

TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS IN SOMALIA

Somalia's food systems hold the key to the country's economic and social development. The way food is produced, processed, transported, traded, distributed, consumed and disposed of, brings forth an array of opportunity for prosperity within the country. However, for this revolution to occur the food system needs to be transformed in its capacity to be sustainable, resilient and support healthy diets.

What is at stake?

The food system faces an array of challenges in its potential to feed the growing population. Agriculture (crop production, livestock and fisheries) is an important source of livelihoods and employment in Somalia, representing 72 percent of employment in 2019. High rates of malnutrition with one in four people facing high levels of food insecurity and approximately 800 000 children under five at risk of acute malnutrition poses a great challenge for the country. The low levels of food production and productivity (in crop production, livestock and fisheries) has led to an increased dependency on humanitarian assistance as well as 60% of food imports. The Somali government acknowledges that food insecurity is also major contributor to conflict in the country and therefore advancements in the food system, and urgent action is needed to ensure that the food systems are able to support the food needs in Somalia.

Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP increased from 3.9 per cent in 2018 to 4 per cent in 2019 however, statistics show that 70% of the population lives under the poverty line with 40% in extreme poverty. In addition to this, approximately half of female-headed households are living below the poverty line. One in every five Somali household depends on overseas remittances. It is anticipated that the impacts of COVID-19 may lead to a worsening situation among the vulnerable groups including those in urban centers and IDPs. A majority of the Somali population 65% are under the age of 35. Accelerating economic growth and increasing employment opportunities, particularly for young people, has been a priority for the FGS and as such is reflected in the NDP-9. However, the food system is not able to provide decent livelihood opportunities for the growing workforce.

Reports indicate that one-quarter to one-third of Somali households are headed by a woman and they generate up to 70% of household income. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a prerequisite for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Somalia.





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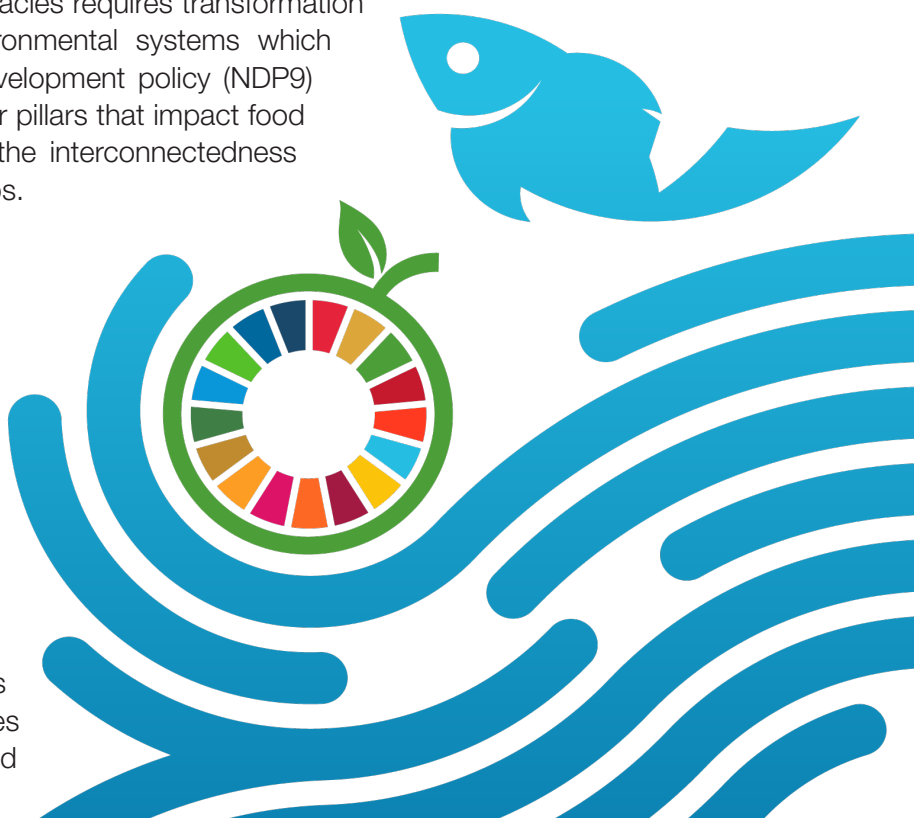
Women's participation in leadership and decision-making roles, in public and political spheres at all levels—national, state, local, remains low. Over the past decade, both attitudes and narratives regarding gender equality, women's representation and participation have been improving in the public sphere in Somalia, with the development of several key frameworks including the National Gender Policy and the Somalia Women's Charter.

The compromised food systems have also exasperated environmental degradation and the negative effects of climate change. The climate change being a risk multiplier has led widespread to displacement and livelihood inequities. Somalia the nation continues to face obstacles as it works towards implementing durable solutions to displacement, territorial and socioeconomic inequalities. It is estimated that 2.6 million people in the country are displaced – all of who continue to face serious risks of marginalization, forced eviction and exclusion. 80 percent of these displaced populations live in informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas. Displaced and poor urban households are particularly sensitive to price shocks, with limited coping capacity, and consumption of nutritious foods is most affected in these populations. Due to the security situation in Yemen and Ethiopia, it is expected that Somalia will also continue to receive refugees and asylum seekers. Over 28,000 refugees and asylum seekers are projected to require assistance and support in 2021.

The culmination of all these deep-rooted obstacles requires transformation in the social, political, economic and environmental systems which influence the food systems. The national development policy (NDP9) provides strategic guidance across all key four pillars that impact food systems. Specifically, the NDP9 recognizes the interconnectedness between severe poverty, hunger and food gaps.

Significance of Food Systems Dialogues in Somalia

National Food Systems Summit Dialogues facilitated a country led process to articulate national pathways to sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems, towards the realization of the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to contribute to the National Development Plan 9. Food Systems Champions from multiple sectors and stakeholder groups came together during the Somalia Food Systems Dialogue series and identified the challenges and opportunities that exist within the food system for the food system.



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Somalia has hosted a total of seven dialogues across seven regions on themes identified for priority actions. These thematic encouraged innovative thinking in identifying, managing and preventing complex risk drivers that threaten the resilience of food production. The dialogues brought together different sectors and stakeholders to dive into thematic priority areas and identify urgent transformative actions towards strengthening agri-food systems and addressing all forms of malnutrition in Somalia.

Food Systems Pathways for Somalia

1. Economics, Trade and Investments in Food Systems:

- Invest in irrigation technology infrastructure and mechanization at the production stage for all productive sectors to ensure production throughout the year not only during the rain seasons. This was identifies as particularly urgent for Lower Shebelle and the crop production zones.
- Leverage on Somalia's coastline and invest in the fisheries industry by providing advanced technology for fish storage and processing for small scale fisherfolk.
- Stimulate localized food systems by creating an enabling environment for in-county trade e.g. through subsidies, legislative frameworks that favor local production.
- Promote favorable environment for local Small and Medium Enterprises by simplifying requirements and regulations as well as facilitating access to credit for small and medium enterprises.
- Advocate for private and public sector engagements in the food systems to ensure inclusive participation by small scale actors in the food systems.



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2. Impacts of Migration, Displacements and Durable Solutions on Food Systems, and Possible Solutions:

- Encourage multisectoral/ multi-stakeholder coherence through layered and sequenced programming from phase to phase with gradual documented improvements (malnourished to healthy).
- Mega investments long term mega investments of big dams, reservoirs as well as rehabilitation of irrigation canals, to support sustainable local food production, control flooding and minimize population displacement.
- Conduct conflict analysis that focus on food systems to identify the drivers and research based actions to support conflict prone regions in Somalia.
- Support the implementation of the national policy frameworks on durable solutions for displaced persons.



3. Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Food Systems:

- Intensify efforts to combat effects of climate change such a drought, floods, pests, and promote disaster risk reduction that are context specific to Somalia.
- Scale up and Early warning systems and re-establishment of river management authorities and flood task forces that allows for early decision making and reduce magnitude of displacement. It is also important to streamline information flow from existing systems and make the information consumable to the community.
- Strengthen governance structures at all levels in the productive sectors to holistically address climate change and DRR issues and enhance climate change adaptation.
- Development of policies and governance frameworks on river resources and protection of riverine areas e.g. settlements and development.



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4. Shocks and Social Protection Impacts on Food Systems:

- Support the adoption and scaling up of nutrition sensitive, government led social protection programmes.
- Limit importation of locally available products through legislation and legal frameworks.
- Investments in diversified nutrition sensitive value chains to stimulate markets, provide livelihood opportunities and more local nutritious food options.

5. Gender in Food Systems:

- Create an enabling environment to support women's access to productive resources such as land, technology, extension services, credit facilities, education, skills and capacity development, provide of funds etc.
- Women have active engagement and involvement if leadership positions e.g. legislative, executive, CEOs etc to promote gender-sensitive decision making.

6. Youth engagement in food systems:

- Create enabling environments for the youth to engage in descent employment and livelihood opportunities across the Somalia food systems.
- Strengthen the education system to increase opportunities for vocational trainings, formal and non-formal education, innovation hubs for the youth.
- Support the youth in accessing financial resources and incentives to support food systems oriented SME.

7. Digital Revolution and Innovation in Food Systems:

- Strengthening the capacity of institutions and communities on digitization and innovations
- Promote incubators linkages with academia and implementers so as to enhance and scale up the innovations to the communities.

Disclaimer: This document presents findings and policy opportunities identified in the Food Systems Dialogue Somalia.



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