

UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake

SESSION REPORT

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- ☐ Plenary
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- ☐ High-level Panels
- ☒ Featured Event
- ☐ Investment Dialogue
- ☐ Stakeholder Action Session

Unlocking Sustainable Investments for Home Grown School Meals

29 July 2025 | 08:00-08:45 AM | CR2

Name of note-taker: Sara Fawzy, School Meals Coalition Secretariat, hosted by WFP

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List of speakers, in all segments, and key messages

Moderated by Ms. Carmen Burbano, Director of the School Meals Coalition Secretariat and Director of School Meals and Social Protection at WFP

NAME AND TITLE OF SPEAKER	SEGMENT (opening, panel, closing, etc.)	KEY MESSAGES OR/AND RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
1. Cindy McCain, Executive Director,	Opening remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Highlighted key achievements and challenges in sustainable financing of

World Food Programme		<p>school meals, including current funding shortfalls.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a forward-looking overview of the session's objectives, emphasizing the introduction of innovative solutions to address financing needs.
2. H.E. Dr. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, Special Envoy of the President of France to UNFSS+4 Summit, speaking as School Meals Coalition co-chair, France	Opening remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighted that school meals are a lever for health, education, equality, and local development. • Spoke about how multilateralism is working — France serves as a co-chair of the School Meals Coalition, alongside Brazil and Finland, and hosted the first global summit in 2023. Recalled that €17 million was mobilized to support school meals in 21 countries. • Gave an example from Kenya: how French-supported project delivers meals and guarantees farmers' incomes. Spoke about ongoing partnerships with Food for Education and the WFP Centre of Excellence in Brazil. • In France, there exists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthened nutritional quality in school meals since 2011. ○ Implementation of €1 canteen for low-income families since 2019. ○ Scaled up local and sustainable procurement incentives since 2024.
3. H.E. Dr. Birhanu Nega, Minister of Education, Federal Democratic	Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School meal programmes started with the support of WFP and the growth was slow.

<p>Republic of Ethiopia</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First real ownership started in 2021, not related to emergency but for development. • Africa has a large young population and this was urgently needed—not just for health but also education quality. • A policy for this was developed by the government in 2021. • Ethiopia has increased the number of children reached through its national school meals programme by five times (1.6 million in 2021 to 7.5 million children today). This scale-up reflects strong political will and strategic use of school meals as a platform connecting education, nutrition, and food systems. Total investment has grown from US\$21.4 million in 2018 to US\$127 million in 2025. This year, around 56.7% is funded by the community, 37% by the government, and 7.6% by donors including WFP. • Government ownership is paramount and that is the aim for 2030. • Goal is to universalize school meal programmes up till middle school. • The goal is to have healthy capable children; give children equity and give them the opportunity to climb the economic ladder while creating a stable society in the long run.
<p>4. Mr. Harun Yusuf, CEO and Secretary of National Council for Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK), Kenya</p>	<p>Panel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenya is working towards universalizing the programme. Currently, Kenya is feeding 2.6 million children. The ambition is to reach 8 million learners by 2027 and 10 million by 2030. • Kenya is the first country that has nationalized the School Meals Coalition under the leadership of the Ministry of

		<p>Education. Several partners are supporting the government in this Coalition and there is a new operational plan that has been designed for the scale up of the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya has adopted a food system forward approach to school meals. Through its operational plan, it is focused on 3 main priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift to local supply chains to ensure sustainability of the programme. Utilization of nutritious and drought-resistant crops in every region. Transition to clean cooking solutions. This plan is strongly supported by both international and local partners, including Food4Education.
5. H.E. Martha Salazar, Deputy Secretary of Food and Nutritional Security, Guatemala	Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School feeding is protected by law and not subject to political cycles. The right to food is legally guaranteed through a per-child, per-day budget. National budget allocation has increased from US\$ 73 million in 2015 to a projected US\$427 in 2025, reaching 3.1 million children and adolescents. A legally mandated tax mechanism called IVAPA is enforced, which has a social purpose (70% of the resources must be used directly to purchase from small-scale family farmers) and allocates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.5% to the Peace Fund 0.8% of the national budget to social spending which

		<p>includes school meal programmes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme uses a territorial approach and prioritizes local smallholder farmers, women and agricultural cooperatives. • School feeding boosts local economies and food quality. • Guatemala is developing long-term, sustainable financing mechanisms through public-private partnerships and integrating the programme into instruments of long-term national planning and budgeting.
<p>6. H.E. Dr. Ouk Makara, Vice Chairman of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD,) Kingdom of Cambodia</p>	Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushing school meals as a national priority and for food systems transformation. • Investment is set to increase four-fold from 7 million in 2020 to 28 million meals in 2025. The ambition is to increase up to 56 million meals by 2028. • Domestic financing for school feeding has increased eightfold. • Approved school feeding policy includes strategies on food systems transformation and broader national human capital development agenda, and government wants to embed it in national policy to increase sustainability. • It is a key part of the Cambodian Road Map for 2030. • Cambodia was the host of the First School Meals Coalition Regional Summit in South-East Asia in 2024. • Addressing supply chain constraints, transport, and infrastructure facilities to ensure consistent delivery of food.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six strategic areas to drive food systems transformation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legal framework. ○ Food security. ○ Rising community cohesion. ○ Health and nutrition. ○ Agriculture and economic development. ○ Government partnership and cross-sectoral. • Working with the School Meals Coalition’s Sustainable Financing Initiative to guide investments and strengthen local procurement. • Cambodia has seen transformed markets in the following ways—nutrition and dietary habits. • Embedding school feeding in national frameworks ensures long-term sustainability. • It supports interventions in health, nutrition, and WASH.
7. Ms. Amina J. Mohamed Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations	Closing remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Meals Coalition has been one of the most successful global mobilizations in recent years. • Government leadership and private sector buy-in has been key. • Acknowledged the School Meals Coalition co-chairs—Brazil, France and Finland – whose early and continued commitment has been instrumental to the Coalition’s success • Commended all governments who have been working towards expanding and strengthening school meal programmes, and that have achieved clear and

		<p>measurable progress since the last stocktake.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged role of partners across the School Meals Coalition, working with governments to deliver on national commitments. • Recognized school meals as a lever to building more inclusive sustainable food systems and equipping our next generation with the health, nutrition and education that they deserve to reach their potentials and aspirations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mentioned focusing on four key areas: Expanding coverage and raising collective ambitions. Next to governments, the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty has joined the forces with the School Meals Coalition to rally governments and development partners behind a bold global target to reach an additional 150 million children in low- and middle-income countries by 2030. – Using procurement to transform food systems. Countries are harnessing the potential of school meal programmes to catalyse food systems transformation, but more can be done through aligning school meals menus and procurement with nutrition, using clean cooking solutions in schools and reducing food loss and waste through food, nutrition, and climate education in schools. – Integrating schools into climate finance. When rooted in sustainability, school meals have potential to advance climate mitigation and adaptation, and to
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		<p>promote biodiversity. COP30 in Brazil is a key opportunity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Explore innovative financing solutions to ensure economically stable future for low- and middle-income countries at high risk of debt distress. The Sevilla commitment encourages us to do that. Explore financing solutions to address this gap. Much to learn from the innovations that have taken place. • Every child should receive a school meal by 2030.
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Interventions from the floor

SPEAKER	QUESTION OR KEY POINT OF INTERVENTION
N/A	N/A

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

The government-led School Meals Coalition hosted the Featured Event “Unlocking Sustainable Investments for Home-Grown School Meals.” It drew strong participation with around 450 in-person and over 200 online attendees, highlighting how governments increasingly view school meal programmes as long-term strategic investments driving food systems transformation, and linking them to education, agriculture, nutrition, social protection and multiple sustainable development goals.

Ms. Amina J. Mohamed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, highlighted that the School Meals Coalition is now one of the most successful global mobilizations in recent years.

Governments, supported by the School Meals Coalition, are embedding school meals into food systems transformation national strategies and delivering unprecedented results: Ethiopia increased total investment from USD 21.4 million in 2018 to USD 127 million in 2025 reaching 7.5 million children; Kenya is feeding 2.6 million learners and aims to reach 10 million by 2030; Guatemala’s budget rose from USD 73 million in 2015 to USD 427 million in 2025, with 70% of produce procured locally; and Cambodia achieved an eightfold increase in domestic investment since 2020.

With 98% of the USD 48 billion global school meals market financed domestically, governments are embedding these programmes into national development strategies. However, continued investment and innovative financing—especially in low-income and fragile settings—remain essential to closing existing gaps.

The session concluded with a call to action for governments and partners to bring forward new commitments to the upcoming Second School Meals Coalition Global Summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, this September. These should focus on scaling domestic investments, leveraging climate and blended finance, strengthening inclusive procurement, and embedding school meals into broader policy frameworks advancing the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty's goal of reaching 150 million more children by 2030.