



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

TOWARDS THE ARAB REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUE

Arab Stakeholders Dialogue on Food Systems

11 March 2021, 11:00-12:30 pm (Beirut time, GMT +2)

INFORMATION NOTE

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are organizing the Arab Stakeholders Dialogue on Food Systems in preparation for the Arab Regional Food Systems Dialogue that is taking place on 29 March 2021. The Arab Regional dialogue will consolidate regional views, perspectives and experiences. A Regional Outcome Document to reflect those discussions will be presented at the Food Systems Summit (FSS) to be convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in September 2021.

The Arab Stakeholders Dialogue on Food Systems aims at providing an integrative and engaging platform to enable groups representing farmers, women, banks, engineers, private sector, and others as key stakeholders to share their role, perspectives, experiences, and issues on making the region's food systems healthier, more inclusive and more sustainable, in addition to enhancing their resilience within the COVID-19 context.

Background

Food systems, the way the world produces and consumes food, need a revolutionary transformation to deliver on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Food Systems Summit will be held in September 2021 with a broad vision to launch actions, solutions and strategies and identify pathways to accelerate progress towards more sustainable, inclusive and healthy food systems that are resilient to shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participation of a diverse group of stakeholders to food system dialogues is essential to enhance the exchange of information and to foster effective partnerships. In the Arab region, smallholders and farmers are the most food insecure and face difficulty in supporting their families. Women, although essential contributors to food security, face high levels of anemia reaching 35.5 % and are disadvantaged economically were they face limitations in terms of land ownership and tenure among others. Further, COVID-19 restrictions have highlighted the importance of trade, especially intra-regional trade offering a better utilization of regional resources. Identifying the role, views, and experiences of regional groups in relation to food systems will therefore help identify potential ways in which they could contribute to enhancing the region's food systems.

Dialogue Objectives and Output

The Arab Organizations Dialogue on Food Systems will be organized around the five action tracks of the Summit to engage the Arab region organizations in the process and to provide them with the opportunity to identify priority actions to support the SDGs within the context of current realities. Key messages generated from these discussions will be presented during the Arab Regional Food Systems Dialogue to be held in March 29, 2021. A Regional Outcome document will be submitted to the Summit Secretariat in preparation for the Food Systems Summit in September 2021.

Participants

This dialogue will bring together diverse groups from the Arab region that represent organizations from civil society and private sector such as farmers and commerce unions, women, agricultural professionals, private sector, research centres, and other stakeholders involved in food systems to discuss “game changing” solutions for current food systems.

Tentative agenda

Opening remarks: ESCWA, FAO, 5’

Presentation on the Food Systems Summit and five tracks 10’

Discussion group on priority action areas to transform the region’s food systems? 60’

Track 1: Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all

- What are the challenges to fill the hunger gap and provide nutritious and safe food to people?
- What game-changing solutions are needed to ensure right to food, healthy diets and food safety? ?

Track 2: shifting to sustainable consumption patterns

- What are the challenges to changing consumer behavior?
- What solutions to motivate and empower consumers to make informed, healthy, safe and sustainable choices for reducing food waste and changing consumer behavior to ensure a shift to sustainably produced food, strengthen local value chains, improve nutrition (especially to the most vulnerable) ?

Track 3: Boosting nature positive production

- What are the challenges faced by the current food production environments?
- What solutions to sustainably manage existing food production systems and restore degraded ecosystems and rehabilitate soil function for sustainable food production?

Track 4: Advancing equitable livelihoods

- Why do we have inequality and in current food systems practices?
- What solutions to transform current structures and eliminate practices and norms that limit equitable livelihoods along the value chains of the food systems?

Track 5: building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

- What are the causes of vulnerability of Arab food systems?
- What solutions to build resilience to future sources of shocks and stresses (conflict, health, environmental and economic) and other stresses on food systems? How can food systems maintain functionality, recover from the effects of shocks, and improve to a better-off state?

Feedback from Discussions 10’

Closing Remarks 5’

Dialogue information

The meeting will be conducted in the English language. Simultaneous interpretation into the Arabic language will be provided.

Approved and registered participants will be provided with a link and password to participate in the dialogue. All meeting-related correspondence should be sent to the following:

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