FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021 DIALOGUES

JULY 2021

Synthesis of Member State Dialogues

REPORT 2

UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Synthesis describes the progress of the United Nations Food Systems Summit Member State Dialogues which are taking place in preparation for the UN Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit in September 2021, hereafter simply referred to as the Summit. The Summit has been convened in recognition of the significance and complexity of food systems around the world and offers an opportunity to identify pathways towards sustainable national food systems contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Alongside a wide range of other preparatory work for the Summit, Member States were invited to initiate a series of Dialogues designed to bring together an extensive range of stakeholders and actors in their national food systems in order to address the complex and often contentious issues faced by Governments in promoting a sustainable food system.

This is the third synthesis of the progression of Member State Dialogues. The first (January 2021) described the inception period. The second (May 2021) synthesised the information from all feedback forms of Member-State dialogues published on the Gateway[1] by 13 April 2021. This third synthesis includes information from all feedback forms of Member State dialogues published on the Gateway by 11 June 2021.

It is thus a cumulative synthesis, including the feedback synthesised in previous reports.

This synthesis has therefore been prepared from all Official Feedback Forms published by Member State convenors up to and including 11 June 2021. Forty Member States had then published 164 feedback forms that convey the input of over 15,000 people in the Member State Dialogue process as part of the engagement around the Summit. As the conclusion notes, synthesis, and thus sense-making, is a constant process. This document is a snapshot in time that gives an insight into this extraordinary progression. A further synthesis of the dialogue progression will be produced in advance of the Summit incorporating all Member State Official Feedback Forms received through 13 August 2021.

Snapshot of The Dialogues Program

This report covers: 164 feedback forms, published by 40 Member States, with input from over 15,000 people.

By the time of publication, the Dialogues Program overall has grown—this includes:

- **140 national Convenors** nominated.
- **420 Member State Dialogues** registered, with **240 feedback** forms submitted.
- **720 Independent Dialogues** Registered, with **320 feedback** forms submitted.
- **10 Global Dialogues** Convened.
- More than **45,000 participants** across all dialogues.

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[1] The Gateway is the website of the Food Systems Summit Dialogues: www.summitdialogues.org

This synthesis is in eight sections that lead the reader through a process to make sense of the enormous body of data upon which it is based. The eight sections and related key findings are as follows:

1. The progression of Member State Dialogues

This section introduces the dialogue progression as an engagement process for the Summit. It explores the benefits of the dialogues and why they work in complex settings before expanding on the details of the progression that Member States are undertaking.

Many Member States are participating in the programme of Food System Summit Dialogues; this novel form of engagement has been received with enthusiasm and commitment all over the world. As of 11 June 2021, 129 Member States had nominated a National Dialogues Convenor; 341 Member State Dialogues had been announced on the Gateway; 40 Member States had published 164 Official Feedback Forms which are synthesised in this report. Additionally, connections with the Independent Dialogues have helped expand the reach and diversity of the Summit engagement process.

2. Participant analysis

This section explores who participated in Member State Dialogues. It looks at participants by age, gender, sector, and stakeholder group and shows how the dialogue progression has expanded by number and diversity.

There is widespread and diverse participation in the Member State Dialogues, with over 15,000 people engaged in the Member State dialogues incorporated in this synthesis: that number continues to grow rapidly. The participants represent a wide range of sectors and stakeholder groups. The number of men and women participants is near equal, and the dialogues are engaging increasing numbers of farmers, Indigenous peoples, workers and trade unions, and local civil society organisations.

3. Convergence of Dialogue outcomes per Summit objective

This section extracts how the 164 feedback forms relate to the five objectives of the Summit.

In the initial framing of most of the Member State Food Systems Summit Dialogues, material from the Scientific Group and the Action Tracks was used. As Dialogues progressed, many additional themes, related to specific local and national priorities, have started to emerge. Dialogue participants have many relevant propositions that are relevant to each objective. Areas of convergence under each objective of the Summit are identified.

Converging Themes

Objective 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- **Enabling all people to access the food that they need to live life to the full**
  Underlying most Dialogues is an agreement: People's right to food has to be one of the principles on which societies are organized. Efforts should be made to ensure that everyone is able to access the nutritious diets they need for long term well-being. The relevance of this right is highlighted by ways in which COVID-19 has impacted on so many people's access to both energy and nutrients. During the dialogues it was made clear that even in situations of extreme shortage people should be able to access food that reflects cultural preferences and religious obligations.
- **Available and affordable nutrition for all**
  There is remarkable consistency in feedback forms on the need to ensure that all people can not only access the food they need, but also that they can access the nutrients they require to achieve full potential in life.
- **Action to end malnutrition in all its forms**
  Most feedback forms suggest that ending malnutrition in all forms should be a central feature of all food

policies, with multi-sectoral focus on the needs of groups most at risk including pregnant women, young children, and older people, especially within poorer households and communities.

- **Food safety**
  There is widespread interest in assuring food safety through national legislation, policies, and regulation, including traceability, and enforcing standards for food safety, animal welfare especially among industrially produced food providers and informal food suppliers such as street traders.

Objective 2: Shift to healthy and sustainable consumption patterns

- **Links between food consumption and people's well-being**
  The increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes and heart conditions in adults is reported from most countries: they are associated with excess consumption of energy dense foods at a young age. High levels of excess consumption and undernutrition often coexist in the same settings.
- **Non-communicable diseases**
  Dialogues highlight that the change from traditional diets in recent years is contributing to NCD incidence. This underscores the need for people of all incomes levels to access healthier and environmentally friendly food choices and to avoid high consumption of hyper-processed food products. Dialogues stress that efforts to shift behaviour require careful analyses of factors that influence excess consumption, enhanced regulations around marketing to specific population groups, procurement policies that prioritize sustainably produced nutritious food, and unambiguous nutrition information on food labels.
- **One Health**
  The One Health approach to reduce antimicrobial resistance are frequently mentioned as being key to maintaining health at the interface between animals, humans, and the environment.
- **Food loss and waste**
  Feedback forms also refer to limiting food loss and waste. Reducing loss calls for better infrastructure, modern food processing, and improved storage to lengthen shelf-life; cutting out waste involves purpose-linked public/private partnerships, backed by legislation around recovery of surpluses and recycling non-consumed food. A specific need is for SMEs to be better able to preserve locally produced fruit and vegetables.

Objective 3: Boost nature-positive production

- **Importance of valuing nature when the cost of food is considered**
  Food systems everywhere are contributing to environmental degradation and climate change: the economic costs of these impacts should be factored into the real prices that are paid for food. But given the huge pressures everywhere to keep the costs of nutritious food as low as possible, it is important that the full cost of natural resources used in food production are made explicit, whether viewed from local, national, or international perspectives.
- **Nature should be valued and managed with a mix of preservation and regeneration**
  This applies both to ecosystem services and biological diversity and calls for well-functioning policy and regulatory regimes that encourage climate-smart, water-conserving and energy-saving food production systems, for crops, livestock, aquatic foods, and forest products, everywhere.
- **There is increasing interest in decarbonizing food production**
  Similar policies and practices are needed for reducing GHGs emissions—especially from livestock—for protecting and preserving forests, prioritising the needs of Indigenous peoples, reducing use of chemicals and pesticides, promoting organic farming, developing seed banks, and encouraging greater intake of plant-based sources of protein.
- **Nature-positive production can be boosted through**
  Public procurement of environmentally friendly agricultural products; payments to producers for their contributions to nature and mitigating climate change; linking agricultural support (including subsidies) to environmental outcomes; development and communication of appropriate regional regulations and protocols; appropriate changes in legislation on land use and documentation of changes over time in policies and practices.

Objective 4: Advance equitable livelihoods

- **Ensuring that smallholder producers and food systems workers are fully involved in food systems transformation**
  The hundreds of millions of households actively involved in food systems are some of the poorest in our world. Half a billion smallholder farms produce only a fraction of the food their families need each year with household members making up the gap through earnings from labouring—because of this, they are usually in severe debt. National dialogues focused on the need for rural transitions that enable food system

workers to have the kinds of incomes and working conditions that truly reflect their contribution to the value of the food that they help to produce. Dialogues stress that the policy direction should come from government with implementation that involves purpose-driven public/private partnerships.

- **Enabling smallholder producers to benefit from increased production**
Feedback forms consistently call for explicit efforts to increase the involvement and contribution of smallholder producers (farmers, fishers, livestock keepers, forest dwellers, and more) through targeted support tailored to their needs. Support is likely to include tax breaks and subsidies, adequate physical infrastructure (access to irrigation and transportation), targeted social protection schemes, and preferential access to markets for specific vulnerable groups. It also includes an effort to engage and support young people and women in their roles as food producers.
- **Access to productive resources and market opportunities**
Dialogue feedback identifies longstanding structural inequalities which inhibit poorer peoples' engagement in food systems. Indigenous Peoples and others who have limited room for manoeuvre face specific challenges regarding their access to land or water. They urgently seek greater engagement in the development of food systems strategies in ways that reflect the interests of smallholders and food system labourers.
- **SME growth**
Feedback also underlines the importance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) especially for increasing local production and ensuring that benefit reaches smallholders (including services for storing food and securing short-term loans at reasonable rates)

Objective 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress
- **Resilience should be a property of all food systems**
There was widespread feedback from dialogues suggesting that food systems should be resilient when analysed from the perspective of the producer, the consumer, or society. COVID-19 outbreaks, extreme weather events, and violent conflict can all impact on the functioning of food systems. Some dialogues focused on means for enhancing the resilience of those who produce and consume food while others focused on ways to ensure that all people have continued access to nutrients when this is imperilled by shocks and stresses. Dialogues reflected on the importance of international policy and best practice frameworks, the need to invest in national resilience frameworks, advocate for better insurance schemes that help producers to navigate emergencies, and support nutrition-sensitive social protection and safety nets to protect those who have vulnerabilities. Dialogues stress that the resilience of national food systems can be strengthened through reducing reliance on imported foods, through enhancing diversified local food production, and improving storage and transport, within the context of a regenerative and circular economy with less reliance on monocultures.

4. Achieving transformation through Levers of change

Four Levers of Change both stimulate and support food systems transformation. These are: a) prioritizing universal realization of the Right to Food; b) advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, c) adopting technical and social innovations and d) the strategic use of public and private finance. The dialogue feedback forms are analysed with respect to these Levers in Section 4 of the synthesis.

Levers of Change

- **Human Rights**
Feedback from dialogues indicate that Human Rights are a vital foundation for national food systems, emphasising the need for healthy foods to be accessible to everyone as well as for everyone to enjoy decent incomes and be protected from threats. The right to food applies within households, communities, and nations, and should also include the right to good nutrition.
- **Women and Youth**
The importance of addressing gender inequality and prioritizing the roles of young people in food systems have been constant themes throughout the national dialogues. Proposals have emerged for job creation, support for start-ups, women and youth-focused value-chain development, incentives for young people to not emigrate; and enabling women to have land tenure rights.

- **Innovation**
  Technical and social Innovation are key to sustainable and equitable food systems: for instance, some Dialogues stress their importance to help boost resilience through less deforestation in value chains and encouraging regeneration. Some Dialogues also point at the attention needed for ensuring equitable access to innovation, especially for smallholders.
- **Finance**
  Public and private finance, when used strategically, is a vitally important lever of change: for example, enabling SMEs to access credit, smallholders to access insurance, and low interest loans for those who adhere to sustainable production methods. Some Dialogues explored how development banks can support sustainable food systems or how financial incentives can improve the quality of food produced.

Beyond the four Levers of Change explored for the Summit, other potential Levers for transformation emerged repeatedly in feedback forms:
- **Metrics and data** to assess the performance of existing food systems.
- **Access to a universal body of Indigenous, traditional, and scientific knowledge** around food systems, seeds, and plants.
- **Capability for Action Research** to encourage innovative best practice spreading knowledge and experience among farmers (especially women and youth farmers), and supporting specific emerging areas such as alternative protein sources, products to improve crop sustainability, and warning systems for zoonotic disease.
- **Regulation for agricultural products,** including pesticides, fertilizers and harmful wastes, food and water safety, and for improving traceability from farm to fork.
- I**nfrastructure** to enable smallholder engagement through promoting associations and cooperatives, value-chains, disaster prevention, and resilience.
- **Better governance** with integrated land and water planning, focus on livelihoods, recovering surpluses, restructured government, public/private partnering, cross-sectoral working and multi-stakeholder engagement.
- **Access to land and soil, free and open trade** and **talent development** are also mentioned as relevant Levers in some settings.

5. Frequently mentioned areas of divergence

Member State Convenors were asked to comment on areas of divergence in their dialogues when providing feedback. This section summarises areas of divergence that recur throughout the feedback forms.

The areas of divergence reflect a number of challenging topics which require more attention. The Convenors of Member State Dialogues have openly described areas of divergence in the dialogues for which they are responsible. The synthesis highlights the need to continue surfacing and exploring these tensions within local settings: they need to be worked through, sometimes with expert assistance, if efforts to transform national food systems are to succeed.

Areas of divergence
- **Differing priorities for the future of national Food Systems**
  Dialogues reveal the multiple objectives for food systems and the challenge of combining them in an integrated approach to transformation. There may be tensions when stakeholders seek to agree on which objectives to prioritise. Questions also arose over how to cope with apparent incompatibilities between the economic, environmental, and human dimensions of food systems sustainability.
- **Which to prioritize - access to food or healthy diets?**
  When food is scarce the focus is often on ensuring that everyone has enough calories to consume. At the same time, it is also important to ensure that each person has enough nutrients in their diet, especially at times of growth (pregnancy, early childhood, and recovering from illness).
- **The price of food – what it really costs or as low as possible?**
  The prices food producers receive are often little more than the cost of production. They cannot afford to hold back on selling and make the investment needed to add value through processing. Yet, if farmers are

to be paid more, the price increases will be passed to consumers. Thus, the need for low cost food works against the interest of the producers.

- **Free and open trade or protecting local production systems?**
  With the impacts of COVID-19 effecting food imports, some Dialogues stress the need to increase resilience and reduce dependence through boosting local production. At the same time, nations seek to comply with existing free trade agreements.

- **Maximizing production or minimal agricultural inputs?**
  Modern production practices may cause significant, even irreversible, damage to environments. At the same time, practices that limit inputs (including agro-ecology and precision farming) reduce the risks of soil degradation, depletion of fresh water, fertiliser run-off, biodiversity loss, and high greenhouse gas emissions, but are often perceived as reducing quantity produced. Are more sustainable production methods compatible with ensuring that sufficient food is produced to feed the world by 2050?

- **Plant-based or animal-based sources of protein?**
  There could be multiple benefits from increasing the dietary proportion of plant-based protein intake, but in many farming systems livestock are vital for the livelihood security of smallholders.

- **Who makes the choice, the government or the individual?**
  In many countries people's diet contributes to ill health, and this has a cost for society. Diet-related diseases—such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and obesity—are associated with increased risks to life. Who is responsible for healthy eating: the individual or State? The feedback forms from several Dialogues point at divergence in perspectives on this.

- **A will to change but limited capacity to do so**
  Several feedback forms point at the tension between ambitions for systems transformation efforts and the limited number of skilled professionals and institutional mechanisms to ensure successful multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary working.

- **Long term reform or urgent response**
  Long-term reform is needed for many aspects of food systems: this includes tackling inequities in access to land and other assets or re-thinking the terms of trade in food. Such reforms are hindered when the focus is on more urgently needed responses.

6. Emergence of Pathways

The three stages of the Food Systems Summit Dialogues help participants identify the characteristics of current food systems (stage one of the Member State Dialogue), generate a wide range of potential adaptations and evolutions of those systems (stage two of the Member State Dialogue), and then consolidate these into an agreed sense of direction (stage three of the Member State Dialogue). A multi-stakeholder exploration through dialogues of food systems in a country is a fundamental element in shaping a national pathway to a sustainable and equitable food system by 2030.

The strategic pathways that Member States are preparing are based on national food and agriculture strategies that are already adopted, the decisions that need to be worked through now to bring the pathways to life, and the plan for how stakeholders will work together in support of the pathway and how they will know if they are moving in the right direction. Convenors seek to secure political support for pathways from the outset: it helps if pathway development is well connected to governmental policy and timetables.

7. Commentary on Observed Patterns

This section of the synthesis draws attention to some emerging patterns from the synthesis data. It is not intended to be exhaustive. It makes sense of the data from the countries' Official Feedback Forms, making areas where countries are collectively indicating the need for action more apparent and pointing to where collections of actors might form to collaboratively address these needs.

A number of patterns start to appear. Each pattern reflects a different combination of actions and Levers of Change and provides an opportunity to explore potential future collaborations and coalitions for food systems transformation. The goal of highlighting these emerging patterns is to

help Member States identify shared priorities and assist the different workstreams involved in Summit preparations to better appreciate priorities and perspectives of national governments and in-country stakeholders.

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Patterns

1) **Total Food Systems Transformation**
The governments of many countries are starting to indicate their intention to accelerate and deepen the transformation of food systems to ensure that they better reflect the interests and needs of people and planet, and contribute to sustainability, equity, and resilience.

2) **Nutrition and health**
Including links between foods consumed and people's well-being (health at all ages and nutrition, especially women and small children) disaggregated by wealth and other attributes.

3) **Sustainable production systems**
Including increasing production in ways that are nature-positive, climate-smart, pro-biodiversity, and adapted to local circumstances.

4) **Reducing import dependence**
There is an emphasis on increasing local-level production and processing of nutritious food to reduce dependence on food imports, and also includes sustainable production practices and social protection of producers.

5) **Increasing capacity for food production and export**
Priority is given to establishing viable food businesses that connect local production with national and international value chains. The focus is on sustainable production practices, decent conditions of employment for producers, and the production of foods that have high nutrient density and meet national and international food safety standards.

6) **Ensuring that systems are resilient in face of conflict and other stress**
Including ensuring that food systems function predictably, in ways that respond to the needs of people and planet, and in the face of stress and crises (war, pandemic, weather extremes).

7) **Focusing on livelihoods of producers and processors**
There is a greatly increased focus on people who produce and process food but are frequently left behind—especially smallholders, labourers, women, Indigenous peoples, youth, migrants, and those who are very poor.

8) **Efficient use of water**
Water-scarcity is a major impediment to increasing productivity in food systems: this is exacerbated by the increased incidence of droughts and floods caused by climate change. There is greater priority to the governance of water alongside the need to maximise the strength and utility of soils and to maintain natural habitats (eg wetlands).

9) **Incorporating Food Waste within the Circular Economy**
As governments, local authorities, and other stakeholders become increasingly conscious of the need to use resources efficiently in food production and processing, there is emphasis on a) reducing the extent of loss and waste along the production-consumption chain, and b) increasing the extent to which all elements of food production are incorporated – including food waste.

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8. Conclusion and looking forward

The progression of Member State Dialogues is accelerating rapidly and connecting more deeply with other areas of the Summit. This section draws conclusions from this data and looks forward to the activity between now and the Summit, and beyond.

Moving from "what needs to happen" to "how to help it happen" is critical for the success of efforts to encourage system transformation. The areas of convergence (and divergence), together with emerging patterns, indicate the views of dialogue participants about 'what' needs to change in different national settings. The Levers of Change give an indication of 'how' this change can be supported. The four Levers that were originally identified are complemented by others that also may be important in different settings. The Levers of Change recur repeatedly in the feedback from national dialogues: this reminds all concerned that focusing on the Levers, and how they are brought to life in different settings, is vital for the success of food systems transformation.

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MEMBER STATE FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT DIALOGUES SYNTHESIS

This synthesis seeks to be informative not instructional. Its purpose is to make visible and accessible the wealth of work that is underway all over the world. It conveys only some of the information that has been shared, and instead, offers a glimpse into the activity in countries that can be explored further by reading their Official Feedback Forms which are referenced throughout the synthesis and listed in the annex. It seeks to represent all points of view so that others may determine for themselves the validity and importance of the feedback.

The report also tries to convey the incredible sense of purpose, energy, and intent that comes from the Member State Dialogues. The Dialogues progression is a rich, and at times raw, experience for all involved. As well as shifting the way people think about issues, dialogue creates a shift in the way people feel about those issues and about those with whom they connect during the process. This shift is only partially captured on feedback forms.

 The role of a Member State convenor is therefore a huge responsibility that carries a significant volume of work. Bringing multiple stakeholders, with often conflicting points of view, into a dialogue carries a risk that can be felt keenly by convenors.

By accepting this challenge, Member State Convenors have ensured that the fundamental issues at the heart of transforming food systems to be more equitable and sustainable are being addressed. For many countries, Convenors are introducing a way of working with complex and contested issues that will leave a legacy of novel and sometimes surprising connections around shared aspiration for the future.

This synthesis is based on data available on 11 June 2021, at which point 129 Member State Convenors had been nominated, 77 of them had announced 341 Member State Dialogues, and 40 Convenors had published 164 feedback forms on the Dialogue Gateway website (www.summitdialogues.org). This synthesis draws on the 164 feedback forms published on the Gateway by June 11, 2021, complemented by knowledge of the Dialogues process in each country acquired by the support team of the Dialogues who is working closely with national Convenors.

1. The progression of Member State Dialogues

1.1. The Member State Dialogue progression and the Food Systems Summit

In the run-up to the UN Secretary-General's Food Systems Summit 2021, UN Member States have been focusing on how their national food systems can, in the coming decade, align with and contribute to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a core component of the Summit process, each Member State has been invited to convene multi-stakeholder dialogues and to articulate a national pathway towards sustainable food systems. This implies an approach to food systems that reflects connections with all the SDGs and pays special attention to people who might otherwise be left behind.

To support the development of national pathways towards sustainable food systems by 2030, Member States have been encouraged to initiate **multi-stakeholder Food Systems Summit Dialogues.** These Dialogues take place over three stages, within different sub-national settings as well as nationally. The Dialogues have engaged participants from all stakeholder groups with an interest in the relationships between people, food, and the planet and who are involved in national food systems. Dialogue participants agree to work together in ways that reflect the Principles of Engagement in the Summit while they explore what needs to change and options for action that can contribute to sustainable and equitable food systems. Individual stakeholders who are unable to take part in their Member State Dialogues programme may participate in Independently organized Dialogues. Given the impact of COVID-19 on gatherings, arrangements have been made for the dialogues to be run virtually where conditions permit. This limits the numbers of people who can be involved and may have excluded those in isolated locations or with limited resources.

1.2. Why dialogues work in complex systems

Food systems are inherently complex. The millions of people involved in food systems include farmers, labourers, fishers, processors, transporters, warehouse workers, shopkeepers, marketing professionals, regulators, and consumers, among many others. Food systems connect to financial systems, land ownership, the natural environment, health, and cultural norms.

This complex weave of people, places and their politics is the messy reality of food systems on our planet. A simple change in one area may have profound implications for others further down the line. Effecting change in such circumstances is far from straight forward. Good technical solutions may not be adopted for multiple reasons; they may not make sense in different settings, they might disturb too many existing interests, it might be impossible to easily unlock the intricate weave of personal connections that has evolved over centuries of habitation.

Transforming such complex systems require adaptive approaches, approaches that can evolve over time to fit the changing local context and circumstances. Complex systems transformations require ways of reaching out to and connecting with multiple interests and bringing them together when they may hold strongly differing views. They require processes that encourage people to engage honestly around difficult and contested situations.

This is the purpose of the Food Systems Summit Dialogues: bringing together multiple stakeholders in a safe environment to encourage honest exchange. From this, new connections are made, mindsets evolve, and new solutions emerge. The Food Systems Summit Dialogues play an important role in creating the conditions for change. They highlight what matters to a wide range of people, the sorts of solutions that

might be needed if food systems are to become equitable and sustainable and which of these solutions people might be prepared to adopt.

The Food Systems Summit Dialogues have created profound engagement on an enormous scale around the ways that food systems do and do not work for people and planet. Dialogues leave an impression everywhere they have been held. This includes deepened understanding between conflicting interests, new and surprising connections, and a way of engaging around complex issues that builds a sense of solidarity and commitment around a new direction.

1.3. The Food Systems Summit Dialogue Programme

There are three types of Food Systems Summit Dialogues;

1. Global Dialogues (co-convened by the Special Envoy of the Food Systems Summit with partners in conjunction with other global processes such as finance or climate)
2. Member State Dialogues (convened by national Convenors nominated by their government, addressing the food system in that country)
3. Independent Dialogues (convened by anyone who has an interest in food systems)

As of June 11, 2021, nearly 1000 Dialogues have been announced on the Gateway of the Dialogues:

- 9 Global Dialogues
- 341 Member State Dialogues convened by 77 Member State Convenors
- 604 Independent Dialogues

In addition, several Member States have worked with inter-governmental organisations to convene multi-stakeholder regional Dialogues. As of June 27, four intergovernmental dialogues have been announced on the Gateway (The Pacific Community (SPC); SICA (Sistema de la Integracion Centro Americana); Nordic Council of Ministers; and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States). The Official Feedback Form of the intergovernmental dialogue of the Pacific Community (SPC) is part of the feedback forms analysed for this synthesis.

1.4. Member State Dialogue Convenors

The ways in which national Dialogues are initiated varies from country to country but the general pattern is as follows:

- The UN Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) sent a letter on November 3, 2020, to each nation inviting them to nominate a National Dialogue Convenor. The letter was sent to the Permanent Missions in New York and then to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the capital city.

- Once the letter was received, an internal discussion has taken place within Governments about how best to address the nomination process before a nomination has been made.

- In the countries with UN presence, the UN Resident Coordinator and Country Team have been engaged and helpful in assisting this process.

As of 11 June 2021, 129 Member States[2] worldwide had committed to participation in the Food Systems Summit Dialogue Process through the nomination of a national Dialogue Convenor by their government.
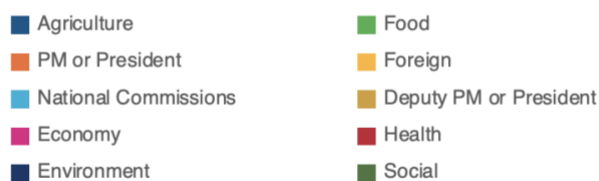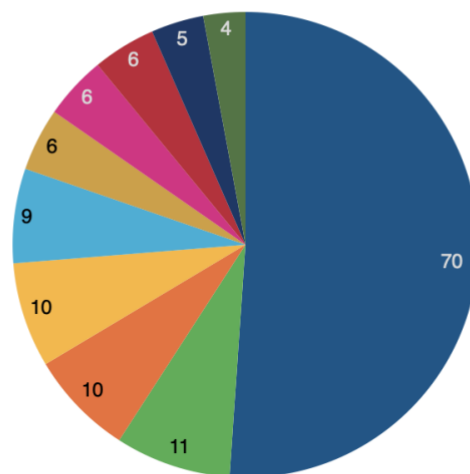
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[2] the list of National Convenors is available at https://summitdialogues.org/overview/member-state-food-systems-summit-dialogues/convenors/

Dialogue Convenors have been appointed from the ministries or organisations shown in the following graph. NB: *different governments organise their ministries according to their specific situation, so Convenors have been accounted for in the description of a ministry that best fits their position.*

- Just over half the national Convenors are from the Ministry of Agriculture or equivalent.
- Next most numerous are Convenors from the Office of the President or Prime Minister, or the office of their deputy, one of whom is the First Lady of that Republic.
- Ministries of Food and Foreign Affairs are also well represented.
- National institutes and commissions, usually for food, welfare or planning, also provide a number of Convenors.
- Some nations have appointed two or three Convenors. These may bring ownership from two different ministries or provide a balance between political and technical leadership.

Member State Dialogue Convenors by Ministry

Legend:
- Agriculture
- Food
- PM or President
- Foreign
- National Commissions
- Deputy PM or President
- Economy
- Health
- Environment
- Social

Total = 137

The decision by Government to identify and then nominate a Convenor is a critical moment in the preparation of the national Dialogues. It prompts reflection as to how national food systems are composed and enabled to function. This means being prepared to explore the ways in which the food system links to people's livelihoods, as well as agriculture, livestock and fisheries, public health and well-being, trade practices, the economy, ecosystem services, and more. The discussions and reflections in agreeing this nomination are a valuable part of developing the pathway forwards. Some Governments have taken time to ensure these nominations are formally agreed and adequately resourced.

1.5. The Member State Dialogue Process

The Member State Dialogue Process has been designed in three stages.

- Stage 1 – Initiating national engagement in the Summit
- Stage 2 – Extensive explorations everywhere
- Stage 3 – Consolidation and commitment.

As might be expected in a complex and systemic environment, not all national Convenors are following all three stages in this way. Convenors have been encouraged to adapt the standardized approach to fit their local needs and circumstances. This has meant different scenarios have been observed so far. (Numbers in parentheses refer to the number of dialogues included in this synthesis.)

- Many national Convenors intend to complete all three stages and are currently on that progression, including Albania, Cambodia, Finland, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, Nigeria, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA.

- Georgia and Ireland have completed all three stages of their national dialogue progression.
- Some Convenors have used **'stage one' to undertake a wide and thorough process of engaging with stakeholder groups** one by one. For example, Japan held 35 stage one Dialogues. Others also held multiple stage one dialogues: Rwanda (5), Fiji (5), Republic of Korea (4), Samoa (3), Mexico (3), Cambodia (2), Honduras (2), and Malaysia (2).
- **Some Member States have held wide ranging processes of sub-national and thematic dialogues for stage 2**, including Nigeria (19), Cambodia (8), El Salvador (6), Brazil (3), and Honduras (3).
- Many Convenors, including those in Dominican Republic (9), Australia (5), Argentina (3), Israel (2), Spain (2) and Denmark (1), have **not attributed their dialogues to a particular stage**. In all, some 30 dialogues in this synthesis fit this category.
- Some countries have only completed one Dialogue referenced as 'stage three' dialogue. This unique Dialogue has been used to ensure information from earlier work on food systems can be consolidated and shared; this includes Denmark, Turkey, and Oman.
- Some countries have indicated that they may only complete one dialogue before the summit but that this is the start of a process that they hope to continue. These do not all necessarily appear in this synthesis as they may be still to be held.
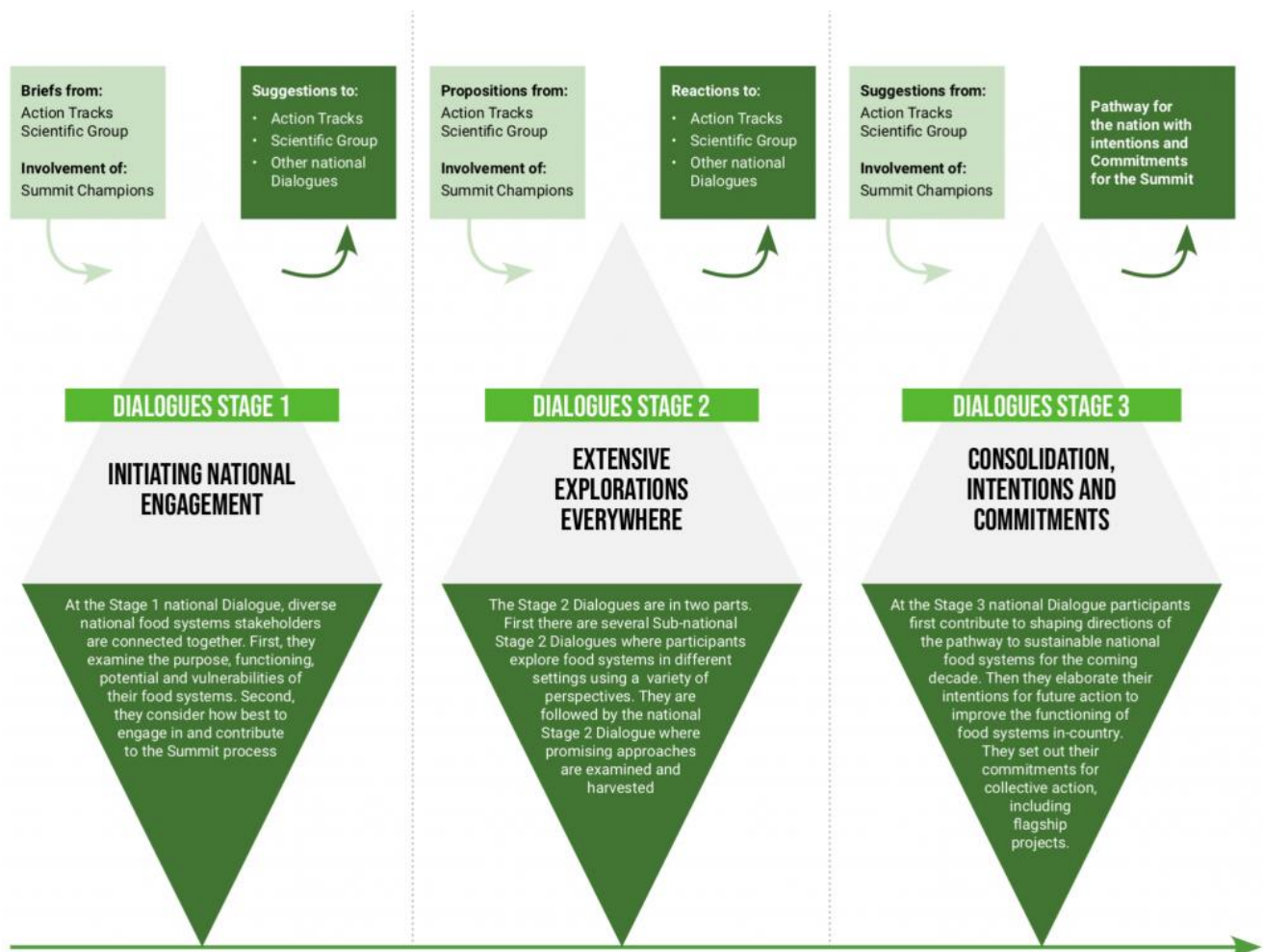
The 3 stages of the Member State Dialogue Process

As of June 11, 2021, 164 feedback forms of Member State Dialogues were published on the Gateway. They have been analysed for this synthesis. Many more Dialogues are currently being held and reported. The final synthesis to be prepared for the Summit will take account of all feedback forms published by August 13, 2021.

The breakdown of dialogues by stage included in this report is illustrated in the chart to the right.

Dialogues included in the synthesis by stage

■	Stage 1
■	Stage 2
■	Stage 3
■	No Stage

66

54

14

30

Total = 164
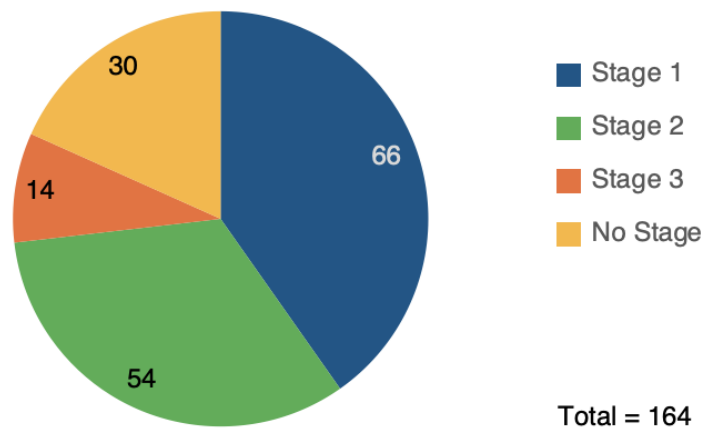
1.6. Dialogues lead to pathways

As national Convenors complete their stage 3 dialogues the connection between the dialogue progression and a national pathway to sustainable and equitable food systems becomes clear. Across the progression of dialogues, participants will have:

- appreciated the purposes of current food systems
- clarified and agreed expectations of national food systems in the coming decade
- identified changes that could be made and decisions that will need to be worked through
- explored how stakeholders can work well together for collective action

Connecting these outputs from the national dialogues with existing plans and policies and indicating key milestones forms the basis for the national pathway.

Capturing this in a short strategic document enables Heads of State and Government to present these strategic pathways to 2030 at the summit. It enables synergies with other countries and stakeholders to become evident and facilitates the formation of coalitions for action.

1.7. Connection with Independent Dialogues

Independent Dialogues have been seen as a valuable way of extending the reach and engagement of the Member State Dialogue process. Member State Convenors have described this as a powerful and enriching process. In areas hit hardest by COVID-19 it has enabled convenors to complete a fuller stage two process, incorporating a broader range of participants, including from more remote areas of the country.

Connections have been formed between Independent Dialogues and Member State dialogues in many ways. Here are some examples of how this is working.

- In the **Bahamas**, the Convenor created a flyer to promote Independent Dialogues providing background on the Summit.
- In **Bangladesh** a series of thematic Independent Dialogues has been convened by UN organizations with the engagement of the national Convenor, complementing stage 2 sub-national dialogues.

- The Ministry of Agriculture in the **Dominican Republic** has connected with in the Independent Dialogues organized by the private sector (Dominican Agribusiness Board).
- In **Guatemala**, the national Convenor has been involved in an Independent Dialogue with parliamentarians.
- The Member State dialogues in **Hungary** will include outcomes from an Independent Dialogue organised by the UNFSS Champion, Judith Varga.
- In **Ireland** the national dialogues convenor has been supporting Independent Dialogues with a view to enriching the outcomes of the national dialogues.
- The Convenor of **Italy**'s Member State Dialogues encouraged the convening of Independent Dialogues in stage 2, to complement the stage 1 national dialogue.
- In **Nigeria** the national dialogues convenor actively encouraged organisations to hold Independent Dialogues to complement the government-convened events.
- In **Rwanda** the national dialogue convenor has organised an Independent Dialogue exploring urban food systems in Kigali and environs.
- In **Spain** the national convenor has connected to the Independent Dialogue run by Interporc.
- In **UK**, an Independent Dialogue process in England (commissioned by the government in 2019 – 2020) is being connected to processes in other parts of the country (Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland).
- In the **USA,** the US Department of Agriculture has listed on its website information on Independent Dialogues in the US and has encouraged participants invited to the national dialogues to read the feedback from those Independent Dialogues before attending.
- National Convenors of **Israel**, **Philippines,** and **Hungary** have indicated that the outputs from Independent Dialogues will be incorporated in the Member State Dialogues.

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2. Participant Analysis

This section of the synthesis is derived from data included in the 164 feedback forms published by national convenors. Not all convenors complete all elements of the feedback form in full. Numbers referred to here in each category reflect the data that are available in that section of the Official Feedback Forms. Totals will therefore vary between sections.

Not all feedback forms included the total number of participants. Where this was missing, tallies in other sections (for example, number of participants by age or by gender) provides a more complete picture of over 15,000 people seen to have contributed to the dialogues. The actual number was certainly higher. For the previous synthesis (May 2021) this number was 1,000 people. This represents a significant acceleration of the Member State Dialogue process.

The dialogues represent a mix of stages from across the countries that have submitted feedback forms. Where possible, a breakdown by stage of dialogue is presented. On average, participation in stage two dialogues is higher than in stage one (average 70 participants per dialogue in stage one and 127 participants in stage two). Stage three data is only submitted from a small number of countries with some running very large, mass participation events, so it is not yet possible to extract a meaningful output from the participation data.

2.1.   Gender

5483 men and 4960 women participated in the Member State Dialogues with a further 77 people identifying differently or preferring not to say. This means that approximately 47% of participants are female, which is slightly higher compared to the May 2021 Synthesis.

Gender Distribution in Dialogue Participants

■ Male ■ Female ■ Other

1%

47%

52%
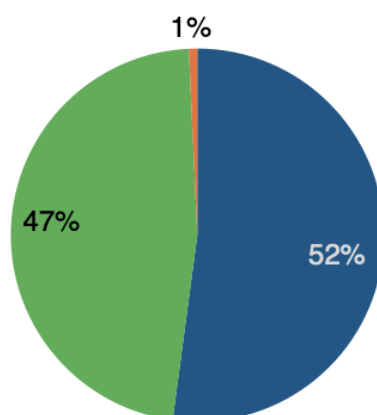
2.2. Age

Across all stages, the majority of participants are in the 31-50 years age range. More younger people are participating in stage two dialogues than stage one, as these dialogues have a more local and less governmental focus. Convenors have made intentional efforts in several countries to engage more young people in their dialogues.

Age Distribution of Participants by Dialogue Stage
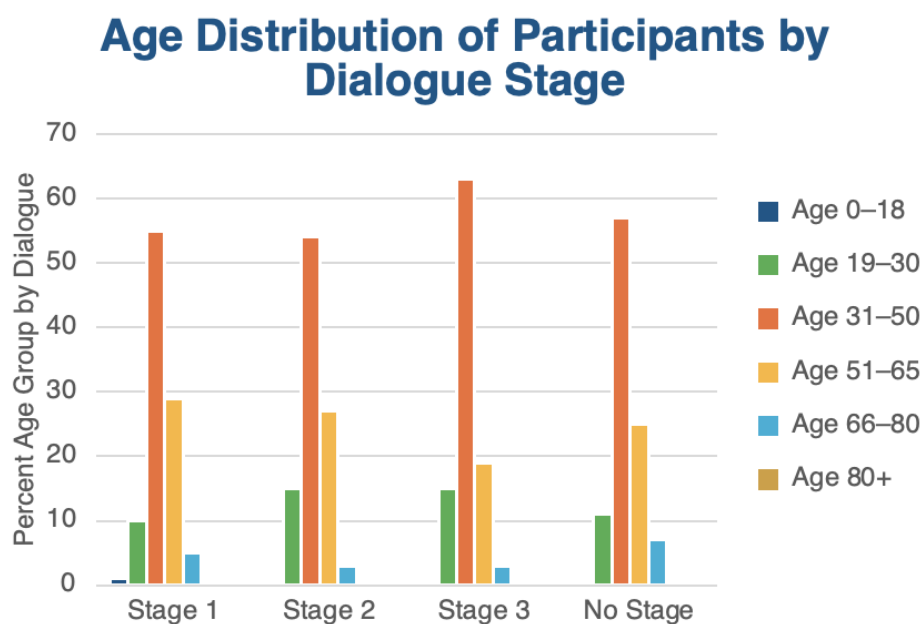
2.3. Sector

For stage one, 'communications' figures strongly as a sector and yet is proportionally reduced for participation in stage two. This is due to high attendance from this sector in one Malaysian dialogue.

For stage two, 'national or local government provides' the largest single group of participants but with 'agriculture and crops' providing a major grouping of participants. 'Education' and 'health' feature strongly, with participation then spread widely across a range of sectors.

'Other' accounts for less than 13% of participants overall.

Sector Participation Rates by Dialogue Stage

Percent Representation by Dialogue Stage

Legend:
- 1. National or local government
- 2. Other
- 3. Agriculture/crops
- 4. Education
- 5. Environment and ecology
- 6. Communication
- 7. Health care
- 8. Food industry
- 9. Livestock
- 10. Trade and commerce
- 11. Food processing
- 12. Nutrition
- 13. Industrial
- 14. Food retail, markets
- 15. Fish and aquaculture
- 16. Utilities
- 17. Financial Services
- 18. Agro-forestry
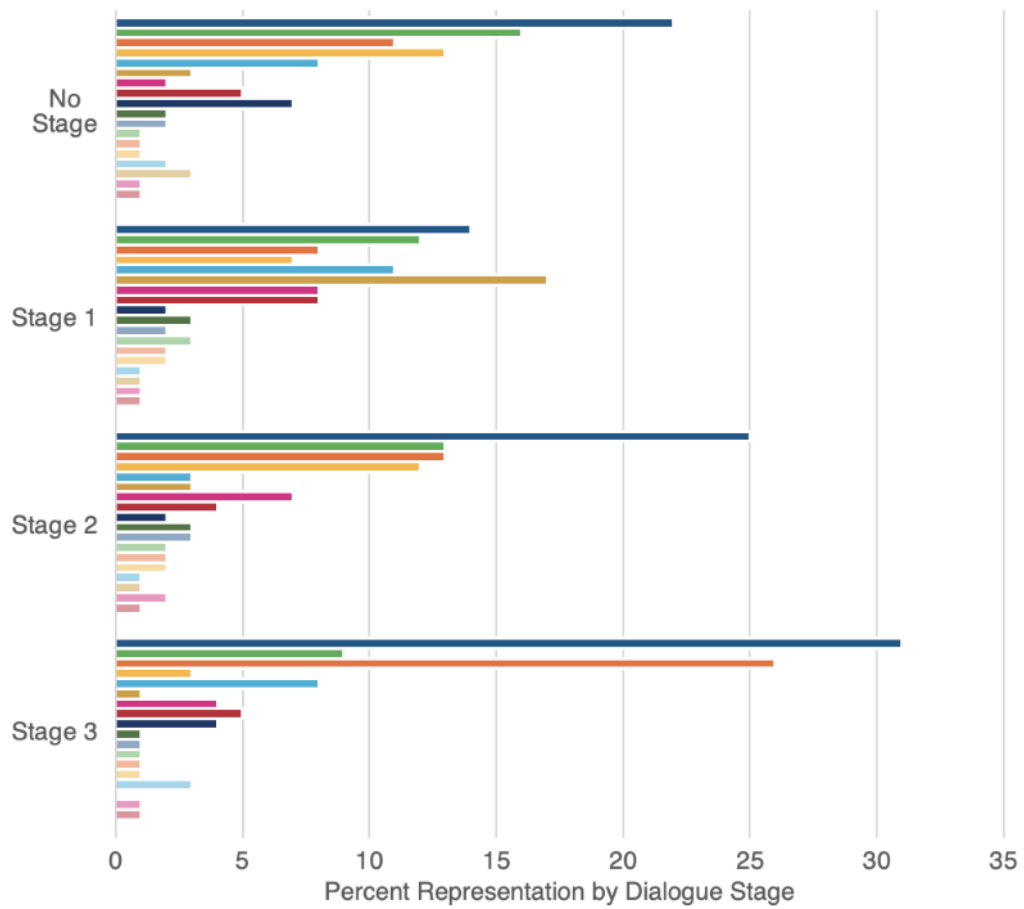
From mid-April 2021, the additional sector of "nutrition" was added and accounted for in Official Feedback Forms and the sector "Crops" was adjusted to be identified as "Agriculture/crops".

2.4. Stakeholder Group

Participation by stakeholder groups shows a progression from stage one to stage two. This reflects the active efforts by convenors to widen their circle of engagement. Convenors identified groups that were under-represented in stage one and created strategies to ensure they were better reached and included for stage two. The graph below shows those participating in a Member State dialogue by stakeholder group, however, as many Member State convenors also linked to Independent Dialogues with the express intention of broadening participation, it is anticipated that actual participation of these groups is higher.

The graph shows that between stage one and stage two there is a **clear increase in the numbers and proportion of small-scale farmers, large scale farmers, Indigenous peoples, workers and trade unions, and local NGOs**. The **numbers of large national businesses declined** from stage one to stage two. For both stages, government and national institutions provide the largest single number of participants. The largest single overall grouping is once again from civil society.

Stakeholder Partcipation Rates by Dialogue Stage

Percent Representation by Dialogue Stage

- 1. Government and national institution
- 2. Science and academia
- 3. Other
- 4. Local Non-Governmental Organization
- 5. Local authority
- 6. Small-scale farmer
- 7. United Nations
- 8. Small/medium enterprise/artisan
- 9. International Non-Governmental Organization
- 10. Large national business
- 11. Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
- 12. Consumer group
- 13. Workers and trade union
- 14. Medium-scale farmer
- 15. Multi-national corporation
- 16. Large-scale farmer
- 17. Indigenous People
- 18. International financial institution
- 19. Regional economic community
- 20. Member of Parliament

3. Ensuring food systems are fit for the future: convergence in dialogue outcomes

The National Dialogues have focused on a) the desired characteristics of food systems by 2030 and b) priority issues for attention now for these characteristics to be realized. This section draws out key messages from the dialogues about what needs to change, while recognizing the actual priorities identified will depend on local specificities and that the interconnections between priorities are viewed differently in each setting. In this section, priorities emerging from the national dialogues are grouped in relation to the objectives of the Summit.

The objectives of the Summit, linked to the five Action Tracks, are as follows:

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
5. Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

3.1. Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all

Enabling all people to access the food that they need to live life to the full:
There is remarkable consistency across feedback forms on the need to ensure that all people can access not only food, but also the nutrients needed for them to achieve their full potential in life, as a fundamental human right and as critical for addressing both poverty and ill health. Their focus has been sharpened by the multiple impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's access to nutrients. Feedback forms draw attention to the challenges arising from dependence on food imports, the importance of trade and the diversification of local agricultural production, and the specific risks for import-dependent communities. Feedback forms refer to the need for people to be able to access food that reflects national cultures and enables them to meet religious obligations.

Available and affordable nutrition for all:
Many of the national dialogues emphasised the need to complement policies that focus on increasing production of specific products with a greater emphasis on access to good nutrition. Indeed, feedback forms all acknowledge the importance of both goals. There is repeated emphasis on the need to increase access to the foods (and nutrients) needed to ensure people's food and nutrition security including through the fortification of food, exploring ways to improve access to protein, as well as encouraging local production, access, and transportation of nutritious foods designed to respond to specific nutritional needs. This includes increasing production and access to a diverse range of foods, including for example, 'blue foods.'

Action to end malnutrition in all its forms:
Feedback forms from national Dialogues reveal a widespread perception that enabling people to enjoy good nutrition is a central feature of all food policies. Some suggest that ending malnutrition should be a central feature of all food policies, while others suggest that specific initiatives need to be added to respond to the needs of groups most at risk of malnutrition; These include pregnant women, young children, and older people, as well groups with specific needs (including persons with disabilities), especially within poorer households and communities. This calls for a multisectoral approach that involves authorities responsible for health, education and social welfare as well as those concerned with food

production, processing and marketing. Responding to the needs of the most vulnerable communities calls for nutrition action plans that are designed in ways that enable them to meet their specific nutritional needs.

Food safety:
The feedback forms from many dialogues comment on the need to improve and assure continuing food security and safety through better national legislation, policies, and regulation. Specifically, this includes the safety of water used in food production; levels (and type) of fats, sugars, and salt in foodstuffs; packaging and labelling; and the need to limit agrochemical residues in food. Feedback forms also stress the importance of regulation and traceability 'from farm to fork,' the importance of enforcing safety standards for food products, and the need to ensure animal welfare standards are maintained throughout food systems. Feedback also emphasised the need for consistent application of norms and standards to industrially produced food and, where relevant, regulation of informal food suppliers such as street traders.

Feedback Form References for this section

Albania (23459); Argentina (16091,16096); Armenia (6197); Bahamas (11895); Bangladesh (2568); Bolivia (25704); Brazil(14580); Cambodia (7273,8374,11675); Dominican Republic (13101,13646,13654,13677); El Salvador (17191,17208,17216); Fiji (23720, 23722); Finland (4531); Guatemala (14783); Honduras (8427,19894); India (25737); Ireland (9820); Israel (15749,15760,21856); Italy (11334); Kuwait (8054); Malaysia (22945, 22931); Mexico (11752); Netherlands (20392); Nigeria (2736,8622); Oman (10765); Rwanda (8496,8907); Spain (14692).

3.2. Shift to sustainable consumption patterns

The links between food consumption and people's well-being:
Most feedback forms reflect the growing recognition of the links between eating habits acquired early in life and the risk of experiencing diet related Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) later in life. This trend has increased as many people around the world shift from traditional to more modern diets. Dialogues highlight the need to encourage all people to make healthier food choices and reduce their consumption of less nutritious foods. There is consensus in the feedback forms on the value of encouraging people everywhere to consume foods that are beneficial for their nutrition and health. Interventions should be based on analyses of the challenges to encouraging healthier eating, including the perception that health and nutritious foods tend to be more expensive for consumers to purchase. Indeed, many feedback forms comment that healthy food must be accessible and affordable for low-income citizens.

Existing strategies to encourage nutritious consumption, including media campaigns and education programmes need to be assessed with a view to appreciating what can work in different settings. Some feedback forms reflect on the enormous advantages that hyper-processed foods offer—in terms of ease of access and time needed for preparation—though their widespread use is often seen to be associated with obesity and NCDs. Strategies are proposed for increasing awareness of the risks posed by hyper-processed foods, and for reducing their consumption: these include enhanced regulations around their advertising and marketing.

The potential value of reinforcing healthy choices through school gardens and canteen menus, and the use of locally produced food from small-scale producers in canteens was also identified. Sports education and encouragement in schools is also cited. Other proposed approaches include improved food labelling,

greater clarity and awareness about the costs of more nutritious food, and increased prices for non-nutritious foods.

NCDs:

Feedback forms comment on the prevalence of foodborne and diet-related illnesses. Reducing imports of super-processed foods and regulation of advertising and marketing of unhealthy products is proposed in several dialogues. The change from traditional diets over recent years is seen as a contributory factor in the growth in NCDs. Feedback forms also note that NCDs and malnutrition both exist in many countries and that this should be recognised in national food policies.

One Health approach:

Three feedback forms refer directly to One Health, stressing its importance and drawing attention to issues around anti-microbial resistance. It is suggested that support can be given to One Health through digital and technological innovation.

Food loss and waste:

There is a great deal of common ground in feedback forms to the reduction of waste in national food systems. They comment, for example, on the need to establish and maintain an infrastructure for sustainable local food production, including modern food processing and storage methods, and also a need for public/private partnerships. Feedback forms identify the need for international and national policy and legislation on the recovery of surpluses and recycling food that is not consumed. There are also several specific proposals such as support for SMEs to better preserve locally produced fruit and vegetables as well as co-operative approaches to encourage the adoption of modern food processing and packing techniques.

[Feedback Form References for this section](#)

[Albania (23459); Argentina (16091); Armenia (6197); Australia (15370,18887); Bahamas (11895); Bangladesh (2568,22770); Brazil (14580); Cambodia (7957,16717); Colombia (14995, 16124); Denmark (11119); Ecuador (16065); El Salvador (17191,17208,20506,22481); Fiji (23720,23722); EU (18790); Finland (4531,5032); Georgia (12277); Guatemala (4694,14783); Hungary (2066); India (25737); Ireland (9820); Israel (15810, 15749,15798,21856,21873); Japan (11622); Korea (14566); Kuwait (8054,16241,16258); Italy (11334); Malaysia; 22931, Mexico (11752,11966); Netherlands (20392); Nigeria (2736,7737,8634); Oman (10765); Rwanda (8496,8907); Samoa (25374); Sudan (9381); Switzerland (5003); Turkey (19998,21143); USA (1871,15282,25665).](#)

3.3.   Boost nature-positive production

The feedback forms from national dialogues refer to environmental degradation and climate change as overarching challenges for food systems. The costs associated with these changes should, ideally, be properly factored into the prices paid for food by consumers. This cannot happen without a greater appreciation that food systems of the future need to reflect the finite nature of natural resources, whether they are viewed from local, national, or international perspectives. Nature should be valued properly and managed sustainably, with an appropriate mix of preservation and regeneration, and the maintenance of biological diversity. Numerous feedback forms also comment on the need for appropriate international policy and regulatory regimes.

The feedback forms identify the need for policy frameworks that encourage climate-smart, water-conserving, energy-saving, food production systems for crops, livestock, aquatic foods, and forest products. There are specific references to the need for appropriate policies and practices in relation to soil and water management; efficient land use; the benefits of reducing GHGs from livestock; and the need for appropriate policies to protect and preserve forests, noting for example the impact of deforestation on

Indigenous peoples' food sources. Other areas arising in feedback forms include comment on reducing the use of chemicals and pesticides, promoting organic farming, seed bank development, and encouraging plant-based diets with reduced intake of meat and dairy products.

Within the context of an overall intention for all food production to be nature-positive, a wide range of specific actions are proposed or under consideration. These include environmentally friendly agricultural production; payments to producers for their contributions to nature and to mitigating climate change; linking agricultural support (including subsidies) to environmental outcomes; documenting conservation measures; development and communication of appropriate regional regulations and protocols; and appropriate changes in legislation on land use.

Feedback Form References for this section

Albania (23459); Argentina (16091); Armenia (6197); Bahamas (11895); Bangladesh (22770); Bolivia (25704); Cambodia (7957,16588,17001); Colombia (14995); Denmark (11119); Dominican Republic (13673); El Salvador (16688,17191); EU (18790); Finland (4531); Georgia (12277); Honduras (19896); India (25737); Israel (15760); Japan (9704,23739); Korea (14566); Kuwait (8054); Mexico (11752,11966); Netherlands (20392); Nigeria (2736,8657); Rwanda (10124); Samoa (25374); Spain (17668); Sudan (9381); Switzerland (9381); Turkey (21143); USA (1871,15282).

3.4. Advance equitable livelihoods

Ensuring smallholder producers and food system workers are fully involved in food systems transformation:
The feedback forms indicate that the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of households, whose livelihoods are based on their involvement in food systems, are directly influenced by the ways in which the systems function. The feedback forms underlined that small-scale food producers, who only produce a proportion of the food their families need each year and thus try to make up the gap through income from labouring, experience high levels of distress because of indebtedness. The feedback forms indicate a desire for fundamental changes in the functioning of national food systems to create sustainable and adequately remunerated opportunities for employment and contribute to reducing poverty. Participants describe the need to develop and nurture new arrangements to engage food systems stakeholders who have the least power and income, in food systems transformations that are just, characterised by greater collaboration, a fairer distribution of value along the value chain, and purpose-driven public/private partnerships that support the transformation.

Enabling smallholders to benefit from increases in production:
Feedback forms record multiple approaches for increasing the involvement of smallholder producers (farmers, fishers, livestock keepers, forest dwellers, and more) through reforming the legal and economic environment in which they work and providing targeted support tailored to their needs. These include policy changes around taxation, subsidies, and legislation. Other feedback forms comment on the importance of ensuring adequate physical infrastructure to increase participation in food systems, including through fair access to irrigation and transportation routes that respond to needs. There is a particular emphasis on supporting smallholders from vulnerable communities, especially those who belong to ethnic minorities and Indigenous peoples groups: this may include targeted social protection and preferential access to markets. There is also widespread recognition of the importance of engaging and supporting young people and women in their roles as food producers.

Access to productive resources and market opportunities:
Feedback forms from national dialogues also point to underlying and longstanding structural issues which may inhibit poorer peoples' engagement in food systems, such as difficulties with ensuring access to land or water. They refer to systemic inequalities in food systems and identify the increasing challenges faced by Indigenous peoples and others who may have more limited opportunities. Feedback stresses the need

for greater community engagement and ownership of food systems strategies and the urgency of rebuilding food systems infrastructure to include and pay attention to the interests of smallholders and food system labourers.

SME growth:

Small and medium enterprises are identified in the feedback forms as of critical importance within food systems, especially when attempts are made to increase local production and consideration is being given locating processing facilities in rural areas to promote local smallholder development. Additionally, emphasis is given to ensuring that smallholders can access credit at reasonable terms when they need it.

Feedback Form References for this section

Albania (23459); Australia (,8887); Bangladesh (2568,22770); Bolivia (25704); Brazil (14586); Colombia (14995); Cambodia (7957); Ecuador (16065); El Salvador (17191,17208); Fiji (23722); Finland (4531,5032); Georgia (12277); Guatemala (4694,14783); Honduras (8427,8707); India (25737); Ireland (9826,9829); Japan (23739); Kuwait (8054); Netherlands (20392); Nigeria (2736,7737); Oman (10765); Philippines (23800); Rwanda (8496,10147); Samoa (25374); Spain (14692); Sudan (9381); Sweden (8205); Switzerland (5003); Turkey (21143); USA (1871,15282).

3.5.   Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

Feedback forms refer to the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises as valuable learning experiences in fostering food system resilience. They focus on the resilience of farmer livelihoods, food supply, and access to nutrients in the face of shocks and stresses including climate change, conflict, and disease outbreaks like COVID-19. They reflect the importance of an international framework of policy and practice to support national resilience and identify the need for investment to reinforce existing national resilience frameworks.

Feedback forms also refer to the importance of insurance schemes that enable producers to access exceptional funds to help them mitigate emergencies and other social protection measures, which include the protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups through nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes.

Feedback forms comment on other ways to increase resilience; for example, by reducing reliance on imported food, support for smallholder farmers, and enhancement of local food production, storage and transport chains. Feedback forms also highlight the potential benefits of developing regenerative and circular food systems to foster resilience: they comment on the merits of diversified, local food systems (for example, at regional level or around cities, to reduce reliance on local monocultures and so increase resilience to shocks). In this, resilience should be a property of all food systems whether viewed from the perspective of the producer, the consumer, or of society as a whole.

Feedback form References for this section

Albania (2459); Armenia (6197); Australia (15364); Bangladesh (2568); Colombia (14995); Cambodia (2549,16717); Dominican Republic (13285); Ecuador (16065); Fiji (23720); Finland (4531); Georgia (12277); Guatemala (14783); Honduras (8427,8707); Hungary; 2066, Israel (21866, 21856); India (25737); Japan (23739); Korea (14566); Kuwait (8054); Mexico (11752); Nigeria (2736); Oman (10765); Rwanda (8496,8878); Samoa (25374); Sweden (8205); Switzerland (5003); USA (1871).

4. Achieving transformation through Levers of Change

The Food Systems Summit identifies four Levers of Change for advancing food systems transformation: a) prioritizing universal realization of the Right to Food; b) advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, c) adopting technical and social innovations and d) the strategic use of public and private finance. Each of these Levers are relevant to advancing the five Summit objectives and Action Tracks. When applied in combination, they can bring about significant progress for both food systems transformation and the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The section examines how the four Levers of Change are referred to in the Official Feedback Forms of national dialogues. Other potential 'levers,' which emerge repeatedly in feedback forms, are also highlighted.

4.1. Human Rights

The right of each person to be able to access the nutritious food needed for health and well-being is seen as a vital foundation for the future of national food systems in the feedback from many dialogues. The dialogues in Spain started from the need to ensure the fundamental right of every person to access adequate food (14692). The central importance of food security was stressed in the feedback from Argentina (16091) and the need to ensure that healthy foods are accessible to all was referred to in the Bolivia feedback (25704). Rwanda (10147) speaks to the importance of rights more broadly than the right to food, specifically the rights at work, and the need to raise incomes and redistribute risk protection. The feedback from El Salvador stressed the importance of enabling all in a household to realize their right to food, and also reported that sometimes food is prioritized for men and boys with the consequence that women have a higher risk of becoming malnourished (17191). The feedback from Mexico recognized the need to address both obesity and undernutrition in the population (11966). Ireland mentions rights-based approaches to governance as important in official development assistance policy (9829).

4.2. Women and Youth

The need to tackle gender inequality and increase the engagement of young people in food systems are constant themes throughout the national dialogue feedback forms. There is specificity as to the changes needed including, increasing women and youth involvement in food production (Rwanda; 8496), creating jobs for young people in food and agriculture (Japan; 23739), market-oriented competitive products to develop value chains for small-holder farmers, women, and youth (Georgia 12277), school feeding linked to family farming (Ecuador; 16065), incentives for young people to stay in the islands (Bahamas; 11895), incentives for youth farmers (Korea 14566), empowering women by institutionalising rights to land (India; 25737), and supporting young people and women as key drivers of change in the transition to more sustainable food systems (Ireland; 9826).

4.3. Innovation

Both technical and social Innovation are seen as key to ensuring that food systems are both sustainable and equitable. It is often mentioned generically but many specific examples of where innovation is needed are also given, including innovative approaches for boosting resilience (Australia; 15364), innovative solutions to reduce deforestations in value chains (Denmark; 11119), and innovation to encourage regenerative and circular food systems (Samoa; 25374). In the Philippines, better involvement of

smallholders in contributing to food systems of the future will depend on the extent to which they are able to access and use innovative technologies (Philippines; 23800). In the Nigerian dialogues (2736), participants propose an innovative monitoring framework to track improvements in systems performance and also propose ensuring inclusive access to technology (2736) and scaling up the use of sustainable technologies throughout the food system (for example, in cold chains) (Denmark 11119).

4.4.   Finance

The strategic use of public and private finance is identified as a key lever in feedback from many dialogues. Access to finance and credit (Albania; 23459) is mentioned as an important means to encourage economic growth, particularly amongst SMEs. This is echoed by others who see better access to finance and insurance as important also for smallholders (Rwanda; 8496). Targeted investment choices can build resilience in sustainable food systems (Armenia 6197). Examples of this include a development fund and development bank (Oman; 10765). Feedback forms also refer to the use of finance to incentivise system shifts like the use of subsidies to support improvements in food quality rather than increases in the quantity that is produced (Kuwait; 16258).

Below are other issues that also appear regularly in the feedback forms which may emerge as levers for systems transformation.

4.5.   Metrics and data

Many feedback forms comment on the need for better analysis of national food systems and highlight plans to review and develop food systems knowledge bases. Proposals include an ambition to integrate various existing food industry databases and to upgrade laboratory capacity. A particular area of knowledge mentioned in feedback forms concerns mechanisms and data for monitoring performance and evaluating policy initiatives in food systems.
(Armenia; 6197, Australia; 23300, Denmark; 11119, Dominican Republic; 13673, Fiji; 23722, Finland; 4531, Israel; 15760, Japan; 9700, Nigeria; 8634, 8637, Rwanda; 10124, Samoa; 25374, Sweden; 8182, Switzerland; 5003, SPC Intergovernmental; 11735)

4.6.   Access to a universal body of Indigenous, traditional, and scientific knowledge

Building up the body of knowledge related to food systems is repeatedly acknowledged as vital. There are various forms of knowledge described. Resources are needed to secure ancestral knowledge and link it to innovation and scientific knowledge (Ecuador; 16065, SPC 11735, Samoa 25374). There is a general recognition in the feedback forms of the importance of respecting and preserving ancestral, traditional, and Indigenous knowledge around food systems, seeds, and plants. Other recurring themes include building public knowledge on nutrition and public education (Nigeria: 2736), promoting food education and raising awareness of healthy diets (Argentina; 16091,16096,16099), improving access to information (Rwanda; 8907), and educational campaigns for local food consumption (Bolivia; 25704).

4.7.   Research and Development

Feedback forms comment on the need for increased international and national research and development into innovation and best practice.

Feedback forms also suggest that expertise and knowledge should be developed and shared more readily both regionally and internationally. They also indicate that, within countries, more should be done to spread knowledge and experience among farmers; for example, through education and training, and also by supporting new technology applications by farmers. There are specific comments in feedback forms

about the importance of community participation in research and development, particularly by women and young people.

Feedback forms also highlight some other specific research interests, for example, alternative protein sources, chemical synthesis products to improve crop sustainability, and warning systems for zoonotic disease.

(Bangladesh;2568, Brazil; 14583, Cambodia; 9908, Colombia; 14995, Dominican Republic; 13285, Ecuador; 16065, El Salvador; 22481, EU; 18790, Fiji; 23722, Finland; 4531, Hungary; 2066, India; 25737, Ireland; 9826, 9829, Israel, 21856; Italy; 11334, Kuwait; 8054, Malaysia; 22945, Nigeria; 2736, 8634, 7737, 8600, 17247, Rwanda, 8878, 8496, Sweden; 8205, Switzerland; 5003, USA; 1871)

4.8.   Regulation

Regulation is recognised as a means by which governments can intervene in food systems to effect transformation. There are numerous points where this intervention can occur. Regulation of pesticides and harmful waste (Dominican Republic; 13673), food and water safety regulation (Nigeria; 2736), reducing use of chemical pesticides and fertiliser (Japan; 20939), regulation and traceability of food from farm to fork (Israel; 21856), and enforcement of food safety legislation (Armenia; 6197, Georgia; 12277).

4.9.   Infrastructure

Either through directly investing in infrastructure or through incentivising development, feedback forms comment repeatedly on the need for enhanced infrastructure. This takes many forms: promoting producer associations and cooperatives (Dominican Republic; 13646), infrastructure for value chain development (Armenia; 6197, Georgia; 12277; Nigeria 2736); infrastructure development in response to disasters (Japan; 23739); enhance investment in infrastructure to support innovation and increase resilience (Kuwait; 8054) and with an ultimate aim to make food value chains more efficient and sustainable (Mexico; 11966).

4.10. Governance

Feedback from national dialogues reveals that transformation in food systems requires governments to examine their own processes, for example strengthening public policy and governance of agricultural systems (Colombia; 16124), long term planning in water and land management (Israel; 15760), policies to address institutional and systemic barriers to improved livelihoods (Samoa; 25374) and policies and legislation to ensure recovery of food surpluses (Italy; 11334). Many see a need for radical change in government structures and call for intensification of public/private partnerships (Kuwait; 8054) and stress that there is a need for more discussion across government Ministries and departments to establish food systems policies that are fit for the future (Cambodia; 7967; Nigeria 2736).

Feedback form References

Argentina (16091,16096,16099); Armenia (6197); Australia (23300); Bahamas (11895); Bolivia (25704); Brazil (14586); Colombia (14995); Dominican Republic (13285); Ecuador (16065); El Salvador (20506,22481); EU (18790); Fiji (23722); Finland (5032); Georgia (12277); Guatemala (14783); Ireland (9702,9826); Israel (21856); Italy (11334); Japan (9700,20335); Korea (12916); Kuwait (8054); Netherlands (20392); Nigeria (2736); Philippines (23800); Rwanda (8878,10127); Samoa (25374); Sweden (8205); SPC (11735); Switzerland (5003); USA (1871).

5. Frequently mentioned areas of divergence

The Official Feedback Form asked Convenors to comment on particular areas of divergence in their dialogues. Not all did so. The feedback forms highlight several issues that are challenging because they are still contested by different groups of stakeholders. They draw attention to decisions that need to be worked through, involving trade-offs and negotiation at a political level within different jurisdictions. These challenges and trade-offs are characterised below.

5.1. National Food System Priorities

Reports from the dialogues indicate the challenge of combining all food systems objectives within a single approach to transformation. There is a divergence of views on what to prioritize given incompatibilities between the economic, environmental, and human dimensions of sustainability. How can all be prioritized at the same time? Many feedback forms point to the trade-offs that must be worked through so that a balanced approach evolves. The tensions need to be exposed and debated within different political contexts (Australia, Cambodia, Honduras, Ireland, Samoa, Sweden, Switzerland).

5.2. Food and nutrition security versus nutritious and sustainable eating

The dialogues reflect the growing interest worldwide on the health impacts of what people eat, for example, in the form of diet-related disease and non-communicable disease. However, at the same time, many countries are experiencing widespread under-nutrition frequently caused by food shortages and face challenges with ensuring year-round availability of food.

The feedback form from Armenia (6197) stresses the tension in policymaking – between a focus on ensuring that everyone can access a healthy diet and prioritizing food processing and transportation so that an economically viable food sector contributes more to the nation's prosperity.

5.3. Remunerative food prices for farmers versus Affordable nutritious food for consumers

Food with a high nutrient density is perceived to be more costly to produce in a sustainable way than staples. Several feedback forms highlight that this high cost of production must be reflected in the price consumers pay, not least to ensure a proper return to producers, but this may mean that such food is not affordable for poorer and more vulnerable members of society.

This tension between ensuring that producers are properly remunerated and that consumers can afford to pay for nutritious food is mentioned in feedback from many Dialogues, especially Fiji 23720, Honduras 8707, Japan 22007, Kuwait 16258, Sweden, and USA.

5.4. Local production of nutritious food and managed imports versus unfettered trade in foodstuffs

Reports from many dialogues stress the importance of increasing local food production and shortening supply chains to reduce dependence on imports and bring benefits to local economies. Local food production brings valuable opportunities for promoting nutrient-dense foods, increasing local opportunities for employment, for career development, and for creating viable businesses, especially SMEs.

At the same time, most of the Member States engaged in the Dialogues have signed Free and Open trade agreements, either globally, regionally or bilaterally: these limit the extent to which they can restrict imports so as to protect emerging local production systems or promote specific consumption patterns with a view to improving nutrition and health outcomes. Many feedback forms indicate that, during national dialogues, one of the tensions that surfaced was the desire to support increased local production while complying with free trade agreements (Brazil 14586, Cambodia 7957, Colombia 14995, Fiji 23720, Finland 5032, Israel 21866, Japan 22007, Rwanda 8878, Samoa 25374).

5.5.   Choice of Agriculture production model

During the national dialogues it was recognized that food production can be detrimental to the environment in several ways, for example by degrading soil, depleting water supplies, and contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, agriculture practices often evolve slowly, so the shift to more sustainable production methods must be initiated now if it is to be successful by 2030. Feedback from national dialogues confirms the need for environmentally sustainable agriculture production practices, including a shift to agroecology. At the same time, some feedback forms – especially from national dialogues in agro-exporting countries – remind us that the world's growing population needs to be able to access sufficient nutrients and energy: some question whether this can be achieved through nature-positive practices and 'green deals.'

Many feedback forms point at the tensions which can exist between agro-ecology and high-input agriculture, or modernised production versus traditional methods (Brazil 14583, Cambodia 17001, Israel 15760, Nigeria, Switzerland).

5.6.   Plant-based diets versus Animal production

Feedback from some dialogues articulates the human, environmental, and economic benefits of increasing the proportion of protein intake that is derived from plant sources as an alternative to animal-sourced protein, especially red meat. Feedback from several other dialogues indicates that enhanced livestock production is a vital strategy for improving the economic condition and well-being of smallholders. It raises questions about the best ways to support local livestock production while at the same time encouraging a shift from an overreliance on animal sourced protein (Australia, EU 18790, Finland 5032, Ireland 9702, Israel 15749).

5.7.   Governments' regulation versus Individual Behaviour Change

Many countries are coping with the costs of responding to the dietary-related diseases of their populations. These include long term conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Obesity, often resulting from excessive consumption of energy-dense foods, is associated with risks to health and life. There are also related problems of food waste caused by the production and consumption of cheap but non-nutritious foodstuffs.

Feedback forms from national dialogues reflect the continuing debate about where responsibility lies for action to encourage healthy eating. What is the correct role for governments in educating to encourage widespread consumption of nutritious food? To what extent should governments intervene (for example, to limit imports of food with low nutritious quality)? Should such food be taxed to discourage consumption? Should advertising or the promotion of less-nutritious food be restricted? Should there be special attention to the food environment of younger people as dietary habits are developed? There is much comment on the need to educate and inform everyone, beginning with young people in schools, about the benefits of nutritious diets and healthy lifestyles.

A few feedback forms offer the perspective that consumers have the right to make their own choices about their lifestyles and that the involvement of governments is to be kept to a minimum (Honduras 19894, Nigeria, USA).

5.8. Political willingness to change versus Limited capacity

Several feedback forms stress the tension between the involvement of different government ministries and departments in the transformation of food systems, and the limited number of skilled professionals and amount of finance available to advance such a transformation (Bahamas 11895, Ecuador, Samoa 25374).

Some stress the limited institutional capacities to coordinate across sectors and stakeholders (Nigeria).

One feedback form reported a discussion about whether it is better to rely on development partners or the national government in leading the food systems transformation (Honduras 8707).

5.9. Long term reforms versus Urgency for change

Some Dialogues spotlight land reform (Cambodia) or trade (Sweden) as important Levers of Change, while stressing that these reforms take a long time to be negotiated and implemented, and therefore not compatible with the urgent need for change.

5.10. Summary

Feedback forms reveal the numerous tensions that must be navigated as national food systems are reviewed and their transformation is shaped. Dialogues surface the tensions between differing priorities and the political trade-offs to be resolved and the feedback confirm the importance of governance for food system transformation that facilitates negotiation between different interests while maintaining a focus on sustainability, equity, and resilience by 2030.

The Food Systems Summit Dialogues are an invitation to all stakeholders in society to recognise and address contentious issues where there are not necessarily any right or wrong answers. Resolution will require continuing dialogue and compromise both nationally and internationally.

6. Emergence of Pathways

A multi-stakeholder exploration through dialogues of food systems in a country is a fundamental element in shaping a national pathway to a sustainable and equitable food system by 2030.

The three stages of the Food Systems Summit Dialogues help participants identify the characteristics of the current systems (stage one of the Member State dialogue), generate a wide range of potential adaptations and evolutions of those systems (stage two of the Member State dialogue), and then consolidate these into an agreed sense of direction (stage three of the Member State dialogue).

The process by which the Member States do this, by assembling a diverse and inclusive range of stakeholders around commonly held visions of the future (framed in the dialogue discussion topics), has an added benefit. It builds a sense of commitment around the solutions that are emerging and gives convenors a sense of how fast a pathway might progress in particular directions.

The Official Feedback Form does not ask specifically for information on pathways. As the dialogue process develops through its stages, convenors increasingly connect the consolidating commitments from their dialogues with existing policy. The solutions identified and commitments to achieving them easily form elements of a pathway. This will become increasingly evident as more countries complete their stage three dialogues.

There is also value gained when countries took time to ensure their national convenor was well connected to in-country political processes. Ensuring the sponsorship and connection at the outset may have taken countries some time (meaning a later start to their dialogue programme), yet at this stage in the process helps connect the dialogue output to governmental policy and timetables.

Guidance has been provided on 'Articulating National Pathways for Food Systems Transformation in Support of the 2030 Agenda'. The guidance suggests the pathway is a strategic document that considers six important factors.

- Appreciate the purposes of current food systems.
- Clarify and agree on the expectations of national food systems in the coming decade.
- Identify changes to be made and decisions that must be worked through in the coming three years.
- Define how stakeholders can work well together for collective action.
- Highlight and reinforce connections between the pathway and other planning documents.
- Indicate key milestones along the timeline of the pathway.

Member States developing pathways

Engagement with national convenors gives an indication of where Member States are potentially developing pathways. These countries are listed below (numbers in parentheses refer to a specific feedback form.) *Other Member States not included in the synthesis are also developing pathways.*

- Albania
- Armenia
- Bahamas
- Bangladesh
- Bolivia
- Cambodia
- Colombia
- Denmark
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Fiji
- Finland
- Georgia
- Guatemala
- Honduras (8707)
- India
- Israel
- Japan
- Korea
- Kuwait (8054, 16258)
- Mexico (11966)
- Nigeria
- Oman
- Philippines
- Rwanda
- Samoa
- Sudan
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Turkey

7. Commentary on patterns observable from the synthesis of Official Feedback Forms

Several topics recur repeatedly across the feedback from multiple countries and in conversations regarding 'pathways.' From this data patterns are emerging. Drawing attention to these patterns is a way of making sense of the complexity of food systems and identifying potential opportunities for transformation.

This section of the synthesis comments on some emerging patterns from the data provided in countries' Official Feedback Forms and points to connections between those patterns. It is an interpretation of dialogue outcomes and is not intended to be exhaustive. The intent is that in helping to make sense of the huge volume of data from countries' Official Feedback Forms, potential areas where countries are collectively indicating the need for action become more apparent and potential areas for collaboration become clearer. These observations are offered as a way of triggering further reflection on current outcomes and deepening exchanges as the dialogues progress.

Inevitably, in a complex system patterns tend to overlap. Decisions made and actions taken in the context of one pattern may have impacts on others, either directly or indirectly over time. These impacts may be positive and negative, intended and unintended, foreseen and unforeseen. Each emerging pattern presented below likewise reflects emerging perspectives of the national government, local authorities, and several stakeholder groups. Each pattern is followed by a comment on its implications in terms of the kinds of decisions being worked through and ways in which the basis of these decisions appears to be changing in advance of the Summit.

1. Rising to the Challenge of Food Systems Transformation

There is an intention to accelerate and deepen the transformation of food systems in order to ensure that they better reflect the interests and needs of people and planet, and contribute to sustainability, equity and resilience.

As the national dialogues progress, participants appreciate the benefits of looking at food systems from a wide-angle perspective and through a process which systematically re-evaluates the relationships between food and people, the planet, and prosperity. The process of food systems transformation involves articulating visions for how the national food systems should be in 2030, focusing on all the SDGs, and concentrating on sustainability, equity, and resilience. It also involves an exploration of options for food-related policies and practices, and the determination of strategies for moving forward together using a multi-stakeholder approach. It requires stakeholders to commit to working through difficult issues quickly by working together despite possible strong personal animosity. The task requires efforts to establish common purpose and build trust: this may take several years.

When a food systems transformation is being framed, a first step is to explore the merits and challenges associated with different transformation strategies. Ideally, strategic elements will reflect both national ambitions and align with the 2030 Agenda. The values that form the basis of the current food system will be re-examined to ensure there is an emphasis on sustainability, equity, and resilience. This framing will lead decision-makers to reconsider the benefits and costs (including hidden costs) associated with different options. The options available, and nature of the choices being made, may change within both public and political discourse. This change in meaning will be made visible through scientific analysis of alternative options within the local context: this will require extensive cross-sector working and interdisciplinary science with full involvement of the stakeholders concerned.

For the transformation process to advance it must take account of possible competition between and tensions among different stakeholder groups, including the degree to which power-relations among stakeholders are made explicit. The Summit will trigger increased demand for structured, cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary, and multi-stakeholder arrangements for supporting transformations that are ambitious (in terms of the 2030 Agenda), well adapted to local realities, and likely to have significant impacts.

2. Nutrition and health

A focus emerged on links between foods consumed and people's well-being (health at all ages and nutrition, especially women and small children) disaggregated by wealth and other attributes.

This has involved a shift in mindsets. A long-standing dominant perspective views *'food as fuel,'* with the objective of food as providing the necessary energy at the lowest possible cost, which means priority for a) high energy density and b) palatable foods. The emerging perspective, as seen in dialogues, is *'Food as nourishment,'* viewing food as the combination of energy and nutrients needed for full body functioning for years to come.

The emerging perspective means that greater attention must be paid to enabling specific population groups to benefit from accessing and utilizing the nutrients required to be able to achieve their full potential: this applies specifically to pregnant women, children under 2 years, older people, persons with special needs, and those experiencing illnesses that interfere with appetite, digestion, or absorption (eg diarrhoea, pneumonia).

In practice, ensuring access to what people need to be well nourished is likely to include making food systems 'nutrition - and health-sensitive' through a) encouraging production of, and access to, nutrient-dense and health-giving foods; b) supporting breastfeeding and reducing dependence on breast milk substitutes; c) Focusing on the special needs of different groups in a life-cycle approach to nutrition.

3. Sustainable production systems

There is an emphasis on increasing production in ways that are nature-positive, climate-smart, pro-biodiversity, and adapted to local circumstances. The current dominant perspective is that to produce sufficient food for the world population at low cost, it is necessary to industrialize food production with the help of high quantities of inputs – soil nutrients, crop protection products, and modified seeds – which all have the potential to impact ecosystems. The emerging perspective coming through in the dialogues is that the balance should shift towards regenerative and sustainable food production systems that prioritize ecosystem services, promote biodiversity, and reduce green-house gas emissions. Stakeholders also recognised the potential for optimizing production and sustaining income while adopting more sustainable production practices.

Establishing a sound analytic basis for reaching decisions about the costs and benefits of inputs within local settings calls for well-organized interdisciplinary scientific studies: it takes a willingness to hear and take account of the perspectives of others. As more precise information comes available it will help inform decision-making amid often contentious public debates.

There are well-documented positions in these debates featuring perceived advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to using inputs to support better production. The evaluation of trade-offs involves continued dialogue and is an ongoing process influenced by producer experience and the results of applied research and the nature of the debates, amongst others. In practice, the way forward involves all concerned moving towards positions which seek to balance perceived benefits with known risks.

4. Reducing import dependence

Increasing local-level production and processing to reduce dependence on food imports is likely to include an emphasis on sustainable production practices and social protection of producers.

The current perspective is that if countries can produce nutritious food at low prices, the food should be made widely available through a rules-based international trading system: this system works best if countries avoid introducing bans on exports and if exporters seek to avoid exporting unsafe, less nutritious foods. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted imports in many parts of the world and has revealed vulnerabilities associated with import dependence. This may have changed the parameters of decision-making on how best to maintain food security in important-dependent settings, with higher importance being given to increased local production and the quality of imported food from a nutrition, health, and environmental perspective.

The emerging perspective is that dependence on imports should be reduced as much as possible through stimulating local production and that this should be enhanced through the formation of producer organizations, short supply chains, sustainable production systems, and support for producers (social protection and education). In such situations, increased dependence on local production may introduce new and different challenges. Hence, those responsible for food system governance may wish to think about the way in which local food production is organized. For example, should the emphasis be on cooperatives with their own built-in mechanisms for social protection? Should private enterprises be invited to propose cost-effective options for increasing local production, complemented by plans to import specific items, to fill the gaps, in ways that do not compete with local production?

5. Increasing capacity for food production and export

Priority is given to establishing viable food businesses that connect local production with national and international value chains. The focus is on sustainable production practices, decent conditions of employment for producers, and the production of foods that have high nutrient density and meet national and international food safety standards.

When food production shifts from being an activity that producers primarily undertake to feed their households to becoming a viable business proposition, producers often seek ways to add value by increasing local food processing capacities and getting the produce into specific value chains. To do this they need to ensure that food produced and exported meets a) international food safety standards, b) standards for sustainable production, and c) standards for nutritional content.

Aligning food production with national and international best practice usually involves substantial financial investments and know-how. As governments seek to increase the contribution of food to local and national economies they may decide to contribute, using public funds, to increasing the capability of producers to sell produce into value chains. This may require the intensification of public-private partnerships using public funds to de-risk private investment.

There are communities and nations with extensive experience in establishing local production and processing capacity with a view to getting produce into national and international value chains. Specific areas for partnership include a) aquatic foods, b) vegetables and fruits, c) livestock and poultry products, d) niche products.

6. Ensuring systems are resilient in face of conflict and other forms of collective stress

This pattern includes ensuring that food systems function predictably, in ways that respond to the needs of people and planet, and in the face of stress and crises (war, pandemic, weather extremes).

Typically, to prepare for situations where people are unable to access the food they need during conflicts and other stresses (eg pandemic and weather extremes) it is necessary that strategic reserves be established and complemented by access to supplies of relief foods obtained domestically or from international sources. The dialogues indicated an emerging perspective that in settings where food systems are likely to be stressed, the systems should be redesigned with a view to increasing resilience all round.

Current decision-making strategies are often dominated by the need to prevent suffering and save lives at all costs, giving priority to urgent provision of humanitarian relief. The emerging approach also calls for prioritizing the regeneration of food systems: this takes longer, and is more political, but it is necessary as the needs for humanitarian assistance continue and the costs of bringing relief supplies to where they are most needed can be both challenging and expensive. Investing in local capacity and systems' regeneration may be the most efficient and effective means for ensuring that food systems continue to function when stressed by crisis situations. This means continuing to work effectively at the nexus of relief and development and strengthen national institutions that contribute to system regeneration within the context of a continuously adapting international architecture that prioritizes this way of working.

7. Focusing on livelihoods of producers and processors

The dialogues show a significantly increased focus on people who produce and process food but are often left behind—including smallholders and labourers who are often women, Indigenous peoples, young people, and migrants—who are also often some of the poorest people in their communities. Here, the emphasis is on increasing the agency of producers and processors through dedicated support to ensure decent conditions of work and remuneration. In this pattern there is expressed a systematic effort to enable smallholders and others who may have limited power in food systems to have an adequate standard of living (eg through a guaranteed minimum wage, social protection or access to markets).

8. Efficient use of water

Water-scarcity is a major impediment to increasing productivity in food systems: this is exacerbated by climate change and increased incidences of droughts and floods. This pattern is associated with challenges on governing the use of water for irrigation so that it is used more efficiently and contributes to soil integrity. It also includes water storage, retention, recycling and precise application, adaptation to the needs of specific settings, and the regeneration and conservation of water sources.

As water is increasingly valued as a contributor to productivity of food and to health of people, it is expected that decision makers will give greater priority to governance of water management alongside the need to maximise the strength and utility of soils and to maintain natural habitats (eg wetlands). Some communities and nations have extensive experience of responsible and efficient water use: their experience will be of value to all.

9. Incorporating Food Waste within the Circular Economy

As governments, local authorities and other stakeholders become increasingly conscious of the need to use resources efficiently in food production and processing, there is emphasis on a) reducing the extent of loss and waste along the production-consumption chain, and b) increasing the extent to which all elements of food production are incorporated – including food waste. This requires consistent efforts to drive down costs, increase the benefits associated with food loss, and incorporate waste into food systems. This approach builds on existing efforts to redistribute unwanted food to those in need and seeks to incorporate food waste as a valuable component of the food economy. The incorporation of food waste is increasingly factored into food system governance: there are several examples, especially at city level, and experiences are ripe for being transferred.

8. Conclusion and Looking Forward

Key findings

The key findings of this synthesis are as follows.

- **Many Member States are participating in the programme of Food Systems Summit Dialogues.**
  This novel form of engagement has been received with enthusiasm and commitment all over the world. As of 11 June 2021, 129 Member States had nominated a National Dialogues Convenor. 341 Member State dialogues had been announced on the Gateway. 40 Member States had published 164 Official Feedback Forms which are synthesised in this report. As the progress continues, more feedback forms are being received: they will be incorporated in future syntheses.

- **There is widespread and diverse participation in the Member State Dialogues.**
  Over 15,000 people are known to have taken part in the Member State Dialogues incorporated in this synthesis: that number continues to grow rapidly. The participants represent a wide range of sectors and stakeholder groups. The number of men and women participants is close to equal, and the dialogues are engaging increasing numbers of farmers, Indigenous peoples, workers and trade unions, and local civil society organisations.

- **There are evident areas of convergence when the feedback from dialogues is synthesised.**
  There is much from all the Member State Dialogues that converges around the five Summit objectives and the Levers of Change. Both the Summit objectives and the Levers of Change are clearly seen as important for Member States: many framed their dialogues originally around the objectives and Action Tracks, though as dialogues progressed, additional themes related to specific local and national priorities have started to emerge. Dialogue participants expressed many propositions that are relevant to each objective and lever. Some important areas of convergence have emerged, though areas of divergence were also apparent and are highlighted in this report.

- **The areas of divergence reflect a number of challenging topics which require more attention**.
  The Convenors of Member State Dialogues have openly described areas of divergence in the dialogues for which they are responsible. The synthesis highlights the need to continue surfacing and exploring these tensions within local settings: they need to be worked through, sometimes with expert assistance, if efforts to transform national food systems are to succeed.

- **As national governments focus on the objectives of food system transformation, a number of patterns start to appear.**
  When such a rich volume of information is analysed, patterns start to appear—some can be discerned even at this early stage in the national dialogue programme. Highlighting them should help Member States to identify shared priorities. The patterns should also assist the different workstreams that are involved in Summit preparation (the Scientific Group, Action Tracks, Levers, the Champions Network, food systems online community) to better appreciate priorities from the perspectives of national governments and in-country stakeholders. The patterns help all concerned to explore the potential for future collaborations and coalitions that will contribute to food systems transformation.

- **Moving from "what needs to happen" to "how to help it happen" is critical for the success of efforts to encourage system transformation**.
  The areas of convergence (and divergence), together with the patterns, indicate the views of dialogue participants about 'what' needs to change in different national settings. The Levers of Change give an indication of 'how' this change can be supported. The four Levers of Change are complemented by others that may also be important in different settings.

- **Member State are preparing strategic pathways towards their national food system for 2030**. The pathways are based on national food and agriculture strategies that are already adopted, decisions that need to be worked through now to bring the pathways to life, and a plan for how stakeholders will work together in support of the pathway and how they will know if they are moving in the right direction. National pathways will be accompanied by commitments from key stakeholders to collaborate on the pathway.

Looking forward

As the Summit approaches, the national dialogues become more numerous, and intense. As of 10 July 2021, 140 Member States have appointed national dialogue convenors: the number continues to grow, exceeding all expectations. 362 Member State dialogues have already been announced on [www.summitdialogues.org:](www.summitdialogues.org) this implies that at least 30,000 people are already engaged in the Member State dialogue process. Many national dialogue convenors have started lining up with Independent Dialogues to increase the range of engaged stakeholders. The increasing involvement will continue through the July Pre-Summit to the September Summit, and beyond. Outcomes of national dialogues are being combined in a number of sub-regional dialogues: African nations are expected to attend the Summit with an articulated regional position.

The dialogues focus both on the needs of countries and the priorities of the Summit: In the 13 weeks between end of June 2021 and the September Summit, the national dialogues are expected to concentrate on exploring options and consolidating outcomes (stages two and three of national dialogue progressions), as well as articulating pathways that set out priorities for food systems transformation, and commitments from stakeholders to bring the pathways to life. These can be of value to the Member State in establishing the direction for food systems transformation. They will also be of value to national delegations as they prepare for the work with others who share similar priorities and to join action coalitions that will help with advancing the pathways.

National Convenors are connecting with the Summit preparation workstreams: The Secretariat continues to encourage connections between the Convenors from different Member States through individual exchanges, collective briefings, and answers to specific questions. A series of 'Convenor Connection' sessions is offered weekly from now until the Summit. These are held twice each day, one day per week, with interpretation available in the six UN languages and Portuguese: most are attended by the Special Envoy or her Deputy as well as the leadership teams from the Action Tracks. New relationships are being built and connections formed that will lead to new collaboration and coalitions forming around the key themes of the Summit.

Numbers of national pathways will increase in the run up to the Summit: The number of Member States working on pathways will grow. The pathways will initially appear at the Pre-Summit: they will be further honed for announcement at the Summit itself. National convenors will draw on expertise within their support teams as they refine pathways and look to sharpen commitments. At least 40 national pathways will have been shaped by end-July 2021, with the number expected to double by the time of the Summit. Within some Member States, committed stakeholders will continue with dialogues after the Summit to help advance transformative change in line with the pathways.

The synthesis of dialogue outcomes is a continuous process. Although this document has been produced at a specific point in time, ongoing synthesis is an essential component of sense-making around systems change. The extraction of key findings from feedback forms will enable the Secretariat to keep constant track of what is occurring in the Member State dialogues and to adjust activities accordingly.

Annex A –
Official Feedback Forms published by Member State Convenors: numbers by country

Country	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	No stage	Total
Albania	1				1
Argentina				3	3
Armenia	1				1
Australia				5	5
Bahamas				1	1
Bangladesh	1				1
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	1				1
Brazil		3			3
Cambodia	2	8			10
Colombia				1	1
Denmark				1	1
Dominican Republic				9	9
Ecuador				1	1
El Salvador		6			6
European Union				1	1
Fiji			2		2
Finland	1	1			2
Georgia				1	1
Guatemala	1	1			2
Honduras	2	3			5
Hungary				1	1
India	1				1
Ireland	1	1	2		4
Israel			6	2	8
Italy				1	1
Japan	35	1			36
Kuwait	1	2			3
Malaysia	2				2
Mexico	3	2			5

Netherlands				1	1
Nigeria	1	19			20
Oman		1			1
Philippines			1		1
Republic of Korea	4				4
Rwanda	5				5
Samoa			1		1
Spain				2	2
Sudan		1			1
Sweden	1	3			4
Switzerland	1				1
Turkey			2		2
United States of America	1	2			3
Totals	**66**	**54**	**14**	**30**	**164**

Annex B –
Official Feedback Forms published by Member State Convenors: URL by country

Country	Official Feedback Forms included by URL
Albania	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23459/official-feedback-23459-en.pdf?t=1623427098
Argentina	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/16091/official-feedback-16091-es.pdf?t=1623356727 https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/16096/official-feedback-16096-es.pdf?t=1623357350 https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/16099/official-feedback-16099-es.pdf?t=1623357800
Armenia	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/6197/official-feedback-6197-en.pdf?t=1620756591
Australia	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/12922/official-feedback-12922-en.pdf?t=1623393494 https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23300/official-feedback-23300-en.pdf?t=1623392618 https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/18887/official-feedback-18887-en.pdf?t=1623395800 https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/15370/official-feedback-15370-en.pdf?t=1623392798 https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/15364/official-feedback-15364-en.pdf?t=1623393019
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Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/25704/official-feedback-25704-es.pdf?t=1623427475
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Sudan	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/9381/official-feedback-9381-en.pdf?t=1618746124
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