

1st meeting - Group of Friends of Food Systems Summit (GoFFSS)
Wednesday, 18 June, 2020: 15:00-17:30
Short summary

1. General Overview on the Status of Preparation for the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 to be provided by the Deputy Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit, Martin Frick
Co-Moderators: Ambassador Alex Bugailiskis (Canada), Ambassador Carlos Cherniak (Argentina)

The following points were raised under this agenda item:

- **Time is of essence.** Consistent calls were made for more detailed information as early as possible about the venue of the Summit, composition of the structures of Advisory Committee, Science Group and Champions Network, timelines, as well as to speed up the process.
- **Modalities.** Given ongoing uncertainty regarding COVID-19, various options are being considered, including a hybrid format and possibly a digital Summit. A large digital platform is being established to facilitate Food System Dialogues at country level to ensure broad communications and inclusive dialogue.
- **Scientific Committee.** It was explained that global experts representing strong scientific networks not only on agricultural production but on food systems at large, would serve in their individual capacity to clarify key questions, challenge the learnings from the ground, and also bring traditional knowledge to the fore.
- **Action tracks** covering five thematic areas (**nutritious food for all, nature positive production, resilience against shocks such as climate change, pandemics and conflicts, creating income and livelihoods, and changing consumer behaviour and demand (e.g. food loss and waste)**) are being proposed to the Advisory Committee to provide focus for dialogue and action.
- **Food systems dialogues (FSDs)** are intended to provide an opportunity for more in-depth dialogues at regional and national level (2-3 cycles) to start communities of action that look at issues from a systemic approach. They will identify key learnings, including enabling other actors to organize their own FSDs (“FSD in a box”) (e.g. farmers or producers). More information was requested on how national consultations will be rolled out and discussions structured to ensure good preparations.
- **Key outcomes.** The importance of a concrete, action-oriented and inclusive Summit preparatory process, delivery and follow-up was highlighted. It was noted that a voluntary political document which would be endorsed by a wide range of government and stakeholders, is one option under consideration. Some raised the issue of a follow-up mechanism with the overarching objective of achieving the SDGs and improving accountability.
- **Inclusiveness.** It was conveyed that the UN Secretary-General is committed to an inclusive UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) and to take a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Mobilizing key actors such as women, youth, rural smallholders, and SDIs was emphasized as key to ensuring that no one is left behind, including through innovative tools such as digital technology.

- **Resource mobilization.** Recognizing the need for resources to support the Summit process, requests for further information on funding received and on the Multi-Donor Trust Fund, established at WFP, were made, stressing the importance of presenting a revised budget soon that reflects the reality of working remotely and making the process as inclusive as possible.

2. Members' expectations, priorities and main questions regarding the FSS and the GoFFSS

Co-Moderators: Ambassador Malik Melvin (Malaysia), Ambassador Ulrich Seidenberger (Germany)

Under this agenda item there was general support expressed for the Non Paper (Annex) prepared by the Co-convenors which outlines elements for a structure, guiding principles and working methods of the GoFFSS.

A great many interventions highlighted that the GoFFSS could be of assistance to fill a number of gaps in the preparatory process for the FSS. Thus, the group could facilitate the information exchange among Members, might serve as a sounding board for the testing and receiving of new ideas. In addition, the group could offer an opportunity for the members of the FSS Advisory Committee to receive input and feedback from the membership. Furthermore, the group was considered by several interventions as a means for spurring networking between Rome, Nairobi and New York, i.e. the three locations where the FSS secretariat is based.

On the other hand, it was cautioned that the group should not duplicate any work that falls within the remit of the FAO, IFAD and WFP governing bodies. Many participants raised concerns with the lack of progress related to the date and venue of the Summit. Some participants expressed a clear preference for Rome as the venue for the FSS. Moreover, several interventions underlined the need for the FSS to duly take into account the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on food security and livelihoods. In this regard, several interventions voiced the significance of strengthened local and regional markets, as well as the importance for smallholders to get access to global markets.

Based on the wishes expressed by Members, the following items were identified for discussion at the next High Level Meeting of the GoFFSS with the Special Envoy Agnes Kalibata on 14 July 2020:

1. Clarifications on the preparatory process

- How will it be organized?
- Are there areas the Special Envoy would like to test out in an informal way?
- How can Members engage in the action tracks?

2. Information on the FSS outcome and follow-up

- Up-date on current thinking on how the Summit Outcome will be developed and anchored with stakeholders
- How would the outcome look like (Political Declaration, Policy Tools, platforms for action)?
- What summit follow-up mechanisms are envisaged and which modalities should apply?