

Food Systems Stocktaking Moment 2023

Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Arab Region

13 March 2023, Beirut, Lebanon

Executive Summary of Key Messages¹

Key takeaways

- Link between food security and nutrition with the overall stability in the region
- Crisis is a wake-up call and opens a window of opportunity to accelerate transformation and implementation of pathways
- No one country can do it alone – regional collaboration and interdependency
- Importance to take into account the context of the Arab region facing common challenges as well as the diversity within Arab states based on culture, socio-economic and climatic conditions.
- Focus on country needs, challenges and scaling up and replicating existing success stories without reinventing the wheel is essential to identify the expectations and accurate measures of success at national level that will be reflected with progress at regional level.
- Partnership and coordination at all levels focusing on technical and financial levers– whole of government and whole of society agenda
- COP28: elevate food systems transformation to be part of the priorities of discussions, negotiations and outcomes of COP 28 building on COP27

Challenges in the region

- Productivity levels are insufficient and stagnating with unsustainable use of already scarce resources
- High import dependency coupled with high food loss and waste
- Growing population and increasing demographic pressure – consumption
- High level of food insecurity as well as triple burden of malnutrition especially in vulnerable countries
- Poverty and vulnerability of workers in food systems
- Climate change – scarce and depleted natural resources (water and land)
- Conflicts and recurrent crisis situation + migration and refugee challenges
- Growing inequalities leading to growing vulnerabilities of the underserved segments of society

Priorities to transform the region's food systems

- **Rural transformation and inclusive value chains:** enhancing productivity and income, focusing on youth employment and women empowerment to close rural/urban divide
- **Food security and healthy diets for all:** focusing on trade and its legislation, food safety and quality, and nutrition education
- **Greening agriculture:** addressing water scarcity and ensuring environmental sustainability and climate action

¹ This is an executive summary of the deliberations in the meeting. A detailed report will be released in due time.

- **Building resilience** to multiple shocks, protracted crises and emergency situations along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus including climate change impacts (floods, droughts, extreme events)
- **Regional cooperation, integration and solidarity:** finding common solutions to common challenges, enhance exchanges through interregional trade, free zones and better infrastructure, south-south cooperation and exchange of knowledge and success stories, including through regional organizations such as the League of Arab States.
- **Data for decision-making and monitoring progress towards transformation:** to inform decisions and assess the impact of interventions on communities, environment and economy, in order to manage trade-offs and leverage synergies
- **Finance for FS transformation:** INFFs for FS/ FS country budgeting tool, increasing public investment, role of private sector investments, de-risking investment in conflict countries, tapping into climate finance, making finance accessible to smallholders
- **Technology, Innovation and science-based interventions,** agriculture incubators
- **Leveraging the power of legislation and the role of Parliamentarians**
- **Enhancing risk transfer and social protection policies for a just and equitable transformation**

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