

UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake

SESSION REPORT

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Type (click one):

☒ Plenary

☐ Ministerial Roundtable

☐ High-level Panels

☐ Featured Event

☐ Investment Dialogue

☐ Stakeholder Action Session

Session Title: High-Level Opening “Harnessing a changing world for the future of sustainable food systems”

July 28th 2025 | 09:00-10:50

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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. H.E. Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	High-Level Opening Statement	The UNFSS+4 is a moment to take stock and to renew our commitment to urgent and

coordinated action to building food systems that are resilient, inclusive and just.

Food is not only agriculture, it shapes our health, our economies, our environment and our future. Food systems are facing immense pressure, at the same time that international cooperation declines.

Ethiopia places human dignity at the centre. It is committed to achieving food self-sufficiency and to ensuring that all Ethiopians have access to safe, diverse and nutritious food.

The roadmap launched by Ethiopia during the first UNFSS in 2021 entails broad key policy reforms in land use, agricultural development and rural finance for the transformation of our national food system. Over 700 interventions are under implementation, structured around seven strategic clusters and engaging federal and regional governments, developing partners, civil society, the private sector and research institutions. Central to the Ethiopian approach is social protection, with special focus on women, young children and food insecure families.

Despite progress, the African continent faces mounting challenges. Africa can feed itself and help feed the world but this requires predictable development finance, including climate finance, access to technology and fair trade. Africa contributes least to climate change but suffers most.

Support must scale up from aid to shared investments. Ethiopia remains committed to work with its partners to put the agenda of food systems transformation forward.

This Summit must mark the moment we match words with will, resources and commitments, with the courage to deliver.

<p>2. H.E. Giorgia Meloni, President of the Council of Ministers, Republic of Italy</p>	<p>High-Level Opening Statement</p>	<p>We are glad to co-organise this event in Addis Ababa not only because Italy has a special relationship with Ethiopia, based on concrete cooperation, but also because we believe that it is essential to involve the African continent as a protagonist in the international community's decisions and actions, starting with food security, which has been severely challenged first by the pandemic and then by Russia's aggression against Ukraine.</p> <p>Food security is a political issue for Italy, impacting poverty, conflict, terrorism, and forced migration, as well as an economic issue, as it is a driver of growth and development.</p> <p>In Italy's Mattei Plan for Africa, the agri-food sector plays a key role and we intend to boast our unique expertise that combines tradition and innovation. Several initiatives that are part of the Mattei Plan, in partnership with the private sector, are already operational in Algeria, Senegal, Ghana, and Congo, and will soon be implemented in Ivory Coast and Kenya.</p> <p>We are also strengthening capacity and skills for the use of water in Tunisia.</p> <p>Italy works along with the European Union's Global Gateway to support the development of coffee production chains in several African countries and recalls the importance of technical and scientific training to create self-reliance, rather than dependence.</p> <p>Italy strongly supports the concept of food sovereignty, as the right of peoples to shape their own production model based on traditions and cultural identity.</p>
<p>3. H. E. António Guterres, UN Secretary-General</p>	<p>Video message</p>	<p>The first UNFSS affirmed that food systems are more than food, they are about health, nutrition, climate, decent work, justice, and the right to a better future.</p> <p>We have seen progress since then but progress is not fast or fair enough. Hunger is</p>

		<p>rising, trade shocks are pushing food prices out of reach, one third of the world's population cannot afford a healthy diet and one third of the food produced is lost or wasted.</p> <p>The hidden costs of our food systems exceed 10 trillion US dollars a year.</p> <p>40% of the global workforce is linked to food systems yet many remains in poverty.</p> <p>Conflicts drive hunger from Gaza to Sudan and beyond, leading to further instability and undermining peace. We must never accept hunger as a weapon of war.</p> <p>Transformation is underway and governments are leading it but they cannot do it alone. The private sector must play a vital role, ensuring that responsible business practices are aligned with the public good. We must build on new partnerships such as the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty.</p> <p>I see three urgent priorities: 1) break down silos; 2) govern food systems fairly, delivering on the right to food for all; 3) unlock and connect finance at scale.</p> <p>The future of food is the food of humanity. Let us work together to build food systems that nourish every people and grow prosperity from the ground up.</p>
4. H.E. William Samoei Ruto, President, Republic of Kenya	High-Level Statement	<p>The picture is mixed. We have made significant progress in terms of reduction of poverty and hunger. However, this encouraging trajectory is not universal and starvation and undernourishment remain a harsh reality for too many. At the same time, obesity and other non-communicable diseases, as well environmental pressures are hampering socio-economic development. Food systems also account for over 1/3 of greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss and pollution globally. Food markets are</p>

		increasingly volatile and food prices are on the rise. We urgently must reorient global food systems, integrating food system strategies into national policies, strengthening governance, providing research and innovations with the means they require, supporting small holder farmers, engaging with the private sector and improving access to finance.
5. H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President, Federal Republic of Somalia	High-Level Statement	For Somalia agriculture is not a sector but the lifeblood of our society. Livestock is not a major pillar but a crucial driver of food security. The National Transformation Plan identified agriculture as the engine of inclusive economic growth, social cohesion and national recovery. In our country, where nearly half of the population live in rural areas and over 4 million people face acute food insecurity, transforming agriculture is not a choice but a moral obligation and a necessity. For Somalia food security is peace. Agriculture must not only feed our people but create jobs, foster peace and prepare Somalia for the future. Somalia is committed to rebuilding state institutions and is calling for a strengthened international solidarity and access to finance, technology and innovations.
6. H.E. Azali Assoumani, President, Union of Comoros	High-Level Statement	Global food systems face multiple challenges and yet they also offer opportunities and solutions. One billion people could be fed with the food that is lost and wasted each year. In the African continent we have a huge potential but we need to modernize and transform the African food systems. In the Comoros, we have been implementing since 2021 a national roadmap to improve climate resilience, agriculture governance, value chains' added value, food security and the economic inclusion of youth and women. We achieved remarkable results but there are challenges that remain, in particular we need to boost climate smart agriculture and

		increase credits for smallholders. We encourage our international partners to support our strategy to transform our food systems, which is something essential to our dignity.
7. H.E. Kashim Shettima, Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria	High-Level Statement	Nigeria has been investing since 2021 in the transformation of its national food systems. Food and nutrition are pillars of the National Development Plan 2021-2025 and the Nigeria Agenda 2050. Innovations and technology are now part of our agricultural vocabulary. We are investing with international financing institutions in agro-industrial processing zones, which are engines of transformation. Production is not enough, we need nutrition-sensitive agriculture. Through the Nutrition 774 Initiative we are placing our local governments at the centre of nutrition delivery. We must renew our commitment to multilateralism with shared responsibility, because a broken food system anywhere in the world diminishes the dignity of the humanity as a whole.
8. H.E. Jessica Alupo R.E., Vice President, Republic of Uganda	High-Level Statement	Uganda remains committed to the transformation of food systems, in collaboration with its partners in the African continent and beyond. The Uganda's Food Systems Transformation Strategy is integrated in the current National Development Plan and it is anchored in the five pillars of sustainable industry, private sector growth, human capital development, infrastructure development, and governance and security. The Parish development model and the Uganda's school feeding initiative are examples of systemic programmes which integrate agriculture with health, nutrition and education. We need to move now from dialogue to action, deepening our collaboration, scaling-up financing innovative mechanisms and unlocking the transformative potential of local and indigenous solutions.

9. H.E. Eduardo Martínez Díaz, Deputy Prime Minister, Republic of Cuba	High-Level Statement	Cuba reaffirms its commitment to position food systems at the centre of the agenda of social and economic development, to fight poverty and inequality. This requires the joint mobilization and solidarity of all, taking into account the needs and traditions of each country and maintaining a focus on social protection. The current global order implying high defence global expenses and unilateral coercive measures are an impediment to food security and the transformation of food systems. Despite this, Cuba keeps on seeking solutions to boost its food production. Resources to achieve zero hunger are available, it is only a matter of political will to reorient them to the benefit of peoples. South-South Cooperation demonstrated that solidarity and determination are able to promote food security.
10. H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson, African Union	High-Level Statement	Food systems transformation is an imperative and we need to focus on more concrete and incisive actions. Millions of people, especially women and children, go to bed hungry and this is especially serious in the African continent. Major challenges remain, starting from climate change, conflicts, economic shocks and structural inequalities. Africa only contributes to 4% of greenhouse gas emissions, yet 10 million people are displaced due to climate-related events. In January 2025 the Summit in Kampala adopted the 10-Year CAADP Strategy and Action Plan to advance agricultural transformation and food systems in Africa but international partners will be key to unlock investments and support African-led solutions.
11. H.E. Jeremiah Kpan Koung, Vice President, Republic of Liberia	High-Level Statement	Liberia prioritized three key areas in its national food systems transformation pathway: nutrition-sensitive agriculture, climate-smart agriculture, and inclusive governance frameworks. Liberia recognizes that sustainable transformation of food

		<p>systems requires regional cooperation and reaffirms its commitments to the African Union and its CAADP strategy. Liberia underscores the critical link between food security and peace, which is especially relevant for conflict-affected and fragile states. Liberia pledges a continued support to the UN food systems agenda. Let us not only invest in agricultural yield but in sustainable stability, human dignity, resilience, and lasting transformation for future generations.</p>
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Overall session summary, conclusions and recommended actions (max 250 words)

The High-Level Opening launched the UNFSS+4 by positioning food systems transformation as central to achieving the SDGs in a fast-changing world marked by climate shocks, conflicts, and rising inequalities.

The session, co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the President of the Council of Ministers of Italy, featured a video message from the UN Secretary-General and interventions by Heads of State and Government of Kenya, Somalia, Comoros, Nigeria, Uganda, Cuba and Liberia, as well as the Chairperson of the African Union.

Despite undoubted improvements, the high-level statements underlined that many challenges remain and that progress is not fair enough. Hunger is rising, trade shocks are pushing food prices out of reach and one third of the world's population cannot afford a healthy diet, while one third of the food produced is lost or wasted.

Interventions presented key relevant policies and strategies implemented in various countries to advance on the sustainable transformation of national food systems, reiterating the need to put people at the centre, especially women, youth, and farmers. They also emphasised the importance of engaging with the private sector, unlocking essential finance and ensuring that responsible business practices are aligned with the public good.

Countries reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen collective action and accelerate the transformation of food systems, calling for strengthened international solidarity and a more equal access to finance, technology and innovations.