



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
FOR THE FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT

Information Note October 2020

As a part of the *Decade of Action for the SDGs*, the **United Nations Secretary-General is convening a Food Systems Summit in 2021** aimed at empowering people to leverage food systems as accelerators of progress to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The following quarterly Information Note is intended to provide an update on the status of the Summit process, particularly in light of the outcomes of the second meeting of the Food Systems Summit Advisory Committee.

RECENT UPDATES

Second Meeting of the Summit Advisory Committee: The UN Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) chaired the second meeting of the Advisory Committee on 9 October 2020. In opening the meeting, the DSG congratulated the World Food Programme, and by extension the entire UN System, Member States and partners, on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. The award is recognition of the continuing importance of multilateralism and underscores the essential nature of the work ahead.

The Envoy and Summit Secretariat then presented an overview of progress in rolling out the various work streams:

- **Independent Scientific Group**: This Group's work on evidence, knowledge, and policy that will underpin the Summit, is now well underway with the framing and initiation of work. It has held two meetings and is developing a comprehensive work plan focusing on the dynamic interface with the Action Tracks; developing models to explore food systems approaches and plans; cross-cutting issues, such as innovation and indigenous food systems; and engagement in the national Food Systems Summit Dialogues (FSSDs). Draft Scientific Group papers will soon be shared for wider discussion and feedback.
- **Action Tracks**: Initial leadership of the Action Tracks was [announced](#) in mid-September, and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs are working together to bring wider technical leadership, capacity, and diversity of perspective to the teams before work gets under way. Special attention was given to the leadership role assigned to youth across all five Action Tracks. Further build-out of leadership teams will be premised on ensuring representation of key levers of change (i.e. gender, finance, innovation and human rights), balanced representation and capacity to engage. The construction of the Action Tracks is based on three levels: (1) A Core Team serving as secretariat to the Action Track; (2) A Leadership Team, linking into important networks and driving the discussions and actions; and (3) Open Platforms for discussion, collective action and innovation that will serve as sources of game changing ideas, testing and socialization of ideas developed. Following confirmation of Member States and other stakeholders in each Action Track, the work will begin in earnest as of early November.
- **Champions Network**: Work has been initiated in this work stream with the rollout of the initial [Contact Group](#) and it will soon open up for people everywhere



to engage. The Contact Group met in early October and is working closely with the Secretariat on how to strengthen the Network and refine its path forward, with ever greater diversity, inclusion, and regional engagement. This Network will serve as an important two-way communication channel and mobilizer for individual and collective action.

- **Digital Platform:** The Secretariat is advancing efforts to put in place a digital platform that will strengthen capabilities for the Summit to be inclusive and “A People’s Summit”. The objectives of the digital platform are to (1) provide information, ideas, etc... and effective knowledge management; (2) allow for an online engagement to build communities of action, networking and mobilization; and, (3) allow commitments and actions to be made at any level while tracking against the follow-up framework.
- **Engagement Roadmap:** The Summit process will continue to seek to connect with other processes that offer potential to showcase and capitalize on the linkages that underpin food systems, including the G20 and the significant meetings on climate, biodiversity, health, nutrition, and gender equality next year.
- **UN Task Force:** The Chair, Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP, complemented the overview of the Special Envoy, and highlighted the potential to build on the strong outcome of the recent Nature Summit. The Task Force has held its first two meetings, engaging 36 UN entities as well as the IMF and World Bank. It is responsible for ensuring a strategic and coordinated engagement throughout the preparatory process to the Food Systems Summit. UNDP and UNICEF are confirmed as Vice-Chairs. The Task Force has begun to explore how to engage entities in the work of the Action Tracks and to support the process at country level.
- **Food System Summit Dialogues (FSSDs):** The Envoy was pleased to note that Dr. David Nabarro and his team at 4SD had been engaged to collaborate with the Summit Secretariat on the FSSD engagement programme. Dialogues are planned at three different levels: (1) Member State level led by national governments, (2) global level alongside high-level international events, and (3) independently by any constituency as long as they draw from the vision and principles of the Summit and provide feedback in a standard reporting template for analysis and synthesis. Dr. Nabarro focused in particular on the planned phased progression of Member State-led, multi-stakeholder FSSDs. He highlighted that support would be available from UN Country Teams as well as the potential linkages between Dialogues, Action Tracks and the Scientific Group, including the testing of the ideas and propositions emerging from the latter two groups at country level. The intention of working with Member States to evolve pathways to sustainable national food systems by 2030 and the elaboration of commitments to improve the functioning of food systems in-country was emphasized. The engagement program will formally begin in November. More information, and newsletter signup, is [online](#). Advisory committee members welcomed and applauded this effort.
- **Budget and Resource Mobilization:** The Secretariat presented the Summit preparatory budget, underscoring that the budget had been recalibrated in light of impacts from COVID-19 and to reflect the Summit’s final vision and work streams over the remaining 1.5-year process. There was a focus on immediate resource needs to continue priority Summit efforts through the end of 2020. The Secretariat conducted an analysis of its rate of expenditure and expenses required in the work streams, and the analysis showed that the Secretariat needs approximately an additional USD \$5.5M into the Summit’s Trust Fund within the



next 3 months in order to move forward on high-priority activities and procurements. Some members noted that they were actively exploring contributions to the Summit. The potential of appropriate contributions from non-State actors was welcomed. Also welcome was the idea from a member that the Trust Fund should be open for review on how resources get invested and used.

- **Timing and Venue:** The DSG welcomed the robust feedback and interaction around landing the Summit venue and timing, particularly when accounting for the impacts and uncertainties linked to COVID-19. The DSG informed members that the Secretary-General would be making announcements on place and location of the Pre-Summit which she said would be next summer in Rome and Summit in New York, in timed to coincide with the UNGA High-level Week. The Pre-Summit would take stock of the work process and define bold actions for inclusive and sustainable food systems. This would enable a three-phased approach by (1) defining much of the outcome at a Ministerial-level Pre-Summit in Rome, (2) presenting the outcomes at the highest political level in New York for commitment and mobilization and (3) bringing many of those outcomes back to Rome to lead in driving them forward. The [announcement](#) of the Summit timing and venue was made by the Secretary-General to kick-off World Food Week.

Advisory Committee members welcomed the progress made, offered suggestions of ways to engage various regions, country groups and stakeholder constituencies in the Dialogues, and made offers of support. They encouraged the Envoy and Secretariat to continue to build out a robust communications and engagement effort to ensure that the process delivers on its intention to make the Summit both a “People’s Summit” and a “Solutions Summit”.

The DSG encouraged members to support the process to the fullest extent possible, both through their engagement in the work streams and by investing resources in its success. The next meeting of the Committee will take place in early December.

World Food Week: One year after the Secretary-General called for a Food Systems Summit, this week represented an inflection point in the Summit process and an opportunity to invite stakeholders around the world to join the Summit discussion and explore the actions and partnerships that can deliver on our shared goals. The Special Envoy amplified this message during [the noon briefing on the same day](#). The process therefore transitioned into a more operational phase and initiated much broader public engagement. The Secretary-General, DSG, Special Envoy and the Secretariat engaged in several important events, including the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the FAO 75th Anniversary and World Food Day celebrations.

To help introduce the Summit to a wide audience and to invite stakeholders to engage, the Secretariat organized a [24 Hour Global Relay Conversation](#), which reached more than 2.5 million people across all regions with more than 100 speakers across food systems sectors.

Informal Briefing on the Food Systems Summit (4 September): The DSG and the Special Envoy held a briefing for all Member States on the state of preparations and Summit work streams and invited express interest in joining any of the five Action Tracks and submit nominations for the Champions Network.



Other Ongoing Engagement Opportunities: In addition to World Food Week activities, a proactive approach to broad and diverse engagement continues to be pursued. This has included consultations, among others, with the FAO Regional Conferences, various meetings of Farmer's and Producer's Organizations, Indigenous People's organizations, youth networks, issue constituencies around environment, climate, and nutrition, the CFS private sector mechanism and other private sector networks. The Secretariat has also initiated an open and regularized approach to civil society and youth outreach. Following a series of open informational calls, a group of friends for civil society was established in September and has met twice.

External Outreach: The first phase of the [Summit website](#) has been launched with [the anthem video](#) and [social media campaign geared toward young leaders](#) to promote the [Food Systems Heroes](#). All stakeholders are encouraged to engage with the Summit and Special Envoy through these channels for regular updates and information-sharing as the preparatory process continues and movement towards the Summit builds.

- Twitter – @foodsystems @Agnes_Kalibata
- Instagram – unfoodsytms

NEXT STEPS

During November, the Summit Secretariat intends to:

- **Share 6 initial papers of the Scientific Group for broad review, discussion, and feedback.** These papers included one on [Food Systems – Definition, Concept and Application for the UN Food Systems Summit](#), as well as papers on each of the Action Tracks as follows: [Ensuring Access to Safe & Nutritious Food for All](#), [Shifting to Sustainable Consumption Patterns](#), [Boosting Nature Positive Production at Sufficient Scales](#), [Advancing Equitable Livelihoods](#), and [Building Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks, & Stresses](#). These papers are shared by the Scientific Group as “early drafts” with the aim to provide information and to facilitate discussion for transparent and evidence-based Summit preparations. Inputs are welcome, and the papers will ultimately be revised, peer reviewed, and finalized by the authors.
- Initiate the work of the Action Tracks towards the generation of game-changing solutions at local, regional, and global levels, and consult widely on initial “discussion starter” papers of the Action Track leaders with key issues and questions as follows: [Ensuring Access to Safe & Nutritious Food for All](#), [Shifting to Sustainable Consumption Patterns](#), [Boosting Nature Positive Production at Sufficient Scales](#), [Advancing Equitable Livelihoods](#), and [Building Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks, & Stresses](#).
- Commence the Food Systems Summit Dialogues, including through a series of briefings for Member States and other partners to support rapid uptake and initiation at country level.
- Build out and deepen the engagement plan for the Champions Network as well as the broader global public engagement strategy.

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