

# FOOD SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS DIALOGUES

## *Policy Integration to Support Food Systems Transformation*

06 November 2024

Summary Report

### Introduction

The Food Systems Solutions Dialogues (FSSD) are purposeful and organized events that bring together National Convenors and other food systems actors to share their experiences and insights on food systems hosted by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (the Hub). A new series is launched each year, and morning and afternoon sessions are held for each Dialogue to accommodate different time zones. On 06 November, the sixth Dialogue of the 2024 series was held on “*Policy Integration to Support Food Systems Transformation*” - this Summary Report reflects the combined discussions from the two sessions (morning and afternoon).

The dialogue emphasized how the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP) and the post-Malabo process have underscored the value and importance of cross-sector interdependence and its linkages to national food systems pathways. Moreover, it provided a platform to explore solutions for localising a food systems approach and discuss key enablers for implementing multi-sectoral food systems policies at the country level.

### Setting the Scene

Mr Khaled Eltaweel, Programme Coordinator at the Hub, opened both the morning and afternoon sessions by underscoring the importance of integrating policies to address the interconnected challenges of food systems, climate resilience, and sustainable development. He noted that climate impacts, including droughts, floods, and soil degradation, are increasingly threatening food security, making coherent, cross-sectoral policies essential. Linking food systems with water management and environmental strategies, he explained, can enhance resilience and adaptation efforts, particularly for vulnerable countries. Mr Eltaweel emphasized that successful policy integration must be grounded in locally informed and context-specific solutions, aligning with both regional and national needs. By leveraging integrated food systems approaches countries can unlock new opportunities for sustainable development and climate adaptation. He concluded his opening remarks by calling on participants to seize the moment to explore innovative policies that can lead to a future that is both resilient and climate responsive.

The morning and afternoon sessions welcomed a distinguished panel that included:

- Mr Martin Bwalya, Food System Regional Specialist for Africa, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub
- Mr Pushpa Shreshta, Policy Officer, WFP Country Office in Nepal (morning session)
- Hon Jay Bahadur Tandan, National Convenor, Nepal (afternoon session)
- Mr Oliver Oliveros, Coordinator for the Agroecology Coalition

- Dr Kate Roll, Political Scientist, Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, University College London

Ms Mia Madsen, Policy Officer at the Hub, moderated the event.

### **Key Insights from Panellists**

The panelists shared diverse perspectives on strategies for driving food systems transformation, offering practical approaches and innovative frameworks tailored to local, regional, and global contexts. Mr Martin Bwalya opened the floor by highlighting the pivotal role of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in shaping Africa's food systems transformation over the past two decades. He outlined its evolution from the Maputo Declaration in 2003, which emphasized increased public investment in agriculture and productivity, to the Malabo Declaration in 2014, which integrated broader commitments such as climate action, health, and trade. Mr Bwalya emphasized that CAADP has enhanced systemic capacity, fostered cross-sector collaboration, and improved coordination among public, private, and donor sectors. In his intervention, he highlighted examples from countries like Rwanda, Ghana, and Zambia, where intentional investments in data systems, planning, and resource allocation have driven measurable progress. Looking ahead, Mr Bwalya stressed the forthcoming Kampala Declaration in 2025, which focuses on implementation capacity, multi-sectoral approaches, and elevating food systems transformation to the highest levels of governance.

Following Mr Bwalya's intervention, Mr Pushpa Shrestha detailed Nepal's progress in institutionalizing and localizing its food systems transformation agenda. Guided by its Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act, Nepal has established a robust policy framework, including a Food Systems Steering Committee that unites ministries, development partners, and stakeholders. Shrestha shared examples of localized food system initiatives piloted in seven municipalities, supported by WFP and FAO, which have introduced programs like school agriculture initiatives, indigenous crop promotion, and irrigation projects. He also emphasized the success of Nepal's Homegrown School Feeding Program, which connects local farmers to provide nutritious meals for schoolchildren, and the Green Evolution Pathway, which integrates climate resilience into food systems. In the afternoon, Hon Jay Bahadur Tandan, National Convenor for Nepal, expanded on the nation's long-term vision of equitable, resilient, and sustainable food systems by 2030. He emphasized Nepal's strategic focus on capacity building, policy alignment, and multi-stakeholder engagement, facilitated by a Steering Committee composed of government bodies, NGOs, and development partners. Honorable Tandan highlighted the alignment of Nepal's initiatives with the SDGs, including the development of a Green Evolution Pathway to reverse food system vulnerabilities and climate risks. To conclude his speech, he noted the success of the Homegrown School Feeding Program, which clusters eco-agricultural regions to integrate local farmers into supply chains, and the Multisector Nutrition Plan, a \$1.5 billion initiative aimed at addressing malnutrition and food security challenges across Nepal.

As part of the panel, Mr Oliver Oliveros discussed agroecology as a transformative pathway for food systems, emphasizing its potential to address biodiversity, climate resilience, and

sustainable development. Mr Oliveros highlighted examples of national agroecology strategies recently launched in Tanzania, Brazil, and Colombia, and regional guidelines like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) framework. He introduced tools co-developed by the Coalition, such as guides for integrating agroecology into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and for enhancing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). These tools provide countries with practical policy options and implementation measures to align food systems with biodiversity and climate goals. Mr Oliveros also stressed the importance of institutionalizing agroecological practices through governance structures, financing mechanisms, and monitoring schemes, while ensuring co-benefits and trade-offs are effectively managed. He concluded by emphasizing the role of agroecology in creating systemic shifts that bridge production, consumption, and supply chain sustainability. Dr Kate Roll closed the panel by reflecting on the role of academic research in driving innovation and systemic change within food systems. Dr Roll discussed frameworks for understanding complex transitions, such as the convergence of political will, policy solutions, and problem awareness needed for transformative change. She highlighted the importance of destabilizing entrenched systems carefully, ensuring alignment between market-shaping policies and public procurement strategies. In her intervention, she also emphasized the power of convening coalitions and reframing challenges through multi-sectoral lenses, as exemplified by initiatives like Nepal's school feeding program. Lastly, she encouraged leveraging moments of crisis or "focusing events" as opportunities to introduce ready-made solutions that can drive systemic transformation.

### **Dialogue with National Convenors**

Following the expert panel, the Dialogue moved into an interactive session with National Convenors, providing a platform to explore solutions for localising a food systems approach and discuss key enablers for implementing multi-sectoral food systems policies at the country level. The discussion was guided by questions exploring the practical experiences, challenges, and strategies countries have encountered in advancing integrated food systems approaches.

Convenors were asked to consider:

- What steps has your country taken to align policies and bring about a coherent environment supportive to advancing an integrated food systems approach?
- What are the key lessons learned from developing and implementing food systems policies? Have specific institutional reforms or new mechanisms been put in place, and what kind of institutional capacity building is needed?

During the interactive session, National Convenors shared valuable insights on the steps their countries have taken to align policies and create coherent environments supportive of integrated food systems approaches. They highlighted the importance of involving various government ministries in food systems transformation, particularly agriculture, health, economic planning, and education, to ensure that policies are well-rounded and address the

interconnected challenges of food security, nutrition, and climate resilience. Several Convenors emphasized their countries' efforts to decentralize food systems governance, empowering local governments and creating steering committees to better engage regional and subnational levels. By involving different sectors and local stakeholders in policy development and implementation, they are ensuring that food systems strategies are context-specific and cater to the diverse needs of communities. These efforts often include youth engagement, with youth-led programs and initiatives, such as school debates and agricultural projects, being seen as essential for fostering leadership and long-term sustainability in food systems transformation.

A significant part of the conversation focused on the challenges faced in policy implementation. Convenors shared their countries' efforts to address these challenges by creating dedicated technical secretariats, improving coordination among ministries, and building institutional capacity. Technical support, data management, and regular monitoring and evaluation processes were identified as key factors for ensuring that food systems strategies are effectively executed. The need for better policy coherence was also highlighted, particularly in ensuring that food systems transformation is aligned with other national priorities such as climate change, economic growth, and public health. During the interactive session an important document was shared, the [Transformation Report: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems](#). This report, by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany developed through multi-stakeholder engagement, provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and solutions related to food systems transformation.

The role of international partnerships was also a significant theme, with Convenors discussing how collaboration with development partners, UN agencies, and the private sector has helped support the design and implementation of national food systems strategies. In their interventions, some also stressed the importance of innovative practices, such as agroecology, sustainable agriculture, and climate-smart initiatives, which are central to building resilient food systems. These practices are essential for promoting food security, improving livelihoods, and addressing environmental challenges, especially in regions most vulnerable to climate change. Lastly, the Dialogue emphasized that the success of food systems transformation lies in inclusive, multi-sectoral cooperation, effective policy implementation, and continuous capacity building. Countries are making strides in building more coherent and inclusive food systems, and the shared experiences during this session highlighted the importance of collaboration, both within and between sectors, to drive lasting change.

### **The Way Forward**

The Dialogue on Policy Integration for Food Systems Transformation highlighted several essential takeaways for advancing integrated approaches to food systems transformation. First, participants emphasized the need for policy coherence across sectors, ensuring that food systems policies are aligned with broader national goals, including climate resilience, health, and economic development. It was recognized that integrated policy frameworks are vital for addressing the complex and interrelated challenges of food insecurity, malnutrition, and climate change. Convenors stressed the importance of aligning

agricultural, nutrition, climate, and health policies to ensure that food systems are not only productive but also sustainable and adaptable to future challenges.

Second, the role of multi-sectoral collaboration was underscored as a key enabler for food systems transformation. The Dialogue stressed the importance of cross-sectoral coordination to break down silos and foster synergies between ministries such as agriculture, health, education, and economic planning. Several countries shared their efforts in establishing multi-sectoral platforms and steering committees, which bring together diverse stakeholders to create a unified vision for food systems transformation. This collaborative approach is seen as essential for achieving long-term sustainability and resilience in food systems. Finally, the importance of building institutional capacity was emphasized. Convenors discussed the need to strengthen the skills and capabilities of policymakers at all levels to effectively implement integrated food systems policies. This includes providing technical support, enhancing data management systems, and ensuring continuous monitoring and evaluation to track progress. Capacity-building efforts are critical for ensuring that food systems transformation is not only a top-down process but also locally owned and context-specific.

In her closing remarks, Ms Madsen highlighted the significant progress being made in establishing multi-sectoral platforms and policy coherence at the national level. She emphasized that policy integration requires ongoing effort, particularly in ensuring alignment with national development goals and the SDGs. Ms Madsen reiterated the importance of institutional frameworks, cross-sector collaboration, and capacity building to achieve transformative outcomes. In closing the sessions, she thanked the participants for their active engagement and valuable contributions, recognizing that the path forward requires continued innovation, collaboration, and commitment from all sectors to build sustainable, resilient food systems.