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

Type (click one): ☐ HLS/PLENARY – ☐ LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE – ☒ SPECIAL EVENT

DIGITALIZATION FOR RESILIENT AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS

25TH JULY 2023: 14.30-15.30 CEST

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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
1. Dejan Jakovljevic, CIO and Director of Digitalization and Informatics Division, FAO	Opening/welcoming note	- UNFSS is an important moment that brings us all together to continue exploring ways to better serve countries through systemic, country-driven, customized support in translating their commitments into effective actions to reach sustainable food systems by 2030. - The dialogues generated in the session aim at bringing together the wide array of experiences and possibilities that digital brings us towards building resilient agrifood systems, and through the specific lens of technology and innovation, at highlighting the importance of digitalization's overarching efforts in accelerating agrifood system transformation.

2. Máximo Torero, Chief Economist, FAO	Opening remarks	- It is important to embrace digital transformation and leverage technology for the productivity, inclusivity, and sustainability of our agrifood systems to achieve food security at the global scale. - To face the extreme challenges our world is facing, we need to accelerate the digital transformation. and could summarize its causes with "4 Cs": Connectivity, Cost, Content and Capabilities. - As digitalization has directly on so many sectors including investments, market access and financial inclusion, many efforts have still to be made in an enabling environment to activate those leverages at various levels so that digitalization can truly benefit 'People, Planet and Prosperity', as a whole, with more investments and collaboration with partners.
3. Honourable Franklin Mithika Linturi, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, Republic of Kenya	Keynote speech	- Kenya is perceived and taking the role of a digital champion (cf Transformation Agenda and national data driven policies, set as milestone by President). - Food systems are volatile and vulnerable to stress and shocks, but digital innovation has the potential to transform and find solution for the 4 betters and make agrifood systems more productive, efficient, inclusive and sustainable, also empowering youth and women. - The digitalization programme ranks highly in Kenya's economic agenda as it is the first enabler of the national food system transformation. - This has resulted in an enhanced targeting of services to improve the work of farmers and the safety and productivity of crops. - Several achievements can be noted, such as 5.1 million farmers registered on KIAMIS, 3 million bags of fertilisers distributed, the extensive use of extension services, mobile payment services (Mpsa), E vouchers, the development of a geospatial EW system, desert locus and FAW.

		- Kenya welcomes investment in this space, with a focus on data management, AI for better farming practices, market access, information sharing platforms and the use of Agro advisories for better Food Systems traceability. - "Digitalization breaks the ranks and makes us equals'(quote).
4. Tania Strauss, Head, Food and Water, World Economic Forum (WEF)	Panellist	- WEF plays a crucial role as co-lead of the Innovation Lever of Change at UNFSS, and through the Food Innovation Hub's global initiative, supporting data and digital solutions (with already 80 stakeholders). - WEF is also part of the Global Coalition for Data and Digital Food Systems Innovation, hosted by FAO and co-led with WEF, World Bank and CGIAR. - One of the flagship initiatives from the coalition is "One Map" with leadership provided by Kenya. This project leverages common understanding on interoperability to leverage capabilities to make real time decisions and collaborative learning. This map, that is staring to get build, reveals opportunities and open-source data, for private and public sector. - Call to action for partners to join and support the coalition. We need to find opportunities for collaboration and leveraging the expertise of each partner, and to help develop governance and cooperation needed with long term vision, using ecosystem services. - Accent was put on soil as a strategic tool to enable nature-positive farming and global food security, with reference made to the 100 Million Farmers initiative and role of technologies for soil health as Innovation Lever. - To conclude, the importance of country support as well as the need for innovative multi stakeholder partnerships, were again stressed out to succeed in achieving overall resilience when trying to implement sustainable solutions for our agrifood systems.

5. Alessandra Zampieri, Director of the Directorate of Sustainable Resources, EU Joint Research Center (JRC)	Panellist	- The EU works at the interface between EU policies and science and is witnessing like everyone the rapid changes digitalization brings, being aware of the need to connect the need and the game changing aspects, with confidence needed all across different domains (including AI).
		- Digital is a true game changer - if properly governed and not works in isolation (across cutting nutrition, financial services, advisory services, etc.)
		- Technology opens new markets, and it is critical for the very existence of businesses. Technological innovation can benefit all the chain of a business, from production, to supply, to consumption.
		- Geospatial data (with robust geospatial systems) is essential to build resilient food systems.
		- Digitalization can truly transform farmers livelihoods through availability and accessibility.
		- The benefit of digitalization can reach more people if we increase connectivity and bridge the digital divide. And new systems (like European Union gateway) are boosting and building these bridges.
		- But the EU – and all of us – are facing some of the main risks that go along with digital technologies for informing policy and allowing monitoring and compliance.
		- Tech innovation can increase inequality, and we need to defend rights of citizens and avoid concentration in tech giants, no-one needs to be left behind. Legislations about this and AI are being implemented to be safe, transparent and not discriminatory.

6. Martien Van Nieuwkoop, Director, World Bank	Panellist	- The WB has been investing significantly in digital and data solutions, mostly climate smart agriculture, and realized that a blueprint has to be tailored to local conditions.
		- The development of data platforms and is essential to create actionable real time analytics, with examples already in action. These platforms need to be open source to work for farmers and make precision agriculture work for them.
		- The development of digital last mile service delivery (private sector and private extension) for smallholder farmers should also be considered to ensure connectivity, productivity, empower digital skills, improve quality and targeting and impact of services. In the past we have missed this element, with no access, but nowadays we can recognize their disadvantage and act upon it.
		- What can AI do to improve the farmer extension service interface? The development of innovation ecosystems is crucial to enable scaling up. The scale of innovation driven by digital is very wide (roadmap, advisory services, fintech startups, etc.) and has the potential to transform agriculture.
		- Agriwallets can also be used to leverage digitally developed credit scores.
		- Governments can leverage intervention from the private sector including agtech and fintech startups, like in Ethiopia, Kenya, through the Roadmap for Digital Agriculture Extension
7. Massimiliano Giansanti, President, Confagricoltura		- Confagricoltura is an active actor in the field of digitalization and innovation thanks to its Digital Agenda that fosters Agriculture 4.0 and Smart and low environmental impact agri-food chains.

		- Digitalization brings opportunity to everyone. In Italy, there is a big difference between regional areas, but with digitalization there is a guarantee for all farmers to have the same tools despite the regional location.
		- Confagricoltura gives great importance to digitalization for food production and reaching SDGs 2 Zero Hunger, especially through its new platform Hub Farm being launched now and that is used by members/farmers as to produce with precision farming/less input where not only farmers are active but also insurance companies, banks, internet providers.
		- Hub Farm is an open platform where farmers can share data. With this data, AI can offer back to farmers analysis and further information. The use of Hub Farm has reduced the use of water, fertilizers, tractors and has also reduced illness of plants – all these being tangible results. Farmers now have the possibility to produce with lower costs and stay on the global market.
		- There are nevertheless still risk areas around data, including privacy and principles.
		- Call to action in working together for more rules.
8. Dejan Jakovjlevic	Closing	- The session provided the opportunity to showcase that digital technologies truly have the potential to help strengthening the distinct resilience capacities agri-food systems must have – to prevent, anticipate, absorb, adapt and transform – by: enhancing food supply chain resilience, supporting livelihoods in the agri-food system and, in the face of disruption, ensuring sustainable access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to all.
		- Providing resilient agrifood systems at the global level enabled by technology is still hampered by many factors, including the digital divide which requires significant public investments, improved regulations, coherent policy and incentive frameworks to be bridged.

		- Embedding digitalization when building resilient agri-food systems should be considered as a key policy objective. This will require mainstreaming resilience in agri-food policies and greater coordination in and for efficient digitalization across all relevant sectors and layers of government institutions to ensure policy coherence in that sector, across all the systems and actors over time.

Interventions from the floor

SPEAKER	QUESTION OR KEY POINT OF INTERVENTION
1. Rikin Gandhi, Chief Executive Officer, Digital Green	- Mr Gandhi highlighted the importance of agricultural extension. Historically agricultural extension has been typified as top down (from research to farmers). Now there is a real opportunity with digital to flip the paradigm, from top down, to bottom up and farmers can become decision makers. Not only it is an opportunity to inform farmers, but to gather data from the farmers themselves, from the ground. This can help to refine and improve these models and research. - The exciting thing with AI, (farmer) video and data can be put into large language models and support extension agents. All the text-to-speech and speech-to-text technologies can include even the most marginalized communities. This combo of thrust-worthy and relevant content and AI models and data exchange are building blocks to define digital infrastructures. And then we can see how members countries can adapt to site specific ways, tailored to their needs.

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

1. Despite new challenges to tackle, but with new solutions to bring, digitalization is now more than ever a critical component for accelerating the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, at all levels and at all times, as seen in the examples presented.

2. Digitalization plays a pivotal role in supporting the implementation of national pathways for food system transformation and enhancing action not only at the national, but also at the regional and global level, paving the way towards action at the wider scale.

3. Digital tools can empower farmers and food producers with precision agriculture techniques, supply chain optimization, and market access, boosting productivity and sustainability overall, flipping the traditional paradigm.

4. Several actions can already be taken to improve the resilience of our agrifood systems – including the stability of food availability and access, for long-term but also short-term resilience, e.g. investments in infrastructure, training, R&D, support policies, to leverage priority areas such as climate, biodiversity, food security, nutrition, and early warning systems with relevant development outcomes.

5. Partners are called to unite for this purpose in joint digital initiatives, such as through the Global Coalition for Data and Digital Food Systems and/or other enabling mechanisms, highlighting the need for a coherent multi stakeholder approach and in support of evidence-based decision, enabled by technology and data, for resilient agrifood systems.

5. New issues emerging related to the safe and ethical of digital technologies, such as AI, need to be now taken into consideration as well to ensure in a holistic perspective 'an open, free and secure digital future for all' – as outlined by the Global Digital Compact- that will make strong and lastly impact on our agrifood systems.

6. Paving the way towards the SDGs Summit and the Summit of the Future, the key role of Digital Cooperation should be further emphasized to address the challenges our world faces today in an effective way.

7. Using the momentum of the Innovation and Technology lever, this will allow to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and overcome fragmentation within and across sectors to act in a trans-disciplinary manner, bringing together the natural and social sciences with data and technology to drive efficiently agrifood systems transformation in a holistic approach, leaving no one behind.