

FOOD SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS DIALOGUES

1st Food Systems Stocktaking Moment

Wednesday 15 March 2023

Summary report

On March 15, 2023, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (the Hub) virtually convened the first food systems solution dialogues of 2023. The following represents a summary of the two sessions of the meeting held in the morning and the afternoon to accommodate for different time zones.

Introduction

Opening the meeting, Stefanos Fotiou, Director of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, briefed participants on the upcoming Stocktaking Moment (STM) from 24 to 26 July 2023. In his opening remarks, he stressed the urgency of transforming food systems to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and emphasized the role of the Hub in supporting countries to accelerate the design and implementation of national Pathways. He described the series of regional preparatory meetings being held at the regional level that gather countries' views and capture recommendations from the broader ecosystem of support. In closing, Mr. Fotiou highlighted the fundamental role of transparency, inclusivity of actors, and themes when promoting food systems transformation in an integrated manner.

Q&A

Following the opening remarks, participants raised questions about several topics, including the voluntary reporting template to be used for reporting progress in food systems transformation, side events, improving media action, engaging with non-state actors, the hybrid format of future meetings, and concrete steps to maintain momentum toward the STM. These questions were addressed by Hub representatives and more information will be shared on a regular basis in upcoming communication from the Hub.

Discussion

During the session, participants were divided into breakout rooms – respectively moderated by the Deputy Director of the Hub, Sylvia Ekra, and the Hub Programme Coordinator, Khaled Eltaweel. Questions addressed:

1. What are your expectations for the STM?
2. What support do you need to be well-prepared?
3. How are you planning to prepare for the STM?

A significant number of participants have expressed their satisfaction and enthusiasm toward the upcoming STM. They view this event as an opportunity to reinforce the advocacy for Food Systems transformation at national and global level and as a valuable opportunity to further the momentum of the UN Food Systems Summit. Regarding expectations of the STM, they noted that it is an excellent opportunity to reflect on the progress made and examine how countries approach food system transformation post-summit. Many requested further guidance to support countries in preparing for the global meeting. The voluntary reporting template was welcome as an opportunity to allow for comparison and analysis of progress across countries.

Various interventions drew on national experiences, noting short and long-term actions being undertaken to implement the national pathways. This includes the organization of national dialogues and a periodic review of the pathways to reflect changes in both the national and the international contexts.

Participants outlined some challenges they face in transforming their food systems. Many stressed the importance of linking with other UN fora, such as the SDGs Summit, the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), the UN water conference and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Several interventions highlighted the importance of sharing information, best practices, and lessons learned from the countries and coalitions to enhance knowledge and coordination. Solutions dialogues are considered an insightful exercise and provide an opportunity to identify the key drivers and barriers in implementing the National Pathways. Moreover, a frequent request shared was the establishment of a learning platform that provides tools and resources to assist countries in implementing national pathways. Hub representatives explained that technical and financial assistance is being provided in many countries by the Hub, RCs, UN Country teams and many other actors in the Ecosystem of support to enable the implementation of National pathways.

Coalition representatives took the opportunity to share updates about their work, highlight the challenges they face in collaborating, and stress the importance of cross-fertilizing to prevent duplication of efforts. They underlined the significance of engaging with other coalitions to avoid duplication. They emphasized that the STM is an opportunity for countries to engage more actively in the coalitions. Their expectation from the STM is to gain insight into how the coalitions can work more effectively. Participants noted that with 27 coalitions in place, avoiding burdening countries with redundant requests is imperative. Coalition representatives have also underlined their commitment to supporting countries by reviewing their work plans and refining their offers and added values.

In plenary, the rapporteurs – Ms Ekra and Mr Eltaweel - summarised the key outcomes of the discussions from the breakout rooms. There was a focus on the role of coalitions in the preparatory process and their need for greater support from entities and individuals. Participants emphasised the role of regional bodies in the STM process. Moreover, there was a consensus that the STM should prioritize implementation and concrete action as an opportunity to reinforce the work led by national convenors. Participants stressed that the STM should be a learning moment through sharing good practices. Overall, the

discussion outcomes suggest that participants recognize the importance of collaboration and sharing information and resources to achieve food system transformation.

The way forward

In closing the dialogue, Mr Fotiou expressed pleasure regarding the discussion, specifically on multi-sectoral collaboration in food systems transformations. He once again emphasized the need for these dialogues to be conducted as one UN system consistent with the UN secretary-general's guidelines. He further mentioned setting up criteria to ensure side events of the STM support SDGs and the distribution of a reporting template. Mr Fotiou closed the meeting by informing that the STM roadmap will be published by early April as the leading next step toward the STM in July.

Background

The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub is hosted by FAO on behalf of the UN system. It is supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Program (WFP), the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO). The Hub's mission is to support the follow-up to the 2021 Food Systems Summit and stimulate and support action for SDGs-based food systems transformations towards the acceleration of the 2030 Agenda.