



United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS+2) Highlights

24-26 July 2023, Rome – Italy

1. About the Summit

The United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS+2) took place in Rome, Lazio, Italy, from 24 to 26 July 2023 at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) premises. The Government of Italy hosted the summit in collaboration with the Rome-based UN agencies (FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP)) and the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub. As the first global follow-up to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, the summit provided opportunities for countries to report on progress made at the national level and on their contributions to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



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2. Key outcomes

The UNFSS+2 launched the UN Secretary-General's call for accelerated food systems transformation to inform the SDG Summit, UNFCCC COP 28, and the 2024 Summit of the Future.

The Secretary-General called on governments, international financial institutions (IFIs), farmers, and other stakeholders to prioritize the implementation of future food systems around six areas:

1. Incorporating food systems strategies into all national policies for sustainable development while leaving no one behind;
2. Establishing food systems governance that engages all sectors and stakeholders for a whole-of-society approach;
3. Investing in research, data, innovation, and technology;
4. Deepening joined-up participatory design and implementation inclusive of women, young people, and Indigenous Peoples;
5. Promoting increased engagement of businesses, including through public-private partnerships (PPPs), to shape the sustainability of food systems and strengthen accountability mechanisms; and
6. Ensuring access to short- and long-term concessional finance, investments, budget support, and debt restructuring.

3. Key messages from the closing ceremony highlighted the importance of:

- Investments in infrastructure, science, and technology (including data analytics, artificial intelligence and blockchain), finance and education to increase local production, resilience, sustainability and reduce waste.
- Embarking on a holistic approach which includes economic, environmental, and social aspects.
- Collaborating locally and internationally and involve all stakeholders, including the private sector.



- Improving trade policies and increase local markets.
- Putting people at the centre of agricultural activities, particularly women and youth.
- Investing in EbA (nature-based solutions), CSA and regenerative agriculture.
- Promoting blue foods.

4. CRFS Alliance Engagement.

In addition to the momentous outcomes mentioned above, the UNFSS +2 presented a remarkable opportunity for the CRFS Alliance to actively engage at the Ministerial Level through two Leadership Dialogues: "Food Systems for the Planet" and "Coalitions of Action." The Alliance also co-organized two side events: "Food Systems Transformation Amid Polycrisis" and "How to Make Water Pivotal in Food Systems."

Beyond the formal participation in these events, the Alliance held significant bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the UNFSS +2. These interactions underscored the Alliance's commitment to fostering meaningful collaborations and driving positive change within the global food landscape.

5. Highlights from Leadership Dialogues and Plenary Sessions

During the summit, various events were held, facilitating discussions on the diverse experiences of key stakeholders in the journey towards advancing sustainable and resilient food systems, providing a platform for fruitful deliberations, and contributing to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that food systems face. Below is a brief summary of the main Leadership Dialogue and Plenary sessions.

- a. **Financing Food Systems Transformation** [UNFSS+2: Financing food systems transformations - YouTube](#)

The session's topics were about financing and supporting smallholder farmers and gathering data as a key pillar of food system transformation. Addressing climate change as the most significant driver of worsening food security issues is urgent. To this aim, it is key to support



food system transformation through climate finance, as global food prices disproportionately impact people living in the Global South.

b. How do coalitions support governments? [UNFSS+2 How do coalitions support governments - YouTube](#)

The session highlighted the importance of coalitions in supporting governments. Leaders from various countries (representing the Agricultural/Food Ministries), and those representing various food/agriculture organisations communicated their countries' involvement, activities and progress regarding national, regional and international coalitions. For example, Ethiopia, Sudan, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Chile, the United States of America and Iceland have established, or are part of, coalitions that are focusing on holistic food transformation to improve the sustainability and climate resilience of food systems, nutrition, food availability and access. Some of the coalitions are centred on social protection, blue foods, policy and advocacy, and agricultural research. With their objectives aligned with the Climate Resilience Food Systems (CRFS) Alliance, these coalitions foster collaborations or integration where synergies exist, remove silos and help countries move on in diversity. During this Leadership Dialogue, The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (FAO) launched the ['Offer of Assistance from Food Systems Actors'](#), which aims to connect governments and stakeholders with food system coalitions and organisations.

c. Food Systems and Climate Action [UNFSS+2 Food Systems and Climate Action - YouTube](#)

Climate action across agri-food systems is urgent to build resilience to climate change's impacts and reduce their carbon footprint to meet global food demand. The speakers highlighted the importance of a balanced transition in terms of environmental, social and economic transition. During this session, the Minister of Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates launched the COP28 Food Systems and Agriculture Agenda. The agenda is proposed to have two levels (National Action and Farmer, Business and others) and two pillars (innovation and funding).



Regarding innovation, the focus is on scale context-appropriate innovations to climate-vulnerable communities, particularly smallholders. Regarding funding the focus is on financial and funding partners mobilise funding to upgrade national food planning tools for climate, pro-climate food systems transformation projects, support non-state actors, and scale innovation. The agenda aims to support existing initiatives, and each pillar will have a complete toolkit to support the national and local stakeholders.

During this high-level plenary, the countries presented their challenges and initiatives.

- The President of Mauritania highlighted the requirement of financial means and financial support and the development of agriculture and the need to support rural economy and small agriculture.
- The Prime Minister of Samoa called for affordable finance and technology and highlighted the critical role of women and youth in transforming and strengthening agriculture.
- The Prime Minister of Djibouti highlighted the importance of establishing early warning systems.
- The Bangladesh Prime Minister presented how the country works on climate-resilient agri-food solutions, highlighting the work with farmers and younger generations. The calls for action were that transforming food systems should be a priority financed by developed countries; the coordination needs to scale up knowledge in resources and innovations; the private sector needs to be actively engaged; enhance the efforts of international partnerships.

d. Food Systems Transformation in Practice [UNFSS+2 Food Systems Transformation in Practice: Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward - YouTube](#)

An important component of the summit was the opportunity to share agrifood systems transformation experiences; identify best practices and showcase successes that can be replicated across countries and regions. During the Food Systems Transformation in Practice session, the Prime Minister of Nepal, highlighted the success of the 2018 Right to Food and



Food Sovereignty Act which has expanded domestic food production and identified and responded to food-insecure households across the country. The Minister of Agriculture of Bangladesh highlighted that the country has become self-sufficient in food grain and is attempting to transition from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture. The African Union Development Agency praised the adoption of the African Common Position on Food Systems by the majority of African nations and mentioned ongoing transformation activities including improving seed varieties in Ethiopia. Other experiences that were shared included the importance of involving stakeholders in the food system transformation, including peer-to-peer learning.

e. Reversing food and hunger crisis: Building resilient food systems [UNFSS+2](#)
[Reversing the food and hunger crisis building more resilient food systems - YouTube](#)

The session discussed how countries and regions are partaking in strategies that promote food security in the face of COVID-19 aftershocks, the climate crisis and economic meltdowns. Some of the actions which countries and/organisations¹ are taking include supporting small-holder farmers with access to agricultural inputs and training, creating opportunities for youth and women, implementing National Food Pathways, establishment of drought-monitoring agencies, climate-smart agriculture (CSA), ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) initiatives, investing in technology and innovation and infrastructure, reframing multi-sectoral policies and through access to finance. Including the private sector in food systems activities and dialogues remains limited, and countries with rugged terrain and limited water supplies, such as Bhutan, still rely on foreign intervention.

f. Mobilizing Means of Implementation for Food Systems Transformation [UNFSS+2](#)
[Mobilizing Means Of Implementation for food system transformation - YouTube](#)

The UNFSS identified five means of implementation as key enablers in accelerating the transformation: finance, science and innovation, data, trade, and governance. The session

¹ E.g., Liberia, Nigeria, Colombia, Italy, Somalia, Norway, Germany, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIR), and WFP.



looked at the challenges and opportunities for development financing for transformation and how finance and the other means of implementation should align and interact to strengthen transformative actions.

Some examples of the session include using "food system dialogues" with stakeholders in Eswatini and a new national funding mechanism, that provides tailored financing for all stakeholders. IFAD highlighted the work in strengthening food systems in fragile environments using an evidence-based approach. The World Bank outlined the 3FS (Financial Flows for Food Systems) initiative and presented initial results on financial information stemming from it. This information includes the trend that the global output of development assistance toward food systems has decreased in recent years. The World Bank also highlighted the importance of determining the best GHG mitigation tool in agriculture and asked for incentives for multilateral development banks to take risks to support food systems.

Pegasus Capital shared how private equity groups are getting involved in initiatives in the Global South through partnering on food systems work with the Green Climate Fund. Additionally, Food Systems for the Future, commented that building commercially viable enterprises based upon the ability of capital to deliver commercial returns is critical to food system transformation. In the same line, the President of AGRA, stated that countries should consider developing compacts between public and private organisations that de-risk investment in the sustainable value chain.

g. Towards the SDG Summit, the Summit of the Future and the 2025 UNFSS+4
[UNFSS+2 Towards the SDG Summit - YouTube](#)

Looking forward to the next summits including the SDG Summit in New York, the COP28, and the UNFSS+4, the speakers highlighted the urgent need to transform our food systems. Investing in women, indigenous communities, farmers, and youth as key change agents is paramount. Massive investments in food system transformation and active involvement of the private sector are essential. Additionally, international financial institutions, notably the World Bank and IFAD, play a crucial role in unlocking this endeavour's financial potential.



Qatar emphasised the significance of maintaining food accessibility, even during times of crisis, highlighting the imperative of sustainability within the food system. This entails rationalising consumption and instigating a shift in consumption habits to promote environmentally friendly practices. The Bahamas stressed the necessity of understanding the dynamics of international bureaucracy in shaping public policies, especially for smaller nations. He expressed concerns about the disadvantageous impact of international financial institutions, as they consider per capita GDP, which excludes countries like The Bahamas from obtaining necessary assistance. The session included remarks from different stakeholders, including youth, women, indigenous peoples, farmer organisations and the private sector.

h. Closing ceremony and remarks [UNFSS+2 Closing Ceremony - YouTube](#)

During the closing ceremony, the AU Commissioner for Rural & Agriculture, Josefa Sacko, stressed that Africa's food systems are fragile and non-resilient to shocks partly due to poor structural systems, despite having 60 % of arable land. The continent is, however, embarking on a post-Malabo Programme and a 3-year operation plan for food systems transformation. On the other hand, the EU Commissioner for Rural & Agriculture, Janus Wojciechowski, emphasised the EU's investment scale-up to transform food systems, biodiversity, innovation, and capacity. For example, the Global Gateway Initiative has set aside about 18 billion Euros for agriculture/food systems. The FAO Director General, QU Dongyu, assured countries that FAO is committed to supporting members with their National Pathways to improve production, nutrition, the environment and livelihoods, leaving no one behind. The UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, advocated for urgent action at scale to close the implementation gap; and highlighted the importance of financing for development, debt relief stakeholder engagement and scientific innovation and technology. Furthermore, she recommended establishing food systems strategies in national policies and promoting multi-stakeholder collaboration.



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In conclusion, the Food Systems Summit proved to be a pivotal moment of opportunity, laying the groundwork for building essential alliances and forging new pathways towards the forthcoming UN Climate Week in New York, the COP28, and the UNFSS+4 in 2025. As stakeholders unite and visionary initiatives take shape, the Summit's impact has the potential to catalyse a collaborative and transformative journey towards more sustainable and resilient global food systems.

The full programme and streaming of the summit can be found here: [Programme \(unfoodsystemshub.org\)](https://unfoodsystemshub.org)



MONDAY 24 JULY

	Plenary Sessions	Leadership Dialogues	Special Events
09:00			
09:30			
10:00	School Meals Powering Food System Transformation	Healthy Diets, Cultures and Traditions	Measuring Food Systems Transformation
10:30			The True Cost of Food
11:00	Financing Food Systems Transformation	How do Coalitions Support Governments?	Fertilizers: Meeting Short-Term Needs While Working Towards Sustainable Solutions
11:30			
12:00			
12:30			Side Events
13:00			
13:30			
14:00			
14:30			
15:00	Official Opening		
15:30			
16:00			
16:30			
17:00	Food Systems and Climate Action	Stakeholder Roundtable	Leveraging Urbanization for Food Systems Transformation
17:30			
18:00			

TUESDAY 25 JULY

	Plenary Sessions	Leadership Dialogues	Special Events
09:00			
09:30			
10:00	Food Systems Transformation in Practice - Successes, Challenges and the Way Forward	Food Systems for the People	Blue Transformation - Advancing Aquatic Food Systems for People, Planet and Prosperity
10:30			Building Africa's Food Sovereignty and Resilience through Sustainable Investments
11:00		Food Systems for the Planet	Governance for Food Systems Transformation
11:30			
12:00			
12:30			Side Events
13:00			
13:30			
14:00			
14:30			
15:00	Reversing the Food and Hunger Crisis: Building Resilient Food Systems	Food Systems for Prosperity	Digitalization for Resilient Food Systems
15:30			Value Chains for Resilient Food Systems
16:00		Science, Technology and Innovation	Private Sector
16:30			
17:00			
17:30			
18:00			

WEDNESDAY 26 JULY

	Plenary Sessions	Leadership Dialogues	Special Events
09:00			
09:30			
10:00	Mobilizing Means of Implementation for Food Systems Transformation	Partnerships for Food Systems	Aerospace Technology for Food Systems
10:30			Trade
11:00		Empowering National Convenors Towards 2025 - Systems Leaders for Transformative Action	Presenting the Food Systems Window of the Joint SDG Fund
11:30			
12:00			
12:30			Side Events
13:00			
13:30			
14:00			
14:30			
15:00	Towards the SDG Summit, the Summit of the Future and the 2025 UNFSS+4	Food Loss and Waste Prevention and Reduction: A Key Lever for Food Systems Transformation	Indigenous Peoples Food Systems
15:30			
16:00			
16:30			
17:00	Official Closing		
17:30			
18:00			
18:30			
19:00			