

FOOD SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS DIALOGUES

FOSTERING Synergies Between Climate Action and Implementation of Food Systems National Pathways Towards COP28

Wednesday 13 September 2023

Summary Report

On 13 September 2023, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and the COP28 Presidency hosted the “Fostering Synergies Between Climate Action and Implementation of Food Systems National Pathways Towards COP28” session as part of the Food Systems Solutions Dialogues. The following represents a summary of the two meeting sessions held in the morning and afternoon to accommodate different time zones.

Introduction

H.E Mariam Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates and COP28 Food Systems Lead, highlighted the importance of the collaboration between the Hub and the COP28 Presidency. Together, they focus on food systems' vital role in achieving both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the targets of the Paris Agreement.

H.E Almheiri emphasized the urgent need to shift to inclusive, sustainable, and resilient food production to combat rising hunger, malnutrition, and environmental degradation due to climate change.

The Minister underscored the pivotal role of food systems in addressing global challenges and the urgency of action needed to transform them, focusing on securing global commitment at COP28. She called upon all Leaders to endorse the first-ever Emirates Declaration on the food systems and climate nexus.

Additionally, she indicated that a core intention of signing the Declaration will be to integrate food systems into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) by COP30 and highlighted the development of technical tools that will support countries to achieve this, as well as a training package for climate negotiators.

Following H.E. Almheiri's opening remarks, **Mr Kristofer Hamel**, Head of Food Systems at COP28, presented the main elements of the Declaration to be adopted at COP28.

The Declaration acknowledges the bidirectional relationship between food systems and climate change. It offers an opportunity to consolidate, raise ambition, and signal support to work towards adaptation and mitigation across food systems while enhancing food and nutrition security, nature and biodiversity, livelihoods, and resilience, with national efforts forming a crucial foundation. However, this vision extends beyond traditional state boundaries and recognizes the vital role of non-state actors within food systems. The Declaration will also emphasize the importance of scaling evidence-based innovations that increase sustainable

production and promote resilience for smallholders while enhancing access to international financing that can transform food systems to respond to climate change, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Discussion

The Dialogue continued with a dynamic discussion moderated by Ms Sylvia Ekra, Deputy Director of the Hub (morning) and Mr Stefanos Fotiou, Director of the Hub (afternoon). Before commencing the discussion, Mr Fotiou pointed to the growing importance of the Climate Agenda in addressing urgent climate-related challenges in food security. He highlighted the importance of establishing connections between climate change and food systems during the UN Food Systems Summit +2 (UNFSS+2). Mr Fotiou articulated the urgency of substantial and concrete action, underlining the necessity to mobilize efforts and unite the various stakeholders in a systemic and coordinated manner. Working closely with the National Convenors and broadening strategic partnerships at all levels is crucial to accelerate progress. Participants were then asked the following questions:

1. How to develop synergy between food system transformation and climate action, i.e. how to link the transformation pathways to NDCs and NAPs?
2. What are the main recommendations for the “Leaders Declaration on Food Systems, Agriculture and Climate Action” draft?

During the Dialogue, participants highlighted the vital support from entities like the Hub and shared the urgent need for funding for effective climate action. Success stories from some countries showcased improvements in climate action and their integration into National Pathways. Challenges in coordinating with all the other actors at national level were noted, calling for an integrated food systems approach. Participants also highlighted the need for greater synergies between existing programmes, initiatives, and climate action, including the One Health approach. Striking the right balance between mitigation, adaptation, and resilience and balancing mitigation, adaptation, and resilience was discussed as pivotal to achieving win-win solutions in climate action.

Reflections from the Discussion

Reflecting on the discussion, **Mr Zitouni Ould-Dada**, Deputy Director of FAO's Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, affirmed the Organization's commitment to advancing the climate agenda. Agriculture was underscored as central in addressing current challenges. He called on everyone to work to translate intentions into concrete actions. Mr Ould-Dada mentioned the FAO's role in facilitating access to climate finance through GEF and GCF funding. He said that the FAO is engaged in various initiatives and several programmes and projects that recognize the critical role of smallholder farmers.

Mr David Nabarro, Strategic Director at 4SD, appreciated the collaborative efforts and progress, including developing national pathways, solutions dialogues, and the process leading up to UNFSS+2, which placed food systems in the spotlight. He underscored that countries are currently facing multiple substantial shocks and underlined the central role of National Convenors.

In the afternoon session, **Minister Plenipotentiary Mohammed El-Gammal**, Deputy Director of the Climate Change and Environment Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reiterated Egypt's commitment and highlighted the attention given to food security during COP27. Mr ElGammal stressed the need to identify and showcase successful processes, mentioning initiatives like FAST and the Sharm El Sheikh adaptation agenda. He also underlined the importance of addressing food security comprehensively, recalling UNFCCC as a key platform for addressing global challenges.

Mr Stefanos Fotiou concluded the Dialogue by calling on the participants to capitalize on and leverage existing initiatives and structures while connecting different food systems actors at all levels. He acknowledged that the agenda ahead of us is ambitious and extended his best wishes to the COP28 Presidency in their endeavors to address these critical issues. He also added that when developing countries commit, they should be supported to implement their commitments. To this extend he highlighted that for the COP28 Presidency the challenge is not only to ensure political commitment from hundreds of world leaders, but also to ensure that a proper mechanism and resources are put in place to support countries to act on their commitment in the two years after the COP28.