

FOOD SYSTEMS SOLUTIONS DIALOGUES 2026

Food systems approach in practice – building policy coherence across agendas

25 March 2026

Summary Report

Introduction

The Food Systems Solutions Dialogues (FSSD) are purposeful, organized events that unite 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 launches annually. Morning and afternoon sessions are held for each Dialogue to accommodate different time zones. On 25 March 2026, the Dialogue "Food systems approach in practice – building policy coherence across agendas" was held as the first session in the 2026 Food Systems Solutions Dialogues (FSSD) series. The Dialogue was organized in collaboration with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement and the FAO Agrifood Systems and Food Safety Division (ESF) and both national convenors and SUN government focal points were invited to attend. This Summary Report reflects the combined discussions from the two sessions (morning and afternoon).

The Dialogue explored how a food systems approach can be operationalized at the country level to strengthen policy coherence and inclusive governance across national food systems and nutrition agendas. Drawing on the framework presented in FAO's publication [*Transforming Food and Agriculture Through a Systems Approach*](#), the Dialogue highlighted country experiences through a deep dive into innovative governance mechanisms, including the roles of SUN Focal Points, SUN multi-stakeholder platforms, and National Food Systems Convenors. It examined how these institutional arrangements enable more integrated decision-making, foster cross-sector collaboration, and support the implementation of national food systems pathways, ultimately contributing to improved nutrition outcomes and advancing sustainable and inclusive food systems transformation.

Setting the Scene

Ms. Corinna Hawkes, Director of the Division of Agrifood Systems and Food Safety (ESF) at the Food and Agriculture Organization, highlighted the importance of adopting a systems approach to strengthen policy coherence across agrifood systems. Drawing on country experiences and systems science, she emphasized that transforming agrifood systems requires moving beyond siloed approaches towards integrated, multi-sectoral action that addresses outcomes such as nutrition, climate, economic development, and inequality.

simultaneously. She underscored key enabling practices, including joint planning across stakeholders, coordinated policy and investment portfolios, evidence-based decision-making, and the integration of monitoring and learning systems to manage trade-offs, identify co-benefits and adapt over time. Ms. Hawkes also noted FAO's ongoing efforts to support countries through knowledge generation, technical guidance, and a forthcoming knowledge product and learning series under the One Planet Network to foster convergence and coherence in food systems transformation.

The morning and afternoon sessions featured a distinguished panel bringing together global and national perspectives on operationalizing a systems approach and strengthening policy coherence across food systems and nutrition. The panel included:

- Ms Paulina Addy, Food Systems National Convener, Ghana
- Dr Phommy Inthichack, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Lao PDR
- Mr Abdelrahman Mohamed Belal, Director General of the One Health Department of the Ministry of Health and Population in Egypt
- Ms Katherine Curi Quinto, Public health Researcher at Instituto de Investigación Nutricional and Member of the Food and Nutrition Security Social Initiative PERUSAN, Peru

The morning session was moderated by Ms Mia Madsen, Policy Officer, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, while the afternoon session was moderated by Mr Edward Boydell, Food Systems Strategic Advisor, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Secretariat.

Key Insights from Panellists

Ms. Paulina Addy, Food Systems National Convener for Ghana, highlighted Ghana's experience in strengthening policy coherence through a cross-sectoral and systems-based approach. She noted the unique arrangement of having two convenors, one from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and another from the National Development Planning Commission. The second convenor is also the SUN focal point, and provides a bridge to the Office of the President Building on an existing cross-sectoral planning group, she explained that the food systems approach has further strengthened collaboration across sectors, bringing together stakeholders from agriculture, health, education, finance, the private sector, and academia. She emphasized ongoing efforts to coordinate actions through joint planning, budget tracking, and the development of a food systems strategy and investment plan, including initiatives such as the Feed Ghana Programme and school feeding programs with an explicit focus on addressing malnutrition. Ms. Addy also highlighted the importance of linking sectors, such as infrastructure, energy, and agriculture, to improve access to food and support nutrition outcomes, while acknowledging that some challenges remain as sectors continue to move away from siloed approaches. She concluded that strong coordination led by the Planning

Commission has been key to advancing more integrated action towards improved nutrition and food security.

Dr. Phommy Inthichack, Deputy Director General at the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Lao PDR, highlighted the country's transition from a health sector-focused nutrition agenda to a comprehensive food systems approach that integrates production, markets, diets, health, environment, and climate resilience. He emphasized that food systems have been elevated as a national policy priority, supported by key milestones including a national food systems diagnosis, the UN Food Systems Summit pathway, and the recent launch of the National Action Plan for Sustainable Food System Transformation (2026–2030). Dr. Inthichack underscored institutional reforms such as the merger of agriculture and environment ministries and the strengthening of coordination mechanisms across sectors and levels, including the expansion of the National Nutrition Committee's mandate and the role of sub-national committees in delivering integrated interventions. He further highlighted the importance of systems thinking in practice through multi-sectoral coordination, a shift toward whole-of-system policy framing, and the active management of trade-offs and synergies to balance nutrition, environmental sustainability, and economic priorities.

Mr. Abdelrahman Mohamed Belal, Director General of the One Health Department at the Ministry of Health and Population of Egypt, highlighted Egypt's transition toward a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach to food systems transformation and nutrition following the UN Food Systems Summit. He emphasized the establishment of a high-level national committee chaired by the Prime Minister, bringing together around 15 ministries and relevant authorities to harmonize policy directions and align sectoral actions under a shared national vision. Supported by technical and scientific working groups, this structure has guided the development and implementation of a National Action Plan comprising over 200 initiatives focused on scaling up nutrition, reducing anemia and stunting, and promoting sustainable and healthy diets. Mr. Belal underscored the importance of integrating efforts across sectors, including agriculture, health, education, water, and infrastructure, while engaging the private sector and leveraging new technologies to address resource constraints and improve food production. He also highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination, monitoring, and resource alignment, noting that while challenges remain in fully aligning sectoral mandates, Egypt is making steady progress toward a more coherent, inclusive, and sustainable food systems transformation aligned with national priorities and global commitments.

Ms. Katherine Curi Quinto, Public Health Researcher at the Instituto de Investigación Nutricional and member of the Food and Nutrition Security Social Initiative (PERUSAN) in Peru, shared reflections from civil society on the country's transition toward a food systems approach to nutrition. She highlighted Peru's high geographic, cultural, and food diversity, with a significant share of domestic consumption supplied by local production and supported by farmers' knowledge in managing agrobiodiversity and climate resilience. At the same time, she underscored a persistent paradox between food availability, consumption patterns, and malnutrition, marked by disparities in access to healthy diets, rising consumption of

ultra-processed foods, and the coexistence of undernutrition and non-communicable diseases. While noting progress in establishing multi-sectoral mechanisms and fostering multi-actor engagement, she emphasized ongoing challenges, including weak implementation of a food systems approach, fragmented governance, limited integration between food systems and nutrition policies, and a policy bias toward agro-exports over domestic healthy food production. She further highlighted structural constraints such as poverty, gender inequalities, unhealthy food environments, and climate pressures, concluding that stronger integration, improved regulation, and scaled-up interventions are needed to achieve meaningful nutrition outcomes.

Dialogue with National Convenors and SUN Focal Points

Following the panel, National Convenors and SUN government focal points engaged in an interactive dialogue to exchange country experiences on operationalizing a systems approach to strengthen policy coherence and inclusive governance across food systems and nutrition agendas. The discussion highlighted the role of National Convenors, SUN focal points, and multi-stakeholder platforms in enabling coordinated, cross-sectoral action.

To guide the conversation, participants were provided with a few guiding questions:

1. What arrangements are in place in your country to link food systems and nutrition agendas? How do these arrangements reflect a systems approach?
2. What works well to support policy coherence and coordination across food systems and nutrition agendas and what are the gaps?

During the dialogue, National Convenors and country representatives shared concrete experiences in operationalizing a systems approach to strengthen policy coherence and multi-sectoral coordination for food systems transformation. Several countries highlighted ongoing efforts to integrate nutrition objectives into national policies and strategies. For example, Bangladesh is reviewing its National Nutrition Policy and incorporating food systems considerations, supported by a policy coherence analysis and the finalization of its national pathway plan of action. Jordan is aligning food systems transformation with climate commitments and national development frameworks, including its NDCs and Vision 2030, while noting financing as a key constraint. Haiti reported the recent establishment of an inter-ministerial committee on food security and nutrition, supported by a technical body under the Prime Minister's office, while Sudan highlighted efforts to develop a 10-year national multi-sectoral nutrition plan involving multiple ministries, despite ongoing challenges in achieving high-level coordination.

Participants emphasized the importance of existing institutional arrangements and practical approaches to support coordination across sectors. South Sudan noted existing structures such as a Food Security and Nutrition Council under the Office of the President and a National Food Reserve Agency, while acknowledging challenges related to operationalization,

governance, and data gaps. Countries also shared concrete interventions linking food systems and nutrition. Jamaica highlighted efforts to strengthen school feeding programmes by connecting them with local agricultural production to increase access to fresh, nutritious foods. Bolivia emphasized food fortification, support to family agriculture, and investments in post-harvest infrastructure and cold chain systems to preserve nutritional quality. Mali stressed addressing anemia through nutrition-sensitive value chains, including food fortification and iron-rich foods, while Sweden shared experience in strengthening public meal systems through nutrition standards, guidance to local authorities, and monitoring of dietary habits among children and vulnerable groups.

At the same time, participants identified common constraints, including limited financing, fragmented governance, weak implementation, and challenges in aligning sectoral mandates under a shared vision. In contexts such as Sudan, overlapping crises, including conflict, climate shocks, and economic pressures, further complicate coordination and require more holistic approaches. While policy frameworks and strategies are increasingly in place, gaps remain in translating these into effective and coordinated action, particularly at sub-national levels. Overall, participants underscored the importance of strengthening coordination mechanisms, improving policy coherence, and aligning resources, while highlighting the value of peer learning and continued support to advance inclusive and sustainable food systems transformation.

The Way Forward

The Dialogue underscored the importance of strengthening institutional frameworks to support integrated, systems-based policymaking and sustained multi-sectoral engagement. Moving forward, efforts should focus on enhancing coordination mechanisms - including links between the Food Systems Convenor, SUN Focal Point and multi-stakeholder platforms,, building capacity through targeted support and technical resources, and improving collaboration across stakeholders to advance coherent and effective food systems transformation.

Participants also highlighted the value of continued peer learning and knowledge exchange to share good practices and innovative solutions. Sustained dialogue across sectors and with local stakeholders remains essential to align national priorities with global commitments and ensure accountability. The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, together with partners including the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, FAO's Agrifood Systems and Food Safety Division (ESF), and other partners, will deepen collaboration to facilitate these efforts and provide platforms to advance inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food systems transformation with nutrition as a central goal.