

# 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

## Indigenous Peoples' led Session: From Food as a Commodity to Food as a Global Public Good

29 July 2025 | 09:00 – 10:20

Name of note-taker: N/A

Session lead/co-lead: Indigenous Peoples' Representatives in the SENA and Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems Coalition

E-mail of note-taker: N/A

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. Amina Amharech, Acal/AZUL/Indigenous Determinants of	Opening	Amina emphasized that Indigenous Peoples, though only 5% of the global population, safeguard 80% of the world's biodiversity

Health Alliance (IDHA) member		<p>through ancestral knowledge and reciprocal relations with nature. She warned that colonization and land dispossession continue to undermine Indigenous food sovereignty, stressing that food systems are not simply economic but cultural, spiritual, and ecological. She called for recognition of Indigenous governance, restitution of land, and Indigenous-led solutions to global food and health challenges.</p> <p><i>“There can be no Indigenous health without Indigenous food systems, and no food sovereignty without territories and natural resources.”</i></p>
2. 2. Aluki Kotierk, Chair, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and Indigenous Peoples Food Systems Coalition Chair - video message	Video message	<p>In her video message, Aluki described Inuit food systems, particularly seal hunting, as central to nutrition, cultural continuity, and kinship. She emphasized that these practices are living and adaptive, sustaining health and identity while fostering intergenerational knowledge transfer. She urged partners to place Indigenous leadership at the center of coalitions and global food systems transformation.</p>
3. Juan Lucas Restrepo, Alliance of Bioversity & CIAT, Rome	Panel intervention	<p>Juan Lucas highlighted Indigenous food systems as climate-adapted, nutrition-rich, and biodiversity-based models essential for achieving the SDGs and Paris Agreement. He pointed to Brazil’s integration of Indigenous foods into school meals as proof that Indigenous systems can shape public policy and improve national nutrition outcomes. He urged systematic investment in Indigenous knowledge, disaggregated data, and genuine co-creation with Indigenous communities.</p> <p><i>“The future of food is already in Indigenous territories—we must recognize, support, and invest in it.”</i></p>

4. Aminata Diallo, Arramat Project, Youth	Panel intervention	<p>Representing the Arramat Project, Aminata shared how food is deeply tied to unity, gratitude, and reciprocity, recalling meals eaten from one plate as symbols of community and care. She warned that food is being weaponized by conflict, climate change, and land grabs, undermining Indigenous lifeways. She showcased the Arramat Project's work with 70+ communities to protect seeds, sacred food spaces, and Indigenous governance, and called for long-term, flexible funding and power-sharing.</p> <p><i>"Food is not just a system to be transformed. It is a way of life to be protected, respected, and restored."</i></p>
5. Francisco Rosado-May, Mayan Intercultural University of Quintana Roo (UMQROO)	Panel intervention	<p>Francisco introduced a framework for co-creation of knowledge, designed to bridge Indigenous and scientific systems through trust, respect, and shared values. Researchers and Indigenous Peoples (IP) have developed 13 principles and 7 values to guide intercultural co-creation of knowledge processes that involve IPs. These principles and values have the potential not only to boost confidence in scientists working with IPs but also to overcome epistemological barriers in transdisciplinary work that involve not only different scientific fields but also different cultural ways of knowing. He argued that knowledge systems must be placed on equal footing, with Indigenous-led research and education ensuring the intergenerational transfer of ancestral wisdom. He urged academic institutions to recognize Indigenous epistemologies as central to sustainability and resilience.</p> <p><i>"If we start from shared values, then co-creation is not only possible—it is transformative."</i></p>

6. Sebastian Medina-Tayac, Capital Native Nations	Moderator and Panel intervention	Sebastian, representative from Piscataway shared efforts to restore ancestral corn varieties and strengthen Indigenous food sovereignty in the U.S. He exposed the injustice of Indigenous imagery being used in reports while resources and funding rarely reach Indigenous farmers directly. His call to action emphasized the need for direct, equitable investment in Indigenous-led farming and food sovereignty initiatives.
7. Saulo Ceolin, Brazil, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Panel intervention	<p>Saulo presented Brazil's <b>National School Feeding Program (PNAE)</b> and Indigenous Food Acquisition Program, showcasing how policy and legal reforms have enabled 2,800 Indigenous farmers to supply over 200,000 students with culturally appropriate foods. He underscored how reducing barriers and including Indigenous voices in governance can embed Indigenous food systems in national nutrition policies.</p> <p><i>"This is leaving no one behind in practice, not just in words."</i></p>
8. Amina Amharech (Indigenous Determinants of Health)	Panel intervention	<p>In a second intervention, Amina presented the <b>Indigenous Determinants of Health framework</b>, which views health holistically—encompassing physical, cultural, spiritual, and environmental well-being. She explained that this framework is now recognized in the Convention on Biological Diversity and WHO's Social Determinants of Health report. She argued that food systems are at the core of Indigenous health and must be safeguarded from colonization.</p> <p><i>"Health is not just the absence of illness. It is balance—physical, spiritual, cultural, environmental. Food systems are at the heart of that balance."</i></p>
9. Hanieh Moghani, UN Permanent Forum on	Panel intervention	Hanieh framed food as a human right, not a commodity, and condemned the use of hunger and sanctions as tools of colonization.

Indigenous Issues Expert Member		She highlighted Gaza as a tragic example where hunger is weaponized against Indigenous peoples of the land, warning that their absence from global discussions is a collective failure. She called for dismantling colonial structures, ensuring Indigenous decision-making power, and direct financing for Indigenous-led initiatives.
10. Hanieh Moghani, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Expert Member	Closing Remarks	Hanieh closed the session by reaffirming that Indigenous food systems are <b>already nature-positive and evidence-based</b> , not theoretical concepts. She cautioned against appropriation of Indigenous knowledge through patents or extractive research, and called for direct, predictable financing for Indigenous-led initiatives. She emphasized that Indigenous food systems embody ethics of reciprocity, solidarity, and responsibility to future generations. <i>“Indigenous food systems are not projects—they are living ethics of reciprocity, solidarity, and responsibility to future generations.”</i>

#### Interventions from the floor

SPEAKER	QUESTION OR KEY POINT OF INTERVENTION
Carmen Burbano (School Meals Coalition, WFP)	Carmen stressed that school meals can act as a bridge between Indigenous food systems and national policies. She pointed to Brazil as a model, where Indigenous foods and governance have shaped school nutrition programs. She committed the School Meals Coalition to deepening collaboration with the Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems Coalition.  <i>“When Indigenous foods shape school nutrition, children benefit, communities benefit, and nations benefit.”</i>
Sara Farley (Rockefeller Foundation)	Sara pointed out that philanthropy has been slow to learn and often exploitative, noting that less than 1% of climate and philanthropic finance reaches Indigenous-led initiatives. She emphasized the need for Indigenous leadership to be central, not tokenized, and for partnerships to be accountable and

	<p>non-extractive. She highlighted Rockefeller’s shift towards funding Indigenous-led solutions and respecting traditional knowledge systems.</p> <p><i>“Indigenous leadership is not a choice, it is a requirement.”</i></p>
Oliver Oliveros (Agroecology Coalition)	<p>Oliver highlighted the natural alignment between Indigenous food systems and agroecology, noting that Indigenous practices are time-tested models of resilience. He called on coalitions like Agroecology, School Meals, and Healthy Diets to strengthen partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and to ensure Indigenous systems are visible and supported in global food debates.</p> <p><i>“Indigenous practices are not new—they have ensured resilience for millennia.”</i></p>
Ambassador of Colombia to UN agencies in Rome	<p>The Colombian Ambassador reaffirmed Indigenous rights in national law and shared Colombia’s co-leadership with Guatemala in the Indigenous Peoples’ group of friends in Rome. She announced that Colombia and Brazil will co-host the <b>Second Intergovernmental Conference on Rural Development (2025, Cartagena)</b>, ensuring Indigenous participation. Her intervention framed Indigenous Peoples as central to achieving rural development and food sovereignty.</p>
Representative of UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food	<p>The representative of the Special Rapporteur warned that hunger is being weaponized in conflicts, citing Sudan, Gaza, and Haiti as examples. She argued that voluntary principles are insufficient and called for legally binding frameworks to curb corporate power and protect food as a human right. She stressed that peasants, Indigenous Peoples, and civil society must be included meaningfully in decision-making processes.</p> <p><i>“Voluntary principles are not enough. We need legally binding measures to end hunger and protect rights.”</i></p>

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

The session on Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems opened with ceremony and prayer, situating food not as a commodity but as spirit, culture, and life. Indigenous leaders reminded participants that while Indigenous Peoples make up approximately 6.2% of the global

population, they safeguard 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity—a role rooted in centuries of stewardship, reciprocity, and intergenerational knowledge.

Speakers from across regions highlighted how Indigenous food systems are climate-adapted, nutrition-rich, and biodiversity-based, offering concrete solutions to today's crises. For Inuit communities, hunting seals sustains both nutrition and cultural bonds; in the Sahel, ancestral practices of sharing food from one plate symbolize unity and reciprocity; in the Americas, Indigenous farmers are reviving ancient corn varieties and re-embedding traditional foods into public policies like Brazil's Indigenous food acquisition and school feeding programs. Each testimony illustrated that food is identity, ceremony, governance, and justice.

At the same time, the session did not shy away from the harsh realities of colonization and exclusion. Hanieh Moghani warned that hunger, displacement, and sanctions are modern tools of colonization, citing Gaza as a painful reminder of how food can be weaponized. Others pointed to structural inequities: less than 1% of climate and philanthropic finance reaches Indigenous-led initiatives, while corporate-controlled monocultures continue to displace traditional systems.

In response, speakers presented Indigenous-led frameworks and initiatives. The Indigenous Determinants of Health framework redefines health as balance across physical, spiritual, cultural, and environmental dimensions, now recognized in global biodiversity and health processes. The Arramat Project, spanning over 70 communities and 150 partners, connects elders and youth to protect sacred seeds, defend food sovereignty, and restore Indigenous governance. From Mexico, Professor Francisco Rosado-May outlined a co-creation framework to bridge science and Indigenous knowledge through shared values and trust.

Governments and allies also reflected on their role. Brazil showcased its reforms to school feeding and procurement laws, ensuring Indigenous farmers directly supply culturally appropriate foods to thousands of Indigenous students. The School Meals Coalition recognized these models as blueprints for scaling Indigenous-led nutrition globally. The Agroecology Coalition stressed the alignment between Indigenous practices and agroecology. The Rockefeller Foundation committed to shift philanthropy toward accountable, non-extractive partnerships with Indigenous Peoples, admitting the deep inequity in current funding flows.

The session repeatedly highlighted the role of the Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems Coalition, born from the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, as a living embodiment of Indigenous sovereignty. It provides a global platform for dialogue, advocacy, and co-creation—ensuring Indigenous voices and rights shape international debates on food, climate, and biodiversity. Speakers called on states and UN bodies to provide direct, predictable funding to the Coalition, as urged by the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Closing interventions reinforced that Indigenous food systems are already nature-positive, resilient, and evidence-backed. They are not simply practices to be studied but living ethics of reciprocity, solidarity, and responsibility for future generations.