

# 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

## National Food Systems Transformation Convenor-led session: From Pathways to Implementation: National Convenors Leading Food Systems Transformation

29 July 2025 | 15:00 – 16:20

The recording of the session is available [here](#).

### 1. Session background and objectives:

The session was designed as a strategic moment within the broader context of the UNFSS+4 to consolidate the progress achieved since the inaugural 2021 Food Systems Summit. Its aim was not only to recognize the leadership of National Convenors but also to foster dialogue on how their work is being institutionalized at national and regional levels.

By surfacing concrete examples, highlighting flagship initiatives, and promoting cross-country learning, the session contributed to shaping the roadmap leading up to UNFSS+6 in 2027 and to the 2030 Agenda milestones. It provided a space to identify persistent bottlenecks, financing gaps, and partnership opportunities while showcasing the leadership of Convenors in advancing equitable and resilient food systems.

### 2. Session report:

#### a. Opening remarks

**Ms. Lena Savelli**, Deputy Director of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, opened the session by welcoming participants and acknowledging the critical timing of this discussion—four years after the first Food Systems Summit and five years before 2030. She described Convenors as the bridge between local realities and national ambitions, aligning grassroots efforts with the global food systems agenda.

#### **b. Keynote Speech**

**H.E. Ms. Amina Mohammed**, UN Deputy Secretary-General, delivered an inspiring address, acknowledging that Convenors are not merely facilitators but architects of transformation. She commended their evolution into national change-makers navigating inter-ministerial landscapes, engaging civil society, securing financing, and embedding food systems in development planning.

Despite operating in complex and often fragile contexts, Convenors have mobilized and implemented over 129 national pathways and maintained momentum by fostering inclusive dialogue and systemic thinking. The DSG reaffirmed the UN's commitment to accompany Convenors through the Convergence Initiative, the EU Accelerator, the Youth Leadership Programme, and the Joint SDG Fund.

#### **c. High-level framing contributions**

**H.E. Mr. Eng. Khaled Hneifat**, Minister of Agriculture of Jordan, emphasized the urgency of collective action, especially for countries experiencing interconnected crises related to conflict, climate change, and food insecurity.

He outlined Jordan's comprehensive strategy, which integrates the national food systems transformation pathway into the country's food security strategy (2021–2030), economic modernization agenda, and national agricultural plan (2022–2025). Examples of practical impact included the creation of a regional food security observatory, a school feeding programme reaching over 520,000 children, and expanded grain storage infrastructure.

Jordan has institutionalized inter-ministerial coordination through a high-level food security council and pioneered green financing schemes, including interest-free loans targeting women and youth. The Minister concluded by reaffirming Jordan's regional leadership role and willingness to share lessons learned.

#### **d. National Convenors' Roundtable Dialogue**

National Convenors from five regions presented key achievements, challenges, and innovations:

- **Ecuador – Mr. Marco Oviedo (LAC):** Highlighted the critical role of smallholder farmers, who supply 58% of national food. He emphasized the importance of youth engagement, especially as the rural workforce ages, and the leadership role of women in ensuring food system sustainability. Ecuador's approach emphasizes local ownership of transformation strategies, linking national policy to territorial implementation.

- **Central African Republic – Ms. Armelle Siopathis (Africa):** Shared progress on institutional reforms, including the establishment of a food systems coordination unit and proposed legislation to support cross-sectoral governance. She stressed the importance of communication, awareness-raising, and strategic planning workshops to promote a systemic rather than siloed approach.

**Armenia – Mr. Arman Khojoyan (Europe & Central Asia):** Armenia developed a national agriculture strategy aligned with its food systems pathway. This includes integrated budgets, food traceability systems, and inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms. The government has quadrupled investment in food systems and developed a policy framework spanning food safety, nutrition, climate resilience, and technology. The Convenor plays a leadership role, ensuring national ownership and coherence.

- **Thailand – Ms. Praiya Sawetjinda (Asia & Pacific):** Described the institutionalization of the Convenor role in the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure continuity and legitimacy. Thailand has implemented national dialogues, mapped SDG indicators into sectoral strategies, and created a national pathway grounded in stakeholder consultations. The four-pillar approach focuses on governance, inclusive economy, innovation, and capacity building.
- **Lebanon – Dr. Inaya Ezzeddine (Arab States):** Despite ongoing crises, Lebanon has advanced legal and governance reforms, including a proposed right to food law. Dr. Ezzeddine emphasized the importance of inclusive, evidence-based policymaking and highlighted work on food systems KPIs, pilot science-policy platforms, and fiscal incentives for healthier diets. Lebanon's approach aligns food systems transformation with the humanitarian-development nexus.

#### e. Flagship Initiatives Supporting Convenors

Two key donors presented flagship initiatives strengthening national leadership:

- **Ms. Wampie Libon (The Netherlands):** Spoke about the *Food Systems Climate Action Convergence Initiative*, which bridges food and climate objectives. Active in 26 countries, the initiative supports countries in aligning transformation pathways with climate adaptation and mitigation goals. Data—including gender-disaggregated ownership stats—was presented as essential for driving inclusive policy.
- **Dr. Andreas Schaumayer (Germany, BMZ):** Presented Germany's contributions to the *Youth Leadership Programme* and direct support to countries such as Malawi, Cambodia, and Zambia. He emphasized that transformation must be youth-led, inclusive, and grounded in long-term collaboration, not just technical assistance. The importance of joint financing, knowledge products, and leadership pipelines was underlined.

#### f. Flagship Initiatives Supporting Convenors

A vibrant open-floor discussion followed, including reflections from convenors and country representatives from Germany, Algeria, Nepal, Uzbekistan, Bhutan, Philippines, and Cameroon.

Key points included:

- **Germany** emphasized integration across Rio Conventions and the CFS agenda.
- **Algeria** called for sovereign or regional food financing funds.
- **Nepal** underscored its constitutional right to food and budgetary allocations in the national five-year plan.
- **Uzbekistan** shared digital platforms for food systems monitoring and legislation on food security.
- **Bhutan** advocated for quarterly Convenor sessions and GCF/GEF support.
- **Philippines** noted the influence of external climate and political volatility on national food systems.
- **Cameroon** showcased coalition building across seven ministries and alignment with agroecological goals.

#### g. Closing remarks

**Mr. Stefanos Fotiou**, Director of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, concluded by recognizing the depth of engagement and tangible leadership demonstrated throughout the session.

#### Key Messages:

1. **National Convenors must be recognized and empowered** as strategic leaders of SDG acceleration — not just facilitators but catalysts of systemic change.
2. **Financing must align with ambition** — including national budgets, external support, and innovative mechanisms.
3. **Capacity building and peer learning are essential** to sustain momentum, particularly through platforms like the Youth Leadership Programme, Convergence Initiative, and SDG Fund.

Mr. Fotiou reaffirmed the Hub's commitment to provide tailored support and convening platforms, and to amplify Convenors' work through practical tools, financing, and visibility. He closed by urging collective action "with purpose, partnership, and hope."

### 3. Key messages:

#### i. National Convenors Are Anchors of Systemic Transformation:

National Convenors have evolved from facilitators of dialogue to central figures in the institutionalization of food systems transformation. In 158 countries, they are driving the integration

of food systems approaches into national development plans, legislation, climate strategies, and financing frameworks.

Convenors are not only implementing pathways — they are shaping governance, aligning cross-sectoral policies, and sustaining momentum in increasingly complex contexts.

## **ii. Pathways Are Being Translated into Action — But Gaps Remain**

Countries showcased real progress:

- **Jordan** institutionalized transformation through high-level governance and financing tools.
- **Armenia** aligned its national strategy and budget with the food systems pathway.
- **Ecuador** emphasized the empowerment of youth and smallholder farmers.
- **Thailand** and **Lebanon** stressed inclusive policy-making, data systems, and resilience in fragile settings.

However, persistent gaps remain in:

- Long-term, flexible financing
- Data systems and M&E frameworks
- Coordination across sectors and ministries
- Technical capacity and implementation support

## **iii. Inclusivity and Local Ownership Are Core to Success**

Multi-stakeholder engagement, particularly of women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and civil society, is enabling deeper transformation. Convenors are ensuring food systems become platforms for social inclusion and empowerment, not only technical reform.

*“Food systems are not just about production and nutrition — they are about voice, equity, and dignity.”*

## **iv. Convenors Require Sustained Political, Financial, and Technical Support**

Convenors are leading amidst climate shocks, political transitions, and institutional challenges. To scale their impact, they need:

- Stable political mandates
- Institutionalized roles within government structures
- Access to long-term financing and donor alignment
- Tools for foresight, coordination, and risk management

## **v. Flagship Initiatives Are Enabling Integrated Support**

Global and regional partners — including The Netherlands, Germany, and the European Union — are investing in initiatives that reinforce Convenors' work:

- **The Convergence Initiative:** Bridges food-climate agendas across 26+ countries.
- **EU Accelerator:** Supports governance and implementation in pilot countries.
- **Youth Leadership Programme (Germany):** Builds a next generation of system leaders.
- **Joint SDG Fund:** Mobilizing over USD 30M to create enabling environments.

#### vi. Peer Learning, South-South Collaboration, and Regional Coordination Must Accelerate

Countries such as Bhutan and Cameroon called for more structured exchanges among Convenors. Regional networks, knowledge products (e.g. "Emerging Practices" report), and quarterly coordination mechanisms can build shared capacity and amplify innovation.

#### vii. Convenors Are Key to Achieving the 2030 Agenda

With only five years remaining, Convenors are essential to bridging global ambition and national action. Their continued empowerment is not optional — it is a prerequisite for delivering SDG2 and beyond.

*"Convenors are not just part of the food systems journey. They are the journey's engine."*

### 7. Highlighted Quotes from the Session:

- *"National Convenors are not simply implementers. They are architects of transformation and strategic leaders in the Decade of Action."* — H.E. Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General
- *"You are not simply implementing — you are shaping policy, building institutions, and anchoring systemic change."* — Mr. Stefanos Fotiou, Director, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub
- *"We have a shared responsibility to accelerate a just, inclusive, and sustainable transformation of our food systems."* — H.E. Eng. Khaled Hneifat, Minister of Agriculture, Jordan
- *"We must align food systems transformation with climate ambition and SDG priorities — this is where the Convergence Initiative leads the way."* — Ms. Wampie Libon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands
- *"Our Youth Leadership Programme empowers young leaders with the tools and voice to influence food systems policy at the national and global level."* — Dr. Andreas Schaumayer, BMZ Germany

