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Progress Report on IFAD's Engagement in the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021

Note to Executive Board representatives

Focal points:

Technical questions:

Satu Santala
Associate Vice-President
External Relations and Governance Department
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2142
e-mail: s.santala@ifad.org

Christine Ciccone
Special Senior Adviser Food Systems Summit
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2105
e-mail: c.ciccone@ifad.org

Dispatch of documentation:

Deirdre Mc Grenra
Chief
Institutional Governance and
Member Relations
Tel.: +39 06 5459 2374
e-mail: gb@ifad.org

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AT	Action Track
COSOP	country strategic opportunities programme
DSG	Deputy Secretary-General
DWLIW	Decent Work and Living Incomes and Wages for all Food Systems Workers
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FiCS	Finance in Common Summit
FSS	Food Systems Summit
PDBs	public development banks
RBAs	Rome-based agencies
RDR	Rural Development Report
SOA	Statement of Action

I. Background

1. From 23 to 24 September 2021, the Secretary-General convened a Food Systems Summit (FSS) during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Week. The FSS was a critical call to action in the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. It was the culmination of a two-year, inclusive global process and resulted in actionable commitments by heads of state, governments and other constituency leaders, launching the beginning of a new global focus on food systems transformation.
2. The pre-Summit, which took place in Rome from 26 to 28 July 2021, provided an opportunity for FSS stakeholders to participate in over 50 sessions and activities showcasing work completed and outlining future actions and commitments.
3. The three Rome-based agencies (RBAs) – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IFAD, and the World Food Programme – played a prominent leadership role in the pre-Summit and Summit, fully supporting the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) and the FSS Secretariat. The RBAs will continue to leverage their critical coordination role, also within the broader United Nations system, by taking joint leadership of the United Nations system-wide follow-up mechanism. This mechanism will draw on the totality of United Nations capacities and engage broader stakeholder groups to collectively transform food systems. The endeavour will capitalize on the internal resources and comparative advantage of each RBA towards food systems transformation.
4. Throughout the FSS process, IFAD has been an active champion of rural poor people, including through its role as United Nations anchor agency for Action Track 4 (AT4) - Advancing Equitable Livelihoods and its work on the Finance Lever and Champions Network. Along with the other RBAs, IFAD served as a member of the Advisory Committee, the United Nations Task Force, and the Rome-based Membership Informal Group of Friends of the FSS.
5. This report provides an overview of IFAD's engagement in the Summit since the last written update to the Executive Board in April 2021. It outlines the next steps that IFAD envisions taking internally and externally in the follow-up activities associated with the outcomes of the FSS. IFAD looks forward to continued guidance from the Executive Board throughout this process.

II. IFAD's engagement in the FSS

6. **Background.** IFAD has benefitted from the Executive Board's guidance as a result of the following updates provided on IFAD's engagement in the FSS:
 - (i) 129th session: President's report outlining the proposed financial contribution to the FSS for its implementation.
 - (ii) Informal seminar (7 October 2020): The seminar was organized to engage Member States in IFAD's and CARE's early thinking about AT4.
 - (iii) 132nd session: Written update on progress and the main activities to date.
 - (iv) Informal seminar (22 April 2021): The seminar was organized to provide the Board with additional feedback and a further opportunity to engage.
 - (v) 133rd session: An oral update was delivered to update Member States on the outcomes of the pre-Summit and the upcoming Summit and post-Summit engagement.
 - (vi) Executive Board retreat (8 October 2021): An update on IFAD's implementation of the outcomes from the FSS was presented to members to provide the initial ideas about IFAD's operationalization of the FSS outcomes on the ground.

- (vii) 134th session: The present update, together with the Board’s retreat report¹ constitutes the final FSS update to the Board in 2021.
7. **The pre-Summit.** On 26-28 July, the United Nations Food Systems Pre-Summit took place in Rome with the participation – both in person and virtual – of Member States representatives, civil society, NGOs, academia, United Nations agencies and others.
 8. IFAD had a prominent role in the pre-Summit in terms of both its organization and participation in several discussions and sessions. At the meeting, IFAD reiterated its commitment to the transformation of food systems and actionable commitments that respond to the needs of the rural poor and those most at risk of being left behind. The IFAD President was invited to make keynote remarks at many of the official programme sessions, including the opening and closing plenaries, the farmer-led session, the discussion on private sector priorities, and the session on approaches for follow-up and review.
 9. The pre-Summit also provided an important platform to advance the role of public development banks (PDBs) in catalysing public and private investment for food systems. IFAD convened an event on *Mobilizing trillions - Financing for impact leveraging the pivotal role of the public development banks*, which laid the groundwork for the PDB coalition to emerge.
 10. In its role as AT4 anchor agency, IFAD supported CARE in convening a session on *Ensuring no one is left behind: Equitable livelihoods in food systems*. Further, IFAD’s Goodwill Ambassador Sabrina Elba appeared in person at the pre-Summit to deliver a call for greater funding for rural women and girls at the official Gender Lever event. She also participated in other high-visibility events such as interviews with media, a press conference and meetings with government officials.
 11. In addition, IFAD organized several affiliated sessions the week before and during the pre-Summit, touching upon different key elements of food systems (including mobile pastoralism, voices of rural small-scale producers and agri-entrepreneurs, indigenous peoples, gender equality and youth). Setting the stage for discussions, an affiliated session was held on the Rural Development Report (RDR) during the week leading up to the pre-Summit.
 12. The pre-Summit culminated in the announcement that eight coalitions would be launched at the Summit: (1) Action for Nutrition and Zero Hunger; (2) School Meals, including home grown; (3) Food Loss and Waste; (4) Agroecology, Sustainable Livestock and Agricultural Systems; (5) Aquatic and Blue Foods; (6) Decent Work and Living Incomes and Wages for All Food Systems Workers (DWLIW); (7) Resilience; and (8) Means of Implementation: Finance, Innovation and Technology, Data and Governance. Stakeholders entrusted IFAD with a leadership role in the DWLIW and PDB coalitions, the latter as part of the Means of Implementation coalition.
 13. **The Summit.** The Summit itself included interventions by the representatives of over 158 Heads of State and Government and the participation of the key constituencies that engaged and contributed throughout the FSS process. IFAD was widely recognized during the Summit by a number of speakers, who mentioned the Fund as a supporter of their coalitions or as a key partner for the roll-out of national dialogues.
 14. The IFAD President participated in the session *Carrying forward the vision and momentum for 2030*, together with the other RBAs Principals. In his [speech](#), which was covered by the media and on social channels, the President highlighted the need to continue prioritizing the people that IFAD works for, and noted that the

¹ The report focuses on a summary of the discussion held during the EB retreat following the presentation of the “Update to the Executive Board on IFAD’s Implementation of Outcomes from the Food Systems Summit”.

success of the FSS would depend on addressing the financing gap and ensuring delivery on the ground. The momentum carried through to the days following the Summit, also thanks to IFAD Goodwill Ambassador Sabrina Elba, who carried IFAD's message to the stage of Global Citizen's 24-hour concert.

15. The IFAD-led coalitions were showcased during the Summit through two short videos, both featuring the President and key partners: [DWLIW](#), developed in collaboration with CARE and International Labour Organization (ILO) as co-leads, and [PDBs](#), which included interventions by Agence française de développement, Cassa Depositi e Prestiti and Fideicomisos Instituidos en Relación con la Agricultura.
16. On the sidelines of the Summit and UNGA, IFAD launched the [Rural Development Report](#) and a report about [On Air Dialogues: Listening to Rural People](#),² which presented the results of the dialogues that IFAD rolled out in partnership with Farm Radio International (FRI). This initiative, supported by Canada and World Vision, provided rural people in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania with the opportunity to share their own challenges and solutions with the world. The report and associated [event](#), a [Q&A about the On Air Dialogues](#), and several [human interest stories](#) received broad media coverage and social media engagement. Given the success of the pilot project with Farm Radio, IFAD is looking to expand this to as many countries as possible.
17. The launch of the [RDR](#) offered recommendations for concrete actions to transform food systems. The [launch event](#), [microsite](#), [videos](#), a blog post providing [insights about the RDR](#), extensive social media outreach and [top-tier media](#) ensured that IFAD's "thought leadership" on food systems transformation was communicated prominently throughout the FSS process.
18. **IFAD's visibility.** These and other initiatives allowed IFAD to achieve significant global visibility at and around the Summit. For example, a social media push on IFAD's global channels for the FRI launch, the RDR launch and the FSS brought a potential reach of more than 1.4 million, 124,605 engagements and 1 million video views, thanks to organic and paid activities.
19. The Summit culminated in the release of the [Secretary-General's Statement of Action \(SG SOA\)](#) to which IFAD provided feedback and support, in particular to ensure that rural smallholders and the role of finance in transformation were highlighted in the document. The SOA highlighted the important role of international financial institutions in the implementation of national pathways and the need to change financing approaches to ensure sustainable outcomes. The necessity to continue to engage farmers in this process was also emphasized. The SOA included five areas of action (Nourish All People; Boost Nature-based Solutions; Advance Equitable Livelihoods, Decent Work and Empowered Communities; Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stresses; and Support the Means of Implementation) arising from the work by Action Tracks, levers of change and national conveners in the past year. IFAD will continue to support work in these areas of action.
20. In addition to leading the PDB and the DWLIW coalitions, IFAD has committed to providing technical support to 14 others included in the Commitments Registry. IFAD is also working with the DSG and the Finance Lever to determine how best to take forward the Means of Implementation as it pertains to the global finance structure. It will also work with the other RBAs to jointly lead the follow-up structure that will coordinate outcomes from the Summit. IFAD will continue to support countries in the development and implementation of their national pathways.

² For IFAD's website on Rural Voices please see [here](#).

III. Update on IFAD's financial contribution to the FSS

21. Through a grant approved by the Executive Board in April 2020, IFAD contributed US\$1.5 million to support the FSS Trust Fund. This amount included the salaries of two staff seconded to the Secretariat at the P-4 and P-5 levels as well as ongoing activities associated with the FSS Secretariat.
22. In addition to this direct contribution, one Special Adviser, one Temporary Professional Officer, one consultant, and one intern were hired within the External Relations and Governance Department specifically to support IFAD's engagement with the FSS.
23. To respond to the Special Envoy's request for additional support to the FSS Secretariat for the pre-Summit and Summit preparation, IFAD hired an additional consultant/partnership officer who worked directly with the Special Envoy's Chief of Staff to support Member States' engagement. It also contributed US\$75,000 to the FSS Secretariat to support the in-person participation of representatives of indigenous peoples (6), producers (7) and youth (8) at the pre-Summit.
24. In October 2021, IFAD appointed a Director for Food Systems Coordination, to lead IFAD's engagement and coordination in post-Summit implementation and follow-up.

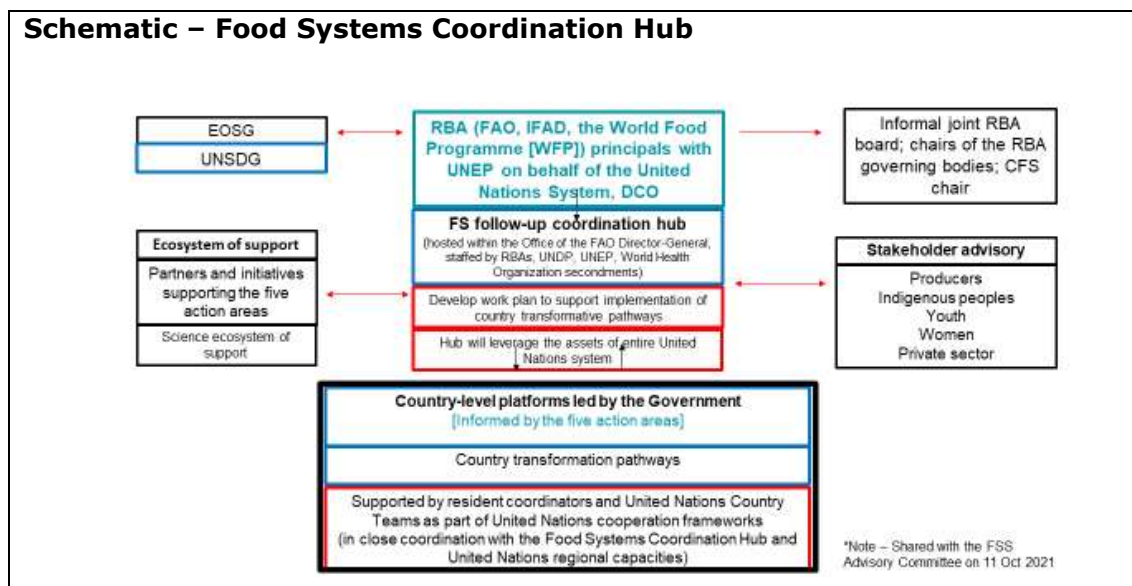
IV. Looking Ahead

25. **Follow-up mechanism.** In his [Chair Summary and Statement of Action](#), the Secretary-General stated that "the Rome-based Agencies [RBAs] — FAO, IFAD, WFP — will jointly lead a coordination hub that collaborates with, and draws upon, wider UN system capacities to support follow-up to the Food Systems Summit". To ensure coherent actions for successful implementation of the outcomes of the Summit, the RBAs, under the leadership of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) and in close consultation with the Special Envoy and other leading experts from across the United Nations system, have considered the following coordination, support and reporting arrangements. These are designed to best advance food systems transformation to achieve the 2030 Agenda by drawing on contributions from the United Nations system, Member States and a broad range of actors within existing structures and processes.
 - The Food Systems Coordination Hub will act as an independent, critical nexus inside the United Nations system dedicated to food systems transformation in the context of the 2030 Agenda. It will replace the time-bound FSS Secretariat, which will sunset at the end of March 2022.
 - The Food Systems Coordination Hub will act as a coordinator and connector taking on the essential function of bringing together the knowledge and expertise needed to support countries in food systems transformation.
 - The Food Systems Coordination Hub will focus on delivery at the country level, and will have four strategic objectives:
 - (i) Support national governments and United Nations Country Teams to accelerate transformative action within food systems to advance progress on the SDGs;
 - (ii) Maintain, expand and deepen the inclusivity of the global ecosystem of diverse stakeholders that are supportive of transforming food systems at all levels;
 - (iii) Sustain a consistent, compelling and contextualized narrative around food systems transformation for the SDGs that the entire United Nations system, and stakeholders more broadly, can embrace and amplify; and

- (iv) Lead a global stock taking moment on food system transformation every two years to update the global community on progress.
- The Food Systems Coordination Hub will not:
 - Replicate existing United Nations functions and capacities;
 - Be an implementing agency or a gatekeeper;
 - Advocate for itself as an entity; or
 - Develop heavy reporting structures.
- To meet the strategic objectives outlined above, the Food Systems Coordination Hub will have five main functions:
 - (i) Support national dialogues and pathways, leveraging the totality of United Nations system capacities, including at country, regional and global levels, to coordinate the provision of technical and policy support requested by countries;
 - (ii) Mobilize an ecosystem of support for national platforms to implement country pathways;
 - (iii) Provide strategic thought leadership to draw global attention to priority topics for food systems transformation;
 - (iv) Conduct communication and advocacy to advance common messaging on food systems issues and accelerate engagement by both technical audiences and the wider public at large; and
 - (v) Ensure stakeholder engagement and advice to benefit from the views of a wide range of important and self-organizing constituency voices.
- The Food Systems Coordination Hub will be comprised of a nimble team that understands the landscape, makes connections, showcases success and opportunities for learning, and shapes select public goods.
- The Food Systems Coordination Hub will track and report on progress to enable feedback and continuous improvement through existing mechanisms in three primary reporting streams:
 - An annual progress report through the Secretary-General to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on the hub's annual activities and results achieved;
 - An annual country results report from resident coordinators to the Secretary-General and through the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Chair; and
 - A comprehensive progress evaluation report to the oversight group on progress and lessons every two years.
- The Food Systems Coordination Hub will be hosted at FAO headquarters in Rome on behalf of the United Nations system, within the Office of the FAO Director-General with full-time staff seconded from the RBAs and other United Nations agencies. It will seek to maintain a lean and agile structure and budget.
- The RBA principals will continue to lead a United Nations system-wide follow-up structure. They will be supported by the RBA Senior Consultative Group and joined by the leaders of the United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO), as well as the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on behalf of the United Nations system to leverage system-wide guidance and expertise. To ensure strong oversight and coordination without creating new structures, these leaders will meet twice

annually as a group ahead of informal joint meetings of the RBA governing bodies and report on progress with FSS follow-up. The RBA principals will also consult with the leadership of their respective governing bodies, and with the Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), on a regular basis.

- The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General will continue to steward this process until the end of the year, with the Food Systems Coordination Hub and these new arrangements to enter into effect by 1 January 2022 for phased roll out. At this time, the FSS Secretariat will be absorbed into the Hub until March 2022.
26. As further details of the Food Systems Coordination Hub are developed, IFAD will consider additional steps to ensure adequate resourcing and support, in consultation with the Executive Board.



27. **Finance as a means of implementation.** IFAD is working with the DSG's office to address the broader issue of the financing gap for food systems transformation, which includes access to finance for rural producers and small-scale farmers. As of the writing of this report, discussions are ongoing between the DSG, FSS Secretariat and the Finance Lever to clarify IFAD's role and establish a process for taking this work forward.
28. **IFAD engagement in coalitions.** IFAD will continue to lead the work around the PDB and DWLIW coalitions, leveraging its engagement at country level and its partnerships with Member States and other stakeholders, and ensuring the achievements of the past year advance. As the work of these coalitions progresses, IFAD will engage with the Executive Board to benefit from its guidance. The Coalition of Action on DWLIW is committed to ensuring economic and social justice and the right to adequate and nutritious food for all food systems workers. The coalition is based on two key pillars: (i) the notion of decent work, including issues relating to rights at work, full and productive employment, social protection and social dialogue; (ii) the goal of creating 100 per cent living incomes and wages in food systems.
29. To operationalize the coalition, IFAD, together with ILO and key stakeholders (CARE, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Private Sector Mechanism), is consolidating stakeholder consultations carried out prior to the FSS and refining the coalition functions (coordination, advocacy, knowledge and research sharing, etc.). IFAD is also driving the development of a robust governance structure that includes an advisory committee and working group

leads. A stakeholder engagement strategy is being designed to mobilize Member States, private companies, civil society organizations, academic institutions and other relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels.

30. Building on this preparatory work, towards the end of 2021, IFAD will facilitate the development of an implementation framework around the coalition commitments and its key activities. Currently, the coalition commitments include: (i) improving data collection on food systems livelihoods; (ii) institutionalizing labour and other human rights in food systems at the transnational and international level; (iii) improving labour market governance and institutional frameworks; (iv) strengthening workplace organization and social dialogue; (v) ensuring access to social protection; (vi) promoting decent employment in food systems, with a focus on more and better jobs for youth; and (vii) accelerating action to create 100 per cent living incomes and wages in food systems. Moving into 2022, DWLIW will guide the implementation framework and monitor and track activities.
31. **PDB.** The PDB platform for inclusive and green food systems financing was formally launched on 20 October, during the Second Finance in Common Summit (FiCS 2).³ Its purpose is to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and it is open to members who share this vision and ambition, in particular regarding climate change issues. The platform builds on a group of like-minded partner PDBs (national, regional, international) with strong national presence.
32. Until the end of 2021, IFAD and partners will continue to support the PDB Working Group in mobilizing expertise to advance the design of services (technical assistance, knowledge sharing, support to innovation), and in the areas of governance and financial issues. In 2022, the PDB platform should begin to deliver services to its members. Given the diverse needs and mandates of the PDBs, the services will be individually tailored. IFAD will continue to advocate for the expansion of the platform's membership and contribute to strengthening coordination between donors for resource mobilization. The main outcomes of FiCS 2 and the process moving forward will inform the preparation of the next FiCS, which will be hosted by the African Development Bank.
33. IFAD is also supporting the following coalitions:
 - (i) [Climate Resilient Food Systems for all beyond 2030](#)
 - (ii) [A Coalition for the Transformation Food Systems through Agroecology](#)
 - (iii) [Zero Hunger Coalition](#)
 - (iv) [Food Is Never Waste Coalition](#)
 - (v) [Proposed Coalition for Blue/Aquatic Foods](#)
 - (vi) [School Meals Coalition: Nutrition, Health and Education for Every Child](#)
 - (vii) [Making Food Systems Work for Women and Girls](#)
 - (viii) [50x2030 A Partnership for Data Smart Initiative \(leading with the World Bank and FAO\)](#)
 - (ix) [Empowering Smallholders through Strengthened Digital Ecosystems](#)
 - (x) [Coalition on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems](#)
 - (xi) [Coalition for Sustainable Territorial Food Systems](#)
 - (xii) [Smallholder and Agri-small and medium-sized enterprise Finance and Investment Network \(SAFIN\)](#) (Commitment for SAFIN2.0 [led by SAFIN])

³ At which a [joint communique](#) was issued, with 13 PDBs pledging support.

(xiii) [SOA: Small-scale and Family Farmers](#)

(xiv) [Food Action Alliance](#)

34. **IFAD country-level support.**⁴ The RBAs believe that food systems transformation and the achievement of the SDGs requires United Nations agency-wide collaboration as well as the direct engagement of countries at the regional, national and local level. IFAD believes this can be best accomplished through the advancement of the national pathways at the country level.
35. IFAD's implementation of FSS outcomes will focus on making solutions and outcomes nationally owned and nationally driven. IFAD's support to governments will be through country-level engagement and support to national pathways through its PoLG. IFAD will use country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) as the main entry point for identifying synergies and closely coordinating with governments to respond to their needs. For countries with ongoing COSOPs, efforts will be made during annual and midterm COSOP reviews to promote alignment with the pathways outlined in each national document. In partnership with the other RBAs, IFAD will also support the integration of national pathways and the broader FSS outcomes within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. IFAD will also seek to leverage new financing instruments such as enhanced Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme and non-sovereign operations, and to prioritize non-lending support, including policy engagement, to create the conditions for sustainable results.

⁴ For more information please see the October 2021 Executive Board Retreat paper on ["Update to the Executive Board on IFAD's Implementation of Outcomes from the Food Systems Summit"](#).