. Advancing Global Food Systems: Key Takeaways From UNFSS+2

1.1. The 2023 UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment - UNFSS+2 In Numbers

The 2023 UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment - UNFSS+2, convened by the UN Secretary-General and hosted by the Government of Italy, in Rome July 2023, gathered a diverse assembly of stakeholders from across the globe, drawing over 3300 in-person attendees, including government representatives from 182 national delegations, 21 Heads of state or government, 126 ministerial-level participants and 100 Food Systems National Convenors, alongside representatives from more than 200 non-state actor organizations and nearly 900 participants from the UN and other international bodies. The event also attracted a significant online audience, with thousands of virtual participants and extensive real-time viewership across its sessions, further amplifying its global reach and impact.

This impressive attendance elevated the positioning of this biennial event as a key forum for advancing global food system transformation. The Stocktaking moment not only sustained the global commitment to transforming food systems as a pivotal catalyst for sustainable development, in line with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, it provided a platform to assess the progress made since the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), including through food systems national pathways launched in 2021. A thorough depiction of country progress derived from a comprehensive analysis of the 101 country reports voluntarily submitted to the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (“the Hub”) between May and June 2023¹ is presented in the 2023 Secretary-General's report “Making food systems work for people and planet - UN Food Systems Summit +2”².

1.2. Country Progress And Challenges In The First Biennium

The global stocktaking exercise, as reported in the 2023 Secretary-General's report, revealed that two-thirds of the participating countries have successfully embedded their food systems transformation vision into their national strategies and sectoral plans. Additionally, a quarter of countries have started reflecting food systems priorities within their national laws and regulations, revealing increasing legislative engagement in this critical space.

Progress in planning and governance was also notable; sixty percent of countries have begun developing implementation plans for their national pathways, while

¹ The total number of Voluntary reports received as of 31 July 2023 stands at 109.

² https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/un-secretary-general/sgreport_en_rgb_updated_compressed.pdf?sfvrsn=560b6fa6_33

approximately the same proportion has either established or enhanced platforms for national food systems governance. Notably, 70% of countries have modified their governance processes to incorporate a food systems approach more effectively.

Decentralization efforts were reported by one-third of countries, by moving food systems initiatives into sub-national jurisdictions with dedicated coordination mechanisms. This local engagement is complemented by nearly half of the countries continuing food systems dialogues at both national and sub-national levels, aiming to refine their pathways further.

Financial strategies to support these transformations are also taking shape. Forty percent of countries are actively assessing financing gaps, and 36% have developed investment strategies to attract both public and private financial resources. Additionally, approximately 37% of countries report that domestic public funds are being specifically allocated to support activities related to food systems transformation.

When it comes to engagement with stakeholders, so far, those involved in food production, processing, trade, distribution, and retail have been prioritized. While women's organizations are also frequently engaged, youth and Indigenous Peoples networks are not yet systematically involved. Most governments also report close engagement with scientific groups both for developing information systems and for building the capabilities of personnel involved in food systems. Finally, nearly two-thirds of countries indicate that information systems are being upgraded, while over two-thirds reports that actions have been taken to facilitate access to knowledge, science, evidence, and technology.

Despite these encouraging signs of countries moving in the right direction, from their own depiction of challenges, countries continue to grapple with a variety of bottlenecks. The complex, ever-changing crisis contexts require continual responses and adaptation, often without sufficient political support for both immediate crisis responses and long-term systemic changes. Transitions in political leadership further disrupt continuity, although in about 15% of cases, established national pathways have helped align new administrations with ongoing broader transformation agendas.

Other operational challenges include pending government endorsement of new policies and laws, and the slow, strenuous process of operationalizing action plans, especially when financial and technical resources are scarce. This is particularly acute in small island developing states and conflict-affected areas. Financially, the fragmentation of funding sources complicates efforts to mobilize the necessary capital. With a mix of domestic and international, public and private funds, aligning financial streams with transformation goals remains a daunting task.

Technical capacity deficits also pose significant hurdles, with a pronounced shortage of skilled personnel to implement a holistic, systems-based approach. This is especially critical in low-income countries that struggle to access needed technical assistance. Infrastructure deficiencies in many countries exacerbate issues, as inadequate facilities for storage, transport, and processing lead to significant food losses and restricted market access.

Furthermore, the labor-intensive nature of coordinating inclusive, participatory processes for food systems transformation presents additional challenges. These processes demand extensive time and effort to manage stakeholder engagement, address power imbalances, and build trust. Practitioners must also be able to communicate the long-term nature of these changes, which requires sustained commitment and adaptive strategies to achieve meaningful and sustainable transformation.

1.3. Food Systems at The Center of Global Development Challenges And Solutions: Key Messages From The UNFSS+2

Throughout the UNFSS +2 several key messages emerged resonating across the 33 session streams. The messages reflected a universal recognition of the urgent need for transformative action and intrinsic interdependencies within food systems and among other key transitions. The importance of a whole-of-society approach was also a recurring message, promoting collaborative efforts involving multiple stakeholders, such as youth, women, and indigenous communities at all levels of governance. Messaging also focused on enhancing the roles and involvement of key stakeholders as key contributors to shape sustainable solutions, and prioritizing gender equality and the role of youth in leading and implementing change.

The UNFSS+2 highlighted a growing global realization that improving food systems can significantly influence broader sustainability goals, including economic growth and stability, social protection, gender equity, health and nutritional outcomes, environmental sustainability, wastes and post-harvest losses and resilience. Participants acknowledged the evolving complexities of food insecurity and malnutrition, exacerbated by economic shocks, climate change, extreme weather variability, and ongoing global conflicts, calling for more integrated, innovative solutions that address these multifaceted challenges.

Throughout the three days, the interconnections between climate action and food systems were prominently featured, with discussions on aligning efforts to address climate change impacts, especially water, and food security simultaneously, especially in the context of upcoming global climate summits. The discussions underscored the urgent need to embed sustainability and resilience into the core of food system practices, using approaches like circular economy and sustainable consumption and production models to mitigate environmental impacts, secure integrated natural resource management, and promote long-term resilience.

Enhancing nutrition and health through sustainable food systems was another central discussion point, with a focus on promoting healthy diets that are culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable. This also includes addressing the global rise in malnutrition by supporting accessible and healthy food choices and ensure access to clear water and sanitation services.

When it comes to the Means of Implementation, there was a strong emphasis on the need for innovative financing and trade measures to support the transformation of food systems across the full food value chain. Discussions highlighted various financial tools and mechanisms that could be utilized to redirect resources more effectively, fostering collaborative partnerships, including between public and private sectors.

The importance of a whole-of-society approach was a recurring theme, stressing the need for collaborative efforts involving multiple stakeholders at all levels of governance. This includes enhancing the roles and involvements of key stakeholders such as youth, women, and indigenous communities, ensuring that they are key contributors to shaping sustainable solutions and prioritizing gender equality and enhancing the role of youth in leading and implementing change.

An unanimous call was made for moving from conceptual frameworks to the practical implementation of solutions, which entails adopting context-specific, innovative, and coordinated policy measures, investment strategies, and governance models tailored to unique local and national circumstances. The UNFSS+2 discussions reinforced the need for data-driven approaches and the application of scientific knowledge to inform and guide food system policies and practices. Finally, the significance of global collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and practices among countries were highlighted.

1.4. Beyond Consultations: Stakeholder Contributions to Global Food Systems Transformation

Stakeholders played an important role in shaping the discussions and outcomes of the UNFSS+2. They were involved, in various capacities, in preparations, through their participation in regional and global meetings organized to identify priorities for the Stocktaking Moment. These meetings highlighted the essential contributions of food system actors from civil society, private sector, academia, and others, integrating their insights into the Stocktaking Moment's preparatory work.

They also fed into the UNFSS+2 process through a Stakeholders' Contribution Document, gathering insights from a wide array of stakeholders on the progress and challenges of implementing food systems transformations since the last summit. The findings, analyzed and refined through peer review by the Hub's Stakeholders Engagement and Networking Advisory Group (SENA Group), offer

a rich perspective on the collective efforts and individual contributions to shaping sustainable food systems globally.

The document highlights the proactive engagement of various stakeholders including women, Indigenous Peoples, youth, farmers/producers, NGOs, academic institutions, and businesses in raising awareness, capacity building, and policy advocacy. These groups have also significantly contributed to safe food production, sustainable agricultural practices, and effective policy dialogues at local, regional, and global levels.

However, stakeholders report persistent challenges such as fragmented food systems visions, inconsistent government priorities, and inadequate resource allocation. These challenges are exacerbated by the lack of technical expertise and financial support at local government levels, particularly affecting groups such as women and Indigenous Peoples. Recognizing equity as a key dimension of food systems transformation, the report advocates for targeted efforts to support youth, women, and Indigenous Peoples by addressing discriminatory norms and ensuring their active participation in policy dialogues. Another key recommendation is a call for the development of multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral architectures to improve food systems governance at national levels, to integrate diverse stakeholder perspectives and address specific resource needs.

Based on a Call for Expression of Interest for Non-State Actors, 225 organizations participated in the UNFSS+2, underscoring the Stocktaking Moment's inclusive and society-wide approach. In addition to being visibly present in the main programme, stakeholders also engaged in side-events and exhibitions which facilitated a comprehensive exchange of ideas and best practices among actors from different sectors and regions, enhancing the collaborative framework of the Summit+2.

The UNFSS+2 discussions, outlined the significant roles and impacts of various stakeholder groups including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, businesses, and producers in the context of food systems transformation. The role of women and youth was emphasized as central to the implementation of food system strategies and Indigenous Peoples were recognized for their unique perspectives and knowledge systems, crucial for sustainable food systems, for example in maintaining biodiversity and ecological health. The involvement of businesses and producers was also highlighted as key to driving innovation and investment in food systems. They are seen as essential for implementing scalable solutions and mobilizing resources needed for food system transformation.

1.5. A Unified Blueprint for Sustainable Food Systems: Priorities from the Secretary-General's Call to Action

Building on these insights, the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation, issued at the conclusion of UNFSS+2,

charts a clear and comprehensive pathway for Member States and the whole Ecosystem of Support as they prepare for the upcoming UNFSS+4 in 2025. This roadmap highlights six priority areas essential for shaping sustainable, equitable, and resilient food systems integral to achieving Agenda 2030.

Firstly, the Call to Action emphasizes the integration of food systems strategies into all national policies and development priorities to place food systems at the heart of sustainable development actions. It advocates for the revision of sectoral policies, legal, and regulatory frameworks to operationalize holistic Food System visions, aligning with National Pathways.

Second, effective food systems governance is highlighted as requiring the engagement of a diverse array of stakeholders across multiple sectors, incorporating transparent and accountable procedures. The importance of multilevel governance mechanisms is underscored, with a significant role attributed to subnational authorities in addressing local food system specifics within national strategies. Regional collaborations are also promoted as vital for enhancing national efforts, sharing context-relevant knowledge, and addressing cross-border issues, especially in times of compounded shocks where governance must balance immediate crisis responses with long-term solutions to foster resilience.

Two key priority areas advocate for strengthening participatory processes, particularly for stakeholders such as women, Indigenous Peoples, and youth, with the use of national and subnational dialogues encouraged for fostering inclusivity and mutual accountability. Fifth, the private sector's significant influence is acknowledged as a powerful lever for change and increasing engagement with businesses positioned as way to provide opportunities to leverage financial resources, innovation capabilities, and market reach to implement sustainable practices, reduce food waste, and promote healthier food options. A necessary corollary is the need to strengthening accountability mechanisms to ensure transparency and responsible behavior by private sector actors, ultimately aiming to deliver fair and just outcomes.

Sixth, recognizing that transformations in food systems hinge on the knowledge, understanding, and capacity of the actors and institutions driving them, the Call to Action calls for bolstered capacity-building and greater access to expertise in science, innovation, and research. Additionally, the Call to Action highlights key thematic priorities such as climate alignment, resilience, and nutrition, alongside essential enablers such as capacity-building, collaboration, ecosystem optimization, and enhanced UN coordination.

2. Post-UNFSS+2, Global Milestones Put Wind In The Sails Of The Food Systems Agenda

2.1. The SDG Summit: Confirming Food Systems Transformation as a key SDG accelerator

Pathways to 2030: Food Systems Transformation and other key entry points for SDG Acceleration

Echoing the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report's (GSDR), the 2023 edition of the GSDR, issued ahead of the SDG Summit, emphasized transformative and integrated approaches as extraordinary opportunities to achieve Agenda 2030. The 2023 edition confirms that action through the six entry points put forward in the 2019 GSDR could significantly accelerate SDG achievement³.

The GSDR 2023 provides a thorough analysis of the transformations needed in food systems as part of a broader effort to achieve sustainable development. Given the interconnections between various sustainable development goals (SDGs), transforming food systems could significantly impact goals related to poverty alleviation, health improvement, biodiversity conservation, and climate action. The report discusses several crucial shifts and interventions required to enhance the sustainability of food systems. For example, to improve food affordability and availability, efforts are needed to increase sustainable yields and lessen environmental impacts. This involves adopting farming techniques that reduce the use of resources like water and fertilizers and refining retail and distribution practices to cut waste. Equally crucial are demand-side actions, which promote healthier, varied diets and promote less resource-intensive eating habits. Transforming food systems, however, faces obstacles such as traditional agricultural practices, resistance from established agribusiness, and logistical challenges in modifying supply chains.

Across all the entry points, the GSDR 2023 calls for action to minimize impediments and support promising solutions specific to different phases of transformation – emergence, acceleration and stabilization. These actions should also simultaneously destabilize, break-down, and phase out unsustainable practices.

The 2023 SDG Summit: turning the world towards 2030

The 2023 SDG Summit, convened by the United Nations in New York, focused on revitalizing efforts towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development amidst a backdrop of global crises. World leaders at the summit reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda, recognizing the need for bold and transformative

³ The six entry points are : human well-being and capabilities, sustainable and just economies, food systems and nutrition patterns, energy decarbonization and universal access, urban and peri-urban development, and the global environmental commons

actions to overcome the multifaceted crises slowing progress. One of the critical areas identified was the need to eradicate poverty, dramatically improve food security and transform towards sustainable food systems.

Unsurprisingly, food systems featured very prominently in the “Call to action – turning our world towards 2030” of the Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly⁴.

The declaration emphasizes that eradicating poverty and significantly improving food security are central to the global agenda. It recognizes the deep interconnections between poverty, food security, and sustainable agriculture, highlighting the vulnerability of food systems to climate change, economic disparities, and global instability. The commitment to ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition is articulated as a priority, with a specific focus on ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round. This involves promoting sustainable agricultural practices and resilient food systems that are crucial for both human and planetary health.

As part of the SDG Summit, FAO along with its partners, launched the High Impact Initiative on Food Systems Transformation during the Action Weekend. This FAO-led initiative, in collaboration with two other Rome-based agencies, IFAD and WFP, as well as the World Bank, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), builds on the outcomes of the 2021 Food Systems Summit and aims to mobilize commitments to ensure food security and promote healthy diets globally. Italy, Japan, United Arab Emirates and FAO also co-organized a Ministerial Side Event titled “Catalyzing global action for sustainable and resilient agri-food systems transformation to accelerate SDGs”. The event, moderated by Agnes Kalibata, UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy to the 2021 Food Systems Summit, put the emphasis on the linkages between food security, sustainable growth, global stability, conflicts, ongoing global health challenges and climate change.

The SDG Summit marked a resolve by the UN System to fully lean on the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda, and address current development practices which often continue to operate in silos, leading to disjointed strategies and processes that are poorly aligned with global aims. To operationalize this shift, six key transitions: food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, have been identified as having the potential to generate multiplier effects, acting as catalysts for broader transformation across multiple systems and SDGs. Each transition requires a multi-faceted policy approach that acknowledges the interconnectedness of the SDGs, ensuring that efforts are not only additive but

⁴ The Declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development was adopted 18 September during the Sustainable Development Goals Summit

multiplicative, enhancing each other's effectiveness.

2.2. COP28: a watershed moment for the food systems agenda

The UAE Declaration: Elevating Agriculture and Food Systems in Climate Change Action

Building on the momentum generated in recent years, at UNFCCC COP28 in the UAE, in 2023, a transformative moment was marked by placing agriculture and food systems at the forefront of the climate agenda. The commitments at COP28 demonstrated a global consensus on the critical role of agriculture in climate change mitigation, adaptation and finance. The COP28 “UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action”, represents a comprehensive framework endorsed by 159 nations, underscoring the urgent need for food systems to adapt and evolve in response to climate imperatives, for significant transformative action by 2025. Key areas of focus include enhancing national strategies, mobilizing diverse forms of finance, driving innovation, and fostering international trade and cooperation.

Several strategic partnerships and initiatives to support the implementation of the Declaration, including the Convergence Initiative, launched by the Hub, and the Technical Cooperation Collaborative (TCC), together aim to provide tailored technical support to countries as they seek to advance their commitments under the Declaration. There are a suite of other initiatives, such as new pledges to the Agricultural Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM4C); the Agricultural Innovation Mission for Scale (AIM4Scale); a Non-State Actor Call to Action in support of the Declaration; the Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes; Financing the Future of Food (F3) initiative; the Agrifood Sharm-El Sheikh Support Program; and, the COP28 Food-Agri-Climate National Action Toolkit for National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). COP28 also fostered a platform for the inception meeting of the Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) Partnership, initially launched at COP27.

Flagship reports such as the FAO Roadmap and emerging World Bank Recipe for a Livable Planet laid out compelling evidence-based visions of where and how the world needs to arrive, within the context of a 1.5 degree world, to deliver social priorities in different contexts.

As the world looks to future climate negotiations, the groundwork laid at COP28 offers a promising path forward for international cooperation to integrate food systems into broader climate action. In addition to creating a robust foundation for ongoing multi-stakeholder collaboration, enhancing the political will necessary to drive needed change, the UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action sets specific milestones for future COPs,

including detailed reviews of progress at COP29 in Azerbaijan and COP30 in Brazil.

The Convergence Initiative: integrating food systems and climate action at global, regional and country levels

On "Food and Water Day" at COP28, a high-level event saw the launch of the Convergence Initiative on Food Systems and Climate by the UN Deputy Secretary-General. This initiative led by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, represents the culmination of the strategic partnership between the Hub and the COP28 Presidency announced during the UNFSS+2. It aims to facilitate the implementation of the UNFSS+2 Secretary General's Call to Action and the COP28 UAE Declaration at the national level, supporting countries, their national convenors, and other critical actors as they pursue ambitious transformations of food systems to enhance climate action, and vice versa.

The Convergence Initiative aims to support national efforts to advance the alignment between the food systems transformation and climate action agendas, to enable governments and stakeholders at national level, to strengthen synergetic action that will simultaneously support the achievement of the SDGs, and the Paris Climate Agreement. This includes ensuring that NDCs, NAPs, and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are refined to reflect priorities of the National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation and *vice versa*. This alignment is particularly crucial as nations prepare to develop ambitious third-generation NDCs by early 2025.

In the lead-up to COP29 and COP30, the Convergence initiative will support countries navigate the complexities as they delve into optimizing the alignment between various agenda and across diverse sectors and stakeholder groups. This involves a critical review of evidence to support decision-making, the use of strategies to enhance synergies and address often politically sensitive trade-offs. This comprehensive work is expected to prompt revisions in key policy documents, including national food systems transformation pathways and NDCs, ensuring they more effectively reflect integrated approaches.

3. Sustaining Momentum at the Country-Level and Within the National Convenors' Network

3.1. The 2024 Regional Meetings

Building on the regional meetings organized in 2023 in preparation of UNFSS+2, between March and April 2024, the Hub organized a second series of face-to-face Regional Meetings with Food Systems National Convenors. These meetings once again took place in the margins of the regional sustainable development Fora to ground these interim regional review processes within broader SDGs processes and expose convenors to opportunities to network and get deeper insight into connections between SDGs and transitions. The 2024 regional meetings took place in Beirut for countries in the Arab Region (6 March), Geneva for Europe and Central Asia (12 March), Chile for Latin America and the Caribbean (April 16), Addis for Africa (April 22) and Bangkok for Asia and the Pacific region (April 29). They were organized in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions, the Regional Offices of the UN Agencies supporting the Hub, and other relevant UN and regional entities. They were also complemented by five side events held during the Regional Fora for Sustainable Development themselves, which helped maintain the visibility of food systems transformation as an accelerator for implementing the SDGs.

These Regional Meetings primarily targeted National Convenors but also included important stakeholders and actors including representatives from civil society, the private sector, UN Resident Coordinators (RCs), members of UN Country Teams, and other actors in the Ecosystem of Support.

Their objectives were multidimensional, aiming to share progress made since the UNFSS+2 STM and to facilitate regional knowledge exchange by identifying emerging patterns and solutions. These gatherings also focused on acquainting participants with the six areas of action outlined in the UN Secretary-General's call to action, preparing the ground for the next Stocktaking Moment in 2025. Moreover, they paved the way for enhanced regional collaboration and community building by exploring strategies for future collaborative efforts among participating countries and stakeholders. The Hub convergence initiative was also further presented and precious feedback harvested.

Overall, the regional meetings confirmed that the momentum and commitment post-UNFSS+2 remained high at country level. 127 countries have now formulated national pathways, compared to 111 at the time of the Summit in 2021. In many countries, the pathways are considered dynamic documents, being revised and updated, and complemented with action plans to bolster implementation. Across the board, the shift towards a more inclusive approach, strengthened governance, and dialogue with previously untapped actors are noteworthy.

During each of the regional meetings, interactive discussions on effective governance were crafted into the programme. Food systems governance is essential in fostering national ownership and advancing broad policy areas crucial for food system transformation. During the 2024 regional meetings, countries shared valuable insights and experiences highlighting the critical role of inclusive multisectoral and multistakeholder governance structures. These interactive dialogues revealed that such collaborative governance leads to more comprehensive and sustainable food system policies that are beneficial across society. However, implementing these inclusive processes is not without its challenges. Country representatives shared that organizing such expansive governance frameworks is resource-intensive, requiring significant time, financial investments, and dedicated personnel. Moreover, practitioners must navigate power imbalances and build trust among stakeholders, who often have varying degrees of influence and access to decision-making processes. Ensuring equal representation and active participation from all food system actors, including governments, farmer associations, businesses, civil society, IFIs, scientific institutions, and media, is therefore crucial.

A holistic approach to transformation is being advocated, addressing the economic, social, and sustainable aspects of food systems and emphasizing the need for context-specific solutions that ensure overall well-being. Furthermore, the role of the private sector in driving investment and innovation in food systems transformation was acknowledged, highlighting the need for governmental support to create an enabling environment for private investments and enhancing corporate accountability frameworks.

Participants in the regional meetings underscored that transforming food systems is a long-term endeavor that cannot be achieved overnight. It requires a commitment to incremental steps, adaptive approaches, and continuous learning to ensure that progress is both impactful and enduring. Through national and sub-national food system dialogues, countries continue to refine and improve their pathways for implementation, demonstrating the dynamic nature of food system transformation and the ongoing effort required to maintain momentum towards sustainable development goals. The need to use scientifically sound data to guide national strategies and monitor progress was also seen as essential.

Finally, empowerment of national convenors has also been identified as a priority, with the Hub requested to play a crucial role in supporting capacity building and fostering interactions with RCs and other stakeholders.

The importance of regional collaboration and solidarity was emphasized, with calls for forging partnerships, sharing best practices, and mobilizing resources to enhance self-sufficiency and promote food security.

3.2. Integrated support from the United Nations System and a maturing ecosystem of support

The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub

Since its creation, the Hub has been instrumental in helping countries turn their national food systems pathways into practical, SDG-aligned strategies by mobilizing a broad Ecosystem of Support, including coalitions, NGOs, the private sector, and research institutions. Many examples of the Hub's work over the past two years are illustrated throughout this document, ie. coordinating the organization of the UNFSS+2, leading the comprehensive Country voluntary progress reporting, partnering with the COP28 Presidency, designing and launching the Convergence Initiative, organizing regional meetings in 2023 and 2024, partnering with and mapping the Ecosystem of support, stakeholders' engagement through the SENA Group.

In addition, one of the Hub's significant financial and technical support efforts includes the Startup Fund, which has played an important role in catalyzing the implementation of national pathways in 14 countries⁵. By providing targeted financial resources, the Startup Fund enabled these countries to move swiftly from planning to action.

Each recipient country has utilized the fund to address unique challenges and opportunities within its food systems context. For instance, the fund has supported the development of inclusive and cross-sectoral food system governance structures in countries like Kenya, Somalia, and Tajikistan, ensuring that various stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society, and private sector participants, are involved in the transformation process. Moreover, in Nepal and Nigeria, the fund has helped localize national pathways, aligning them with specific local needs and capabilities, which is crucial for the nuanced application of overarching national strategies.

The success of the Startup Fund in fostering rapid implementation is also evidenced by its role in the development of costed action plans in countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania. These plans are vital for clearly outlining the steps and resources needed to achieve the desired outcomes in food systems transformation. Additionally, the fund's impact extends to the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks in Nigeria and Timor Leste, which are critical for tracking progress and making informed adjustments to ensure the effectiveness of food systems policies and interventions. Overall, the Startup Fund exemplifies the Hub's commitment to providing practical, immediate support to countries, enabling them to implement their food systems transformation strategies

⁵ Support to these 14 countries was funded through FAO core funding, the FAO Flexible Multi-partner Mechanism (FMM) and the Norway funded project "Fast-tracking food system transformation in selected countries through support to national pathways implementation"

effectively and sustainably.

Through strategic thought leadership, the Hub has also integrated systems thinking into global and national agendas. The Hub established the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to enhance the science-policy interface. Key initiatives like the creation of a Country Dashboard and a Database of good practices have enhanced the tracking of progress at national level. Furthermore, the Hub has continued to conduct monthly solution dialogues, quarterly regional touchpoints, and annual face to face meetings to foster a dynamic exchange of ideas and best practices among National Convenors, and support and empower them in dispensing their critical duties.

When it comes to finance, the work spearheaded by IFAD and the World Bank, in collaboration with the Hub, has been pivotal in improving evidence to support countries in financing policies for food systems transformation; access to financing for food systems transformation and mobilizing transformative private sector financing. IFAD and the World Bank mobilized the ecosystems of support including FAO, OECD, GAIN, AGRA, 4SD and the SUN Movement to fast track the development of a financial tool to help governments generate evidence on their Financial Flows for Food Systems (3FS), allowing them to see the level of their financing to food systems, targeting, gaps and needs, to inform their financing decisions. Three governments, Niger, Peru, and Kenya piloted the 3FS to ensure the evidence it generates responds to country needs. Given the growing interest from countries to access the 3FS, the aim is to support an additional 10- 15 countries to pilot the 3FS in the next 2 years.

In addition, a pivotal collaboration with the OECD was brokered to produce evidence on bilateral and multilateral development financing to food systems. It provides the first global baseline to measure progress in the commitment to increase development financing for food systems transformation. With regards to increasing country access to development financing for food systems, IFAD launched its 13th replenishment cycle with a target of US\$ 2 billion for the period 2024-26 with 100% of its investments dedicated to food systems transformation in countries most in need. In addition to its leading role in food systems funding, the WB set a resource mobilization target of US\$ 1 billion for its Food Systems 2030 facility to help countries with policy-advice, analytical products, and funding for pilot innovative approaches. IFAD and the World Bank together with FAO also engaged with the Global Environment Fund in the design of a food systems integrated program of about US\$238 million targeting over 30 countries.

Lastly, the two co-leads in collaboration with the hub and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), convened consultations with private sector coalitions and benchmarking organizations engaged in food systems transformation on shared priorities. Focus areas for engagement with the private sector are the identification of game-changing private sector investments for food systems transformation in countries most in need for learning and exchange; and the

development of methodology to track transformative private sector financing for food systems.

These consultations paved the way for a technical workshop hosted on April 8 and 9, 2024, by the Hub, in collaboration with GAIN, Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA). This workshop focused on corporate accountability in food systems transformation, and brought together various UN entities (UNICEF, UN Nutrition, UNDP, UN Global Compact, FAO, and WFP), INGOs (WBA, ATNI, GAIN) and private sector groups (WBCSD, WEF, and the CFS's Private Sector Mechanism). The workshop aimed to cultivate a unified understanding of corporate accountability within food systems, assess current accountability frameworks applicable to the private sector, and review key accountability metrics and processes, including those for environmental impact, social equity, and nutrition. The discussions were geared towards proposing a process for the establishment a consensus-driven roadmap that outlines the steps and expected outcomes leading up to UNFSS+4 in 2025 and beyond, while clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of all participants and expanding the network to include additional stakeholders.

The Hub, with support from the German Government, has also launched a Food Systems Youth Leadership Programme to empower future leaders dedicated to creating more efficient, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient agrifood systems. The program focuses on scaling transformational leadership among young leaders in the Global South, steering policies towards science-based solutions, facilitating transformative public policy changes, and seeding sustainable business models to de-risk finance and repurpose funding.

The wider UN System

Since the UNFSS+2, the UN Food Systems Task Force (UNTF) on Food Systems has facilitated ongoing engagement within the UN system to achieve enhanced collaboration, particularly through the newly established UNTF digital platform. In the next biennium it will leverage the specialized expertise of its 139 members representing 35 UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes to provide continuous support to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams (UNCT) by assisting in the development of an online toolkit and developing case studies and knowledge mapping. Moreover, the UNTF intends to facilitate upcoming thematic dialogues on various food system nexus areas, including water, gender, health, climate change, and other pertinent topics.

The UN Regional assets including the UN Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems in Europe, the Africa Opportunity and Issue-Based Coalition on climate action, resilience, and food systems transformation, the Latin America and Caribbean United Nations Regional Task Force on Food Systems, and the Asia Regional Networking Group on Food Systems, continued to play an important role

in strengthening collective support that cater to specific regional needs.

In addition, in 2023, the UN Interdepartmental Task Force on African Affairs focused on the theme: Africa Agri-Food Systems Transition: Addressing environmental sustainability, climate, energy, and water systems, peace, and security nexus. It developed a Compendium which highlights strategic analysis, best practices, and game changing solutions that have the potential to advance the vision of the African Common Position on Food System of the UNFSS and Agenda 2063.

In Africa, in collaboration with the African Union (AU) Technical Committee on the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme-Malabo 2015-2025 (CAADP), and guided by the AU Food Systems Envoy, Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, the Hub is facilitating the incorporation of a food systems perspective into the CAADP-Malabo review and the post-Malabo formulation process.

The Joint SDG Fund window

In March 2024, the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat and the Hub have launched the first funding round of the Joint SDG Fund Window on Food Systems through a Seed Funding and a High Impact Tracks, designed to support RCs and UNCTs in their effort to accompany countries in accelerating the transition towards sustainable, equitable, healthy, and resilient food systems.

For the first funding round, the Seed Funding Track offers up to \$250,000 to 12 countries (Cambodia, Costa Rica, Egypt, El Salvador, Jordan, Kenya, Rwanda, Samoa, Serbia, Tanzania, Uganda and Viet Nam), for projects over a maximum of 12 months. This track is meant to ignite innovation and expedite progress by empowering countries to incubate, develop, and implement solutions that can effect significant changes across their food systems. Conversely, the High Impact Track provides up to \$2 million per project for up to 24 months in six countries (Bolivia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, Tajikistan and Timor Leste). This track is designed for initiatives that demonstrate readiness to achieve accelerated and catalytic results on a larger scale. It seeks to support transformative solutions that are sustainable, integrate a whole-of-government and multi-stakeholder approach, and can leverage significant additional financing. The focus is on mobilizing deep partnerships, bringing scalable initiatives to fruition, and promoting substantial engagement of businesses through public-private partnerships. The projects under this track are expected to have a systemic impact, demonstrating a capacity to significantly improve food systems with potent effects across multiple SDG areas, including climate action, social protection, and sustainable agriculture. Both funding tracks are aligned with the overarching objectives outlined in the UN Secretary-General's Call to Action from the UNFSS+2.

The coalitions of Action

Food Systems Coalitions have been established following the 2021 UNFSS to assist governments in implementing their visions for sustainable food systems. These coalitions vary in maturity stages and roles but are increasingly playing a supportive role at the country level.

The School Meals Coalition organized its first global meeting in October 2023, which led to substantial political commitments and the consolidation of regional networks in East Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, that have been instrumental in enhancing school meal programs through shared best practices. Overall, the work of the School Meals Coalition has contributed to restoring school meal access to 418 million children worldwide—an increase since the pandemic—but has also bolstered domestic funding for school meals programs significantly.

Similarly, the Blue Food Coalition has supported the operationalization of national pathways, including the development of investment cases for blue food development in several countries. For instance, in Indonesia, this coalition has integrated blue foods into the national development strategy and blue economy roadmap, while in Africa, its collaboration with the African Union Development Agency (NEPAD) and various investors has been pivotal in developing sustainable aquaculture initiatives, demonstrating the coalition's pivotal role in mobilizing support and integrating regional resources.

The Agro-ecology Coalition has also made headways particularly in East Africa, supporting Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in developing national agroecology strategies. The introduction of the Agroecology Finance Assessment Tool, now used by Germany in its development cooperation, underscores the coalition's commitment to scalable and environmentally friendly agricultural practices.

Additionally, the Climate Resilient Food Systems Alliance (CRFS) has engaged with countries such as Belize, Ethiopia, and Fiji to conduct diagnostics that identify gaps in achieving climate resilience within their food systems. This targeted support has enabled countries like Belize to recalibrate their national strategies through a climate-focused lens, strengthening their food systems against environmental challenges.

In conflict settings, the collaboration between the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Coalition (HDP Nexus Coalition) and the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) highlighted the critical intersection of food security and stability in fragile regions. In Somalia, this collaboration under the leadership of IGAD, GNAFC, the HDP Nexus Coalition, and the SUN Movement, has brought together various stakeholders to support the development of the Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plan and other strategic frameworks aligned with Somalia's National Pathways. Likewise, in Sudan, partnerships have facilitated the development of effective assistance models for food system transformation,

promoting stability and addressing food insecurity. The strategic field missions organized in these two countries have contributed to establishing robust models for food system transformation through comprehensive multi-stakeholder engagements. These models have greatly influenced the development of local governance structures and integrated approaches essential for sustaining long-term food systems strategies.

As these coalitions continue to evolve, their essential role in global sustainability efforts will continue to grow.

The broader ecosystem of support

In its capacity as a convenor the Hub has continued to map entry points for synergies, identify areas of support for national conveners and facilitate knowledge generation and exchange. In doing so, the Hub is developing a database and mapping of key partners and coalitions at the global level, in order to convene them more effectively and create a structured and facilitated space for dialogue, cooperation, and collective action. Other strategic partners also include the RCs, the UNCTs and the wider UN System at regional and global levels, IFIs, research institutions, and the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

In addition, in order to optimize the national ecosystems of support, the Hub partnered with the World Economic Forum, the RC and the UNCT in Kenya as well as other partners such as GAIN and AGRA, to develop and pilot an innovative tool to map the food systems ecosystems of support at country level. The tool which is still being piloted will generate dynamic food systems maps that visualize the complex sub-ecosystems and interdependencies in a national (and local) food system. By offering a true picture of the interconnected and complex web of actors at the country level, these interactive maps will support national conveners in their complex convening role.

4. Towards the UNFSS+4: priorities towards 2025

The UNFSS+2 acted as a crucial catalyst, invigorating global efforts towards the transformation of food systems and the realization of the 2030 Agenda. Since the landmark 2021 UNFSS, considerable strides have been made towards reshaping the global food systems landscape. This report highlighted the sustained momentum in food system transformation, which has remained robust since UNFSS+2. Pathways in 127 countries are augmented by enhanced governance frameworks that integrate food systems strategies into national laws and sectoral plans. Financial strategies to support these transformations are increasingly taking shape, with countries actively assessing financing gaps and developing investment strategies to attract both public and private resources. Furthermore, the engagement of stakeholders—encompassing governments, the private sector, civil society, and scientific communities—has largely increased. Yet, challenges persist, complicated by the complex, ever-changing context, marred with crisis,

that demand continual adaptation and steadfast political stewardship.

Insights from UNFSS+2 which fed into subsequent major events, such as the SDG Summit 2023 and COP28, helped consolidate the global consensus on the urgency of accelerating food systems transformation. Looking ahead, the next Stocktaking Moment in 2025 will mark a pivotal milestone, occurring just five years before the target date of the 2030 Agenda. This final chapter examines the strategic opportunities available to the global community from now until then to accelerate the alignment of sustainable food system objectives with broader global efforts.

4.1. Journey to 2025: addressing climate, biodiversity, nutrition, hunger and poverty issues through transformed food systems

Recognizing the many ongoing and upcoming international initiatives that will support the transition of food and other sustainable development transitions in line with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, the Secretary General's called for greater coherence and collaboration, and reducing duplication and burdens on country-level engagement. The Hub will therefore continue to build synergetic partnerships with other intergovernmental processes within the wider UN system as well as non-governmental processes of strategic importance.

Global Milestones on Nutrition and Food Security: Pathways to Resilient Food Systems

Billions globally continue to suffer from food insecurity and malnutrition, compounded by the escalating crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. This dire situation is aggravated by diets rich in processed foods and sugars, which not only lack nutritional value but also impose heavy environmental costs. Food systems transformation therefore involves shifting dietary habits and overhauling the ways food is produced and distributed, aiming to deliver nutritious, sustainable diets accessible to all. This will ensure that efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition are inclusive, targeting the most vulnerable populations and addressing the root causes of nutritional inequities. This approach also necessitates tailored interventions in conflict-affected and unstable regions to address immediate nutritional deficits while building long-term resilience.

Looking forward, the integration of nutrition into all aspects of policy-making and the promotion of multisectoral collaboration are imperative to build sustainable, equitable food systems that can withstand future challenges and support a thriving global population.

The next Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit set to take place in Paris in 2024 will represent a significant international opportunity to combat malnutrition, as we get closer to the end of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. The N4G initiative aims to secure new commitments from global leaders, focusing on accelerating progress towards the elimination of malnutrition and ensuring that nutrition

remains a key priority in development agendas.

The 2024 SUN Global Gathering, set to take place in Rwanda, on the theme 'NutritiON: Power the Change', will also represent an important opportunity to strengthen commitments towards better nutritional outcomes. It will emphasize the interconnectivity of nutrition with broader global challenges such as public health, climate action, gender equality, and food systems.

G7 and G20 initiatives also represent particularly supportive efforts towards the food systems agenda. The “Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security” was issued at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023. Similarly, the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, launched under Brazil's G20 Presidency, aims to catalyze global efforts to address food insecurity and poverty reduction by leveraging international collaboration and advocating for the integration of food systems strategies into broader economic and social policies. Key components of this initiative include enhancing governance frameworks, increasing financial investments, and promoting technology transfer to develop sustainable and inclusive food systems. The Secretariat of the Global Alliance will be housed by the Hub in collaboration with DESA, UNDP, FAO, WFP, IFAD, ILO and WHO. Work at country level will be supported by the UN Resident Coordinators System.

Catalyzing Change in Food Systems through Climate and Biodiversity Global Conferences

The foundations established at the UNFCCC COP28 provide a structured pathway for incorporating food systems into wider climate actions. As the focus shifts to UNFCCC COP29 from November 11-22, 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan and UNFCCC COP30 from November 10-21, 2025, in Belém, Brazil, the global community should continue to build on wins secured on the food systems front and take advantage of the specific milestones set for evaluating progress.

In this respect, the Troika formed by the UNFCCC COP Presidencies of UAE, Azerbaijan, and Brazil to focus on accelerating the implementation of Climate COP commitments represents an important opportunity. Their vision of addressing barriers to NDC development and supporting countries to submit robust, 1.5°C-aligned NDCs ahead of COP30, tie directly to the call for third generation NDCs including ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets, issued by the UNFCCC COP. These renewed efforts open a unique window of opportunity to further create convergence between Food systems transformation, climate action, as well as forest and other land use systems.

On the biodiversity front, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted at COP15, underscores the critical interconnections between biodiversity and food systems leveraging the need for a global transition towards sustainable food systems as a fundamental component of biodiversity

conservation, restoration and the sustainable use of genetic resources. Sector-based transformations will be essential for achieving the broader goals of the GBF. The next Conference of Parties on Biodiversity (COP16) to be hosted by Colombia, in Cali from October 21 to November 1, 2024, will mark a significant opportunity to review the progress made towards the national biodiversity goals aligned with this new framework.

4.2. The 2nd UNFSS Stocktaking Moment in 2025: Assessing progress on Food Systems Transformation

The 2nd UNFSS Stocktaking Moment in 2025 (UNFSS+4) will offer another opportunity for the global community to reconvene and assess progress in transforming food systems for sustainable development. During its seventy-eighth session, the UN General Assembly, adopted four resolutions referencing the UNFSS process. A set of resolutions adopted under the 2nd Committee in October 2023 underscore, *inter alia*, Member States' recognition of the importance of building more inclusive, equitable, efficient, resilient and sustainable food systems to achieve the SDGs, noting the 2021 Summit process as a key mechanism steering this work.

The resolution on agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/C.2/78/L.65) calls for a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving national governments, civil society, academia, the private sector, and the international community to bring SDG 2 – Zero Hunger – back on track. Highlighting the biannual UNFSS Stocktaking as a crucial platform for this collective action, the resolution advocates for the implementation of the voluntary commitments that arose from the 2021 Summit, leveraging the support of the Hub. Member States look forward to the UNFSS+4 in 2025 for a thorough review of progress made on these commitments. The UNFSS process also garnered recognition within the resolution on agricultural technology for sustainable development (A/C.2/78/L.24/Rev.1) as a significant forum facilitating food systems transformation through the advancement of agricultural technologies, innovations, and digitalization. Furthermore, the resolution on implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027) (A/C.2/78/L.60) highlights how the UNFSS promotes policymaking that supports an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resolution on natural plant fibres and sustainable development (A/C.2/78/L.32/Rev.1) expresses appreciation for the UNFSS+2 within the context of advocating for more sustainable production, consumption, and utilization of natural plant fibers.

Since the UNFSS+4 will take place five short years before the 2030 target, it is imperative that the next biennium witnesses significant acceleration, allowing the next stocktaking moment to focus on measuring impact. To accomplish this and maintain the level of engagement achieved during UNFSS+2, preparations have

started in earnest in early 2024 at the global, regional, and national levels. Continuous engagement with countries will be facilitated through the continuation of the now well-established Food Systems Solutions Dialogues and Regional Touchpoints, as well as through face-to-face regional meetings in 2024 and 2025.

In addition, building on the initial success of the voluntary reporting exercise in 2023, where 109 country reports were submitted, the Hub aims to refine its tracking system. Countries' 2023 reports have set a foundation which should enable a more profound analysis in the next biennium. This should be aided by the fact that many countries have already begun upgrading their information systems. Needs for specific technical assistance in this area should therefore be catered for as a matter of priority.

Directly linked to global and national monitoring and reporting efforts, the Food Systems Countdown Initiative (FSCI), which emerged from the 2021 Summit, offers a sophisticated monitoring framework that has the potential to significantly advance the global understanding of the state of food systems transformation in 2025. It consists of a set of 50 flexible and carefully selected indicators, developed through extensive consultations with over 500 policy stakeholders worldwide. The first FSCI report published in December 2023, highlights the varied progress of countries in optimizing their food systems, illustrating the complex challenges that transcend economic and traditional development indicators. It points out significant data gaps that hinder effective monitoring and strategy implementation. As part of the Hub's broader strategic partnership vision, it will enter into a partnership with the FSCI to enhance the 2025 UNFSS stocktaking process by integrating the latest findings of the initiative into the data sources for the 2025 Secretary-General's report. This effort will bring significant value-addition in informing global discussions and commitments to foster resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems well into the future.