

UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake

SESSION REPORT

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Type (click one):

- ☐ Plenary
- ☐ Ministerial Roundtable
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- ☐ Featured Event
- ☐ Investment Dialogue
- ☐ Stakeholder Action Session

Transformation in Complex Settings

29 July 2025 | 11:00 -12:50

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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. Cindy McCain, Executive Director, WFP	Welcome remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Today's session will highlight inspiring stories from countries facing recurring and protracted crises, showcasing how they are responding with innovative strategies to reduce

		<p>humanitarian needs and build long-term resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing the root causes of food insecurity in complex settings is especially challenging, requiring coordinated and sustained efforts. • When food systems collapse, instability rises—breaking the cycle of conflict and food insecurity is therefore essential for lasting peace and development. • Let's leave this session with a renewed determination to transform our shared ambition into meaningful, impactful action.
2. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General United Nations	Keynote address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are trapped in relentless cycles of hardship. Over 37 million children under five will face acute malnutrition this year—nearly 10 million with severe wasting. • In the most challenged countries, courage is constant. But it must be matched with long-term solutions for resilience and sustainability. Short-term interventions without links to development are not enough. We must choose transformation over dependency. • We have good examples. Nations are embedding resilience into strategies, combining traditional and scientific knowledge to build inclusive, resilient food systems. These governments are leading—not waiting for permission. But leadership needs finance, partnership, and inclusion. • Finance: We need catalytic investments that build local capacity and wait for transformation, not quick returns. The World Bank is

		<p>committed—we must encourage others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination: Humanitarian response must link to development. Climate action must connect to food security. Shared purpose must replace competing mandates. • Communities: Women grow 60% of Africa’s food but own less than 20% of the land. Youth lead innovation but lack financing—especially in high-risk, low-option settings. • Transforming food systems in complex settings is critical. Equitable, sustainable systems feed people, strengthen resilience, enable stability, and promote inclusive growth. • Transformation must be guided by local innovations, proven strategies, data, and lived realities. • We have tools and inspiring examples. What we need now is accelerated action on a scale. • Food systems are the key to sustainable development. Let’s use that key to unlock opportunity, stability, and hope for those who need it most. And let’s strengthen our multilateral system to make peace and sustainable development a reality for all.
3. Kashim Shettima, Vice President, Nigeria	Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long as a country lacks food sovereignty, it cannot be considered truly sovereign. • In Nigeria, we have 25 million vulnerable people. The government has responded with bold policies aimed at strengthening food systems.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Food Support Mechanism has been established for the North, and the government has empowered displaced people to produce their own food—restoring dignity and providing protection against future shocks. • In the Sahelian region, there is a deep ancestral link between economy and ecology. The government is working to create a conducive environment that respects this balance. • Hunger knows no barrier. That's why we've set up a National Reserve to manage shocks and ensure food availability. • Our agriculture must be market-driven. The focus is on increasing yields through modern practices, improved seeds, and better techniques. That's why we're investing in agricultural extension services.
4. Salah Ahmed Jama, Deputy Prime Minister, Federal Government of Somalia	Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the last 25 years, the world knew Somalia as a country of crisis, conflict, migration, and absence of government; food shortages and importing majority of our food. • After the State of Somalia was revived, we realized that we cannot address these issues of food insecurity in a siloed manner. So, we developed integrated national policies. • We developed a National Transformation Plan: and the center is the idea of addressing the complexities and food shortages coming from fragility, moving from fragility to development.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe state-led solutions, in collaboration with local partners, can drive real change and transformation. • We prioritized water management as a top policy issue, alongside emergency preparedness and response. • Somalia has changed the narrative: shocks and stresses persist, but systems are being built to cope and respond.
5. Moubarack Abakar Roubo, SG Ministry of Production and Agricultural Industrialization, Chad	Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chad's problems are similar to those faced by other Sahelian countries. About 20% of the population—roughly 3 to 4 million people—is food insecure, due to climate change (floods and droughts) and locust infestations. • For years, efforts focused only on increasing yields and production. But we realized this alone wouldn't resolve food insecurity—it requires more integrated solutions. • So, we invested in water management and off-season production (cultures de contre-saison, cultures maraîchères) to ensure year-round food availability. We also integrated livestock and agriculture to support income-generating activities during the off-season. • These investments—in off-season gardening, water harvesting, and integrated livestock-agriculture—are now showing results.
6. Ruth Davis, Special Representative for Nature, United Kingdom	Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know we must shift toward more efficient, locally led humanitarian assistance.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We also strongly recognize the need to invest in long-term solutions for lasting resilience. • Conflicts and the climate crisis are driving recurring emergencies. • We see food systems as central to building long-term resilience, especially because they are vital to vulnerable people and communities. • We work with partners to invest in soil quality, water systems, and land restoration—in a conflict-sensitive way—so land can sustain livelihoods. • However, international financial institutions and climate finance are not reaching the most vulnerable. We must challenge ourselves and these systems to do better. • We operate in an institutionally complex system—with many initiatives and organizations. So, we must improve coordination and work through our systems to ensure finance reaches those who need it most.
Brendan Gleeson, Secretary General, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland	Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability is about building public confidence in our work. It requires transparency and a strong monitoring and evaluation framework. • Collective support for the multilateral framework is crucial right now—it remains our best hope for addressing complex global challenges. • To tackle long-term problems, we need a system and an approach that is built for sustained impact.

Daniel Simeon Kelema, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Mali	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Flagship programme is aligned with the 2063 Vision. • UN agencies played a facilitating role, while governments led the visioning, formulation, and development—showcasing a new model of co-creation and partnership. • The budget for Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger is USD 4 billion, aimed at transforming food systems. • 45% of the budget is allocated to investments in selected value chains, with the remainder going to infrastructure. • Intended outcomes include reduced imports, lower malnutrition, and income-generating activities for youth and women in rural areas and along the value chain. • Innovative elements include strengthening the West Africa trade corridor, a co-investment model (not charity), focus on renewable energy and digitalization • The Flagship addresses the root causes of poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, and unemployment. • It's not about charity—it's about investment and partnerships.
Mustapha Ahmed Mohamed Noman, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Yemen	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The causes of malnutrition and food insecurity are deeply rooted in challenges and conflicts. • For decades, these issues were hidden by the abundant flow of humanitarian aid funds, but now they are becoming visible.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to invest in public institutions and ensure they are properly staffed. • Investing in food systems transformation and nutrition is not just a humanitarian necessity—it's a strategic decision to stabilize the country and set it on a path to growth. • We have issued national guidelines to promote coordinated actions and strengthen capacity. • We have also launched the Food Systems Transformation Pathways.
Shobha Shetty, Global Director, Agriculture and Food, World Bank	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe humanitarian response and development finance must be two sides of the same coin—this is the basis of our Agri-Connect initiative. • In Yemen, this means using predictive analytics with 80% accuracy and investing in agricultural value chains. • We are repurposing existing agricultural support—working with 45 countries and partners like FCDO and BMZ—to redirect even 10% of subsidy flows toward climate-smart agriculture (CSA), which could transform food systems. • This requires political will and builds confidence for private sector investment. • When agriculture employs 60–80% of the population, food systems failure is government failure—yet agriculture receives only 4% of climate finance. • We must shift from risk avoidance to intelligent risk sharing to attract

		<p>private capital. The World Bank is now moving in this direction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We also need to move from project-based to systems financing. We now have food systems preparedness plans in 26 countries, but we must rethink how governments approach food security. • Transforming food systems in fragile contexts offers more than a USD 4.3 billion return—it helps prevent the next generation of failures, migrations, and conflicts.
Philipp Knill, Deputy Director General for Africa, German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structural causes of hunger and inequality must be tackled to build food systems that deliver nutrition. • ODA should be catalytic, focusing on the drivers of food insecurity and poverty—conflict, climate change, and inequality. • How can we do this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By strengthening trade terms and integration ○ Increasing domestic resource mobilization ○ Removing harmful and price-distorting subsidies in agriculture • In complex settings, such as Sudan, the private sector exists but lacks access to finance. We work with partners to provide grants and credit to companies in food value chains operating in high-risk areas. • The Risk Insurance Initiative, led by G20 countries, aims to prepare, prevent, and respond early with pre-identified financing.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Sahel, we work closely with WFP to build community resilience and bridge humanitarian aid with long-term development. • The Global Network Against Food Crises is a valuable initiative, and we look forward to continued collaboration. • We must connect the dots between humanitarian financing, anticipatory action, and risk insurance financing.
Mohamed N. Hayel Saeed, Sr. Strategic Advisor to Managing Director, HSA Yemen	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSA began as a small retail shop in 1938. Today, we employ 35,000 people and are the largest private sector employer in the country. • When conflict erupted, the private sector had three choices: shut down, slow down, or adapt. • From our experience, three key learnings stand out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long-term investment outperforms short-term approaches. ○ Job creation is peacebuilding—HSA remains committed to our employees. ○ The power of partnership: we worked with IFC/WB during Yemen's most difficult times. The private sector collaborates with the government and the international community (e.g., Tetra Pak). • In the hardest places on earth, handouts don't build

		<p>anything—jobs do. Jobs create hope, wealth, and development.</p>
<p>Mutaz Mohammed, Managing Director and Co- Founder, 249Startups Sudan</p>	<p>Panel discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudan is often associated with hunger and humanitarian crisis—and unfortunately, that’s real. • But there’s another side: Sudan is home to startups, innovation hubs, and incubators, all emerging during conflict. • Despite the situation, we’re still investing in innovation. • We launched 249 startups in 2018. Then war broke out. Overnight, we shifted from planning investment to asking: <i>does any of this still matter?</i> • But entrepreneurs refused to give up. They adapted, relocated, and started again. • Local manufacturers are serving agricultural needs. The Sudanese diaspora continues to invest in friends and families. Our local private sector partners stepped in. • With support from Italian cooperation, we launched a financing instrument with grantee schemes and revolving credit. • Key lessons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sudanese entrepreneurs have immense potential ○ In fragile settings, disruption can spark rethinking ○ Sudan is in crisis, but still has a functioning private sector ○ If we focus only on humanitarian aid, we risk deepening the crisis. But if

		we invest in the local private sector, even in crisis, we instill hope and lay the foundation for future development
Ato Dejene, Senior Advisor for the Executive Director, ORDA Ethiopia	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are an Ethiopian NGO, founded 40 years ago, focused on production, livelihoods, and income-generating activities. • After providing food relief, we moved into recovery—rehabilitating the environment and water points, providing water and solar energy, promoting integrated watershed management, green manure, composting, and sustainable livelihoods. • We empower community committees and link beneficiaries to value chain services like transportation and storage. For all this, access to finance is key. • Lessons learned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Watersheds are key to empowering communities. ○ Climate-smart agriculture (CSA), digitalization, and agricultural technologies are essential. ○ Empowering local committees with financing and capacity building is critical.
Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director, World Food Programme	Closing remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today has shown that solutions exist, even in complex situations—and they can be backed by investment, financing, and solid partnerships. • Transforming food systems in fragile contexts is not just needed—

		<p>it's possible, with solutions emerging from the ground.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership is key and partnership is essential. • We need resilient food systems that help communities sustain and adapt to shocks and stressors.
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Interventions from the floor

SPEAKER	QUESTION OR KEY POINT OF INTERVENTION
1. Representative from Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutaz Mohammed noted that when people speak about Sudan, they immediately think of conflict. Unfortunately, this is also true for other Sahelian countries, where the narrative often focuses on terrorism and insecurity—and this is done deliberately to discourage investment. • For years, colonial powers exploited our resources. When we pushed them out in 2022, they responded by using their media and communications to portray our countries as unstable and unsafe. • But the message to potential investors is clear: Come to our countries. There is no insecurity. There is prosperity.
2. Yemen- Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are distracted by earmarked finance from donors and partners. This affects our ability to identify and implement our own priorities, as we end up following international agendas. This is a major challenge. • Transformation starts by transforming our way of working — and that begins with transforming our mindset.
3. Representative from Kenya working with TMG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We shouldn't only associate complex systems with war and conflict. Often, the complexity lies in how we design interventions—ignoring the realities on the ground. For example, school feeding programs in Nairobi often overlook informal settlements.

- We miss opportunities by not contextualizing and focusing on informal and complex settings. We need to shift toward bottom-up mechanisms.
- We shouldn't avoid complex systems. Yet, we tend to go where farmers are already organized—toward easier contexts.
- A question to the private sector: As an NGO, we want to work with you, but face a challenge—private sector actors often seek a “risk-free” environment before investing.
 - Response: There's only one place with a risk-free environment—heaven. There will always be risks, but we need responsible capitalism, driven by long-term thinking, focused on the next generation, not short-term gains.

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

1. Transforming food systems in complex settings requires a decisive shift towards long-term, locally led strategies. This shift is not only urgent, but also possible – and bold strategies and solutions are already emerging from the ground. Empowering local actors and institutions ensures that food systems are not only resilient but also equitable and sustainable. This means investing in integrated approaches, rooted in local realities, that empower communities and build resilience to shocks and stressors.
2. From Nigeria's catalytic vision to Sudan's entrepreneurial spark, from Yemen's private-sector leadership to Ethiopia's community-driven resilience – this high-level panel has shown that even in complex settings, solutions exist. They are ready to be scaled, if backed with catalytic, long-term, flexible, risk-tolerant and sustained investment, and strong partnerships. Bridging humanitarian and development finance is essential to unlock systemic change and attract private capital, even in high-risk environments.
3. This session has demonstrated how governments, donors, the private sector, and civil society each bring vital perspectives and resources to the table. But it is only when these elements come together — intentionally and sustainably — that real systems change becomes possible.