

OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE 5TH GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF THE ONE PLANET NETWORK'S (10YFP) SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS (SFS) PROGRAMME

Overcoming the barriers to food systems transformation

Coherent policies and equity-sensitive solutions to simultaneously fight hunger and malnutrition, biodiversity loss
and the climate crisis

17th June 2025

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1. Overall conference conclusions

The following overall conference conclusions were highlighted throughout the different sessions of the conference:

Food systems transformation holds the solutions to major interlinked challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, diet-related diseases, inequality and poverty. Moving towards sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems requires:

- Fostering convergence and coherence across all public policy areas that are related to food security and nutrition as well as other food systems outcomes.
- Tackling political economy dynamics, in particular power asymmetries and structural inequalities, including through transparent rules of engagement and by actively managing trade-offs and co-benefits in policy processes related to food systems.
- Putting people at the centre through the application of a human-rights based approach to food systems transformation.
- The effective and meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders in policy processes related to food systems, where groups that are often underrepresented, marginalized and disadvantaged such as smallholders, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and people of African Descent, are empowered to play a leading role.
- Promoting equity-sensitive measures that link environmental, economic and social dimensions, such as facilitating access to land and finance, promoting approaches such as agroecology and regenerative agriculture, and public policies such as sustainable public food procurement and school meal programs.

2. Background

On 27-29 May 2025, more than 300 participants gathered in Brasilia (Brazil) with the aim to inspire and encourage bold decisions in key global food systems related policy processes in 2025.

Participants included Ministers and Vice-Ministers from four different countries from three different world regions, UNFSS National Convenors, other members of the One Planet Network, and further actors involved in policy processes, at global, regional, national and subnational level, at the intersection of food systems, nutrition, climate, biodiversity, livelihoods, equality and other related policy agendas, as well as multiple stakeholders from all world regions.

Building on the recommendations of the SFS Programme's 4th global conference and the impetus generated by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP28 Consensus and UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and the UN Food Systems Summit's (UNFSS) stocktaking process, the conference functioned as a major milestone towards the second UNFSS Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+4), taking place on 28-30 July 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and paved the way for in-depth discussions on food systems in the context of the 30th Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC COP30, taking place on 10-21 November 2025 in Belem, Brazil.

The objectives of the conference were:

1. To encourage meaningful, inclusive and cross-sectoral collaboration at all levels to urgently address food systems challenges through convergence across all related policy areas.

2. To inspire action to overcome the barriers to food systems transformation by showcasing integrated solutions for the coherent implementation of global commitments across different policy areas.
3. To stimulate further mainstreaming of food systems in all relevant multilateral agreements and policy fora, financial institutions as well as donor and investment strategies.

The conference looked at practical solutions to overcome major barriers to food systems transformation, with a focus on key levers of change:

- Systems-based and equity-driven strategies to address political economy dynamics.
- Aligning policies and actions on climate, biodiversity, inequalities and nutrition through the food systems nexus, while addressing trade-offs and maximizing co-benefits.
- Measuring progress and promoting accountability mechanisms.
- Scaling up finance for food systems transformation mechanisms and action plans.
- Inclusive and participatory multi-stakeholder collaboration.
- Leveraging the power of sustainable public food procurement and school meals; and
- Circular food systems and food loss and waste reduction.

When discussing these key levers of change, the conference participants:

- Emphasized the need to transform agri-food systems as a core part of the global climate agenda, including addressing the “triple monotony”—in agricultural landscapes, intensive livestock systems, and diets—as a key barrier to transformation, as well as scaling up context-specific innovations, removing structural barriers, and embedding equity and sustainability in both global and national climate strategies.
- Shared experiences and actionable solutions to overcome barriers to food systems transformation, in support of the National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation and other food systems related policies and strategies, as further summarized in this document.
- Recalled the call from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit to mainstream the food systems approach – a holistic approach towards more sustainable, resilient, inclusive and equitable food systems, delivering nutritious and safe foods for healthy diets while considering all relevant causal variables of a problem and all social, environmental, and economic impacts of the solutions.¹
- Further recalled the Secretary-General’s Chair Summary and Statement of Action on the UN Food Systems Summit that called on Member States to drive action at country-level in their local contexts and emphasized the necessity for all sectors to work together towards a common goal to achieve food systems transformation, including through mechanisms that develop and implement national pathways to 2030 that are inclusive and consistent with countries’ climate commitments.

¹ For definitions of terms sustainable food systems and food systems approach, refer to: Sustainable Food Systems Programme. 2020. Towards a Common Understanding of Sustainable Food Systems. Available at: https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sites/default/files/sfs_programme_glossary_towards_a_common_understanding_of_sfs_2020.pdf (Accessed: 17 June 2025)

- Further recalled the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation of the UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment in 2023 that highlighted the need to integrate food systems into all national policies for sustainable development, for people's livelihoods, nutrition and health, for economic growth, climate action and nature, to establish inclusive food systems governance, to strengthen accountability mechanisms, and to ensure access to short and long-term finance.
- Further recalled the COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action in which over 160 countries committed to expedite the integration of agriculture and food systems into their climate action and, simultaneously, to mainstream climate action across their policy agendas and actions related to agriculture and food systems.
- Further recalled the Ministerial Declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session, where Member States affirmed they will undertake to cooperate across sectors and levels of government to transition to sustainable food systems in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, and inspired by the outcomes of the United Nations Food Systems Summit held in New York in 2021.
- Further recalled the 2022 OECD Agricultural Ministers Declaration, emphasizing the urgent need for a transformation towards more sustainability and resilience to address the triple challenge facing agriculture and food systems of ensuring food security and nutrition for a growing global population; addressing environmental challenges, including climate change and biodiversity loss; and providing opportunities for livelihoods for all farmers, including family farmers, and others employed along food supply chains.
- Further recalled the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security's (CFS) 2023 Report on Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition, which underscored the need for a range of actions and equity-informed policies and programs to tackle inequalities across food and related systems, addressing power imbalances and focusing on agency and work to undo inequitable norms.
- Further recalled the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) that encouraged all relevant actors to better address interlinkages, synergies, and trade-offs between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); as well as the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration that recognized the One Planet network as an important implementation mechanism for the SDGs, and called upon all stakeholders to adopt a sustainable food systems approach to promote sustainable consumption and production.
- Further recalled the 2024 One Planet Network (OPN) Forum Outcome that noted the urgency of reducing inequalities and achieving just transitions for all through sustainable consumption and production including circular economy approaches, and recognized the importance of enabling inclusive solutions that help unlock the diverse barriers to sustainable food systems transformation while promoting multiple environmental, social and economic benefits, and of leveraging sustainable public procurement to advance sustainable food systems.
- Further recalled the 52nd Report of the CFS 2024, which highlighted the need to enhance policy coherence and coordination at all levels across different sectors of governments and international organizations in order to address social, political and other drivers of inequalities.
- Stressed the urgency to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030, the Paris Agreement, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, highlighting the important contribution that the implementation of National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation can make in that regard.

3. Conference sessions chairs' summaries

This section reflects speakers' key messages and discussions during the conference sessions as summarized by session chairs and rapporteurs. The conference sessions were conceived with the aim of making a substantial contribution to the UNFSS follow-up process up to 2030, in view of UNFSS+4, and preparing for food systems discussions at UNFCCC COP30. Thus, these messages are primarily addressed to high-level political leaders, legislators and decision-makers, private sector and civil society organizations as well as food systems stakeholders at large, who are involved in the development and implementation of national pathways for food systems transformation and other food systems related policies and strategies that align with climate and biodiversity goals as well as other converging policy agendas.

3.1. Systems-based and equity-driven strategies to address political economy dynamics

- Coherent strategies for navigating political economy dynamics and tackling power asymmetries are key to food systems transformation and must be woven into policy design and implementation across food, climate, biodiversity, nutrition, and equity. Such strategies must address vested interests, market forces, and power relations shaping food systems policy-making processes. Tackling structural inequalities and political dynamics that perpetuate exclusion is vital, including through mechanisms that actively manage trade-offs and co-benefits as well as potential conflicts of interest.
- There are diverse channels for increasing equity and rebalancing political economy dynamics, competing stakeholder interests and institutional barriers in food systems: strengthening inclusive and participatory governance; promoting decentralized planning; fostering accountability mechanisms; reforming taxation systems; leveraging young people's capacities and agency and strong lobbying by civil society all represent powerful inroads.
- Human rights, including the right to adequate food, must be at the centre. We must sow and weave together an inclusive, rights-based approach — nurtured and sustained through civil society engagement, including in support of the recognition and valorisation of local, traditional, and Indigenous knowledge systems, rights, and practices to foster respectful dialogue with scientific innovation.

3.2. Aligning policies and actions on climate, biodiversity, inequalities and nutrition through the food systems nexus

- Policy coherence for sustainable food systems: Food systems hold the solutions to major interlinked challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, diet-related diseases, inequalities and poverty. Tackling these requires aligning food, climate, biodiversity, nutrition and equity agendas through strong political will, long-term coordination, inclusive collaboration, adaptive governance, and integrated financing. Aligning these agendas and embedding them into national development plans reduces trade-offs, enhances synergies, and ensures co-benefits across sustainability outcomes.
- Bridging policy and implementation gaps: Effective implementation requires aligning objectives across sectors and levels of governance. Key strategies include integrating food systems into climate and biodiversity plans, embedding nutrition in agriculture, coordinating food loss efforts, and promoting agroecology. Linking agendas from global to local — and vice versa — and ensuring learning spaces exist to collectively learn from experiences across levels is essential. National and/or local food strategies like procurement and school feeding drive systemic change by shortening supply chains and improving access to healthy diets.

- **Inclusive collaboration:** Achieving food systems coherence involves inclusive stakeholder engagement, adaptive governance, and capacity building. By fostering collaboration among local, national, and global levels, and focusing on marginalized voices, countries can drive more effective, fair, and resilient food systems that balance sustainability, equity, and nutrition goals. This means recognizing women as leaders for food systems transformation but also setting the enabling conditions for this to happen – ensuring their rights to land, access to finance, and meaningful participation in decision-making.
- **Coherent financing for transformation:** Fragmented funding hampers policy effectiveness across food systems. Aligning public and private investments with integrated food systems goals is essential for unlocking co-benefits and achieving equitable outcomes. Conversation on coherence has to be linked to budget and resources. Key strategies include removing harmful subsidies, ensuring smallholder access to finance, innovative financing modalities, balancing short and long-term funding and using strategic public and climate finance to support inclusive and sustainable interventions.

3.3. Addressing trade-offs and maximizing co-benefits

- Transformation to more sustainable food systems involves assessing and managing trade-offs at multiple scales, often simultaneously.
- The consequences of trade-offs made at one scale could reverberate differently across the different scales, further underscoring the importance of a holistic systems approach to food systems transformation.
- Addressing trade-offs by developing transformative co-benefits at one scale could also reduce the need for making trade-offs at other scales.
- Concerted effort to actively discuss trade-offs, and to include concerned societal actors, in decision-making at multiple scales is needed for effective food system policies, current policies are insufficient.

3.4. Measuring progress and promoting accountability mechanisms

- Many strong approaches to measure food systems transformation have already been developed. The approaches continue to evolve, and many are being used to bring about positive change.
- But there are also gaps and challenges, including ensuring that data is comparable across different contexts. There is also a need for more theoretical work to identify the underlying drivers of real-world transformations and capture not only their key outcomes but also the processes driving them.
- Particular gaps include understanding political economy aspects of food systems; capturing multifaceted interactions and trade-offs in planet, human, and economic priorities; and ensuring accountability is built into metrics reporting systems.
- This does not necessarily mean we need more platforms or indicators or frameworks. Better integrated, less siloed, and more synthesised measurements could make them meaningful, while promoting accountability and food systems transformation.

3.5. Raising the ambition on food systems transformation at UNFSS+4 and COP30

- **Reflecting on Progress:** National Pathways should align with commitments under the UAE Declaration as well as broader commitments under the UNFCCC and CBD processes, to drive cross-sectoral action that supports both climate resilience and sustainable development. There is an urgency of integrating food systems transformation into global agendas, particularly at COP30.
- **Partnerships and Tracking Commitments:** Multi-stakeholders should strengthen accountability through more inclusive and participatory processes. Accelerating the implementation of National Pathways requires mechanisms that empower vulnerable populations, with a focus on women, smallholders, youth, and Indigenous Peoples – ensuring that their voices are not only heard but visibly reflected in outcomes and progress tracking. Likewise, to increase the credibility of food systems transformation, partnerships and transformation strategies should be guided by the latest available scientific evidence.
- **Unlocking Finance and Increasing Investments:** Strengthening global and national frameworks to mobilise climate finance and de-risk investments is essential to scaling access to resources for sustainable food systems transformation. Innovative solutions and strategic partnerships that align national priorities with global financing, such as the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, can help operationalise initiatives such as the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, the Financial Flows to Food Systems (3FS) tool and the UAE Declaration, delivering measurable impact at scale.

3.6. Scaling finance for food systems mechanisms and action plans

- **Elevate food systems in climate and biodiversity finance agendas:** Governments, donors, and financial institutions should coordinate more effectively to significantly increase and prioritize funding for nature-positive agriculture and food systems – ensuring they are fully embedded in the implementation of NDCs and NBSAPs, and accessible to local actors driving change on the ground.
- **Scale and align finance through cross-sector collaboration:** At COP30, countries and partners should commit to mobilizing and aligning public and private finance at scale – using innovative instruments and policies to channel investments into nature-positive, low-emission, and resilient food systems.
- **Deliver country-driven food systems solutions:** Parties and stakeholders should champion the development of inclusive, finance-ready pipelines of food systems projects – designed to meet NDC targets while driving just rural transitions and resilient agri-food economies. The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty was highlighted as a strategic instrument to promote national-led effective policies and its policy basket is a concrete tool to transform food systems.

3.7. Inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration

- **Transforming food systems requires inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration,** with the active involvement of traditionally under-represented groups – such as smallholders, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, people of African Descent, consumers associations, women, youth and civil society organizations – in policy processes related to food systems. Decision-makers and food systems practitioners need the tools and knowledge to foster cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial approaches that amplify the voices in shaping sustainable and equitable food policies.

- Overcoming barriers such as power imbalances, lack of resources, and institutional silos and governance models that do not foster inclusion and are inequitable for some food systems actors, such as smallholders, is crucial for ensuring meaningful participation in food systems governance.
- Solutions, such as innovative and effective participatory governance models with clear definition of each actor's roles and responsibilities, capacity-building, and co-creation spaces grounded in a human-rights based approach to food systems transformation, are key to empowering non-state actors and ensuring more inclusive, democratic, and equitable policy outcomes.
- Successful examples of inclusive collaboration can improve the monitoring, evaluation, and development of food systems policies that reflect marginalized perspectives.
- Policy-making processes for food systems transformation should be aligned with relevant multilateral governance mechanisms - such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) - and ensure the effective participation of historically marginalized groups such as smallholders, fisherfolk, pastoralists, agricultural workers, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, people of African Descent, and rural women, including the recognition of their knowledge.

3.8. Leveraging the power of sustainable food procurement and school meals

- Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP), particularly through school meal programmes, is a powerful policy tool to drive demand and organize production for sustainable, locally sourced, nutritious and healthy food, strengthen local food economies, promote healthy diets, and support climate and biodiversity goals.
- Traditionally focused on isolated outcomes, new holistic and systemic developments of such instruments have been generating great potential as entry points for food systems transformation, mostly through the synergies among agriculture, nutrition, climate, and biodiversity.
- Unlocking the full potential of social protection and SPP requires understanding synergies and trade-offs while addressing systemic barriers like fragmented governance, policy misalignment, as well as specific barriers such as formalization requirements, inadequate sanitary regimes, lack of political commitment, and insufficient funding to bold, cross-sectoral strategies centred on sustainability and equity.

3.9. Circular food systems and food loss and waste (FLW) reduction

- Scaling FLW reduction requires strong political leadership, coherent legal frameworks, and cross-sector coordination. Governments can set measurable targets; enact food waste deterrence policies including on food donation, composting, and retail accountability; invest in storage and transport infrastructure; provide incentives for recovery and redistribution; and embed FLW priorities across climate, food systems, agriculture, and development agendas to accelerate progress toward SDG 12.3.
- Local governments play a critical role in advancing pioneering strategic policies that enhance access to healthy, fresh, and minimally processed foods, reduce food waste and enable circularity. Such strategies can contribute to food recovery and redistribution, the promotion of healthy and sustainable diets by shortening food supply chains, and fostering the integration of production, distribution, and consumption across diverse territorial contexts.

- Driving innovation and behavioural change is critical to reducing FLW across the food system. Smart technologies and digital tools are improving food tracking, redistribution, and loss reduction; food environment innovations — including improved packaging and dynamic pricing — are supporting waste prevention; and targeted awareness campaigns, education, and consumer engagement are promoting mindful purchasing, better food storage, and more sustainable consumption habits.
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration is essential to design and scale effective FLW solutions. Inclusive platforms that bring together government institutions, the private sector, civil society, and communities enable data-driven planning, alignment of efforts, and replication of successful models such as food banks, community composting, and public-private partnerships that translate policy into practical impact.

The organizers invite all relevant stakeholders to consider the above key messages in the context of their National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation and further food systems related policies and strategies, and to highlight them in relevant forums and policy processes, including the UNFSS+4 Stocktaking Moment and UNFCCC COP30.

Furthermore, the organizers invite all members of the One Planet Network's Sustainable Food Systems Programme to promote these key messages through their respective activities.

In addition to the key above key messages, throughout the conference sessions several topics for further deliberation in relevant fora were identified, including:

- Strengthen multilateral governance & uphold public accountability by separating corporate interests from decision-making; integrate SDGs and human rights frameworks into food system transformation strategies to ensure accountability; and strengthen legitimate multilateral/multistakeholder spaces like the UN Committee for World Food Security (CFS) as well as the One Planet Network and its Sustainable Food Systems Programme.
- Shift financing & power toward justice and local solutions by redirecting subsidies to smallholders and agroecology; demand reparations for climate adaptation in food systems, similar to loss-and-damage mechanisms; investment in grassroots initiatives (e.g. agroecology schools, urban food banks) to scale local successes globally.
- Policy integration & equitable metrics for systemic change by merging or better coordinating food-relevant competencies across agriculture, environment, and social ministries to align climate and food security goals; adopting holistic metrics that combine decarbonization with equity, health, and rights-based outcomes; balancing global targets (SDGs, COP30) with local needs, using national indicators to track progress.