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UNITED NATIONS  
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SUMMIT 2021

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FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021**

# **CONCEPTUALIZING HOW CONVENORS CAN CARRY OUT NATIONAL DIALOGUES**



A POEM BY DR. NAMUKOLO COVIC



**PREPARED BY THE  
ISSUE-BASED COALITION ON  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**



# INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Secretary-General will convene a **Food Systems Summit September 2021 [1]** as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The 2021 Summit will bring together a diverse range of stakeholders - before, during and after the Summit - to identify ways to make food systems stronger and more equitable and to bring tangible and positive changes to the world's food systems (ultimately driving progress in all of the SDGs).

The **five Action Tracks [2]** that will guide the Summit are:

- (1) ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all;
- (2) shift to sustainable consumption patterns;
- (3) boost nature-positive production;
- (4) advance equitable livelihoods; and
- (5) build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

Throughout the so-called Food Systems Summit Dialogues, a diverse range of **stakeholders are invited to prepare the 2021 Summit by coming together and sharing their experiences of food systems.**

[1] <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>.

The pre-Summit meeting will take place in Rome on 21 July 2021.

[2] <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/action-tracks>



18 - 19 February 2021, Shamkir - Samukh, Azerbaijan - "Strengthening Agrarian Advisory Services" project specialists met with a group of farmers and agrarian advisory service providers in the Shamkir and Samukh districts of the Ganja-Gazakh economic region. The opportunities for using the agricultural advisory services for farmers in the regions and their expectations from the project have been discussed during the meetings. Project funded by the European Union and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Azerbaijan.

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## 3 TYPES OF FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES

- (1) Member State Dialogues that will take place between now and the Summit;
- (2) Global Summit Dialogues ( climate, environment, health, economies and jobs, humanitarian aid and water;
- (3) Independent Dialogues, organized by individuals.

If requested by countries, regional dialogues may also be organized.

## OUTCOMES OF THE DIALOGUES

- (1) fostering new connections;
- (2) sharing the roles of stakeholders in food systems;
- (3) informing the 2021 Summit process; and
- (4) helping design the food systems of the future by guiding actions to make the transformation happen in the coming decade.

In the United Nations **Food Systems Dialogues (UNFSS) gateway** [3], and easy and friendly tool for navigating the dialogues, stakeholders can explore the challenges faced by their food systems, reflect on the Summit themes, and learn from the perspectives of others who participate. The UNFSS gateway provides stakeholders with a broad methodology and a standardized approach for **convening, curating and facilitating dialogues**. The methodology encourages structured conversations among groups with different perspectives on how to get their food systems to work for the common good, defining the roles of **dialogue convenor, curator and facilitator**. The gateway also provides toolkits, training materials and a means to share findings publicly.

The **purpose of this note** is to support national governments in conducting Member State Dialogues at the national level.

The materials being developed by the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems will promote a common approach to sustainable food systems and guide further support to be provided by the **Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems**, United Nations Country Teams or individual United Nations agencies if requested by the convenors of the national dialogue

[3] <https://summitdialogues.org/> (gateway)



### Components of this note:

- **Section I** proposes a generic methodology for interested convenors to organize and conduct structured and inclusive dialogues.
- **Section II** focuses on the training resources and materials that the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems could offer for use in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) national dialogues.
- **Annex 1** presents draft agendas for three meetings as part of the national dialogue.



# I. PROPOSED THREE-STEP METHODOLOGY FOR NATIONAL DIALOGUES

**The Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues (dialogues).** The dialogues are a critical element of the 2021 Summit preparatory process and aim at facilitating national stakeholders in working together to develop national pathways towards sustainable food systems prior to the 2021 Summit and beyond. As advised by the UNFSS Secretariat, the dialogues can take place nationally and subnationally, and governments need to be central. The five Action Tracks could be a thread to the national dialogues.

The Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems offers to interested convenors the following three-phase methodology (Table 1) that aims to support countries in organizing and conducting structured and inclusive national dialogues for the preparation of the 2021 Food Systems Summit. The methodology would need to be adjusted to each country context.

**TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF THE THREE PHASES**

GOAL	PHASES	OBJECTIVES	TIMEFRAME
SUPPORT COUNTRY DIALOGUES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE 2021 FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT	(1) "Getting started" with national dialogue planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designate the convenor</li> <li>Get started and understand how the country can engage in the 2021 Summit</li> <li>Map the core stakeholders and participants</li> <li>Define the overall work programme of meetings and consultations</li> <li>Get knowledgeable on sustainable food systems and importance and value</li> </ul>	November 2020 – February 2021
	2 - Dialogue implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct all meetings, dialogues and collaborations to define the state of the country food system</li> <li>Assess the strengths and vulnerabilities of food systems</li> <li>Build consensus and shared commitments towards sustainable food systems</li> <li>Identify options for food system transformations towards sustainability</li> </ul>	January – April 2021
	3 - Finalizing country inputs for the Food Systems Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft conclusions on how the country should shape policy and actions toward sustainable food systems, what are the key actions towards sustainable food systems, and what are the priority investments</li> <li>Submit conclusions to the UNFSS</li> </ul>	May – June 2021

# Phase 1

## “Getting started” with national dialogue planning

In Phase 1, countries need to identify a dialogue convenor, send an email to the UNFSS Secretariat with their nomination (to: [nominations@summitdialogues.org](mailto:nominations@summitdialogues.org)), and make a plan for the national dialogue process (agreeing on the time frame, the stakeholders to be invited, the number of meetings, the focus of the meetings, and the expected results).

Countries should be advised to consult the extensive information and guidance available on the UNFSS web page (specific materials available and training opportunities).

Key information and useful references for Phase 1:

- the Member State Dialogues: Getting-Started [4], a useful and short "getting started" note as countries select national dialogue convenors [5].
- The Manual for Convenors of Food Systems Summit Dialogues [6]
- The Handbook for Member State Dialogues [7]
- All up-to-date information and resources are available on the UNFSS website gateway at <https://summitdialogues.org/>.
- the Official feedback to the Summit / Sections of the Official Feedback Form [8]
- Collective training schedule February 2021 [9]

## Building a national implementation team to support the convenor.

It is suggested that countries build a dedicated team to support the convenor with general knowledge of the agrifood sector and the food systems approach. The application of the methodology must be conducted by the convenor. The national implementation team can include technical experts with know-how on various themes, such as the specific country's agriculture and food sector, key value chains, agricultural economics, environment, climate change, and policy analysis. Some of the tasks the national implementation team may advise the convenor on include:

- Identifying the participants of the national dialogue, listing key representatives of stakeholders to ensure the required balance of all actors and dimensions of the food systems approach and roles;
- Planning the overall work programme, scheduling meetings and workshops schedule, key deliverables by meeting;
- Defining the stakeholder consultation process, working groups' expected outputs and timetable.

[4] <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Food-Systems-Summit-Member-State-Dialogues-Getting-Started.pdf>

[5] Other United Nations languages: <https://summitdialogues.org/overview/member-state-food-systems-summit-dialogues/>

[6] <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Manual-for-Convenors.pdf>

[7] <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Handbook-for-Member-State-Dialogues-of-the-Food-Systems-Summit.pdf>

[8] <https://summitdialogues.org/overview/official-feedback-to-the-summit/>

[9] <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/February-Training-Schedule.pdf>

## CHECKLIST FOR PHASE 1

- o Designate convenor and advise UNFSS.
- o Identify core team to support the convenor to implement the country dialogue.
- o Select stakeholders.
- o Plan the focus of the country dialogue and agree on the number of stakeholder meetings, focus, dates and invitees.

# Phase 2

## Dialogue implementation

An important focus of the national dialogue is to progress understanding of the food systems approach, get buy-in, change mindsets, facilitate multistakeholder and multidiscipline dialogue, and identify concrete steps along the pathway to more sustainable food systems. Efforts should be made to make this phase as inclusive as possible. It provides an opportunity for diverse, purposeful and respectful exchanges among food systems stakeholders.

To achieve this, each convenor will need to determine whom to engage, possibly involving government officials, research institutes/academia, producers' associations, individual consumers, community members, women, youth groups, members of the private sector, and civil society representatives.

This will be key to ensuring that views, challenges and solutions are considered from various stakeholders.



05 July 2019, Krasne, Ukraine - Combine reloads wheat into the bunker for further transportation during the harvest near the Krasne village.  
©FAO/Anatolii Stepanov

During this phase, the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems proposes to organize a series of **two or three** dialogues approximately 3 hours in length, depending on the nature and complexity:

## DIALOGUE 1

The purpose of the first dialogue is getting to a common understanding on: (1) the 2021 UNFSS Summit; (2) the national dialogue process; and (3) the “sustainable food systems approach.” Expected results of Dialogue 1 including agreeing on the focus and format of the national dialogue (i.e. Focus on all Action Tracks? How many meetings? Who will be the participants? What are the dialogue purposes, expectations and the expected result of the national dialogue?). Dialogue 1 will highlight the key challenges faced in strengthening food systems at country and local levels.

**A suggested agenda for Dialogue 1 is available in Annex 1.**

## DIALOGUE 2

The purpose of the second dialogue is sharing information among stakeholders on the status of the food systems in the country, discussing and reviewing evidence on key challenges to strengthening food systems – as highlighted in Dialogue 1 – and determining practical next steps along the pathway to more sustainable food systems that can be pursued at the country level. Ideally, this second dialogue can take place either at the national level or with a few dialogues at the subnational level. The goal would be to set intentions and commitments on what to work on to improve sustainable food systems in the country before and after the Summit. A suggested agenda for Dialogue 2 is available in Annex 1.

**A suggested agenda for Dialogue 2 is available in Annex 1.**

## DIALOGUE 3

The proposed purpose of the third dialogue is to support the country dialogue team in drafting the conclusion, preparing the submission to the UNFSS web page, and communicating to inform the relevant government offices and stakeholders.

**A suggested agenda for Dialogue 3 is available in Annex 1.**

To support this process, templates of agendas, standard presentations, useful links and other key technical support can be provided by the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems (see Section II).



## CHECKLIST FOR PHASE 2

- o Agree that the format, agenda and composition of each meeting are suitable to the country context.
- o Ensure that the dialogue process is inclusive, led by the government but with the private sector, civil society and individual experts involved and invited to join meetings.
- o Make available and consider the relevant data and evidence specific to the country. This may include data and evidence that is already available in country or at the regional level, directing the convenor to useful information.
- o Consider the data needs and the review of evidence throughout Phase 2 and the meetings. However, there is a need for a realistic balance between making pragmatic appropriate decisions, based on sufficient evidence, in the time available.
- o Ensure that discussions and decisions focus on understanding challenges and identify the practical steps the country can take to improve the food system in order to address food security and nutrition and reach the SDG goals and indicators.
- o Consider whether there is a need for any separate meetings among stakeholder groups (civil society, private, government organizations) before having the joint Dialogue 2 in which all actors come together. Topics to be discussed in separate meetings might include consumption and waste, logistics, marketing, processing, production and environmental aspects.

# Phase 3

## Finalizing country inputs for the Food Systems Summit

At this stage, the elements of the national pathway should be clear enough to form the basis for further work by in-country stakeholders to nurture sustainable food systems in the coming years. The convenor of the national dialogue is responsible for submitting the conclusions [through the feedback forms in the gateway of the UNFSS website.](#)



22 August 2016, Vostochnyi Kyrgyzstan - Cunhuar Hiymamova with his children feeds a cow in his house in the village of Vostochnyi 80 km from Bishkek. Purposes of the FAO project are to improve livestock productivity through establishing district-based cattle producer associations for training and service delivery; access to better feeds, both quality forages and compound feeds; disseminating modern livestock farm husbandry and management practices, such as preventive health, milk sanitation; animal registration and identification and support modern milk marketing associations in order to organize milk producers.

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## II. RESOURCES TO BE DEVELOPED

The Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems will develop supporting materials for the three-phase methodology proposed for the national dialogue process. By providing these materials, it should ensure (1) that multistakeholder engagement is promoted in the dialogue process; (2) that the “sustainable food systems approach” is well understood; (3) that the stakeholders can depict the status of the food system in their countries and map the gaps and priorities towards sustainable food systems, and (4) that the results of the consultation provide useful inputs for the 2021 Summit.

The main resources to be developed are presented in Table 2.

**TABLE 2. MAIN RESOURCES TO BE DEVELOPED BY THE ISSUE-BASED COALITION ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

PHASES	RESOURCES	TIMEFRAME
<b>Phase 1: “Getting started” with national dialogue planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· This document can be shared widely, and it includes all key references and linkages to the UNFSS web page, the optimal reference for Phase 1.</li> <li>· Deciding on the focus of the national dialogue, some tips.</li> </ul>	November 2020 – February 2021
<b>Phase 2 – Dialogue implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Concept notes and draft agendas for dialogues 1, 2 and 3.</li> <li>· PowerPoint presentations with an overview of the UNFSS 2021.</li> <li>· PowerPoint presentation on the short Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems technical note and the sustainable food systems approach.</li> <li>· A Technical Note on sustainable food systems (targeting dialogue convenors) to provide them with a common understanding of sustainable food systems.</li> <li>· A briefing document on specific issues in the region to be considered when transforming food systems and improving sustainability.</li> <li>· A scoping exercise: templates for country food systems profiles OR analysing/mapping the food systems, including indicators, data collection and analysis.</li> </ul>	January – April 2021
<b>Phase 3: Finalizing country inputs for the Food Systems Summit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Checklist for the draft conclusion report for submission to the UNFSS Secretariat.</li> </ul>	May – June 2021

# ANNEX 1: DRAFT CONCEPT AND AGENDAS FOR DIALOGUES

## *Agenda for Dialogue 1 (3 hours)*

**First multistakeholder meeting:** Getting to a common understanding on UNFSS, the country dialogue process and “food systems” [the technical note on sustainable food systems can be introduced here], and agreeing on the focus and format of the country dialogue (for example, whether all Action Tracks will be focused on, how many meetings will be held, will the same participants be at all of them, what is the expected result of the country dialogue). Also, highlighting key challenges faced in strengthening food systems at the country and local levels. A decision also should be made on whether all meetings will be held at central level or whether to exercise the option of a meeting at decentralized/municipality level.

5 MINS	Opening and welcome	CONVENOR
10 MINS	Objectives of dialogue and introductions	CONVENOR
30 MINS	Preparation for the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the national dialogue process  Brief discussion on the expected outcome of the national dialogue (review template of final submission to the UNFSS)	Presentation (10 minutes) and Q&A/discussion (20 minutes)
45 MINS	Context of food and nutrition security and known challenges in food production and consumption	Tailored Presentation
30 MINS	Understanding sustainable food systems and an exchange of perspectives on the national and local food systems (what is working well, what are the challenges)	Presentation (discussion resource: technical note). Presentations on sustainable food systems and the technical note
30 MINS	Break	
60 MINS	Continued discussion on the merits and challenges of the national food system	Option of small breakout groups
15 MINS	Conclusion of meeting, date of next meeting, next steps (including data collection and analysis required before Dialogue 2)	Note for file prepared and distributed after meeting

# ANNEX 1: DRAFT CONCEPT AND AGENDAS FOR DIALOGUES

## *Agenda for Dialogue 2 (3 hours)*

**Second multistakeholder meeting:** Sharing information among stakeholders. Discussing and reviewing evidence on key challenges to strengthening food systems, as highlighted in the first meeting, and determining some practical next steps that can be pursued at country level. Setting out intentions and commitments on what to work on to improve sustainable food systems in the country before and after the Summit.

15 MINS	Opening and welcome, objectives of meeting and introductions	CONVENOR
15 MINS	Updates on any procedural aspects or new information from the UNFSS Secretariat	CONVENOR
30 MINS	Summary of Dialogue 1 on what is working well in the food system and what are the main challenges	Tailored presentation (including relevant data and evidence)
60 MINS	Discussion on how a food systems approach may help food and nutrition and sustainable development outcomes in the country, and any actions required (allowance for participants to share any further views since Dialogue 1)	Discussion and note-taking
30 MINS	Break	
60 MINS	Priority challenges and solutions, suggestions on actions that can be taken [10] before and after the UNFSS, which stakeholders need to lead and/or be involved.	Discussion (option of small breakout groups)
15 MINS	Introduction of the UNFSS submission template and process	Presentation and Q&A
15 MINS	Conclusion of meeting and next steps, including data collection and analysis required before Dialogue 3	Note for file prepared and distributed after meeting

[10] Keep in mind that it might be advised to involve research institutes/academia in this work (i.e. for collecting evidence on challenges and solutions). In addition, challenges/solutions would need to be considered from various stakeholders (i.e. civil society organizations, youth, women and the private sector).



A POEM BY DR. NAMUKOLO COVIC

