

## 2<sup>nd</sup> UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4)

### *Concept Note for Session Co-leads*

July 27-29, 2025 – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

#### 1. Title of the session:

Transforming Food Systems Together: Aligning Action, Investment, and Accountability.

#### 2. Type of the session:

Plenary

#### 3. Date and time of the session:

29 July 2025 from 09.00 to 10.50.

#### 4. Session background (max 300 words):

This high-level plenary sets the tone for Day 2 of the Summit, marking a shift from reflection to action. It challenges leaders to move beyond fragmented pledges and toward a unified, inclusive path for sustained delivery. The session will spotlight transformative efforts that demonstrate how investment in food systems can generate both financial returns and social and environmental impact. Through dynamic panels and moderated exchanges, stakeholders will share lessons, surface challenges, and chart a path forward—starting from what countries truly need and coordinating globally to make it happen.

A central theme of the session is accountability—not only in how resources are mobilized and aligned, but in how institutions commit to long-term, country-led transformation. The discussion will explore how political leadership, institutional reform, and strategic partnerships can drive systemic change. It will also emphasize the importance of tracking progress, ensuring transparency, and holding all actors responsible for delivering on their commitments.

This is not about launching something new; it's about doing things differently, together.

#### Context (max 300 words):

Countries are facing increasing pressure from interconnected crises—armed conflict, climate volatility, economic shocks, and widening inequality—all of which drive food insecurity and malnutrition. In this global context and amid shrinking resources, governments often find themselves navigating a landscape of disconnected initiatives that do not always align with their national priorities or realities. Agrifood systems must be at the center of global efforts to end hunger, reduce poverty, and tackle the increase on intensity and frequency of climate events. According to FAO, these systems are responsible for producing the food that sustains life and livelihoods for over 4.5 billion people, yet they are also highly vulnerable to shocks as

previously mentioned. At the same time, agrifood systems contribute more than one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, consume 70% of freshwater resources, and are a leading driver of biodiversity loss. Transforming agrifood systems is therefore essential not only to feed a growing population sustainably but also to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Without decisive action, current patterns of production and consumption will continue to drive inequality, food insecurity, and environmental degradation. Despite growing momentum for agrifood systems transformation, efforts remain fragmented, often small-scale and lacking the catalytic impact needed to drive lasting change.

What's needed now is a bold shift: to flip the table and start from what countries want and need, not from siloed offers or short-term projects. Transformation must be built from the ground up, with clear political direction and long-term partnership. Food system transformation is imperative and needs to be done at scale: testing how governments and institutions coordinate, how resources align behind national pathways, and how the UN system, IFIs, Private Sector and Civil Society, can better respond to country needs in real time. Building a more effective system means transforming not just what we do, but how we do it — together. This should align to the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty, to the new CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035), CELAC's SAN (Food Security, Nutrition, and Hunger Eradication) Plan, and the ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Promoting Sustainable Agriculture. This plenary sets the tone for Day 2 of the Summit: a pivot from reflection to action. It challenges leaders to go beyond fragmented pledges and build a unified, inclusive path for sustained delivery. At a time of difficult trade-offs, economic instability, and climate-driven crises, political courage and strategic clarity are more urgent than ever. Still, there are promising examples of financing for food systems that deliver both financial returns and ESG outcomes. These include high-impact programs and innovative instruments that unlock investment at scale, combining domestic resources, development aid, and private capital. The aim: to create real opportunities for those on the frontlines of agri-food systems. The session will spotlight these game-changing efforts, sharing what it takes to scale investment in the countries that need it most. Stakeholders will come together to exchange lessons, share challenges, and chart the path forward. This is not about launching something new—it's about doing things differently. Starting from what countries truly need and coordinating globally to make it happen.

## 5. Session objectives:

To shift from fragmented efforts to aligned, country-driven, and regional-driven delivery for food systems transformation. The session invites high-level actors to commit to a new phase of strategic coordination, better targeted and increased investment — grounded in country priorities, strengthened by public and private partnership, and made real through action. It aims to set the direction for the coming years by articulating how global institutions including development partners, financial institutions, private sector and stakeholders will collaborate differently and better, to meet the urgency of the moment.

## 6. Link UNFSS+4 objectives

*Please complete at least one of the three sections below. Feel free to fill in more than one where relevant.*

- a. **Reflecting on Progress:** While the energy behind food systems transformation is growing, delivery remains uneven. Countries are still navigating overlapping initiatives and fragmented efforts. This session will offer space to reflect on what's

worked — and importantly, on the barriers that were overcome — to inform smarter, more scalable solutions moving forward.

- b. **Partnerships and Tracking Commitments:** Strategic partnerships are essential to breaking silos and sustaining momentum. This session explores how institutions can coordinate better across sectors and geographies, and how we can collectively track progress through more transparent, country-led systems of accountability. It's about shifting from declarations to delivery.
- c. **Unlocking Finance and Increasing Investments:** Financing transformation means aligning funds with real needs. From blended finance to pooled investments, the session will showcase successful models that combine domestic resources, development aid, and private capital. The focus is on scalable approaches that support equitable access to nutritious food and strengthen resilience on the ground.

## 7. Key message(s) of the session:

1. **Resilience must be built, not wished for** — food systems transformation is key to making this shift, enabling anticipatory action and early investment to manage shocks before they escalate, strengthen long-term stability, and promote sustainable economic growth.
2. **Fragmentation is no longer an option** — Strategic alignment rooted in country needs is essential to move beyond disconnected projects and deliver lasting change.
3. **Political leadership must drive strategic intent** — translating national vision into realigned partnerships, smarter financing, and systems of accountability that prioritize access to nutritious food for those most at risk.
4. **Coordinated delivery must turn intent into impact** — aligning resources, institutions, and cooperation to move from commitment to results. This means executing at scale and speed, guided by a shared responsibility to leave no one behind and ensure that support reaches those who need it most.

## 8. Session format (max 100 words):

This session will follow a dynamic, journalist-moderated format designed to drive urgency and clarity around food systems transformation. It will open with a framing of the key challenges—fragmentation, delivery gaps, and the imperative to align behind country priorities—followed by concise opening remarks from RBA Principals. Two high-level panels will then explore critical themes: addressing the investment gap and building resilience, and reducing fragmentation to empower country leadership. Each panel will feature diverse perspectives, including government, IFIs, private sector, civil society, and academia, guided by targeted questions. Moderated floor interventions will bring in additional voices from across regions and sectors. The session will close with a synthesis of key signals and commitments, setting a shared direction toward 2027.

## 9. Guiding questions for speakers:

- How are you planning to address the existing investment gap given the current increase in intensity of risks and shocks such as conflicts, climate events, and economic downturn?
- How are you realigning your institution's efforts to respond to national and regional priorities for food systems transformation?
- What are you doing differently to break down silos and reduce fragmentation – how are you aligning with existing initiatives and other partners?
- Can you share a concrete example of successful national coordination or regional coordination that worked — including what made it successful and what barriers were overcome?
- Can you share an example of where increased and targeted investment had a significant impact on food system transformation?
- Considering the critical role of the private sector, how are you contributing to agrifood systems transformation to ensure access to healthy diets and ensure food security?
- Why is corporate accountability important and what is the role of UN agencies on setting norms and providing guidance on corporate accountability in food systems transformation?
- What specific step or shift will your institution take in the next 18 months to turn ambition into action both in terms of policy shifts and operational changes?

#### **10. Desirable outcome:**

The panel will serve as a pivotal high-level convening to illustrate how leading institutions, joint initiatives, and key stakeholders are advancing their collaboration to support country-led food systems pathways, underpinned by aligned investment plans.