

## SESSION 8: “DIALOGUE OF NATIONAL CONVENORS”

*One Planet Network’s Sustainable Food Systems Programme 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference*

*“The Transformation We Need”*

Thursday 27 April 2023

Summary report

### Introduction

On 27 April 2023, the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Swiss Federal Office of Agriculture (FOAG), organised a session titled "Dialogue of National Convenors" as part of the One Planet Network’s Sustainable Food Systems Programme 4<sup>th</sup> Global Conference “*The Transformation We Need*” held in Hanoi from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. The following represents a summary of the session.

Ms Sylvia Lopez-Ekra, Deputy Director of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (the Hub), opened the dialogue. In her opening remarks, she acknowledged the importance of national food systems transformation pathways – the most tangible outcomes from the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). Ms Lopez-Ekra valued the importance of the work being carried by National Convenors, recognizing their pivotal role in elevating the food systems agenda at the country level. Situated at the forefront, she said that they demonstrate an unwavering commitment to this transformational mission, despite working with limited resources.

In a keynote speech, Sir David Nabarro, Strategic Director at 4SD, expressed his belief that the aptitude to function proficiently within systems is a valuable trait. He conveyed his admiration for the significant contributions that National Convenors make towards the progress of nations. Furthermore, he emphasized the necessity of having a guiding principle that elucidates the evolution of food systems. Since the inception of UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), he said that a clear objective has been put in place and it is imperative that we transcend the existing disagreements and tensions and look towards a promising future. With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serving as a compass, National Convenors have used these goals to disseminate knowledge on a national scale. They have also incorporated a human rights approach with an important focus on the right to food. In closing his speech, Sir Nabarro acknowledged the Convenors for using the pathways as a living document while performing their duties.

### Dialogue

Following Sir Nabarro’s keynote speech, the session hosted a roundtable discussion moderated by Ms Lopez-Ekra.

Mr Alwin Kopse, Head of International Affairs & Food Security at the Federal Office for Agriculture and National Convenor of Switzerland, opened the roundtable. He illustrated his work through the Food Policy Citizens’ Assembly – an assembly composed of 80 Swiss citizens with the aim of driving and implementing the Swiss national pathway. He explained that Switzerland has been organizing national dialogues – a form of dialogue that is working to overcome the urban/rural divide. As a result of these dialogues, the Citizen’s Assembly has successfully

formulated 126 recommendations that cover a diverse range of topics, including health, environment, social and economic issues. This process has been successful due to clear rules of engagement, where people have been provided with evidence, tools and learning journeys.

Mr. Sok Silo, Secretary-General of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) and National Convenor of Cambodia, shared an update on the work in Cambodia. He highlighted efforts to improve food systems to ensure food security to all people, as well as to increase exports at the regional and global level. He also emphasized that the issue of policy fragmentation is of great concern, not only at the ministerial level but also at the donor and UN agencies level. He strongly advocates for increased collaboration between local and global authorities. Cambodia is currently grappling with a significant challenge, namely the reluctance of individuals to work on policies pertaining to food systems and food security. In this regard, he argued that there is a pressing need to focus on capacity building. At the same time, Mr. Silo conveyed that the Cambodian government has taken a significant step towards ensuring food and nutrition for its citizens by devising a comprehensive national strategy for the years 2024-2028. Furthermore, the government has also successfully instituted an international food safety day, as well as formulated a law on food safety, and established provincial working groups. With commendable participation in coalitions and representation in the SUN Movement, he stated that Cambodia has shown noteworthy engagement in the realm of food and nutrition.

During the roundtable, Ms Truong Tuyet Mai, National Convenor of Viet Nam, shared insights on the work Viet Nam is doing to transform food systems. An Action Plan by 2030 has been issued by the Vietnamese Prime Minister. She explained that the plan emphasizes the roles and responsibilities of all the actors involved, which shows significant engagement and support from the government. An annual interagency report will guide the government and all stakeholders in aligning their actions towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Ms Mai stressed that the main obstacles Viet Nam faces in transforming food systems is the poor coordination between the main actors involved at multiple levels. Furthermore, she highlighted that there is a lack of knowledge around good practices of people and consumers, as well as limited quality resources of the parties involved. In conclusion, Ms Mai emphasized that the acquisition of extensive knowledge is crucial to foster desirable changes in the behavior of both producers and consumers. However, this can be done with the aid of technology improvements, she concluded.

During the dialogue, National Convenors demonstrated commitment to a multi-sectoral engagement model in tackling issues around food systems transformation. Many noted efforts in their executives, being actively engaged to increase the cooperation between sectors and improve the governance of the food systems.

Mr Martin Hoppe, Head of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, emphasized the need to commit to sustainable food systems by respecting people, and by involving all the actors. By citing the title of the 2022 movie “Everything, everywhere, all at once,” he emphasized the crucial importance of involving all the actors responsible to get concrete outcomes. At the same time, he said that this should encompass all sectors that are interconnected with food, including non-agricultural sectors that go beyond just food production. Mr Hoppe also emphasized the significance of the Stocktaking Moment as an opportunity to bring people together. He observed that the Committee on Food Security (CFS) is already assigned to handle this matter. Thus, to achieve successful results, he emphasized that it is imperative to ensure broad stakeholder participation in the Committee's proceedings. He invited all countries to engage capitals more actively, rather than relying solely on ambassadors in Rome, where the main food organizations are based. He closed by recalling that in the previous Committee session, the adoption of CFS

guidelines on gender was unsuccessful due to a lack of interest in making it a success. This presents a challenge that must be addressed moving forward.

To conclude the roundtable discussion, Mr Kristofer Hamel, Head of Climate Impact Response, Office of the Special Envoy for Climate Change (COP28), shared the Prime Minister of UAE has drawn inspiration from the UNFSS momentum and developed an action plan that led to an update of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). He underlined that the upcoming COP28 presents a great opportunity for food systems transformation. He added that it is equally imperative to maintain the momentum and emphasize the crucial role of the food-climate nexus. Mr Hamel underlined the pivotal role of innovation for food systems transformation. On that, he noted that the UAE and the USA have launched a significant platform for promoting investments in climate-smart agriculture during COP26. In light of the forthcoming UN Climate Summit (COP28), he said it is imperative to promote the intersection of food and climate, emphasizing the significant role of Non-State Actors (NSAs) and innovation in achieving the desired transformation of our food systems.

In the ensuing discussion, Ms Lopez-Ekra welcomed a round of interventions from the audience. A representative from the USA announced their commitment of 5 billion dollars towards building more resilient food systems. The National Convenor of Burundi provided an overview of the food systems transformation that the country is currently undergoing. National consultations have been taking place since 2021, and several projects have been established to implement the national pathway. Notably, the "*Banque de Femmes*" project was highlighted as a means of supporting rural women.

Other interventions proposed a greater involvement of NSAs in the transformation of food systems, given their significant contributions. Finally, Mr Rasool from GAIN expressed Pakistan's commitment and eagerness to share their experiences and progress as part of the post-Summit process, noting the importance of moving from theory to practice.

The session concluded with final remarks from the panelists. All panelists recalled the need to cooperate at a national and international level to achieve the 2030 Agenda. They said it is imperative to explore ways to enhance our collaborative efforts and to acknowledge and appreciate diversity to transform food systems.

## Background

The 4th global conference of the One Planet Network' Sustainable Food Systems Programme aimed at making a substantial contribution to the UN Food Systems Summit's follow-up process, in view of the first Stocktaking Moment scheduled to take place from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2023, at FAO premises. The conference builds on the past fruitful collaborations of the SFS Programme with the UNFSS Secretariat and the current UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, as well as the expertise and tools of the SFS Programme and the outcomes of the Programme's previous three global conferences.