

UN Food Systems Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment

SESSION REPORT

All session recordings will be available after the conclusion of the session. Please send the report of your session to Ms. Yota Nicolarea (Panayota.Nicolarea@fao.org) and Mr. Thembani Malapela (Thembani.Malapela@fao.org) by Tuesday 1st August COB

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Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment

School Meals Powering Food Systems Plenary Session

24 July 2023: 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM

Name of note-taker: Jutta Neitzel

Organization/country: School Based Programmes, World Food Programme, Rome, Italy

E-mail of note-taker: jutta.neitzel@wfp.org

List of speakers, in all segments, and key messages

NAME AND TITLE OF SPEAKER	SEGMENT (opening, panel, closing, etc.)	KEY MESSAGES OR/AND RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
Cindy McCain, Executive Director, World Food Programme	Welcome Remarks	Briefly described the history of the School Meals Coalition's creation and its goals and objective, explained the relevance of school meal programmes to food systems, and praised the "national leadership and commitment that is powering the coalition's progress." Highlighted the criticality of collaboration among the 85 Member States and 95 partners of the School Meals Coalition to achieve its goal of providing every child with the opportunity to receive a meal at school by 2030.

<p>H.E. Julius Maada Bio, President, Sierra Leone</p>	<p>Opening Remarks</p>	<p>Highlighted school meals as a transformative initiative, using the example of Sierra Leone, where a national school feeding programme was launched in 2018, which now supports over 800,000 children with the government covering 80% of the cost of the programme. The programme has helped increase enrolment and attendance, as well as reduce stunting. Future steps include a larger effort to procure from local smallholder farmers. Stressed that while Sierra Leone has gone a long way, challenges remain, the most significant being the shrinking fiscal space to meet the growing demand for school feeding and called on partners to support accelerated progress towards SDGs in low and lower-middle income countries.</p>
<p>H.E. Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Prime Minister of Nepal</p>	<p>Opening Remarks</p>	<p>Expressed his hopes that this Stocktaking Moment focused on means of implementation of national ambitions to transform food systems. Showcased school meals as “an area with tremendous transformational impact” and called on focus to be put in helping clear bottlenecks in countries with the smallest resource base. Presented impressive results from Nepal’s school feeding programme, which currently supports 3.3 million children, with a budget that has quadrupled the budget the past five years and committed to further scaling up this key safety net.</p>
<p>H.E. Ouhoumoudou Mahamadou, Prime Minister of Niger</p>	<p>Opening Remarks</p>	<p>Explained the unique value of Niger’s national school meals programme, which includes the provision of school meals to nomadic populations. Demonstrated the positive impacts of this programme, especially for girls, highlighting that the school abandonment rate for girls is 4.5 times higher in school without school feeding, compared to school where girls receive school meals. Expressed his ambition to significantly increase the government’s investment in school meals, increase the rate of coverage of school canteens to 50% in 2030, and extend procurement from smallholder farmers to 50%.</p>
<p>H.E. Chrysula Zacharopoulou, Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships, France</p>	<p>Setting the Scene: What the Coalition has achieved?</p>	<p>Stressed the potential of the School Meals Coalition to be a model of collaboration for the achievement of global challenges. Highlighted key success factors of the Coalition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 418 million children reached by school meal programmes, from 388 million in 2020

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - USD 5 Billion in additional domestic funding - 15% increased domestic financing by low-income countries - 4 million direct jobs created, most of them for women <p>Presented the results of the School Meals Coalition so far and appealed to government to give visibility to this movement in all major multilateral encounters in the coming months and years, including the UN SDG Summit, COP28, the UN’s Ocean’s Conference, and the coming High-Level Meeting of the School Meals Coalition, hosted by President Macron in Paris in October 2023.</p>
Ms. Jaana Husu-Kallio, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland	Setting the Scene - What has made the School Meals Coalition so successful?	Described the results of a review to assess the impact of the School Meals Coalition, highlighting three key aspects of success: 1) high-level commitment of global leaders; 2) flexible governance structure with a secretariat; 3) the multistakeholder approach focused on country-led interaction. Presented the high-level achievements of the coalition and outlined the next steps. The coalition is “more than halfway there” to achieve its overall goal of providing every child with a meal at school. The review recommended priorities for the way forward, which include continuous mobilization of Member States and non-state actors, strengthening the integration of local food producers, strengthening the peer-to-peer learning initiative, and tracking systems for national progress on school meals.
Ms. Cristina Duarte, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa	Panel opening: Understanding country progress	Advocated for the expansion of home-grown school feeding as a comprehensive way to promote development, not only in the education sector but in several other sectors – “home-grown school feeding is more than a meal for a child at school”. Stressed that school meals are investments, with high return on investment of USD 9 to every dollar invested. Appealed to countries to earmark Official Development Assistance for school meals programmes as a catalyst for nationally owned programmes.

<p>H.E. Gaspard Twagirayezu, Minister of State, Ministry of Education of Rwanda</p>	<p>First roundtable on national commitments and progress</p>	<p>Showcased the impressive expansion of the national school meals programme, which has gone from supporting 680,000 children in 2017 to over 3.5 million children in 2022, with an investment of over USD 120 million. Stressed the importance that “school feeding is more than budgeting; we have also invested in building governing systems”. Rwanda has recently hosted the creation of the East Africa School Meals Coalition Network.</p>
<p>H.E. Fernanda Pacobahyba, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Rural Development and Family Farming of Brazil</p>	<p>First roundtable on national commitments and progress</p>	<p>Highlighted the scale of the Brazilian school feeding programme, which supports over 40 million students every day, providing over 10 billion meals each year. Stressed the key role Brazil plays in sharing knowledge with other countries in support of better and stronger national programmes. “Brazil has supported over 100 countries in Latin America, African and Asia in the past 16 years”.</p>
<p>H.E. Jenny Lester Moffitt, US Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs at the US Department of Agriculture</p>	<p>First roundtable on national commitments and progress</p>	<p>Outlined national food security priorities deriving from the White House National Strategy on Hunger Nutrition and Health, and which include free nourishing school meals. Currently, 60% of students receive free school meals in the United States, 75% of which are children from low-income households. “Our administration is committed to universal free school meals”.</p>
<p>H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister, People's Republic of Bangladesh</p>	<p>First roundtable on national commitments and progress</p>	<p>Announced Bangladesh’s commitment to providing school feeding to all 20 million schoolchildren in the country by 2041. The Government of Bangladesh also announced their joining the School Meals Coalition during the session with the Minister of Primary Education signing the declaration of commitment.</p>
<p>H.E. Cem Özdemir, Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture of Germany</p>	<p>Second roundtable on governments and partners’ investment</p>	<p>Stressed Germany’s commitment to ensure each child, regardless of their income level, has the right to a nutritious meal at school. Announced Germany will provide financial support to Sierra Leone and Laos through a USD 22 million investment over the next five years to accelerate school feeding programmes as vehicles for food system transformation.</p>
<p>Mr. Roy Steiner, Senior Vice President for the Food Initiative of the Rockefeller Foundation</p>	<p>Second roundtable on governments and partners’ investment</p>	<p>“School Meals is the one thing we can all agree on”, said Mr. Roy Steiner as he outlined Rockefeller’s engagement on the School Meals Coalition, which includes 1) creating economic analysis on cost-benefits; 2) introducing change in the systems, for instance by shifting from refined grain to whole grain; and 3) creating the fiscal space to expand these programmes.</p>

<p>H.E. Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, Minister of International Development of Norway</p>	<p>Second roundtable on governments and partners' investment</p>	<p>Reaffirmed school feeding programmes as a key pillar of ensuring food security in their development policy. Highlighted that Norway is providing over NOK 400 million to promote home-grown school feeding in Niger, Ethiopia, and Malawi. He stressed the added value of these programmes: 1) designing home-grown school feeding programmes makes a difference in local development; 2) school feeding can unleash the power of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.</p>
<p>H.E. Mariam bint Mohammed Saeed Hareb Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment of the UAE</p>	<p>Second roundtable on governments and partners' investment</p>	<p>"This (school meals) is a low hanging fruit for food systems transformation and also to tackle climate change", said Minister Almheiri and appealed to those who have not joined the coalition to do so. She announced that the COP 28 will put food systems right, front, and centre in the agenda, and school meals is a significant part of this.</p>
<p>Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations</p>	<p>Closing Remarks</p>	<p>Stressed the critical need to have school feeding programmes and a School Meals Coalition, given it impacts several SDGs, and considering the astonishing needs children in conflict and crisis settings are facing. "School meals programmes have an unrivalled potential to cut through the complexities of food systems". DSG Amina Mohamed closed the session with four calls to action for governments: 1) work to reach all 730 million school children by 2030 with nutritious meals; 2) make changes to the programmes so they can be more sustainable and climate-friendly, including adopting targets for local purchase (like Brazil, which has a target of 30% of purchase from smallholder farmers); 3) integrate school meals into climate finance; and 4) develop a plan of action to mobilise the \$1.7bn needed to low income countries, among others, through debt relief. She wants to see this plan presented at the SDG Summit High Impact Initiative on Food Systems in September.</p>

Overall summary, conclusions and recommended actions (max 250 words)

The School Meals Coalition session was an exciting and inspiring session where governments demonstrated that progress on school meals is possible, even in a world of concurrent crises. The session showed how school meals programmes can operate across policy silos and – above all – produce results. The President of Sierra Leone highlighted that the national school feeding programme supports over 800,000 children with the government covering 80% of the cost of the programme. The Prime Minister of Nepal mentioned that the government had quadrupled the budget to reach 3.3 million children and is committed to scaling up further.

In the ministerial segment, Bangladesh joined the School Meals Coalition, announcing that the government wants to reach all 20 million schoolchildren with meals by 2041. Rwanda has gone from supporting 680,000 before 2021 to over 3.5 million children in 2022, with a domestic investment of over USD 120 million. Germany announced a new EUR 22 million grant for Sierra Leone and Laos, to implement a food systems approach to school meals. The UAE called on more countries and partners to champion school meals, particularly in the food systems and climate space leading towards COP 28.

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