

2nd 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:

Advancing Accountability through Science - Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC)-led Session

2. Type of the session:

Choose the typology of the session from the drop-down list below.

Stakeholders Action Session

3. Date and time of the session:

July 28, 2025; 12:00pm – 12:50pm

4. Session background (max 300 words):

The session will be convened by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, and will bring together a panel of experts, including National Convenors and scientists, to better understand country experiences, and the use of science in enabling inclusive and accountable approaches in national food systems transformation. This is crucial in contextualizing the science-policy interface as an enabling factor to steer national actions and implementation plans toward realising SDGs by 2030.

A key highlight of the session will be National Convenors providing in depth review of their experiences, effectiveness and lessons learned while integrating science in their national action plans, as well as identifying gaps and opportunities to strengthen this integration factor. This will be complemented by members of the SAC, experts with a wealth of experience in food systems, to provide objective reviews of the implementation, and suggest context-specific solutions or approaches that can be adopted and integrated into the National Pathways.

5. Context (max 300 words):

The 2nd UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+4) represents a critical juncture to assess progress since 2021, close implementation gaps, and scale up equitable and just science-based solutions for food systems transformation towards 2030. Despite over 100 countries having outlined their national pathways, strategic implementation and impacts remain unbalanced. However, there exists challenges, including exclusive research priorities, policy agendas and implementation pathways that disrupt and limit access to nutritious foods by all, especially to the most vulnerable. Therefore, this session will explore how science can be harnessed effectively, and being inclusive and transparent, to restore accountability and scale out innovations that serves all people and planet.

6. Session objectives:

1. *Raise awareness of the risks and real-world impacts for accountable action for the future of healthy and resilient food systems*
2. *Generate momentum for reforms in research funding, transparency and governance of food systems*
3. *Showcase the latest scientific breakthroughs and technological, social and institutional developments for transparent and inclusive food systems transformation*
4. *Emphasize participatory science, including women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in creating, implementing and owning innovative food systems approaches*

7. 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

The session will bring National Convenors to reflect on their national progress, especially in integrating science-based evidence and approaches into their Pathways and implementation plans. The Convenors will also provide reflection on gaps and barriers, as well as identify opportunities to harness science for food systems transformation.

b. Partnerships and Tracking Commitments

The session will seek to better partner scientists, especially members from the SAC, with National Convenors, to develop and adopt approaches that can strengthen science-based interventions in national food systems transformation.

c. Unlocking Finance and Increasing Investments

8. Key message(s) of the session:

1. *Scientific innovation and evidence-based solutions are critical levers for accelerating the transformation towards healthy, sustainable and resilient food systems by 2030.*
2. *Governments, partners and collaborators must be equipped with capacity and resources to integrate science and innovations into national pathways and financing strategies in ways that ensure public interest and equity.*
3. *Strengthening global governance and cross-sectoral partnerships is essential to enhance convergence of food, health, climate and ecosystems agendas, through science-based evidence and innovations.*

4. *Ensuring that food systems science is inclusive and equitable, particularly for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized communities, and is fundamental to achieving sustainable and just transformation.*
5. *Addressing conflicting and competing influences and trade-offs in food systems research and policymaking is necessary to provide accountability, credibility, independence and societal relevance.*

9. Session format (max 100 words):

The session will be a panel discussion and deep dive with specific examples provided by experts. A high-level government official will set the context with examples and aspirations from their own country. This will then be followed by two National Convenors providing insights, and answering the guiding questions provided, and a SAC member will follow up with science-based opportunities to address gaps and barriers. An RBA representative will then summarize and close the session.

10. Guiding questions for speakers:

1. *What kind of science-based evidence and innovations have proven effective in developing and implementing national pathways, and addressing obstacles and biases in food systems transformation?*
2. *How can diverse food systems actors, especially women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized communities, be empowered with science as leverage in making decisions in local and global food systems transformation efforts?*
3. *Which bold actions or alliances are needed to unlock transformative change and mitigate trade-offs given the urgency of food, health, climate and inequality crises?*
4. *How can global governance and partnership mechanisms be harnessed to improve science-policy interface, in line with the convergence of food, health, climate and ecosystems?*

11. Desirable outcome:

This session aims to generate shared understanding and political momentum around the need to integrate science-based evidence and innovations for equitable and just transformation of food systems. Discussions will highlight specific actions that can be taken by various food systems actors in providing accountability, promote transparency and reform research and policy agenda to ensure that scientific innovation serves all. A key outcome will be the articulation of concrete commitments by food systems actors to strengthen science-policy interfaces, elevate marginalized voices, and mitigate biased influences and trade-offs, particularly in low- and middle-income countries.

12. Tentative run of show

Name	Affiliation/Title	Role
Dr Shakuntala Thilsted	Chair, SAC of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub	Welcoming Remarks
Dr Stefanos Fotiou	Director, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub	Opening Remarks
H.E. Demba Sabally	Minister of Agriculture, The Gambia, National Convenor	Keynote Speaker
Mr Jarot Indarto	Director of Food and Agriculture, the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) National Convenor of Indonesia	Panel Discussion
Prof Kaosar Afsana	Professor at BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University Scientific Advisory Committee Member	
Prof Shenggen Fan	Chair Professor and Dean of Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, Co-Chair, Scientific Advisory Committee	
Dr Jean Francois Soussana	Vice President for International, National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, SAC Co-chair Co-Chair, Scientific Advisory Committee	
Dr Shakuntala Thilsted	Chair, SAC of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub	Closing Remarks