

UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake

SESSION REPORT

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Type (click one):

- Plenary
- Ministerial Roundtable
- High-level Panels
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- Investment Dialogue
- Stakeholder Action Session

Food Sovereignty – Exploring National Approaches to Accelerating the Food Systems Transition

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. Francesco Lollobrigida, Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Forests, Italy	Opening remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Italy has been working over the last years to strengthen its agricultural model based on the concept of food sovereignty, getting together around

		<p>this common vision a wide range of stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food sovereignty is not only key to food self-sufficiency but to economic growth and to the added value of traditional products. • Famers are the custodians of the land and of good practices able to respond to climate change and to protect the environment. • Geographical indications are essential to protect traditional quality products from the standardization of food at global level. • Food is not only nutrition but history, culture and identity of a Nation. Food for all is not enough, we need quality food for all. • Italy makes its know-how and expertise available and cooperates with partner countries in the transformation of their food systems. The big projects of the Piano Mattei for Africa implemented in various African countries in collaboration with the Italian private sector are an example of this.
<p>2. Abraham Belay, Minister of Irrigation and Lowlands Development, Ethiopia</p>	<p>Opening remarks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethiopia envisions Food Sovereignty as a long-term transformation to boost productivity, biodiversity, market access, and climate resilience. • Empowering smallholder and family farmers—who form the backbone of the economy—is key to achieving food sovereignty. • Scaling up irrigation and improving access to technology are essential to close market gaps and support farmer-led growth.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative models and cluster farming help share inputs (like seeds and fertilizers), creating economies of scale and faster progress. • Large land potential requires transitioning from community-based to medium and large-scale irrigation systems. • Expanding irrigated land will enable year-round food production and bring economic stability to millions. • A call for international cooperation across four areas: technology transfer, local production, technical partnerships, and research & innovation.
3. Mabouba Diagne, Minister of Agriculture, Food Sovereignty and Livestock, Senegal	Ministerial segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite being a predominantly rural country, Senegal is hugely dependent on food and seeds imports. • Efforts so far have not worked, and we need to learn from the past and find new ways of action, collectively with international partners. • To increase production, small-scale farmers need capacity building, technology, access to innovations and finance. • Having food at the table is essential to ensure people's dignity.
4. Roberto Mito Albino, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries, Mozambique	Ministerial segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must shift from the paradigm of assistance to self-sufficiency and we must scale-up from small budget allocations and donations to farmers to a new model, opening the door to loans on favourable terms, so that we can improve agriculture as a business, not just a means of subsistence. • Public-private partnerships are also needed to accelerate our efforts and to

		<p>boost local production, so that we can reduce dependence on food imports, especially of rice and oil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Mozambique, strengthening value chains and ensuring food sovereignty is a priority and we urge our international partners to cooperate to achieve a more sustainable and fair food system.
5. Mohamed Abdi Hayer, Minister of Agriculture, Somalia	Ministerial segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation of food systems is not a national priority but a global imperative and a shared responsibility. Climate change has no border and requires a collective action. • Decades of conflict have led Somali institutions to collapse. Rural communities are facing some of the most difficult conditions on earth. • Somalia launched a National Transformation Plan and an Agricultural Transformation Strategy to restore food production and promote economic growth, investing in climate resilient practices and putting small farmers at the centre, in alignment with the CAADP Strategy. Somalia also launched the Great Green Wall Initiative to enhance resilience against climate-induced shocks. • Somalia is seeking partnerships and urges international support for climate finance, since climate change is a global responsibility. • Building food security is pivotal to peace and dignity.
6. John Steenhuisen, Minister of Agriculture, South Africa	Ministerial segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food sovereignty is a strategic priority for South Africa, for achieving long-term nutrition and food security.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We place great importance on indigenous crops and on local seed banks, to protect local food productions. • South Africa has a flagship comprehensive programme named CASP to support small-scale farmers. Through other programmes, South Africa, among others, fights food prices inflation and supports sustainable livestock, access to land, sustainable management of natural resources, and food safety. • South Africa looks forward to hosting the G20 Summit and moving forward on the pillars of the CAADP.
<p>7. Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Tanzania</p>	<p>Ministerial segment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tanzania also supports food sovereignty and promotes a model centred on people. • Food sovereignty is not just a long-term goal but an urgent requirement for meeting food and dietary needs of current and future generations. At the same time, we should also take into consideration the adverse consequences of an excessive production on the environment. • We learned that we should not rely on external sources, and that we must strengthen the resilience of our food systems. Reviving traditional knowledge is an imperative, as well public procurement, such as school meals, and climate resilient agriculture. • Food systems transformation requires both public and private sectors and the collaboration of national and international actors. Tanzania is thus discussing with different partners such as Italy (Piano Mattei for Africa) and

		UN agencies to increase investments on its lands.
8. Qu Dongyu, Director General, FAO	Multistakeholder panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We must reflect on effective ways to ensure that finance gets to the small producers. • Governments are essential to build long-term confidence and involve the private sector in the transformation of agrifood systems. • As per the example of China, access to credit for farmers is key as well as agricultural insurance schemes, so that farmers' responsibility is balanced by reduced exposure to risks. • Governments must also open national and international markets for their farmers, and Brazil offers an example for that.
9. Alvaro Lario, President, IFAD	Multistakeholder panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming must be treated as a business, with stronger market linkages and alignment between public and private sector goals. • Build instruments to connect public and private actors, and ensure access to data and technology. • Forge partnerships that link global value chains to local private sector ecosystems. • Ensure accountability and long-term commitments from all stakeholders.
10. Juan Lucas Restrepo, Director General, Alliance Bioversity & CIAT	Multistakeholder panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food sovereignty is rooted in cooperation—not isolation—through knowledge exchange and locally grounded yet globally connected approaches. • National planning must be co-created, multisectoral, inclusive, and based on evidence.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment plans must reflect food sovereignty goals by channelling resources to local, context-specific solutions.
11. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO, AUDA-NEPAD	Multistakeholder panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global cooperation beyond Africa is essential to advance shared priorities and empower smallholder farmers—the key to inclusive food systems. A holistic approach is needed: vertically (from global to local) and horizontally (across Ministries like Agriculture, Finance, Trade). Ethiopia is a model of this. Protect traditional knowledge and promote climate-resilient agriculture as a shared response to a shared challenge. Harmonize policies and commitments across all levels of governance. Unlock finance for local solutions through blended finance and de-risking tools targeting SMEs.
12. Massimiliano Giansanti, President, Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations (COPA)	Multistakeholder panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 600 million people depend on agriculture in Africa; 84% are family farms, producing 35% of food with access to only 12% of land. 733 million are undernourished and over 30% face food insecurity. The EU–Africa partnership is crucial, with key frameworks like the Mattei Plan and the Global Gateway. Innovation and digitalization are essential to tackle future challenges, alongside investment in science and research. Unlocking the potential of women and youth, scaling smart agricultural practices, and strengthening value chains are top priorities.

<p>13. Mwendah M'Mahilutha, CEO, Kenya National Farmers' Federation</p>	<p>Multistakeholder panel discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food sovereignty is the foundation of a just and resilient future and must be supported through national investment plans that scale up local good practices. • True food sovereignty starts with farmer sovereignty—ensuring land access, climate resilience, and farmer-led innovation rooted in local knowledge. • Access to finance is essential, with public–private mechanisms and de-risking tools to support local solutions.
<p>14. Kashim Shettima, Vice President, Nigeria</p>	<p>Concluding remarks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Nigeria, physical security is the first condition for agricultural development, a key contributor to national GDP. • Between 2013 and 2017, agriculture's role declined due to violent conflict, farmer displacement, and climate shocks. • Nigeria holds 17.8 million hectares of agricultural land, but unlocking its potential requires rethinking food financing and improving access to credit through de-risking. • Technology must align with traditional practices to be effective and scalable.

Interventions from the floor

SPEAKER	QUESTION OR KEY POINT OF INTERVENTION
<p>1. Hungary</p>	<p>Recent challenges have reaffirmed the importance of food sovereignty and food security. Hungary is investing in organic farming, local food production, and the shortening of supply chains to strengthen resilience. This approach supports regional development, reinforces the local economy, and creates a positive economic loop that extends beyond households to include public kitchens and restaurants. Public</p>

	procurement regulations in catering are a key lever to scale and institutionalize local food systems.
2. Rwanda	<p>Food sovereignty is a national priority, driven by local solutions tailored to local needs.</p> <p>Boost productivity by expanding access to quality seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation.</p> <p>Prioritize nutrition and invest in climate-smart practices, including irrigation and regenerative agriculture.</p> <p>Food sovereignty means leading through partnerships—not isolation.</p>
3. Comoros	<p>Food sovereignty is not a matter of confinement and this is why our approach is based on partnerships between the public and the private sector, as well as the population. Comoros has put in place the legal, institutional and organizational framework to strengthen value chains and entrepreneurship. Farmers are at the centre of our strategy but we are aware that prior conditions must be provided by the government, with the support of technical and financial partners, so that farmers are able to deliver good quality products.</p>

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

Under the co-leadership of Italy and Ethiopia, the Ministerial Roundtable on Food Sovereignty highlighted the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture systems, valuing local traditions, the environment and the needs of local populations.

Showcasing experiences from Italy, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa and Tanzania, the Roundtable highlighted that food is not only a commodity: it is a right, a cultural expression, and a pillar of national food security, identity and sovereignty. The discussion underscored how food reflects history, culture and environmental diversity, and plays a vital role in shaping resilient societies.

The path to food sovereignty builds on the pillars of sustainability, the centrality of local communities, the preservation of traditional practices and culinary traditions. Food sovereignty is therefore at the core of more resilient, sustainable and inclusive food systems and represents an effective tool to reverse the food price inflation caused by international crises. In this context, food sovereignty also emerged as a strategic response to growing vulnerabilities in global food supply chains, underscoring the need to reduce dependency and build local capacities.

A panel discussion featuring International Organizations (FAO, IFAD, Alliance Bioversity & CIAT, AUDA-NEPAD) and producers' and farmers' associations offered multistakeholder perspectives about the importance of supporting small-holder farming, empowering rural communities, and the need to integrate food sovereignty into national planning frameworks, including agricultural investment plans. Traditional knowledge systems and agroecological practices were highlighted as essential components of food systems transformation.

Special attention was devoted to the importance of increasing investments in favour of food sovereignty and the need for more and better partnerships between Governments and the private sector to accelerate the transformation of food systems. The Piano Mattei implemented by Italy in collaboration with the Italian private sector in different African countries was mentioned as a good practice in this respect.

Throughout the interventions, it emerged that a renewed collaboration among countries will be crucial to support the international process aimed at recognising the right to food sovereignty and at ensuring that the farmers and food producers, who are the custodians of the land and its agri-food heritage, are put at the center of decision-making.