



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



The Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition

Advancing knowledge
Supporting policy-making
Impacting lives

A global dialogue on trends, issues and policy responses

In 2007, the FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum) launched a dialogue across borders and disciplines in support of a world free of food insecurity and malnutrition. Since then, government officials, experts and advocates from more than 190 countries have joined the conversation. Together, they have established one of the world's leading online forums for facilitated policy dialogue on all matters related to food security and nutrition, in keeping with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This booklet provides an overview of the unique, neutral and multilingual space that is the FSN Forum, where knowledge and innovative ideas are shared on the complex policy issues that affect food security and nutrition.





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Engaging the development community

The **Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition** is an inclusive platform for people and institutions to share knowledge and support policy-making.

The Forum exists primarily (though not exclusively) online, and is facilitated by the **Agricultural Development Economics Division (ESA)** of the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**. It reflects the UN's move towards more inclusive decision-making processes within the development community.

Towards better food security and nutrition results

The FSN Forum is based on the open participation of a broad spectrum of citizens, governments, and non-governmental and private entities at the global, regional and national levels. Forum members from across the globe can take part remotely in consultations, webinars, workshops and the sharing of case studies.

Exchanges between members and facilitators have fostered awareness, debate, mutual learning and informed decision-making all over the world.

They have also helped to strengthen and shape the thinking of experts and decision-makers on food security and nutrition issues, and to improve the effectiveness of development initiatives.

The Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015, world leaders agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which included the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), formulated to succeed the Millennium Development Goals.

These interconnected global objectives range from ending poverty and hunger to responding to climate change and sustaining the world's natural resources, and will shape national development plans in the years to come.

The SDG formulation process favoured the involvement of a wide range of voices in the discussion of how to advance social and economic development.

Achieving the SDGs

While reaching an agreement on the 2030 Agenda was a major step forward, the greatest challenge still lies ahead. The FSN Forum is committed to supporting achievement of the SDGs by helping experts, practitioners and communities around the world to share ideas, experiences and knowledge.



A QUICK LOOK

WHAT?

The FSN Forum is...

- ▶ an inclusive, multilingual platform for online and face-to-face dialogue on food security and nutrition;
- ▶ a global, regional and national system for knowledge sharing and policy support;
- ▶ a convener and moderator of targeted consultations, surveys, webinars and workshops;
- ▶ a network of experts and professionals who connect with and inform each other.

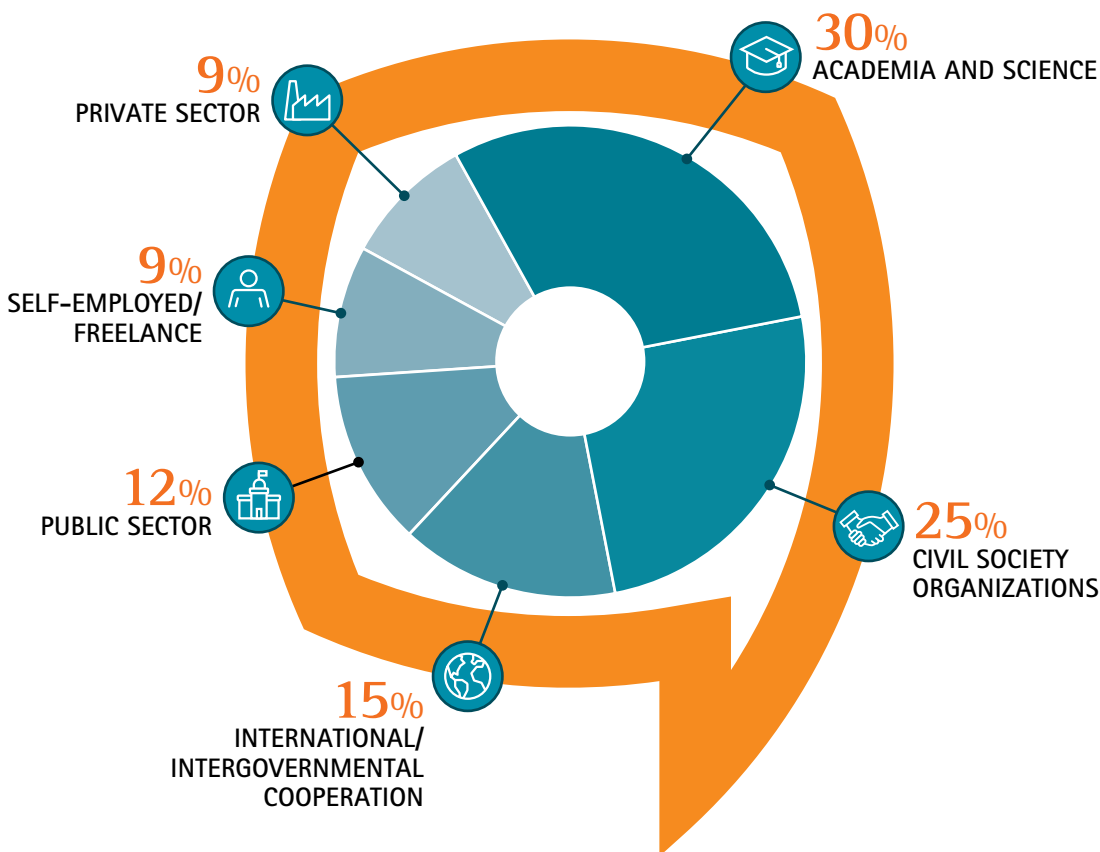
WHO?

- ▶ 10 000+ people from over 190 countries and territories;
- ▶ people from academia, governments, donors, civil society, private sector entities and international organizations;
- ▶ professional networks and organizations focused on the achievement of the SDGs.

WHERE

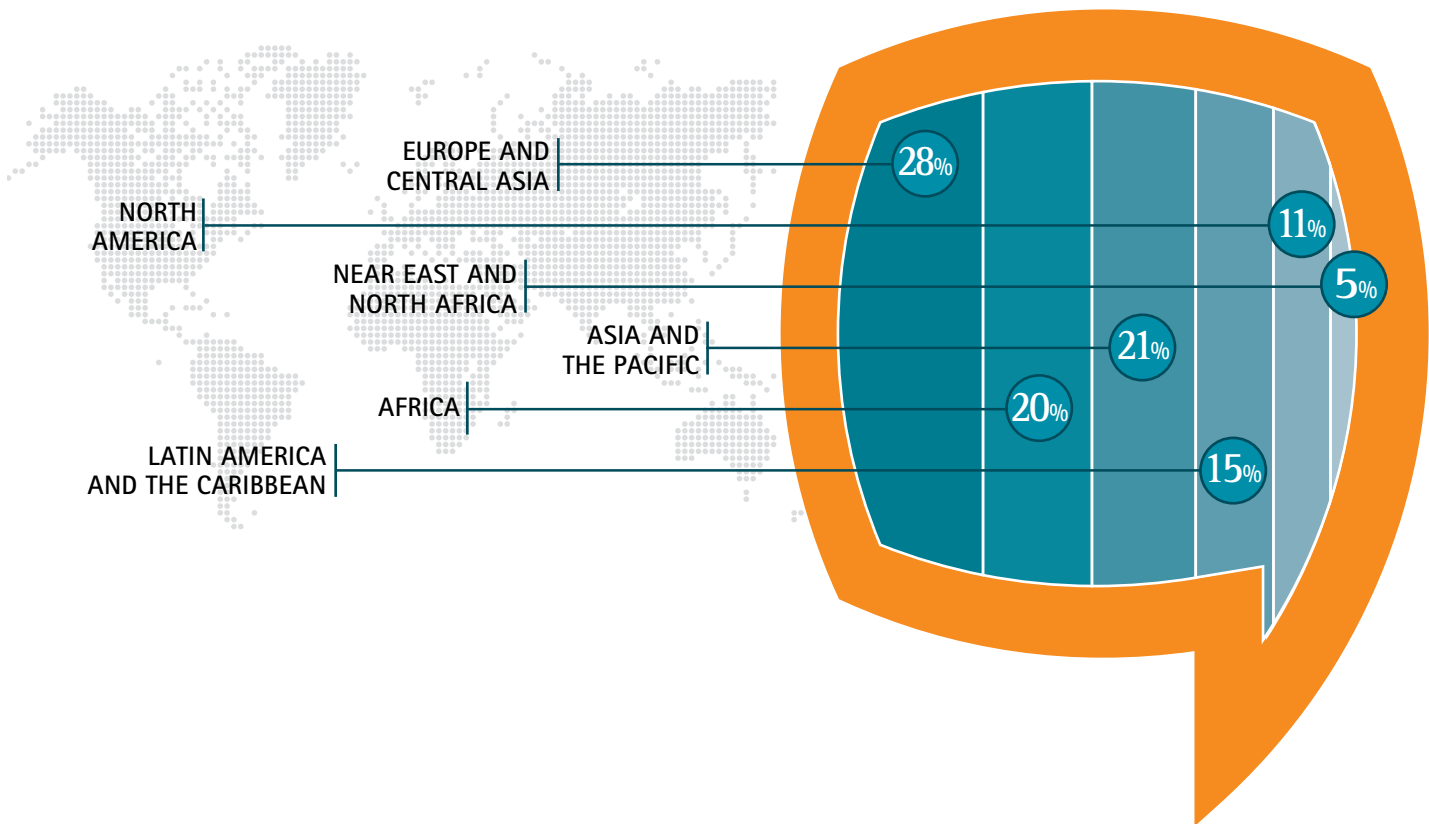
- ▶ based at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) since 2007;
- ▶ hosted by the FAO Agricultural Development Economics Division.

AFFILIATION of FSN Forum members





DISTRIBUTION of FSN Forum members according to FAO regions



Ideas, experience and know-how for sustainable development

The concept

Imagine a town square where people can go to exchange news and ideas and share advice. The FSN Forum is based on similar principles of open access and participation, only with the aim to advance the food security and nutrition dialogue through facilitated online discussions, expert workshops and other knowledge-sharing activities. Since ancient times, a forum has been a gathering place for problems and solutions to be discussed, debated, and analysed – and for new ideas to be proposed. At the FSN Forum, these encounters can be local, national, regional or global.

Open access

People are at the core of the Forum. FSN Forum membership is open to individuals and institutions from all walks of life, anywhere in the world. While the Forum operates primarily through an online knowledge platform, it also brings people together directly in face-to-face workshops, focus groups and other encounters.

Dialogue, knowledge and action

Since 2007, the FSN Forum has brought together experts and institutions who are motivated towards, and professionally engaged in processes aimed at ending hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. It also reaches out to the broader community of those who are interested in related topics to share technical information, research, policy advice, and practice-based experience.

The Forum has driven the food security and nutrition dialogue in new directions, giving participants the opportunity to raise new questions and issues, and lend their voices to high-level discussions which otherwise might not be accessible to them.

For example, when the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2016–2025 the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, the FSN Forum supported the process and promoted inclusiveness by facilitating the initiation of online consultations, leading up to the drafting and finalization of the work programme for the Decade.



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THREE THINGS TO KNOW about the FSN Forum

1. It is an open platform for peer-to-peer engagement on policies, trends and challenges affecting food security and nutrition.
2. It brings together individuals and organizations who would not otherwise have the opportunity to be involved in food security and nutrition policy debates.
3. It facilitates knowledge sharing and constructive feedback among participants.

Voices that count

Providing a dedicated space for people to contribute their voices to the formulation and implementation of policies on food security and nutrition can improve the effectiveness, credibility and legitimacy of decisions ultimately taken by governments – and can also contribute to a better balance of interests. In this way, the FSN Forum contributes to inclusiveness and innovation in policy-making.

Membership

Forum members break through academic and sector silos, across countries and regions, to participate in or follow discussions on food security and nutrition issues.

Members register on an individual basis, but may also participate on behalf of entire groups, companies or institutions.

Participants engage in discussions, consultations, surveys, webinars and workshops on relevant topics proposed by FSN Forum members and partners within or beyond the UN community.

While many contribute perspectives from diverse backgrounds, organizations and institutions, others may read contributions or listen in, then take what they have learned and pass it on, or apply it in their own day-to-day work.



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►► PERSPECTIVES

BEYOND “TEMPORAL” RESILIENCE

How long should an individual, community or system remain resilient before being recognized as such? FSN Forum members addressed this question in a March 2017 online discussion introduced by Walter Mwasaa of the Bangladesh office of CARE, an international non-profit organization.

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Background

“Resilience is increasingly emerging as the tipping point for development programming,” explained Mwasaa. “When programme results cannot be sustained due to shocks, then investments are lost and so is the interest in future funding. So, there is a clear need to weave the resilience discussion into almost every development and emergency programme. Resilience in my opinion puts a human face on development interventions. It acknowledges the challenges a person, household, community and system have to overcome to keep on the path to development.”

Outcomes

“Many development programmes use statistics that are often programme-defined and may not always match the most critical issues that households and individuals have to deal with, some of which are often hidden and complex,” noted Mwasaa.

“The Forum online discussion shared a number of practices and acknowledgment of how much still needs to be done in mainstreaming resilience, enhancing measurement and keeping it real.”


 A woman with dark hair, wearing a denim jacket over a pink top and a pink skirt, is shown in profile, holding a woven basket. She is standing in a rural setting with tall cacti and trees in the background. The lighting suggests it's daytime.

SNAPSHOT

RURAL WOMEN AND GLOBAL AGENDA-SETTING

In recent years, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has paid particular attention to the challenges facing rural women and girls – and to finding ways to accelerate transformations that can improve their lives. Women play essential roles in food security and nutrition and the management of natural resources.

While many women have gained improved access to markets, information and financial services, greater engagement with the private sector, and skills development and other advantages, the lives of many rural women remain unchanged.

In 2017, the FSN Forum was called on to inform the CSW agenda-setting process by gathering perspectives on the gender dynamics of rural livelihoods. An online discussion led by FAO (together with IFAD, UN Women and WFP) looked at critical gaps and priority areas for action. The discussion included such questions as:

- ▶ Is our understanding of the challenges facing rural women and girls still up to date?
- ▶ Are we using the right approaches and policies to close the gender gap?

- ▶ What are the emerging economic opportunities for rural women?
- ▶ Are current capacity-development programmes enhancing the right set of skills for rural women and girls?
- ▶ Are men and boys being involved adequately in gender initiatives in order to ensure their buy-in?

A major thread throughout this discussion has been the recognition of the need to address the root causes of gender inequalities in order to achieve sustainable development. It is only through the involvement of the entire society that a full realization of gender equality can be reached.

TOPICS

FSN Forum members have addressed a long list of topics over the years, reflecting the many factors which affect food security and nutrition. The subjects are various, including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, climate change, smallholders, food value chains, resilience, rural-urban dynamics, poverty, gender equality, and youth employment, in addition to specific food sources.

A BROAD SPECTRUM OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION ISSUES

AGRICULTURE

Rural-urban dynamics

GENDER

SCHOOL FEEDING

IRRIGATION

Nutrition-sensitive agriculture

POVERTY

RURAL RADIO

Right to food

Forestry

FAMILY FARMING

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Education

Nutrition

PULSES

Smallholders

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Rural youth employment

SMALL SCALE FISHERIES

Food value chains

CLIMATE CHANGE

RESILIENCE

Trade and food security

RESPONSIBLE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENTS

MALNUTRITION

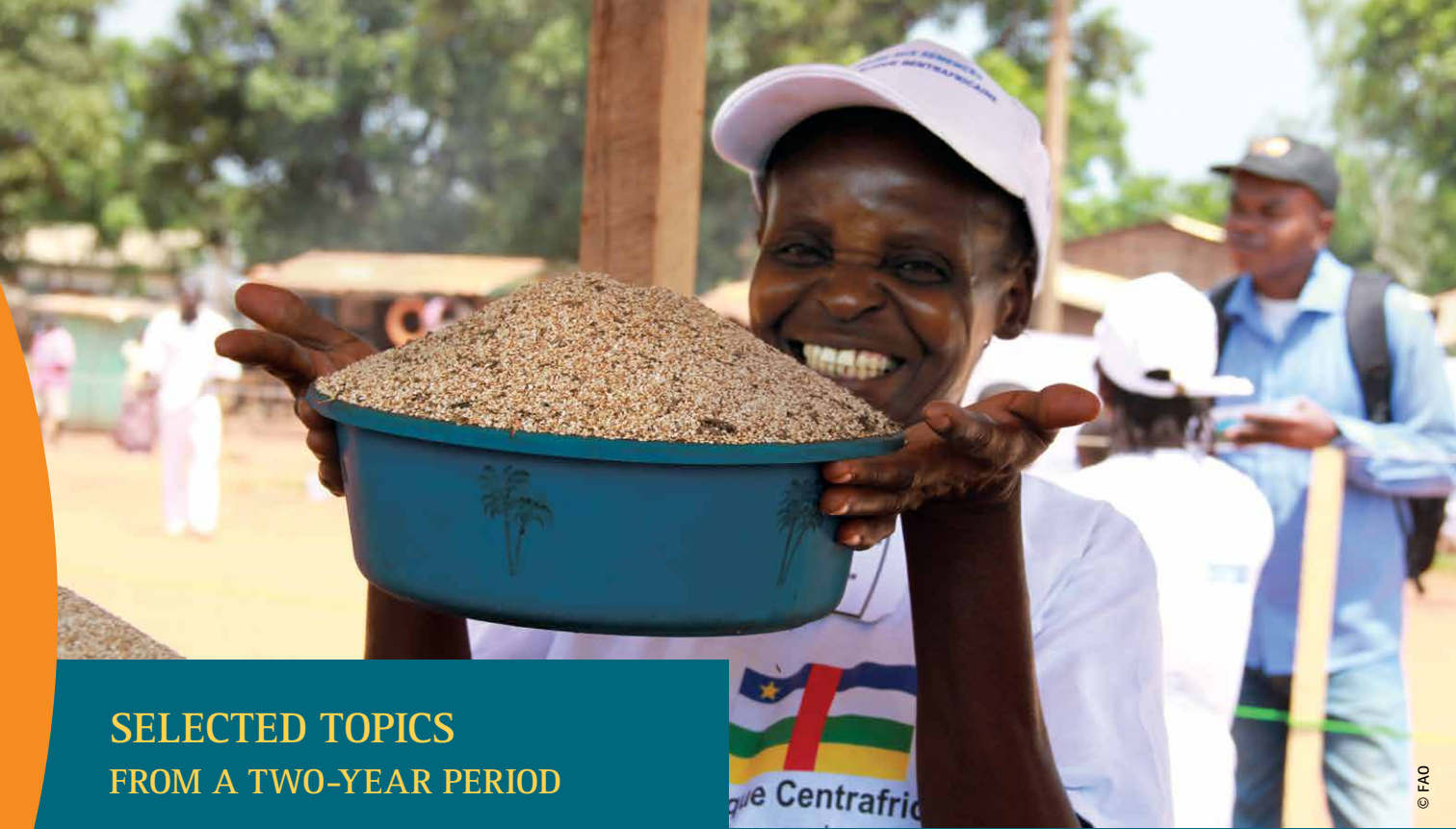
Livestock

Three examples offer a glimpse of the broad range of subject matter covered by FSN Forum interactions:

▶ During an online discussion facilitated by the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Forum contributors identified several areas for addressing overweight and obesity, which is a large and growing concern in Central and South America. Many contributions introduced examples of initiatives which have been successfully implemented and could be applied elsewhere.

▶ In another discussion, members looked at the nutritional value of pulses and shared perspectives on how government policies might help to address production challenges and change attitudes towards consumption.

▶ Two FSN Forum approaches were combined to address the use (and potential) of information and communication technology (ICT) in agriculture in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies. An online discussion and a workshop organized by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences looked at existing methodologies, advanced technologies and best practices, with a view to training young researchers.



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SELECTED TOPICS FROM A TWO-YEAR PERIOD

- Rural women: striving for gender-transformative impacts
- Beyond "temporal" resilience: results that withstand the test of time
- Open discussion on the first draft work programme of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition
- Using information technology in the agriculture of APEC economies and beyond
- Pulses: innovations from the field to the cooking pot
- How can we protect pollinators and promote their role in environmental and agricultural practices?
- Transforming gender relations in agriculture through women's empowerment: benefits, challenges and trade-offs for improving nutrition outcomes
- Are there any successful policies or programmes to fight overweight and obesity?
- Urbanization, rural transformation and implications for food security
- Online consultation for a knowledge-sharing platform on resilience

- Online consultation for developing the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management
- Harnessing the benefits of ecosystem services for effective ecological intensification in agriculture
- Integrating nutrition into the curricula of agriculture education institutions
- Online consultation on the first draft of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on National Forest Monitoring
- Various HLPE e-consultations on early drafts regarding the following themes: nutrition and food systems; sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition; multistakeholder partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda
- Policy implementation of the food security and nutrition programme for Kyrgyzstan
- Online survey regarding Central Asian activities for climate-smart agriculture
- Youth – feeding the future: challenges faced by rural youth aged 15–17 in preparing for, and accessing, decent work

SNAPSHOT

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

An FSN Forum discussion looked at the role played by social relationships and networks in food security and nutrition. Indeed, long before anyone had a computer or mobile phone, people used social relationships and networks to find common ground and share knowledge outside of formalized institutions.

The facilitator was Eileen Omosa, a Kenyan development sociologist and graduate of the University of Alberta in Canada, with expertise in rural and international development. Omosa pointed out that, while many development initiatives tend to focus on the use of formalized channels, strong social networks are important for people to learn and share information and best practices on food, nutrition and other areas of development. Omosa also noted that social relationships and networks help people to keep informed of risks, and also reduce their vulnerability to factors which undermine food security.

SNAPSHOT

STREET FOODS

The FSN Forum held an online discussion on the potential of street foods, not only as affordable and easily accessible sources of nutrition, but also as viable income opportunities, especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Participant contributions came from locations as disparate as Bangladesh, Canada, Mexico, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Some pointed out that street food production and service required little or no formal training, had only minimal start-up costs, and could make use of urban and peri-urban agriculture as a source of fresh, nutritious and less-expensive ingredients. They also discussed the need for street food service to comply with safety and hygiene standards, in order to live up to its full potential. It was noted that government policies could provide support through processes related to urban planning, the issuance of permits, and food safety regulations and guidance.

This discussion helped the FAO Regional Office for Africa to refine its strategy regarding the safety, quality and nutritional value of street foods.



SNAPSHOT

THE NEXT GENERATION

How can young people be kept from leaving rural agriculture in search of urban work? A productive and prosperous agriculture sector, carried forward by each new generation, is a fundamental part of a food-secure world; yet young people increasingly leave the countryside for urban amenities and to seek work in the cities.

This issue was addressed in an FSN Forum discussion facilitated by FAO on decent rural employment for youths aged 15–17. The online discussion was meant to be a building block for a 2016 expert meeting on the subject; as a follow-up, some of the contributors were invited to participate directly in that meeting.

The written summary of the discussion prepared by the FSN Forum, as well as the outcome document of the meeting, have both contributed to further thinking on effective policies and actions which could enable rural youth aged 15–17 to prepare for and find decent work.



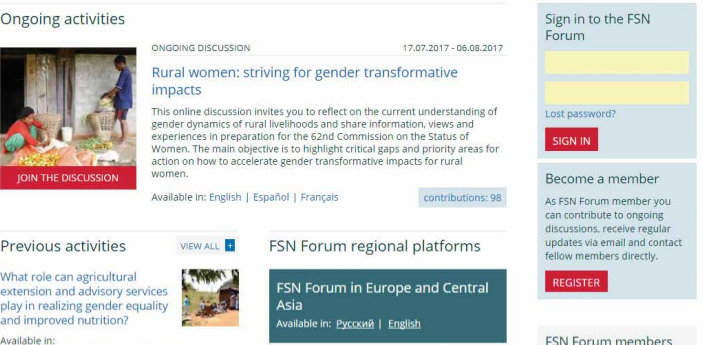
How the FSN Forum works

Flexibility and transparency are central to the FSN Forum's success in connecting people and institutions of diverse backgrounds.

Methodology

Flexibility and transparency are central to the FSN Forum's success in connecting people and institutions of diverse backgrounds. The Forum uses different but complementary methods to access and share knowledge, adapting them, as needed, to the theme, geographical relevance and time constraints. It provides open, multilingual access through user-friendly infrastructure, allowing people to overcome connectivity limitations and participate in the conversation.

The FSN Forum's website is the central hub for all its activities. The Forum acts as a repository for the vast range of knowledge gathered from discussions, consultations, surveys and webinars, in addition to reports and other publications which consolidate the outcomes of virtual and face-to-face meetings. The written materials remain online for future reference and learning.





FSN FORUM TOOLS



● **Online discussions and consultations.** These form the backbone of Forum activities and allow for the deepest level of engagement. They capture the widest possible audience and provide a platform for a fully transparent sharing of ideas and information. They typically take place over various weeks, allowing participants to share structured and well-researched contributions.

- ▶ **Online discussions** focus on innovative topics, sharing knowledge, exploring linkages, and allowing FSN Forum members to shape global food security and nutrition approaches.
- ▶ **Online consultations** open policy processes to input from people from around the world. By including voices which otherwise might not be heard, the FSN Forum's online consultations play an important role in strengthening and democratizing policy dialogue.



Online discussions and consultations can be complemented by:

● **Webinars** which offer opportunities for live engagement with renowned experts. Webinars are recorded and made available to the public, becoming knowledge products in their own right;



● **Workshops** which integrate face-to-face encounters with online exchanges;



● **Surveys** to elicit specific responses from a particular group of people;



● **Calls for good practices, case studies and reports.**

In addition, the Forum also offers to its members:

Contact forms and a searchable database, which allows members to get in touch with their peers across borders, both geographical and thematic.

Information resources including digests, summaries, updates, and news of upcoming events and publications, which are available on the website and disseminated through email.

The FSN Forum discussion

PILLARS OF THE FSN FORUM FACILITATION METHOD (FSN FORUM WORKFLOW)

TIME FRAME: up to four weeks of engagement

LANGUAGE COVERAGE: up to six languages

TECHNICAL FACILITATION: one or more experts involved

MULTIPLE FEEDBACK CHANNELS: online, real-time exchanges, via email and other means

ACTIVE OUTREACH through a targeted mailing list, involving sector-specific platforms, institutions and experts

UPDATES sent via email, with feedback from the facilitator and most recent comments

CONCLUDING REMARKS drafted by the technical facilitator

SUMMARY prepared by the FSN Forum team and shared with Forum members

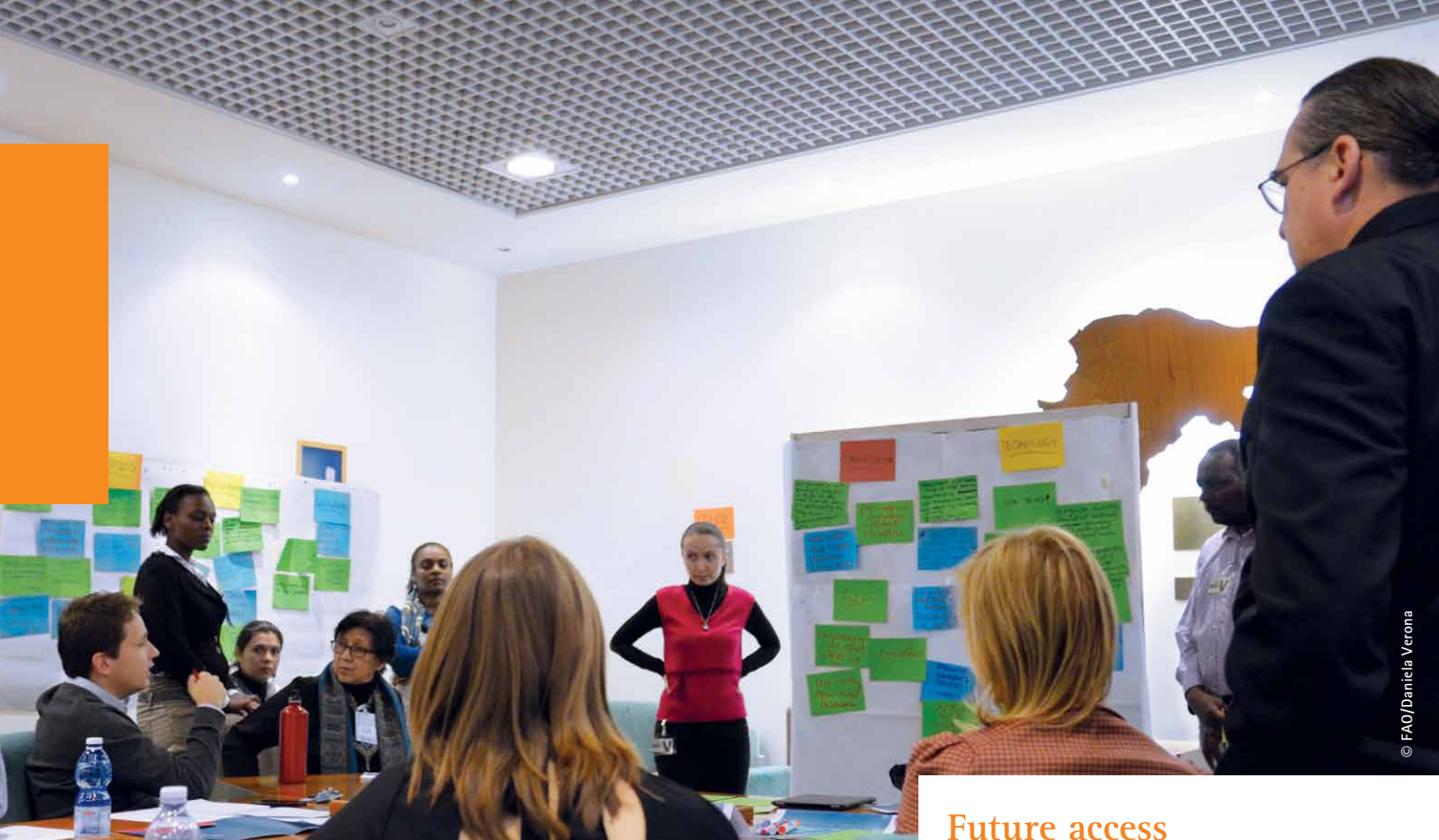
FEEDBACK collected from facilitators and participants

Results oriented

FSN Forum discussions normally feed directly into preparations for specific processes, such as conference and project planning, defining norms and standards, or policy-making. The online portion of an FSN Forum discussion typically lasts three to four weeks, though both the duration of the discussion and the number of contributions may vary, depending on the topic and level of interest.

Diverse voices

The diversity of the Forum's membership is reflected in almost every discussion, with strong levels of participation from academic and research institutions, NGOs, civil society, UN agencies, public sector institutions and intergovernmental organizations. While there tend to be more contributions from Africa, Asia and Europe, any single discussion can receive input from dozens of countries.



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Facilitators

Each new discussion is launched with a brief introduction by the topic facilitator, who is an expert in the chosen topic area. The facilitator lays the groundwork for the discussion by providing general background information and highlighting key questions to be considered. The introduction also helps to explain the objectives of the discussion.

Moderators' team

Moderators support the facilitator and keep the online conversations flowing, helping members to stay current by providing periodic digests, references and further information related to the topics discussed. They may also identify and invite specific individuals and organizations from the Forum's extended network to comment on and contribute to a particular discussion.

How it works

Members participate by logging onto the FSN Forum's website and posting their contributions online, or by emailing them to the Forum team. During the discussion, the facilitators may post follow-up messages which reflect or summarize the various contributions. They may also suggest specific subject areas for further comment and response.

Digests and summaries

While the discussion is ongoing, periodic digests are prepared and sent out to the FSN Forum's mailing list to consolidate key contributions, facilitator feedback, and news related to the discussion. These digests help to ensure that all participants are up to date.

Future access

A discussion usually ends with a set of concluding remarks from the facilitator, touching on key issues and findings that may have emerged. The moderators then prepare a summary of the discussion. The FSN Forum website serves as a repository of all past online exchanges.

Networking

Topics discussed through the Forum help to build networks of people who may be interested in (or already working on) similar themes, and who, without the Forum, might not have learned about each other. When relevant, the FSN Forum sets up parallel consultations with platforms within or outside of FAO, who may be interested in the chosen topic. Examples include Food for the Cities, the World Bank Group's SecureNutrition Knowledge Platform, and the Young Professionals' Platform for Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD).

Knowledge and capacity development

From knowledge to impact

In the fight against food insecurity and malnutrition, access to knowledge and participation in decision-making processes can make an enormous difference to those seeking to improve food security and nutrition.

FAO and non-FAO teams, FSN Forum members, and institutions regularly turn to the Forum to collect input and foster more inclusive development processes.

People who engage in FSN Forum discussions and other activities find a neutral space in which to share their opinions and experiences regarding the complex issues that affect food security and nutrition. They interact with both members and facilitators alike, increasing awareness, knowledge sharing and developing capacities.

Exchanges on the Forum can:

- ▶ raise awareness of topics and issues of concern;
- ▶ provide access to information on relevant global processes;
- ▶ open policy processes to input from a broader spectrum of voices;
- ▶ contribute to a convergence of ideas on how to deal with FSN-related issues;
- ▶ promote the opportunity for collective and effective action;
- ▶ convey knowledge that can be applied and shared by participants in broader contexts;
- ▶ introduce and explore new ideas, concepts and approaches.





FSN Forum networking

Contacts made through the FSN Forum go well beyond the scheduled activities.

Forum participants form networks by connecting with people who work on the same issues, but who might not normally know where or how to find each other.

For instance, those FSN participants who are highly specialized professionals with detailed knowledge on FSN-related issues can get in touch with their peers across borders, both geographic and thematic.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR FORUM MEMBERS can be searched through a database, facilitating networking and opening the door to new conversations.

From research to practice

The diversity of backgrounds and fields of expertise among FSN Forum members has made it possible to share different types of knowledge. Results from research and academic work, for example, are shared alongside practical experience and real-life observations. Members also share their experiences in dealing with the challenges of implementing policy, and of moving from decision-making to action.



►► PERSPECTIVES

INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE TO IMPROVE NUTRITION

Agricultural policies and practices can improve both food security and nutrition. An international research partnership, Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia (LANSA), partnered with the FSN Forum in May-June 2015 to gather knowledge about innovations in agriculture that could potentially be applied in the South Asian region.

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Background

Many promising local and grassroots-led innovations in agriculture and livestock/fisheries production require evidence of their impact on nutrition status to justify upscaling and broader implementation. In this case, information and evidence of impact was shared. Participants offered wide-ranging experiences, such as the use of community-based service providers and volunteers to promote nutrition-sensitive products, services and training; the use of slower-growing, free-range chickens to increase the nutritional quality and market value of resulting meat and egg products, and low-pollution techniques for applying fertilizers.

Perspectives

Professor M.S. Swaminathan and Dr Alan Dangour, facilitating the discussion on behalf of LANSA, commented: "We specifically are looking for new interventions in agriculture that require formative research to aid their design, and/or research to understand their feasibility before being tested in large intervention studies. We also have an eye on the future and on the likely impact of environmental change on agricultural production." LANSA used the information gathered during the online discussion to put together a call for research in nutrition-sensitive agricultural innovations. "LANSA would not have been able to get in touch with the wide gamut of professionals if it had not been for the FSN platform. The level and quality of engagement is a definite bonus to our work."



SNAPSHOT

AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION, ADVISORY SERVICES AND GENDER

In June 2017, the FSN Forum facilitated an online discussion to address the following question: What role can agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS) play in realizing gender equality and improved nutrition? The discussion was pertinent to the new Nutrition Working Group of the Global Forum on Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS), of which FAO is a member.

Experience suggests that AEAS can play a role in promoting nutrition outcomes, enhancing the food and nutrition security of household members and ensuring sustainable food systems that promote healthy diets.

The online dialogue raised the overall profile of the new GFRAS Nutrition Working Group, attracting

participants from widely differing backgrounds and perspectives. Some had not been aware of the working group, or had not previously engaged in similar discussions through the Forum. All were included in the broad community of the working group, thus presenting them with an opportunity to participate in future activities.

Supporting global policy discussions

Inclusiveness and transparency

The FSN Forum has helped to steer the global policy dialogue on food security and nutrition towards greater inclusiveness and transparency, thus helping to shape a growing trend in the UN and other development circles.

The Forum has brought a wide and diverse group of people and institutions (many of whom might not have participated otherwise) into high-level policy discussions. Some of them have raised new development issues to be considered in policies, action plans and reports.

Through these processes, the Forum has helped to set the stage for the implementation of agreed-upon frameworks for action. Over time, this has led to an important cultural shift: a growing number of institutions are using the FSN Forum to channel their official positions on issues related to food security and nutrition, which then feed into global policy processes.

Major policy processes

Issues raised by FSN Forum participants were reflected in the Executive Summary for the World Food Summit (WFS) 2009, a landmark gathering which set the tone for much of the food security and nutrition work which continues to this day.

The Forum discussion highlighted the growing concern within the development community about the impact of high-input agriculture.

Indeed, the Forum was one of the first places in which this concern was voiced and brought to the attention of the global community.

Forum participants and the WFS also called for stronger emphasis to be placed on local knowledge, stressing the need to find solutions through the full involvement of local producers, traders and processors.

The Committee on World Food Security

CFS, the foremost intergovernmental and international platform dealing with food security and nutrition, has turned to the FSN Forum for support in developing several of its best-known products. These include, most recently, the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems, the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, and calls for experience-sharing and case studies on rural-urban dynamics and investments for healthy food systems.

CFS recently invited outstanding FSN contributors to present their cases at the CFS 44 Plenary Session.

This level of participation has raised the bar for the inclusiveness of the work of CFS, and reflects the extraordinary global reach of the Forum.





The High Level Panel of Experts

HLPE is an independent advisory body created to make the CFS more effective, by keeping it up to date on scientific and technical knowledge as well as emerging trends in food security and nutrition.

The HLPE has developed a long-standing collaboration with the FSN Forum, relying on it to gain access to a broad range of development actors. The HLPE holds two open consultations for each of its major reports (in the exploratory and drafting stages), and increasingly benefits from collective statements shared on the FSN Forum on behalf of governments and organizations around the world. A growing network of experts, governmental and non-governmental institutions, and others have joined in these consultations, as they see their contributions feeding directly into the development of the HLPE's prestigious and influential reports.



The FSN Forum played a relevant role in ensuring an open, participatory approach to the post-2015 development agenda consultation process, which led to the identification of key priorities for the Sustainable Development Goals. This was a major step forward within the UN.

In contrast with the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) process, the importance of an inclusive vision and approach was strongly echoed, especially in SDG2 and in numerous SDG targets and indicators.

The Forum is currently well positioned to help keep the 2030 Agenda implementation process open and participatory.



UNITED NATIONS DECAD
ACTION ON NUTRITION
●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
2016-2025

ICN2 Second International Conference on Nutrition better nutrition better lives

The FSN Forum was engaged in both the technical and the political side of preparations for the 2014 Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), a high-level intergovernmental meeting convened by FAO and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The meeting focused attention on addressing malnutrition in all its forms and the FSN Forum also influenced the final documents which came out of the meeting, laying the groundwork for country-level action on nutrition.

The Forum held online discussions on nutrition-enhancing agriculture and food systems, social protection, and the contributions of the private sector and civil society to improve nutrition.

Later discussions fed into the two political outcome documents of the Conference, the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action, which committed world leaders to establishing national policies aimed at eradicating malnutrition and transforming food systems to make nutritious diets available to all.

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) calls for accelerated global action to achieve the goal of eradicating malnutrition in all its forms. The co-convenors of ICN2, FAO and WHO, were asked to organize the implementation of the Nutrition Decade through an inclusive and participatory process.

With support from the FSN Forum and the UNSCN, FAO and WHO drew on feedback from many stakeholders to produce the Work Programme of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition.

The work programme is a living document which builds upon and connects the independent initiatives of governments and their many partners, and will be adapted according to needs and lessons learned. The FSN Forum is well positioned to support this process by keeping the channels open to more analyses of case experiences, policy impacts and proposals for action.



Working with countries

Fostering country policy dialogue

Country-based approaches are central to the work of FAO, and crucial to achieving the SDGs. Countries have turned to the FSN Forum to expand public debate on food security and nutrition, and to develop and evaluate policies, legislation and action plans.

Tailored support at the country level

Depending on national needs and circumstances, the FSN Forum can work in a number of ways at the country level:

- ▶ by supporting target-oriented mobilization of stakeholders, bringing them together in a dedicated space for facilitated dialogue, in collaboration with national partners;
- ▶ by enabling the development of appropriate conditions for future discussions;
- ▶ by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experience among national experts, connecting them with regional and global experts.

Facilitation methods and outcomes vary from country to country and are adapted according to needs and opportunities. They may depend on the level of interaction between government and other actors, including researchers and academia, civil society and the private sector.

The FSN Forum also bridges global agendas and regional perspectives to help inform national policies (and vice versa), while promoting the sharing of best practices.

SNAPSHOT

PARTICIPATORY LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Food security and nutrition in the Dominican Republic have faced a number of challenges, including unemployment, high food imports, price volatility and climate risks.

When the government decided to take a major step forward in strengthening its food security and nutrition policies, a member of parliament facilitated an online discussion through the FSN Forum. This discussion, coupled with focus group meetings held around the country, played a key role in drafting what would eventually become the nation's Law on Sovereignty and Food Security and Nutrition.

The draft was developed in close consultation with members of civil society, government technicians and local authorities, with the support of FAO, WFP and UNDP.



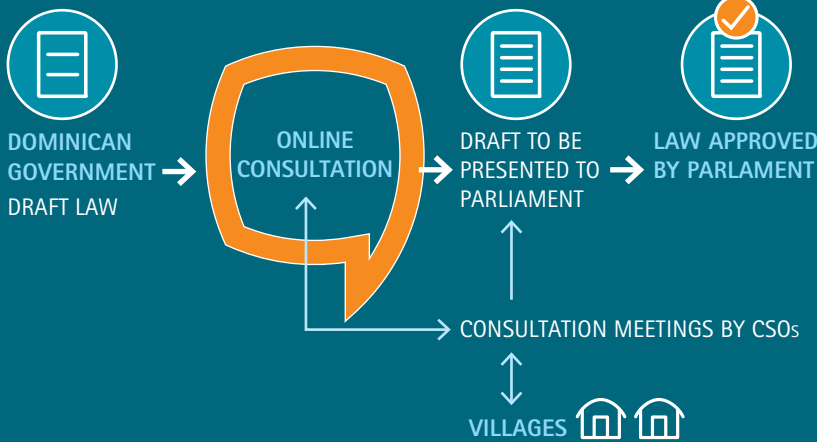
SNAPSHOT

INNOVATIVE POLICY IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT IN KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan is vulnerable to global economic shocks, volatility in international food and commodity prices, and weather-related challenges that negatively affect the country's economy and food security in general. To address this situation, the country adopted the Food Security and Nutrition Programme (FSNP) and Action Plan for 2015–2017.

This comprehensive programme linked food security and nutrition issues with the sustainable development policy of the country, and was the result of a consultation process and participatory approach between various stakeholders. The FSN Forum held two multistakeholder consultations in late 2016, in collaboration with FAO colleagues as well as government, academic and policy institute representatives.

Through this proactive approach, the FSN Forum and its partners introduced, for the first time, a participatory mechanism for continuous stakeholder involvement during the different phases of programme implementation. This included public discussion of existing barriers, challenges, and the potential for successful application of the FSNP in Kyrgyzstan.



Through the discussion and focus groups, citizens and civil society organizations had the opportunity to be involved, from the very beginning, in the design and layout of the draft law. The FSN Forum served as a hub for the comments and information gathered, linking the outputs

of the face-to-face focus groups with those shared directly online. More than 45 organizations from 24 provinces took part, substantially increasing the ownership of the entire legislative process, which led to the law's approval by Parliament in 2016.



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Collaboration

The FSN Forum collaborates with a wide range of organizations and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, to promote inclusive and effective policy dialogue and provide practical guidance on how to deal with food security and nutrition issues and challenges.

From its unique position, the Forum provides a flexible and proven platform that partners can use to connect with a wide range of stakeholders across borders and disciplines. The Forum can help to frame issues and approaches, as well as shaping decision-making agendas and processes.

PARTNERS AND PROCESSES

Organizations

Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE)

World Bank

Eurasian Center for Food Security (ECFS)

Iniciativa de América Latina y Caribe sin Hambre

Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Central Asia and the Caucasus Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (CACAARI)

Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP)

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
Zero Hunger Initiative

Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)

Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia (LANSA)

Processes

Decade of Action on Nutrition

Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

Post-2015 development agenda

International Year of Family Farming 2014

International Year of Pulses 2016



SNAPSHOT

SNAPSHOT

TOWARDS NUTRITION-SENSITIVE VALUE CHAINS

FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme (WFP) and Bioversity International have looked at various ways to strengthen their work towards ending malnutrition in all its forms. They have identified nutrition-sensitive value chains as a key area for improving their work together, along with that of governments, the private sector, civil society and academia. FSN Forum discussions have helped these agencies to refine their approach to nutrition-sensitive value chain development, including advisory services and technical support to country and regional teams in the design and implementation of country programmes and other initiatives.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PULSES

During the UN International Year of Pulses (2016), FSN Forum activities highlighted the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead.

In a series of online discussions, webinars and face-to-face presentations, participants stressed the importance of promoting production and consumption of pulses by supporting seed and mixed cropping systems, facilitating access to markets and value addition, and establishing stronger networks between the different actors in the pulse value chain. They also emphasized the need to raise awareness of the health and nutrition benefits of pulses when addressing malnutrition and non-communicable diseases.

Taking part in the discussions gave people the chance to bring in new views on the challenges and benefits of pulses, as experienced in national and local contexts.

New ideas, concepts and methods

The FSN Forum provides unrivalled access to a wide range of experts and practitioners who are able to communicate with each other freely on policies, trends and challenges affecting food security and nutrition. As they look to the future, FSN Forum members are exploring new ideas, information, concepts and methods – and reshaping the policy agenda at all levels.

SNAPSHOT

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION INDICATORS

What is the impact of development work on people's lives, and how can it be measured? This question captures one of the key challenges in designing, implementing and evaluating food security and nutrition policies and programmes.

The FSN Forum supports stakeholders in mapping, needs assessment, and evaluation of programmes and projects, in part by organizing online surveys and analysis. When the FAO Statistics Division decided to develop a new suite of indicators for monitoring food security and nutrition at the global level, it called on the FSN Forum to organize a stakeholder consultation with representatives of national governments, regional and international institutions, NGOs, and the private sector.

The Forum supported a similar process concerning forests, partnering with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) to host an online consultation on the development of a global core set of forest-related indicators. These indicators are for use not only in the forest sector, but also in the broader contexts of food security and nutrition, livelihoods, and environmental services, which are crucial for agricultural production.





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► PERSPECTIVES

NUTRITION IN AGRICULTURE CURRICULA

How can the next generation of experts and practitioners be better prepared to promote nutrition-sensitive agriculture? This question was the impetus for a November 2015 online discussion on the integration of nutrition-related curricula into agriculture education. The facilitator was Mebit Kebede, an education advisor in Ethiopia for ENGINE (a USAID-funded nutrition project).

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Background

The lack of nutrition training for agricultural workers is acknowledged globally as a significant barrier to combating malnutrition through agriculture and food systems. "Nutrition needs a multisectoral approach," according to Kebede. "In Ethiopia, a country with a high prevalence of malnutrition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources designed a five-year NSA (Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture) strategy. But agriculture graduates, who are expected to implement this strategy, do not have any nutrition background. This is because their university agriculture curricula lack nutrition competencies."

Perspectives

The FSN Forum helped Kebede, a plant and soil scientist by training, to gather the views and experiences of individual project leaders, institutions and countries on how to strengthen pre-service nutrition education for agriculture students. "I realized that the issue which I raised was a concern of professionals around the globe," Kebede said. "The Forum was very important for sharing different experiences and thoughts. It helped me to think about the whole food system and food environment. As a result, we convinced higher officials at the Ministry of Education of the importance of the nutrition dimension, and started to integrate it into the Bachelor of Science Agriculture curricula."

Moving the dialogue forward

What's next for the FSN Forum?

Eliminating food insecurity and malnutrition in a truly sustainable way is indispensable to achieving the broad ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, which are central to the work of FAO. As a champion of a zero-hunger world, FAO recognizes the fundamental importance of taking a multistakeholder, partnership approach to its mandate – and the FSN Forum is helping to put this into practice.

Achieving the SDGs

Since its inception in 2007, the FSN Forum has contributed to transforming the way in which the international community reaches consensus on development priorities. The Forum, with its unequalled access to experts and institutions from around the world, helped bringing new and diverse voices into global discussions that led to agreement on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. FSN Forum online consultations led to greater inclusiveness and transparency and supported FAO in ensuring that the real needs of countries and communities worldwide were more closely reflected in SDG2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture).

From consensus to action

Now that there is broad consensus on what to aim for, countries face the crucial task of formulating coherent policies and programmes and turning them into concrete improvements on the ground. This is a fresh opportunity to promote the large-scale, transformational changes espoused by the SDGs and, in the process, improve lives in lasting ways.

Amplifying FAO knowledge and policy dialogue support

FAO is substantially enhancing its support to countries, increasingly acting as a knowledge broker and neutral arbiter. It supports countries' decision-making processes, in part by ensuring them access to some of the world's most valuable information and expertise.

The FSN Forum's culture of open exchange across borders and areas of knowledge helps to amplify the organization's strengths in these areas.

Moving forward, the FSN Forum will continue to facilitate knowledge- and experience-sharing among many of the most innovative and practical minds working on solutions to food security and nutrition challenges.

The Forum has proven itself to be a multidisciplinary mechanism for promoting the highest standards of transparency, and has become a trusted name for facilitated food security and nutrition policy dialogue.



From global to national

Global reach is important, but so is localized focus. The geographical, cultural and social specificities of each country call for locally relevant policy solutions. But these solutions need not be developed in isolation. They could benefit from other national and regional experiences, and participation in the Forum facilitates access to such perspectives. Since the FSN Forum mirrors the diversity of its participants, it plays an increasingly important role in bridging international and national networks of experts. By adapting its proven methodology to specific national and local contexts, the FSN Forum can reach those most affected by policy change, thus enabling them to have an impact on decision-making processes.

In other words, the potential of the FSN Forum is anchored in its vast network of people and institutions that interact with each other across borders and disciplines, sharing knowledge and building capacities to address the common goal of a food-secure world.

Vision for the future

The FSN Forum is expanding on its strengths, striving to remain innovative, flexible and relevant, and keeping abreast of changing global and regional dynamics. The Forum will continue to enhance participants' access to both knowledge and policy discussions. It will foster policy convergence and enable people who focus on FSN-related issues to remain connected and provide input to each other's efforts. It will strengthen its partnerships with FAO regional and country offices, while increasing collaboration with national institutions and organizations.

The Forum will also build on its fundamental role as a knowledge hub by expanding the variety of channels and tools used, adapting to local contexts and to the audience it aims to reach. It will explore new ways to harness and analyse the virtual vault of knowledge and information which it has gathered over the years from participants, and make it available for future use.

To achieve the SDGs and improve food security and nutrition, everyone needs to be involved.

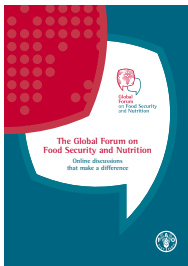
The FSN Forum offers a trusted, efficient and ever-evolving public space where people, institutions and organizations can be part of this effort.

We encourage you and your organizations to join and partner with the FSN Forum.

FSN Forum publications

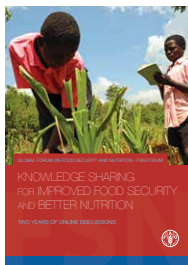
Booklets

Full-fledged publications covering FSN Forum activities and outcomes.



The Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition – Online discussions that make a difference

www.fao.org/3/a-i2736e.pdf



Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition – Knowledge Sharing for Improved Food Security and Better Nutrition

www.fao.org/3/a-i0594e.pdf

Summaries (2016/2017)

The FSN Forum summaries provide impartial syntheses of the positions shared during each online discussion and include lists of the resources referenced by the participants.



How can value chains be shaped to improve nutrition?

www.fao.org/3/a-i7605e.pdf



Beyond “temporal” resilience: results that withstand the test of time

www.fao.org/3/a-i7481e.pdf



Maximizing the Impact of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition

www.fao.org/3/a-i6667e.pdf



Pulses: Innovations from the field to the cooking pot

www.fao.org/3/a-i6621e.pdf



Using information technology in the agriculture of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies and beyond

www.fao.org/3/a-i6817e.pdf



Are there any successful policies and programmes to fight overweight and obesity?

www.fao.org/3/a-bl634e.pdf



How can we protect pollinators and promote their role in environmental and agricultural practices?

www.fao.org/3/a-bl635e.pdf



Transforming gender relations in agriculture through women's empowerment: benefits, challenges and trade-offs for improving nutrition outcomes

www.fao.org/3/a-bl633e.pdf



Pulses are praised for their health, environmental and economic benefits. How can their full potential be tapped?

www.fao.org/3/a-bl632e.pdf



Youth – feeding the future. Addressing the challenges faced by rural youth aged 15 to 17 in preparing for and accessing decent work

<http://bit.ly/2aliKjE>

Briefs (2016/2017)

FSN Forum briefs offer an overview of the topics discussed. They also include issues raised and recommendations shared by participants across more than one online discussion or consultation.



In Brief: Policies and programmes to fight overweight and obesity

www.fao.org/3/a-i6691e.pdf



In Brief: Pulses for food security and nutrition: How can their full potential be tapped?

www.fao.org/3/a-i6690e.pdf

**MORE INFORMATION ON RESOURCES
CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT:**

www.fao.org/fsnforum/resources/outputs





The Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition

Advancing knowledge
Supporting policy-making
Impacting lives

The FAO Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum) is an inclusive, neutral platform for people and institutions to share knowledge and support policy-making.

Over the years, the FSN Forum online discussions have played an important role in strengthening and democratizing policy dialogue in line with the UN's move towards more inclusive decision-making processes within the development community.

The FSN Forum engages a broad spectrum of citizens, experts, governments, non-governmental and private entities at the global, regional and national levels, fostering awareness, debate and mutual learning on the broad range of issues that affect food security and nutrition.

This publication presents the work of the FSN Forum, offering an overview of how Forum activities and its vast network of participants around the world help FAO to tackle the root causes of poverty and hunger and support countries, organizations and communities in their efforts to improve lives.

www.fao.org/fsnforum

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