

**Making food systems work
for people and planet
UN Food Systems Summit +2**

Report of the Secretary-General

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ABSTRACT

The UN Food Systems Summit of 2021 (UNFSS) projected a vision, in which the transformation of food systems through profound shifts across production, storage, consumption, and disposal of food has the potential to generate multiplier effects, acting as catalysts for broader transformation across multiple systems and SDGs. By reimagining and redesigning our food systems, we can address pressing challenges and unlock opportunities for progress in other areas. Since 2021, 126 countries adopted national pathways and 155 appointed food systems national convenors, demonstrating their sustained interest in and commitment to transforming food systems. The preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit +2 - Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) witnessed significant global participation and engagement, with 101 countries submitting voluntary country reports. These reports provided insights into the progress and efforts being made to transform food systems worldwide. In addition, inputs from the UN system and the Food Systems Ecosystem of Support and the stakeholders have been sought out. The analysis of these inputs has informed this report.



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INTRODUCTION

The UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) offers a unique opportunity, at a critical moment, to further tap into the powerful role of sustainable, equitable, healthy, and resilient food systems, as critical SDG accelerators. Urgent action at scale is now required, building on the latest evidence that sustainable food systems contribute to better and more viable outcomes for people, the planet and prosperity, leaving no one behind and that food systems transformation has started to unfold.

This report is based on the analysis of direct inputs received through country reports from 101 countries, and dozens of actors of the Food Systems ecosystem of support, including coalitions of action, the UN system as well as other organizations.



CHAPTER 1

FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION AS A KEY SDG ACCELERATOR

The world is not on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development and its SDGs by 2030. A preliminary assessment of the roughly 140 targets with data, shows only about 15 percent are on track; close to half are moderately or severely off track and some 30 percent have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.¹

In the face of multiple interlinked crises, our global food systems are strained. A confluence of factors — the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, the cost-of-living crisis, the triple planetary crises, economic distress, natural disasters and regional and national unrest and conflicts — impede progress towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030. These crises of multiple origins have spillover effects that go beyond borders and severely weaken food systems. And imperiled food systems can trigger vicious cycles of aggravated, protracted social, (geo)political, economic, and environmental crises.

The hidden social, economic, and environmental costs associated with today's food systems amount to a staggering USD12 trillion, undermining decades of collective development achievements.²

By 2030, 575 million people will still live in extreme poverty.³ According to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023 (2023 SOFI Report), global hunger rates have remained relatively stable between 2021 and 2022, but they are still significantly higher than pre-COVID-19 levels. In 2022, approximately 9.2 percent of the world's population, or an estimated 691 to 783 million people, experienced hunger. This represents an increase of 122 million people compared to 2019, before the pandemic.⁴ There were notable regional variations, with hunger increasing in Western Asia, the Caribbean, and all subregions of Africa.

1 The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition, available from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>

2 Growing Better: Ten Critical Transitions to Transform Food and Land Use, available from <https://www.foodandlandusecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FOLU-GrowingBetter-GlobalReport.pdf>

3 The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition, available from <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2023.pdf>

4 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0639en>

The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity globally remained unchanged for the second consecutive year but rests well above the pre-pandemic level of 25.3 percent. However, severe food insecurity decreased slightly from 11.7 percent in 2021 to 11.3 percent in 2022, representing 27 million fewer people.⁵ The total number of severely food-insecure individuals in 2022 were still approximately 900 million, an increase of 180 million compared to 2019.⁶ Food insecurity continues to disproportionately affect women worldwide, although the gender gap in food insecurity has narrowed at the global level, decreasing from a 3.8 percentage point difference in 2021 to 2.4 percentage points in 2022, suggesting that the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women's food insecurity has reduced globally and in some regions.⁷

The SOFI Report also reveals that the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet is still on the rise. More than 3.1 billion people in the world – or 42 percent – were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021, representing an increase of 134 million people compared to 2019, before the pandemic.⁸ This affordability gap undermines efforts to promote nutrition and exacerbates the challenges faced by vulnerable populations. Malnutrition remains a pressing concern.

⁵ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable. Rome, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc0639en>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid





Although food systems account for a significant proportion of global employment, agricultural households constitute up to two-thirds of people living in extreme poverty worldwide.⁹ Globally, a quarter of employed women work in agriculture, including forestry and fishing, with agriculture remaining the most important employment sector for women in low-income and lower-middle-income countries even as they are relegated to informal, low-paid, low-skilled, labour-intensive and vulnerable jobs.¹⁰ However, despite their critical contributions—from cultivation and production to processing, preparation, consumption and distribution of food—they do not equally benefit.

Meanwhile, food systems continue to generate soil, water, and air pollution, contribute more than one-third of greenhouse gas emissions, as much as 80 percent of biodiversity loss and use up to 70 percent of freshwater use.¹¹ Increasing weather and climate extreme events have exposed millions of people to acute food insecurity and reduced water security, with the largest adverse impacts observed in many locations and/or communities in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, LDCs, Small Islands and the Arctic, and globally for Indigenous Peoples, small-scale food producers and low-income households.¹²

⁹ World Bank. 2018. *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2018: Piecing Together the Poverty Puzzle*. Washington, DC: World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO

¹⁰ Report of the Secretary General on Improvement of the situation of women and girls (forthcoming)

¹¹ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, 2022. *The Global Land Outlook*, second edition. UNCCD, Bonn, available at https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-04/UNCCD_GLO2_low-res_2.pdf

¹² *Global Land Outlook (second edition) Land Restoration for Recovery and Resilience*, available at https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-04/UNCCD_GLO2_low-res_2.pdf

These ongoing interlinked crises, including the war in Ukraine, fuel one another, intensifying the challenges faced in addressing food security, hunger, and sustainable resource use. They create a complex web of difficulties that hinder progress in achieving these vital goals. Among those most affected are vulnerable populations, particularly households led by smallholder farmers and agricultural laborers. These groups experience deepening poverty and face poor nutritional outcomes. They desperately require greater social protection, while fiscal constraints significantly challenge the implementation of comprehensive support measures.

As disruptive shocks become more frequent, it becomes crucial to take multisectoral action to enhance resilience. This requires coordinated efforts across different sectors to build robust systems that can withstand and recover from such disturbances.



To accelerate progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, a more integrated approach is necessary – one that addresses multiple goals simultaneously, rather than limited, excessively narrow sectoral approaches. Food systems transformation presents an extraordinary opportunity to achieve the world's shared ambitions. The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) stressed that the biggest transformative potentials of the 2030 Agenda did not lie in pursuing single Goals or targets, but in a systemic approach that manages their myriad interactions.¹³ Food systems and nutrition patterns were identified as one of six entry points needed for transformation.¹⁴ The 2023 GSDR builds on this framework and proposes key synergetic interventions in each of the six entry points for sustainability transformation.¹⁵

The transformation of food systems entails profound shifts across production, storage, consumption, and disposal of food. These shifts have the potential to generate multiplier effects, acting as catalysts for broader transformation across multiple systems and SDGs. By reimagining and redesigning our food systems, we can address pressing challenges and unlock opportunities for progress in other areas.

This was the vision of the UN Food Systems Summit held in 2021 which marked a significant milestone for the global community, in accelerating actions towards more sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and nutritious food systems. The culmination of the UN Food Systems Summit was a powerful Statement of Action, which urged countries to go beyond rhetoric and take concrete steps towards implementing their newly adopted food systems national pathways. These pathways represent strategic frameworks tailored to each country's context, outlining specific actions to be undertaken for food systems transformation.

13 Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development, (United Nations, New York, 2019), available from https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf

14 The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report identified six entry points for transformation: human wellbeing and capabilities; sustainable and just economies; energy decarbonisation and access; food systems and nutrition patterns; urban and peri-urban development; global environmental commons.

15 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, available from <https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Advance%20unedited%20GSDR%2014June2023.pdf>



CHAPTER 2

COUNTRY PROGRESS TWO YEARS ON

Since 2021, 126 countries adopted national pathways and 155 appointed food systems national convenors, demonstrating their sustained interest and commitment to transforming food systems.¹⁶

A. The Voluntary Country Reporting process

The preparations towards UNFSS+2 witnessed significant global participation and engagement, with 101 countries submitting voluntary country progress reports (hereafter referred to as “reports” or “country reports”). These reports provided insights into the progress and efforts being made to transform food systems worldwide. Importantly, the participation spans across the entire spectrum of income classifications, highlighting the inclusive nature of this global stocktaking exercise and the universal relevance of food systems transformation. There are 30 country reports from countries in Africa, 13 from the Americas, 28 from Asia, 16 from Europe and 14 from Oceania. 24 reports come from countries classified as high-income, 23 are classified as upper middle-income, 35 are classified as lower middle-income and 19 are classified as low-income.

Some countries submitted a country report, even though they did not take specific steps to adopt a national pathway or appoint a food systems national convenor, which is a testament to the inclusivity of the post-UNFSS 2021 process, that has always valued the unique circumstances of each country and the individual routes they adopt for their transformation.

The country reports provide insights into the efforts undertaken by countries at different stages of their transformation journeys and contribute towards a collective understanding of what transformational changes are needed. In the coming years and until 2030, they will serve as an important mechanism for tracking progress, identifying gaps, and inspiring and driving collective action.

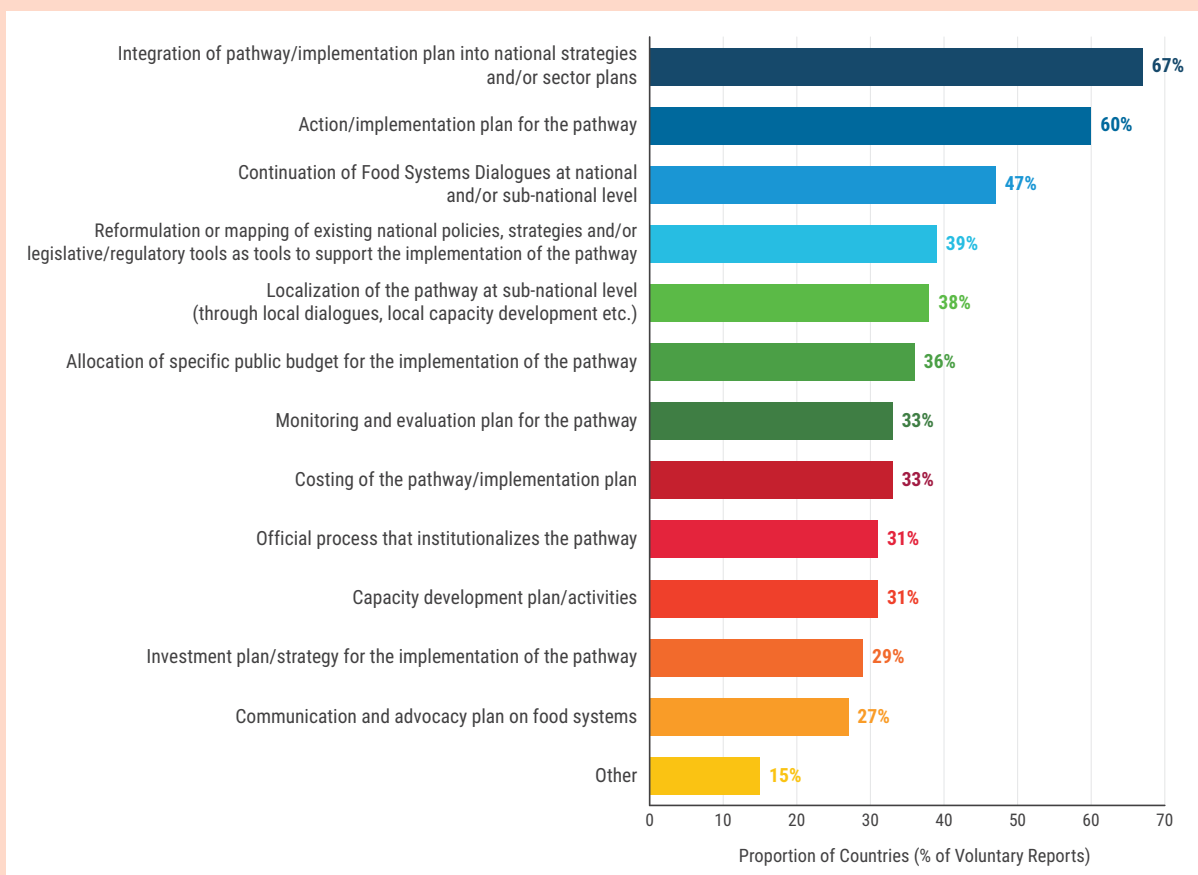
Around the world, countries demonstrated resilience and adaptability in their commitment to transforming food systems despite unprecedented challenges. The global crisis compelled nations to revise their national pathways and make difficult decisions, particularly in the context of limited fiscal resources, but overall, countries have remained steadfast in their long-term commitment to food systems transformation. The impact of the crisis on food systems served as a wake-up call, capturing the attention of decision-makers at all levels. The various shocks experienced during this time also highlighted the vulnerabilities of food systems and the critical importance of food security and resilience.

¹⁶ <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/member-state-dialogue/dialogues-and-pathways/en>

B. Status of country progress

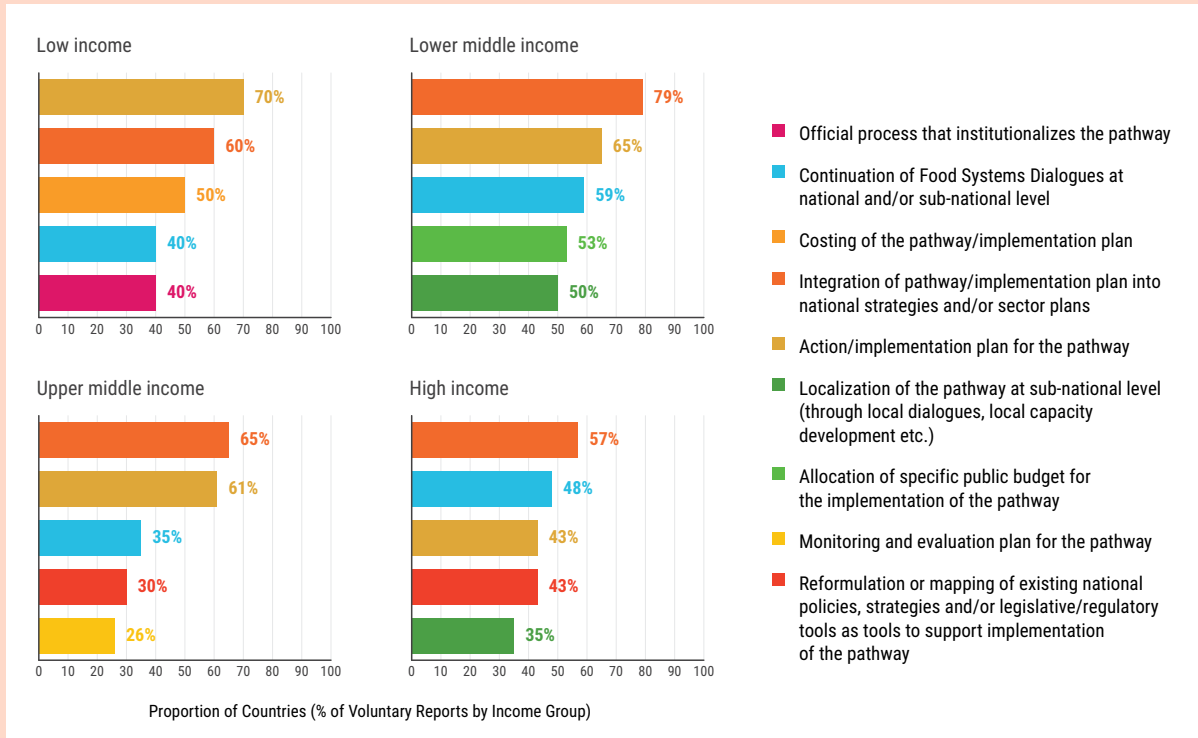
The depiction of country progress presented in the subsequent sections is derived from a comprehensive analysis of the 101¹⁷ country reports voluntarily submitted to the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub between May and June 2023, using the dedicated template. The report contains country examples that illustrate key actions and progress reported in the country progress reports. They however do not represent a comprehensive list of countries that have reported taking initiatives in a certain area.

Figure 1: Proportion of responses (over 100 Voluntary Progress Reports) to Question 1.6.A - “Since the 2021 Food Systems Summit, have you developed or are you working on any of the following outputs as steps towards the implementation of your country’s Food Systems Transformation Pathway?”.



¹⁷ The quantitative analysis presented in this section is calculated on the basis of 100 country reports. One report submitted after the conclusion of the analysis could not be included in the quantitative data but was used for the qualitative reporting.

Figure 2: Proportion of responses to Question 1.6.A. across income groups



Some 67 percent of the countries reporting, particularly middle and high-income nations, successfully integrated the priorities outlined in their national pathways into their overarching national development plans and strategies. This demonstrated a clear commitment to ensure that the transformative goals of their food systems pathways are aligned with broader national development objectives.

Improvement at policy coherence is noticeable across many dimensions of sustainable development with the integration of the food systems transformation, food security, nutrition, food safety, agricultural and value chain development, climate, and water agendas in many countries. This deliberate integration and policy alignment allowed for greater focus on environmental sustainability, climate adaptation, and the resilience of production systems and livelihoods. Recognizing the interdependence of these factors, countries worked towards ensuring that their food systems are productive and efficient and environmentally responsible while capable of withstanding the challenges posed by climate change. A few countries (for example, Georgia and Uruguay) referenced their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for climate action and promising signals indicate a likely increase in efforts at mainstreaming food systems in NDCs and vice versa, in the coming years.



Notably, the impact of the UNFSS 2021, spurred several countries to develop food security and nutrition strategies for the first time. In addition, efforts at integration extended well beyond the traditional domains of agriculture, food security, and nutrition. Some countries indicated the incorporation of their food systems transformation vision into policies related to women and gender (United States of America, Fiji, Sierra Leone), youth (Fiji, Tanzania), early child development, and social protection (Haiti, Guinea).

The UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and the series of shocks experienced by food systems led lawmakers to lend heightened attention and scrutiny to the political importance of food, the right to food, the rights of food systems workers and indigenous peoples, and the necessary trade-offs within food systems. This increased attention resulted in a growing engagement of parliamentarians in food systems transformation efforts, with some countries going as far as integrating elements of their national pathways into national laws.

Approximately one quarter of the countries that submitted reports indicate a greater incorporation of critical topics into their legal frameworks. These include for example: the right to food (Nepal), food security and nutrition (Iraq), food loss and waste (Republic of Moldova), school meals (Latvia), healthy diets (Mexico), public procurement of food (Peru), and labor codes. This underscores the important role that legislation can play to support the transformation of food systems.

A growing trend among countries has been to emphasize food sovereignty as a central tenet of their food systems strategies (noticeable examples include Chile, the Dominican Republic and Ethiopia).

Recognizing the critical importance of public awareness and engagement in driving food systems transformation, approximately a quarter of countries described initiatives aimed at positioning food systems transformation within the national social and political discourse, with the goal of building support, generating momentum for concerted action, and fostering behavior change. By raising public awareness, these countries seek to empower individuals to actively participate in shaping the future of their food systems and making informed choices about their consumption, production, and waste management practices.

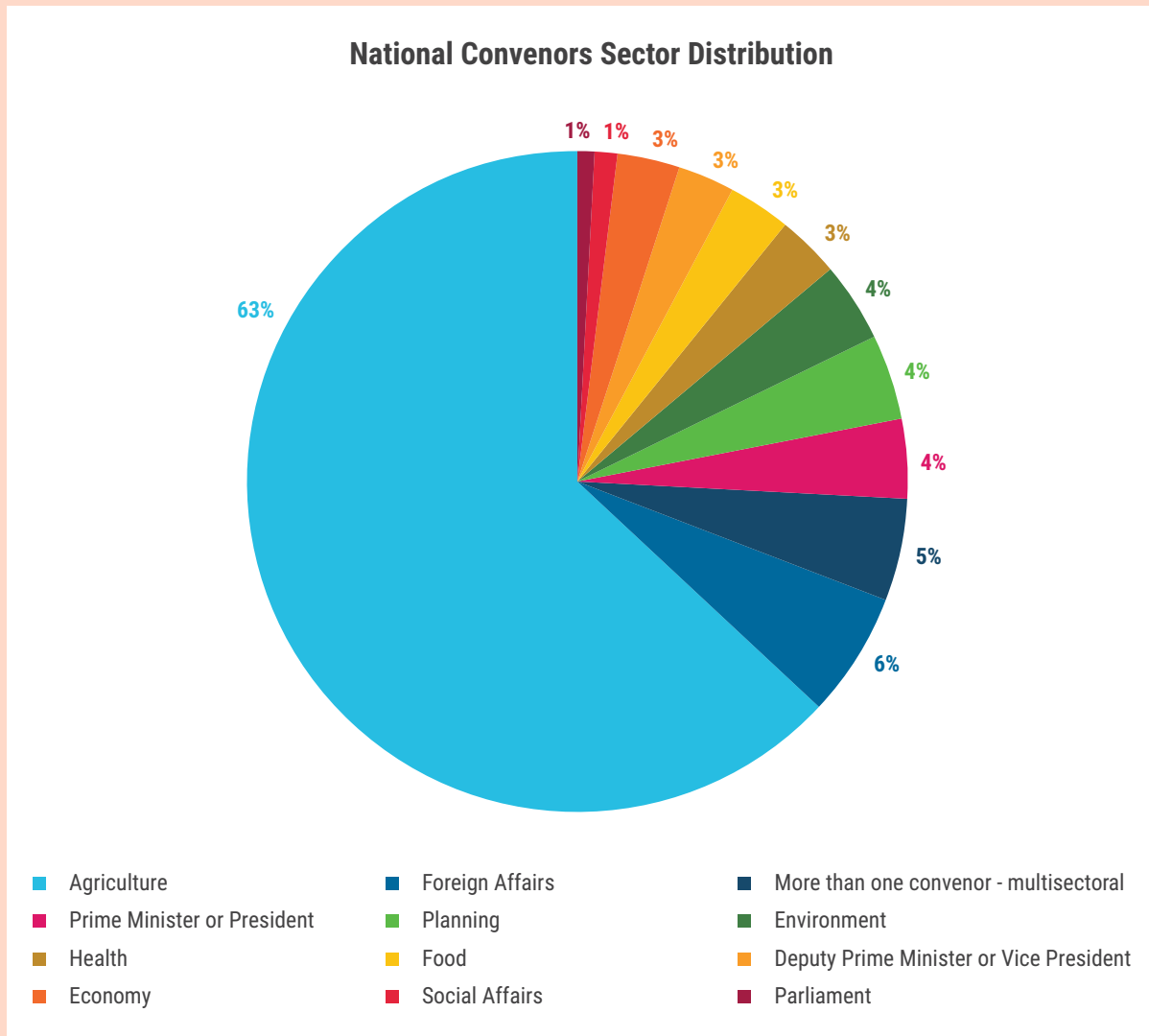
C. Operationalizing food systems through the means of implementation

Governance

A significant number of countries (70 percent) indicated their efforts to establish or strengthen food systems governance, particularly among low- and low-middle-income countries. Recognizing the complexity and interconnectedness of food systems, new forms of governance have been introduced that facilitate cross-sector collaboration. These innovative approaches aim to engage multiple stakeholders at various levels, including national, subnational, and local, to mobilize collective action towards sustainable food systems.

Countries are taking steps to establish and strengthen interdepartmental mechanisms for coordinated action on food systems, with a mandate to enable effective coordination, resource allocation, and implementation oversight. Some are instituting, revitalizing, or merging pre-existing mechanisms. Such initiatives aim to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach to food systems transformation. These mechanisms facilitate the integration of policies, strategies, and actions from various sectors to foster synergies and coherence in addressing food system challenges.



Figure 3: National Convenors Sector Distribution in 155 Member States

When it comes to the institutional housing of these coordination platforms, countries used various options. The majority of National Convenors (sixty-three percent) hail from the agriculture sector, while others come from diverse backgrounds such as (Vice) President or Prime Minister offices (seven percent), ministries of foreign affairs (six percent), the national institution in charge of food (five percent), ministries of planning (four percent), environment (four percent), health (three percent), economy (three percent), and social affairs (one percent). Since the placement of these mechanisms is a strategic decision that directly impacts their effectiveness, going forward, countries should carefully consider the organizational structure and location that will best enable collaboration, coherence, and synergy among different stakeholders and sectors involved in food systems, based on their national context.

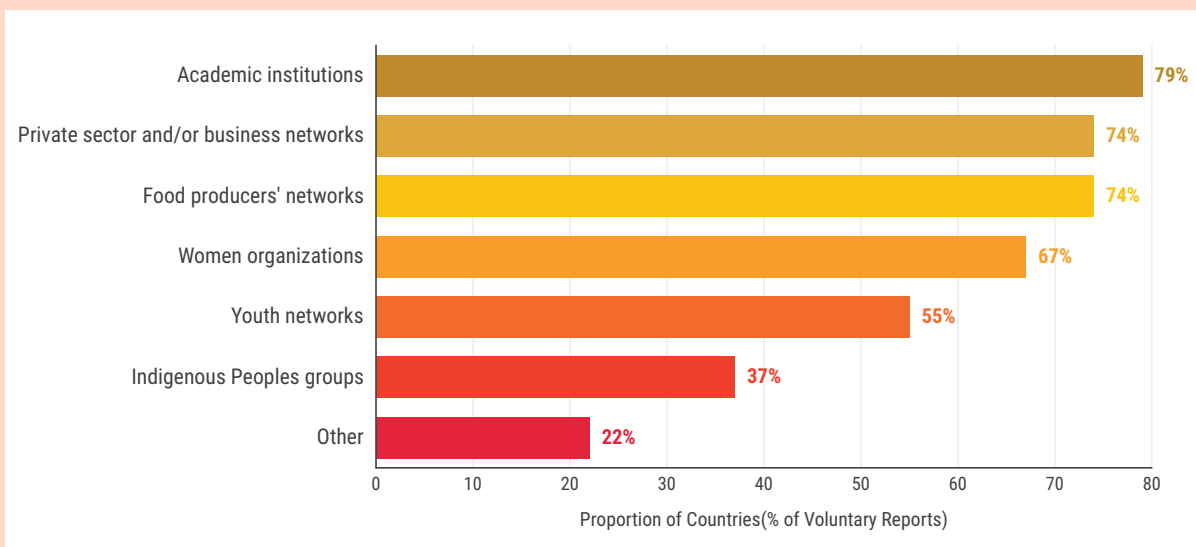
The governance of food systems involves multiple ministries and departments responsible for different aspects of the food system. At a minimum, ministries, and departments responsible for agriculture, fisheries, industry, transport, environment, health, nutrition, social welfare, economic planning, finance, employment, and decentralized administrations should be included. Their collaboration and coordinated actions are essential for addressing the complexity and interconnectivity of food systems challenges.

In some countries, coordination mechanisms are weak and require revitalization due to changes in government. In others, bureaucratic barriers and sectoral budget accountability and structures sometimes recreate silos and constitute obstacles to coordination.

Countries around the world recognize the importance of engaging multiple stakeholders in the dialogue and decision-making processes for food systems transformation. Building on the momentum generated by the 625 national dialogues convened ahead of the Food Systems Summit in 2021, most countries continued to foster or expand engagement with various stakeholders.

In order to complement some participation and inclusiveness gaps in the Summit dialogue process (associated with the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic), a significant number of countries decided to organize new dialogues, focusing on bringing additional, especially underrepresented voices to the table, such as those of Indigenous Peoples, women and youth. This allowed to capture and integrate their insights in the operationalization process for the country's pathway.

Figure 4: Proportion of responses (over 100 Voluntary Progress Reports) to Question 3.1. "Have you engaged with any of the following actors at the national level in designing and implementing food systems transformation?"



In addition, over the past two years, countries sought the input and collaboration of stakeholders involved in food production, processing, trade, and distribution. These stakeholders include representatives from civil society organizations, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples' communities, local governments, and women's organizations. Engagement with youth and Indigenous Peoples groups however is still limited. Efforts should be made to actively involve them and amplify their voice in decision-making processes. Their perspectives, innovative ideas, and traditional knowledge can contribute significantly to the development and implementation of sustainable and inclusive food systems and ensure intergenerational equity.

Many countries (38 percent) took steps towards decentralization and sub-national engagement in advancing their food systems transformation agendas. The reports emphasize the need for a decentralized focus on food systems, recognizing that localized approaches can better address the specific needs and priorities of different regions. By empowering sub-national jurisdictions and administrations to take ownership of food systems transformation, countries can foster greater innovation, responsiveness, accountability, and effectiveness in addressing the challenges faced at the community level.

Regional-level initiatives emerged in certain areas, particularly in relation to harmonizing food safety standards and promoting trade unions (examples include the European Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Pacific Community, the Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East & North Africa (AARINENA), among others). Regional communities play a vital role in facilitating collaboration and coordination among countries within a specific region. These initiatives recognize the shared challenges and opportunities faced by neighboring countries and seek to foster cooperation for more sustainable and efficient food systems.

Finance

The country reports show that despite the tight fiscal situation in many countries, significant levels of domestic funding are being mobilized for food systems transformation. However, in spite of governments' commitment to mobilize domestic revenues, financing remains insufficient for the transformation that is needed. Unsurprisingly, low-income countries are the most challenged in mobilizing financing for food systems. Difficulties in developing national financing strategies for food systems transformation also emerge as a recurrent issue in country reports. Only half of the countries report progress in assessing financing gaps for food systems transformation, with only a few embarking on costing their national pathways. These observations echo the results of a needs analysis survey conducted by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub in 2022, where financing for food systems transformation emerged as the first area of support requested by member states, with some countries requesting analytical support and tools to inform targeted allocation of public financing to food systems.

In response, IFAD and the World Bank, leveraging the ecosystems of support¹⁸, have fast-tracked the development of a harmonized methodology to help decision-makers track Financial Flows to Food Systems (the 3FS) and inform their food systems financing strategy. Keeping track of these flows against targets is an essential building block to spur transformative financing and foster accountability. The preliminary results of the 3FS-prototype which is being piloted in five countries will be released shortly. Thanks to this innovative tool, one of the pilot countries is now in possession of the first ever comprehensive picture of its financing to food systems, showing an increase by 70% between 2019 and 2022, despite the global context. This new data will provide much needed evidence to inform the government's financing strategy in this area.

The 3FS analysis of Official Development Assistance (ODA) conducted together with the OECD, shows that between 2018 and 2020, development partners increased ODA to food systems by about 10% in absolute terms. However, in 2021 it decreased by three percentage points, warranting attention moving forward. The 3FS-prototype also indicates that close to one-third of ODA to food systems is directed to social assistance to vulnerable groups, including food assistance.

Knowledge, science and technology

In recognition of the critical role of knowledge, science, evidence, and technology in driving food systems transformation, 59 percent of countries actively sought to enhance their engagement with the scientific community. This concerted effort demonstrates a growing acknowledgment of the importance of evidence-based approaches and the utilization of technological advancements to shape more sustainable and resilient food systems. A number of countries also highlighted the essential knowledge of indigenous peoples' supporting holistic national-level policies.

The analysis, however, suggests that countries in the upper middle- and high-income groups have enjoyed a distinct advantage when it comes to utilizing science and technology. In relation to this, several countries have called for improved access to technology for all nations. This emphasis on equity highlights the importance of ensuring that scientific advancements and technological innovations are shared and made accessible facilitating knowledge exchange, promoting technology transfer, and supporting capacity-building initiatives in lower-income countries. Looking ahead, countries should prioritize investments in essential infrastructure and create conducive environments to facilitate the optimal utilization of knowledge, science, and technology for an accelerated transformation.

¹⁸ In particular OECD, IICA, FAO, GAIN, AATI, AGRA, AKADEMYA 2063, 4SD, the Good Food Finance Network and the SUN Movement

Data

To ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, countries are working on improving the availability and use of relevant information together with the scientific community. More than 63 percent of countries report efforts to enhance data availability and utilization for monitoring progress and evaluating impact. It includes improving data quality, integrating new data sources, and expanding data collection and analysis capabilities.

Quality data and analytical capacity play a pivotal role in guiding decision-making processes and monitoring progress. Countries recognize that reliable information enables them to track and evaluate the impact of their food systems transformation efforts over time. As a result, they are investing in digitalization and databases to establish more integrated information systems that can be accessed by various stakeholders, including farmers. Some countries developed "food systems dashboards" at national and district levels (for example Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya and Pakistan). However, it is important to note that no country currently possesses a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system specifically designed to track the progress and impacts of national food systems transformation. There is a need for more integrated monitoring mechanisms that can capture the multidimensional nature of this transformation. By addressing the gaps in information and monitoring, countries can better understand the effectiveness of their interventions and identify areas for course-correction.

Trade

Countries mentioned rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable and transparent multilateral trade as an essential avenue to guarantee global and national food security. Many African countries in particular highlighted the significance of maximizing the benefits derived from regional free trade agreements. Trade agreements have the potential to act as a powerful incentive for improved public health, environmental and agricultural productivity outcomes, for instance, by encouraging the repurposing of unsustainable subsidies and incentives. In parallel to advocating to keep trade channels and markets open for the movement of food, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs and outputs, a number of countries implement various initiatives in the realm of trade to reduce over-dependence on food import against the compounding challenges of supply shock, the currency depreciation, and the surge in transport costs they experienced in the past several years. Primarily, these initiatives focus on investing in strengthening shorter supply chains at the local and regional levels and circular circuits (re-use of agricultural byproducts, agroecological fertilizers).

Figure 5: Proportion of responses (over 100 Voluntary Progress Reports) to Question 2.2. “Has your country taken any of the following actions to support food systems transformation?”.

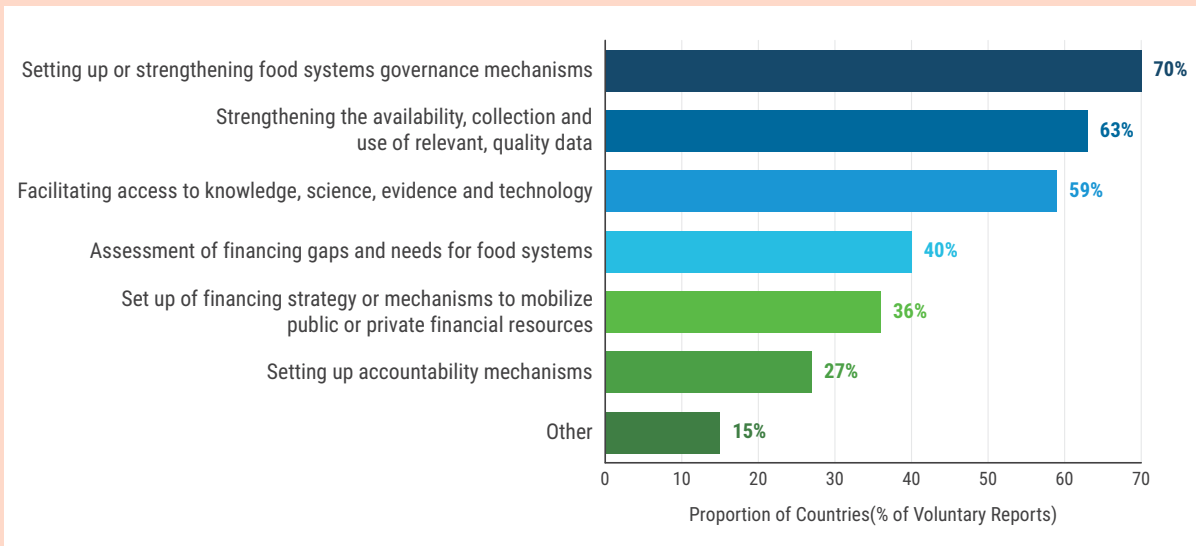
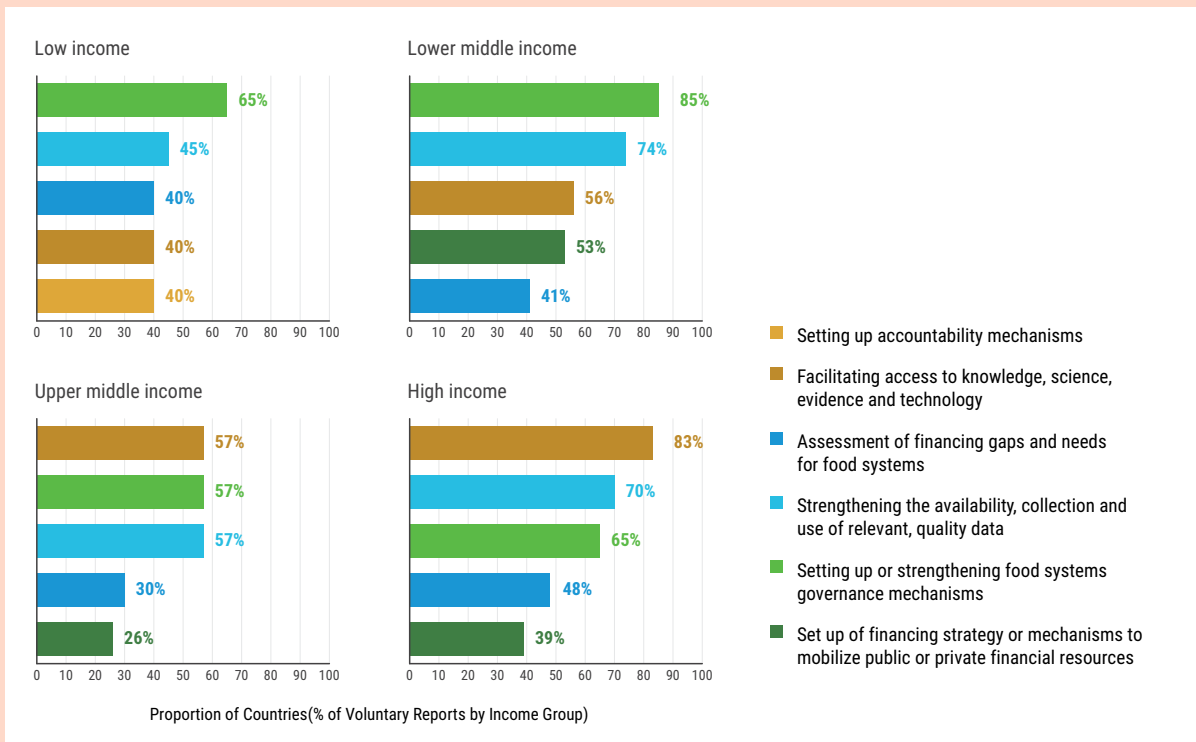


Figure 6: Proportion of responses to question 2.2 across income groups



D. Transformation efforts across the four thematic action areas

Nourish All People—reduce hunger and malnutrition and promote healthy diets

In this action area, it is worthy to note that countries' priorities seemed to vary based on their income levels. High-income countries emphasized the importance of promoting healthy diets, while low-income countries prioritized efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition. Governments recognized the urgency of addressing the cost-of-living crisis and have taken steps to ensure people's right to food, nutrition, and school meals (for example, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Guinea, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mali, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestine, Peru, Poland, Sudan, Tanzania, United States of America, Zambia). Social protection and safety-net programs have also been implemented, with a special focus on the most vulnerable populations (Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Central African Republic, Chile, Ethiopia, Nauru, Nigeria, Somalia, Spain, Sierra Leone, among others). Approximately 20% of the country reports highlight notable initiatives aimed at reducing food waste (Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Qatar, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Uganda, United States of America) and a smaller group of countries focus on preventing both food loss and waste (Denmark, Germany, Israel, Estonia, Oman, and Moldova).

Boost Nature-based Solutions

Initiatives in this thematic action area include actions on agroecology (Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Guinea, Hungary, Madagascar, Mexico, Spain, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uruguay, Vietnam, Zimbabwe) with some countries mentioning national agroecology policies (Brazil, Tanzania, Uruguay Zimbabwe), strategies (Burkina Faso, Switzerland, Tanzania) and plans (Uruguay); regenerative agriculture (Ethiopia, Israel, Qatar, Peru), organic farming (Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Japan, Lesotho, Malta, Palau, Peru, Philippines, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland) with interesting examples of policies (Brazil, Malta, Uganda) and national plans (Malta, Peru); conservation agriculture (Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Tanzania, Zimbabwe) and agroforestry (Cameroon, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Peru). These are combined with actions focusing on land restoration, water management and soil health. In addition, One Health is becoming an explicit objective for policies (for example One Health Strategy in Denmark), collaborations (Sierra Leone) and ongoing research (Lao PDR).

The majority of countries directed their attention to crop production and diversification to boost nature-based solutions and enhance the resilience of their food systems. Some countries also prioritized sustainable livestock and fisheries (including the Republic of Korea, Japan, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Kenya, Spain, Samoa, Uruguay), including the concept of Blue Food (for example Kenya, Madagascar, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau). Technological advancements for sustainable productivity growth were incorporated into strategies as well.

Advance Equitable Livelihoods, Decent Work, and Empowered Communities

One third of countries reporting (37) mentioned specific initiatives to create jobs, including Green Jobs (Fiji and Nigeria); improve farmers' income (Georgia, Latvia, Poland); enhance women's opportunities in food systems, and increase youth participation in food production businesses (Bangladesh, Chile, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Nigeria, Palau, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe, among others). Actions include financial assistance for smallholder farmers transitioning to market-oriented agriculture (Nigeria, Ethiopia); land certification with equal rights to women (Ethiopia); tax system reform to formalize smallholders and social protection provision for the smallest businesses (Palau); covering workers in formal and informal sectors (Bangladesh); increase the minimum wage for workers in the sugar sector (Dominican Republic); revision of regulation to ensure seasonal workers' rights (Finland); public direct payments to increase farm household income (Republic of Korea) or basic income support for farmers safety net (Spain).

Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks, and Stresses

In response to shocks, countries adopted a comprehensive food systems approach that addresses various components, processes, and stakeholders involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of food. While prioritizing food security and resilience, countries have acknowledged the need to balance environmental and nutritional concerns. Governments of food-importing countries have worked on increasing resilience and reducing dependency by diversifying their sources of food supply and boosting domestic food production. Additionally, disruptions in global fertilizer markets have prompted efforts to encourage efficient fertilizer use (Chile, Japan, Republic of Korea, Spain) and explore the use of organic alternatives (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Pakistan, Timor-Leste).

Approximately half of the countries recognize the urgency of adapting food systems to climate change and promoting environmental resilience. Actions have been taken to address land restoration (Chile, Marshal Islands, Niger, Uganda), water management (Cambodia, Guatemala, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Uganda, Tanzania), and soil health (Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Liberia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Spain, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Tanzania, Uruguay).

E. Enduring challenges

The complex crisis and fluid national contexts

The current intricate crisis context has made the imperative of continuous adaptation more pressing than ever for countries. Securing the necessary political support for both crisis response and long-term changes in food systems was however challenging for many of them.

In addition, transitions in government and administrations can significantly impact the momentum of food systems transformation within a country. In these situations, the transformation of food systems faces unique hurdles. Changes in political leadership and administration can disrupt the continuity of efforts, leading to delays or shifts in priorities. In approximately 15 percent of countries that have undergone such changes in the past two years, national pathways for food systems transformation have played a crucial role in more easily securing the commitment of new teams to the transformation agenda.

Operationalization of pathways, policy integration and coherence

In some countries, the endorsement of new policies, laws, or implementation plans by the government is still pending. The process of operationalizing these plans requires time and effort, particularly in cases where there is contention surrounding the policies or when there is a lack of financial and technical resources. These challenges are more pronounced in small island developing states (SIDS) and countries grappling with conflicts.



Finance

Accessing and mobilizing funds continues to be a persistent challenge for many countries and stakeholders engaged in food systems transformation. Securing adequate financial resources is vital for implementing transformative actions, supporting innovation, and scaling up initiatives that can drive sustainable changes within food systems. Furthermore, the fragmented nature of funding sources and mechanisms adds complexity to the process. Countries often rely on a mix of domestic, international, public, and private funding sources, each with their requirements, procedures, and priorities. Navigating through this landscape and aligning diverse funding streams with the objectives and strategies of food systems transformation can be daunting.

Consolidating the currently fragmented food finance architecture is an essential step towards transforming food systems. The World Bank's Report: "The Financing Landscape for Agricultural Development" (December 2020) reveals that the financial ecosystem for agriculture is highly fragmented with many small aid activities, especially by bilateral donors. In 2018, for example, bilateral DAC donors reported a total of 13,649 aid activities for agriculture, with average funding of US\$0.5 million per aid activity, while multilaterals accounted for 2,275 aid activities, with average funding of US\$1.2 million¹⁹. Similarly, at the country level, there is an abundance of small uncoordinated projects, with high-transaction costs for recipient countries and inefficiencies in pursuing common SDG objectives.

Technical capacity

Deficits in technical capacity are an obstacle. The lack of qualified personnel equipped with the necessary competencies in systems approaches is a conundrum for countries trying to drive food systems transformation. National reports highlight that low-income countries in particular, encounter difficulties in accessing technical assistance to bridge this capacity gap. The successful transformation of food systems requires individuals who possess a profound understanding of the complex interactions and interdependencies within the system. These professionals should be skilled in applying a holistic approach, considering social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors, to guide transformative actions. Unfortunately, many countries face a shortage of such qualified personnel. This hinders the pace of implementation and can limit effectiveness and efficiency. The journey towards enhancing personnel capabilities, however, is an ongoing process. 80 percent of countries expressed their intention to further develop these capabilities in the next two years at the national and sub-national levels.

¹⁹ The Financing Landscape for Agricultural Development. available at: <https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2022/05/AgDevFinancing-WFPC-Dec2020.pdf>



Infrastructure

Many low-income countries face significant challenges in their food systems due to gaps in adequate infrastructure for storage, transport, and processing. These infrastructure gaps hinder the efficient movement of food from production areas to markets, leading to pre and post-harvest losses, limited access to markets, and increased food waste. To address these infrastructure gaps, major investments are needed.

Trust building and time to transform and shift

Practitioners working at the country level encounter various dilemmas when it comes to convening and coordinating inclusive and participatory processes for food systems transformation. These challenges arise because such complex tasks require them to engage a diverse range of stakeholders, address conflicting interests, and ensure that decision-making processes are transparent and equitable.

One of the main obstacles faced by practitioners is the labour-intensive nature of convening and coordinating inclusive processes. Effort is required to identify and engage relevant stakeholders and other actors involved. Activities demand time, resources, and dedicated personnel to carry out the necessary coordination and facilitation. Ensuring inclusivity and participation requires practitioners to overcome power imbalances and build trust. Often, different actors within the food system have varying levels of influence, resources, and access to decision-making processes. It is crucial to create a safe and inclusive space where all stakeholders can freely express their perspectives, contribute their knowledge and expertise, and actively participate in decision-making.

The slow unfolding nature of the transformation process also poses challenges for practitioners. Achieving meaningful and sustainable changes within food systems requires long-term commitment and persistence. Transformation does not happen overnight; it requires incremental steps, adaptive approaches, and continuous learning. Practitioners should manage expectations, communicate the long-term nature of the transformation process, and maintain the engagement and motivation of actors and stakeholders throughout the journey.

F. The way forward: Accelerating the effective use of means of implementation and breaking down the mechanics of transformation

The 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) emphasizes the need for strategies that identify and minimize barriers to food systems transformation.²⁰ Such strategies should mobilize the multiple and complementary roles that different actors and entities can play, leveraging their expertise, resources, and influence for a more holistic and effective transformation.

Additionally, the GSDR highlights the importance of utilizing evolving solutions and means of implementation specific to different phases of transformation, namely emergence, acceleration, and stabilization. These means of implementation include governance mechanisms, economic and financial instruments, scientific and technological innovations, individual and collective actions, and capacity building. These levers mutually reinforce each other and should be strategically utilized throughout the transformation process to drive progress and overcome challenges.

Transforming food systems can have implications for other sectors and systems, such as the environment, economy, and social dynamics. Managing these interactions requires comprehensive planning, collaboration, and consideration of potential trade-offs, synergies, and international spillovers. Additionally, it is important to address the resistance and political backlash that may arise against change. Building broad societal support and stakeholder engagement, as well as effectively communicating the benefits of transformation, can help overcome these barriers.

In transitioning towards sustainable food systems, the focus must be on enabling more equitable global access to nutritious and healthy foods, reducing food loss and waste, ensuring that food systems make a positive contribution to nature and the environment and increasing the resilience of food systems.

²⁰ 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report, available from <https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/Advance%20unedited%20GSDR%2014June2023.pdf>



CHAPTER 3

SUPPORT FROM THE COALITIONS OF ACTION AND THE ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT

A total of 31 self-organizing and independent coalitions emerged from the UN Food Systems Summit. Among these, 27 coalitions responded to a survey conducted by the Hub in May 2022, resulting in the creation of the first Compendium of food systems coalitions of action. The primary purpose of these coalitions is to catalyze the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—many of them contributing to SDG2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG13 (Climate Action)—through support to national pathways implementation.

As of July 2023, a total of 131 member countries including the African Union, and the European Union are members of one or more coalitions. Coalitions are multi-actor in nature. They are led by Member States, UN Agencies, Funds, or Programmes – or any organisation or group of organisations. On average, a coalition is led by 5 member organisations/countries. Some coalitions also include cities and local entities as members. The Hub has created a digital compendium of coalitions to allow member states and food systems stakeholders and actors to easily locate coalitions of interest and facilitate meaningful and effective engagement.²¹

Assessing the value-addition of coalitions is difficult due to the absence of agreed-upon metrics and the diversity within coalitions. Collectively, however, they have strengthened the follow-up of the UNFSS, albeit to varying degrees.

The stocktaking of coalitions works over the past two years, based on self-reporting, reveals that they primarily focused on three key areas: transferring lessons, best practices, and capacities (89 percent); fostering alignment and coherence (84 percent); and mobilizing energy and political will (79 percent). Additionally, coalitions have worked on catalyzing coordinated investment (69 percent), networking from local to global levels (69 percent), and mobilizing resources (26 percent). Their modus operandi often leaned on support in policy formulation, advocacy, peer-to-peer learning, analytics, and monitoring and evaluation.

²¹ Compendium of Food Systems Coalitions, available at <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/hub-solution/compendium-of-food-systems-coalitions/en>

At the global level, the coalitions play a crucial role in engaging in global policy spaces to emphasize the importance of food systems transformation. To influence international and UN policy documents, prioritize collective action, and mobilize political commitment, coalitions focus on shaping global discourse, ensuring affected people's voices are central in global events and discussions, establishing global action networks, and facilitating knowledge sharing and management.

At the regional level, coalitions focused on enabling regional spaces to promote knowledge, experience, expertise, and lessons sharing, in implementing national pathways. These will serve as valuable tools to promote regionalized solutions for addressing country-specific challenges.

At the country level, coalitions prioritized efforts on providing technical support for the implementation of national pathways. In 100 countries, the coalitions have provided technical analysis, modeling, and other methods to inform specific policy choices; design food systems strategies, investment plans and bankable business cases to mobilize resources for implementation and facilitated national-level dialogues and capacity building.



The coalitions play an important role in advancing transformation across all Summit Action Areas. Below are some examples:

Nourishing All People: emphasizing the importance of access to safe, healthy and nutritious food; supporting school meal initiatives in various countries; advocating for incorporating blue/aquatic foods into food systems transformation efforts.

Boosting Nature-Based Solutions: facilitating the adoption of regenerative agroforestry practices and encouraging investments in soil health; developing standardized protocols for measuring food loss and waste, as well as supporting policy formulation and implementation related to agroecological transitions.

Advancing Equitable Livelihoods and Empowered Communities: contributing to policy formulation and analytics, particularly around social protection.

Building Resilience to Vulnerabilities and Shocks: supporting the integration of resilience actions into national strategies, policies, and plans; providing scientific assessments and operational guidance to address context-based challenges related to vulnerabilities and shocks.

In doing so, they have facilitated the use of **means of implementation** within countries as demonstrated by the following highlights:

- **Financing:** increasing domestic financing by developing sustainable financing strategies and promoting innovative ways of financing; building a major new financing mechanism to support aquatic foods together with private, bilateral, and multilateral donors and investors
- **Innovation:** uniting actors over an action agenda for agricultural innovation; elevating the importance of nature-positive practices and innovation in achieving sustainable and resilient food systems worldwide
- **Science-policy:** translating science into action by cooperation with the private sector and extension agents
- **Capacity development:** initiatives benefiting cross-fertilization and learning among countries
- **Data:** leveraging the capacity and global expertise of the public and private sector to embrace data-driven decision-making and policy implementation



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The coalitions also report encountering challenges that must be addressed for future progress. These challenges include limited interactions with national conveners, coordination gaps among stakeholders, inadequate national policies and lack of policy coherence, difficulties in scaling up successful models, overwhelming demand for support, and limited funding and resources. To overcome these challenges and achieve meaningful impact, coalitions will need to strategically plan their priorities for the next two years, aiming to go beyond incremental change.

One of the primary objectives of creating coalitions was to reduce fragmentation within the food systems ecosystem of support, by bringing together a broad range of initiatives, partnerships, and actors. Fragmentation often leads to an insufficient integration of the complex and dynamic interactions among actors of the food system and between interconnected systems for health, education, social protection, and others.

During 2021-2023, the coalitions strived to foster alignment, minimize fragmentation, and promote collaboration. While they have made a dent in this daunting endeavor and collaborated with each other in many instances, much remains to be done to address fragmentation. To overcome these challenges in the next biennium, coalitions recommend closer interaction and engagement, breaking down barriers, and aligning efforts based on an overarching narrative and vision. They highlight the challenges posed by the costs of coordination and promoting a systems approach to transformation.

Since its establishment, the UN Food System Coordination Hub works closely with coalitions and other actors, serving as a connector, making these support structures more visible to country convenors, and facilitating knowledge and learning generation and exchange. To enhance coordination and strategy in the future, the Hub could further support matchmaking between country needs and relevant coalitions able to provide support. Rationalizing coalitions could help avoid duplication of efforts and ensure targeted approaches that address country priorities efficiently and effectively.

The full potential of coalitions has not fully unfolded, especially at country-level, given the ambitious goals and expectations and the time needed to implement and observe change. Going forward, cross-system collaboration and a systems thinking approach should be strengthened to avoid duplication and fragmentation and to reduce the transaction costs of numerous uncoordinated outreach to countries. Monitoring, accountability, and learning should be further invested into, to transparently assess the impact of the work coalition roll-out, especially at the country level. The current important contributions to transformative action globally, and the promising engagement with regional bodies should be pursued.





CHAPTER 4

INTEGRATED SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and the UN Food Systems Task Force

The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub was established as an immediate outcome of the UN Food Systems Summit to sustain the Summit's follow-up. The Hub articulates its work around 6 Key Functions: facilitation of national pathways implementation, convening of the global ecosystem of support, strengthening the means of implementation, communication, and advocacy for food systems transformations, and thought leadership.

Since its establishment, it has engaged National Convenors, through monthly global food systems solutions dialogues, quarterly regional touchpoints, and regional face-to-face meetings. Country-specific engagements have also facilitated a more granular understanding of country technical and financial assistance needs, allowing to offer multifaceted and tailored assistance, through the mobilization of the existing UN presence, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinators (RCs), as well as by engaging the ecosystem of Support. As of July 2023, the Hub supports 14 projects in a diverse group of countries to support them and the ecosystem of support in fast-tracking the operationalization of their national pathways. In addition, the Hub and its partners developed an innovative tool to map food systems ecosystems of support in countries (institutions and activities), which can support decision-making and coordination efforts by governments, identifying enablers or challenges, areas of synergies and trade-offs and duplications. The ambition is for the tool, which is currently being piloted in one country, to be made available to all countries by early 2024.

Building on the legacy of the UN Food Systems Summit, the Hub also sought to mobilize a broad range of constituencies, including two advisory groups, the Stakeholders Engagement, Networking and Advisory (SENA) Group made up of representatives of Producers, Women, Private Sector, Youth and Indigenous Peoples, and the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) composed of 29 nominated scientists.



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Preparing for the UNFSS+2, the Hub, together with the UN Regional Commissions and other regional partners, organized a series of five regional preparatory meetings: in Niamey (27 February 2023), Beirut (13 March 2023), Geneva (28 March 2023),²² Bangkok (30 March 2023), and Santiago de Chile (25 April 2023). By engaging in these consultations, which saw the participation of around 800 people, National Convenors, contributed to shaping the vision and roadmap of the UNFSS+2. These five meetings were complemented by the 4th Global Conference of the One Planet network's (10YFP) Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme (Hanoi, Viet Nam - 24-27 April 2023), which served as an important pre-UNFSS+2 event.

Over the past two years, the UN Food Systems Task Force, currently co-chaired by UNEP and WHO, and bringing together over 40 UN agencies continued to provide a platform to connect and catalyze transformative actions inside the UN system and coordinating with wider stakeholders to galvanize food systems knowledge and expertise, supporting countries' action.

²² <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/docs/unfoodsystemslibraries/stocktaking-moment/regional-preparatory-meetings/synthesis-report-regional-preparatory-meetings-of-the-unfss-2.pdf>

B. Support from the UN System at global, regional and country level

UN agencies at Headquarters' level are positioning food systems as a priority and taking concrete steps to integrate them into their core areas of work. This took place among other things through internal redesigns. New divisions and departments were established in FAO (Food Systems and Food Safety Division) and UNIDO (Food Security and Food Systems Unit) for example. Furthermore, new strategies were adopted, such as UNEP's Sustainable Food Systems Strategy²³, the Multisectoral Action in Food Systems Unit²⁴, One Health Initiative²⁵ or the WHO global strategy for food safety 2022 - 2030.²⁶ These institutional changes facilitate collaborative interagency work and enable integrated approaches that transcend traditional silos and encompass areas such as ecology, climate, health, nutrition, agriculture, social protection, agribusiness, and education.

Agencies came together to prioritize food systems in important global conferences and meetings such as the UN Ocean Conference, COP15, UN Water Conference, Stockholm 50+, the World Health Summit, and COP27. The UN played an essential role in developing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which includes 23 targets across food systems to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. The elevation of the topic post-Summit is further evidenced by its increasing prominence at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) remains an essential actor of policy convergence at global level, within the UN System and beyond. A wide range of endorsed integrated policy frameworks and evidence-based recommendations on more than twenty cross-cutting themes (from land tenure governance to climate, protracted crises, youth, food loss and waste, water, responsible investment, nutrition, biofuels, agroecology, smallholders, etc.) offer decision makers and multi-stakeholders precious guidance to adopt a food systems approach through individual sectoral entry points.

UN agencies also issued Calls for Action in response to global food emergencies, food security, and childhood wasting. The Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy, and Finance was also established in response to the far-reaching impacts of the war in Ukraine.

In addition, UN agencies actively collaborated to develop tools and knowledge products such as the multidimensional risk framework developed by ESCAP, WFP, FAO, UNEP, and UNICEF. They worked together to release joint policy documents and plans, including the Joint Plan on One Health led by the Quadripartite FAO, UNEP, WHO and World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH).

23 https://www.unep.org/regions/asia-and-pacific/regional-initiatives/supporting-resource-efficiency/asia-pacific-roadmap-7#:~:text=The%20SFSP%20is%20a%20multi_scientific%20institutions%3B%20and%20private%20sector

24 https://www.who.int/teams/nutrition-and-food-safety/multisectoral-actions-in-food-systems#:~:text=The%20multisectoral%20Actions%20in%20Food_chain%2C%20and%20monitors%20policy%20implementation

25 <https://www.who.int/teams/one-health-initiative>

26 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240057685>

When it comes to improving financing in food system transformation, UN agencies and other actors made significant investments. The World Bank Group continued with its Food Systems 2030 initiative established in November 2020, IFAD launched its 13th replenishment cycle with a specific focus and ambition to scale up financing for food systems transformation, and a new and innovative Joint SDG Fund Food Systems Window was incubated by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat.

UN Habitat, FAO, UNEP, the Local2030 Coalition and many other organizations, worked to strengthen multi-sector partnerships for urban-rural integrated development by local and regional governments with the support of national governments. Collaboration led by UN Women also pushed to advance gender equality within the food systems transformation agenda. In the digital realm, agencies, including IPU, collaborated on the use of AI in agriculture.

The work at the regional level has deepened over the past two years and was greatly enhanced by the emergence of 4 regional platforms: the UN Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems in Europe, the Africa Opportunity and Issue-Based Coalition on climate action, resilience, and food systems transformation, the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Task Force on Food Systems and the Asia Regional Networking Group on Food Systems. These regional assets engage with UN Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams, regional organizations, and countries, to foster collaboration, policy coherence, joint programming, knowledge sharing, capacity development, technical guidance and joint advocacy. They help address regional and cross-border challenges and ensure integration between regional, sub-regional, and national dimensions.

Noticeable examples of regional initiatives include the stocktaking exercises conducted in Europe and Central Asia to analyze the outcomes of the 2021 Summit; the support for the Implementation Plan and Road Map of the African Union Year of Nutrition; the joint publication of the annual Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition reports in the Near East and North Africa region; the coordinated efforts of six UN agencies to support the implementation of national pathways in 16 Latin American and Caribbean countries; or the Gran Chaco Americano initiative, where the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay were supported to adopt a shared vision to transform their food systems, mitigate and adapt to climate change, prevent conflict, and empower Indigenous Peoples.

UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams which were instrumental in supporting countries prepare for the 2021 Summit were also at the frontline of its follow-up. In the immediate post-summit, they intensified their assistance to operationalize national pathways, advance integrated policy on food systems, support the integration of food systems transformation into national development plans and implement joint programs, often with support from the Joint SDG Fund. An increasing number of new generation UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) include food systems transformation within their key priorities. Many UN agencies developed specific guidance to support the mainstreaming of food systems in UNSDCFs. UN Nutrition's guidance to UNCTs focusing on "sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets" offers an interesting example.

C. The UN within coalitions and the broader ecosystem of support

UN agencies are also actively collaborating through coalitions of actions, with 26 UN agencies directly supporting them, as well as alliances and networks such as the Global Network Against Food Crises. Existing collaboration platforms have also expanded their focus to include food systems. This is the case of the Global Environment Fund-8 Food Systems Integrated Program that seeks to catalyze the transformation to sustainable food systems that are nature-positive, resilient, and pollution-reduced, in partnership with FAO and IFAD. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) also plays a crucial role as a major financing source for transforming food systems and supporting developing countries in achieving their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) towards low-emissions and climate-resilient pathways. In addition, by channeling grants and concessional financing through multilateral development banks (World Bank/IFC, IFAD, AfDB, ADB, IADB) and UN agencies (FAO, WFP), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) enables its partners to pilot innovative approaches and help finance high-risk and high-impact investments in food systems.

Post-UNFSS+2, the UN will play a critical role in supporting countries to make a more robust use of Means of Implementation to accelerate progress. To enhance the effectiveness and impact of its support, the system should consider establishing a comprehensive joint UN framework on food systems, including a unified reporting framework that would provide guidance on coordinated actions, ensuring alignment among multiple agencies; encouraging capacity-building, collaboration and knowledge exchange among agencies, member states, and stakeholders, to address critical gaps.





CHAPTER 5

THE WAY FORWARD: TOWARDS THE SDG SUMMIT AND PRIORITIES UNTIL 2025

In 2021, the United Nations Food Systems Summit issued a powerful call to transform food systems in the context of the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. This first global stocktaking teaches us that a great deal can happen in two years on a scale we wouldn't previously believe to be possible.

Today, we find ourselves at cross-roads, with no real alternative than a leap forward through a strong collective coordinated response across several fronts, to guide and focus efforts in the next biennium. Success will be conditioned by unwavering political will from world leaders, and integral commitment by actors and institutions from all sectors and regions, especially those who shape - and must reform - the food systems finance architecture.

A. Key priorities for the next biennium

Policies are the instrument through which governments shape the future of their nation. National policies must give greater attention to leveraging food systems, to contribute to the well-being of all people and of the planet, both in the immediate future and the long term. **National Strategies and Development Plans** can ensure that food systems are at the heart of actions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for responses to a plethora of ongoing crises. In line with the direction set by National Pathways, sectoral policies and regulations, laws and bills can be revised to operationalize holistic Food System visions. National commitments for the climate (**Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans**), **nutrition or biodiversity**, must be linked to food systems transformation strategies, based on national pathways and vice versa. In addition to efforts to increase the provision of nutritious foods for all, measures to address the burden of **malnutrition** in all its forms should be scaled up through systemic policy action.

Inclusive and participatory governance requires a focused commitment to see everyone realizes their right to adequate food. It requires the full engagement of many diverse stakeholders, cross-sector collaboration, and procedures that are both transparent and accountable. Leveraging the **national and subnational dialogues** and creating a framework for them to become an integral, regular and perennial feature of the food systems governance mechanisms at country level has proven to work very effectively in many country contexts and should be pursued.

Subnational administrations: provinces, districts, cities, and municipalities play an important role to ensure that the specificities of local food systems and the priority concerns of local communities are well addressed within national efforts. These local priorities should inform local development plans, budget prioritization and the joint cross-sectoral action plans of decentralized administrations and service providers.

Transformations are only as solid as the **knowledge, understanding and capacity** of actors and institutions that drive them. Capacity-building and greater access to expertise (science, innovation, know-how, research, exploration, and innovation), need to be better rolled-out as stark accelerators of transitions.

The 2021 Food Systems Summit called for USD 300-400 billion of additional investment per year to finance the world's transition towards healthier, more equitable and sustainable food systems. While this amount sounds daunting, putting it in perspective relativizes its magnitude, i.e., the estimated market value of the global food industry is around USD10 trillion²⁷. Mobilizing, allocating and safeguarding **financing** is critical to enable the transition. Ensuring access to catalytic finance, analyzing current flows of public, private, and concessional finance and regularly assessing whether they are conducive to more sustainable food systems, avoiding sector-based spending patterns, mobilizing blended funding, de-risking investments from the private sector and non-traditional sources, coupled with smart short-term support measures to vulnerable food producers, with continuous review and repurposing of long-term support, can effectively support food systems transformation in the face of constrained fiscal spaces and shrinking ODA.

In a context of accelerated and compounded shocks, it is essential to **combine crisis and long-term response** while tackling underlying structural issues. This is done by building resilience throughout food systems, from production through to logistics, storage, processing, and distribution, and increasing access to social protection, universal healthcare coverage and nutrition, especially for the most vulnerable. Strengthening the humanitarian, development and peace nexus, will be essential in an era marked by recurrent crises, in order to intentionally build more resilient food systems that can withstand multiple risks, vulnerabilities and crisis threatening and affecting countries and communities, especially those in fragile and protracted crisis situations.

Regional collaboration and regional communities present untapped potential to amplify national efforts, accelerate context-relevant knowledge sharing and address transboundary issues, particularly around trade. South-South Cooperation, regional collaboration and public-private partnerships have the power to stimulate local and global communities of practice.

Achieving **gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls** can result in greater food security, better nutrition and more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable food systems for all. Gendered solutions are urgently needed to transform food systems. This requires ensuring women's and girls' voice, agency, participation and leadership in shaping food systems.

²⁷ The Food Finance Architecture 2021, available at <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/879401632342154766/pdf/Food-Finance-Architecture-Financing-a-Healthy-Equitable-and-Sustainable-Food-System.pdf>

B. A roadmap for the global ecosystem of support

The rich, diverse global ecosystem of support, which drove much of the Food Systems Summit's thrust, remains deeply committed to leveraging their expertise, resources, and influence for impactful, government-driven transformations. The preparation process to the UNFSS+2 points towards accelerated action in very specific directions.

The effectiveness and impact of **better coordinated Rome-Based Agencies and wider UN support for food systems** could be enhanced through a more robust global framework for integrated delivery that outlines the shared goals, objectives, and strategies for food systems transformation, provides guidance/alignment for coordinated actions among multiple agencies involved, encourages regular communication, and rationalizes structures. Coupled with a common reporting framework defining key performance indicators, data collection mechanisms, and reporting timelines to monitor progress and measure the impact, it will enable stronger joint reporting and enhanced accountability. A resourced Food Systems Window of the Joint SDG Fund will be instrumental in enacting context-specific coordinated delivery of support by UN Country Teams.

Moving forward the Food systems Hub will continue its coordination role and focus its efforts on:

- Strengthening the capacity of the network of National Food Systems Convenors to steer national transformation processes.
- Integrating the Food Systems Ecosystem of Support and provide guidance to Coalitions, the UN Task Force and other relevant actors on how they can align their action in support of national food systems transformation processes.
- Leveraging the Science Ecosystem of Support and the Stakeholders with a view to promote evidence-based and multistakeholder processed for food systems transformation.



The UN System will continue to support and align around the **UN Food Systems Coordination Hub** in deploying the full strength of its convening and capacity development mandate to help Member States deliver on the promise of national development pathways for food systems transformation.

Investing in sustainable food systems by development partners and international financial institutions can go a long way in translating national pathways from vision to resourced action. Supporting **catalytic funding instruments** such as the Food Systems Window of the Joint SDG Fund represents one of the most impactful investments in supporting countries to kick-start solid food system transformation processes. **International Financial Institutions, multilateral development banks, and national development banks**, can be true game changers by decisively increasing access to finance for food systems transformation for countries most in need by applying more flexible and concessional lending rates and expanding borrowing limits. In the context of the reform of the international financial architecture, IFAD and the WB and partner Multilateral Development Banks are raising the attention to the criticality of financing for food systems transformation for the attainment of the SDGs and the Paris climate agreements. The agenda seeks to increase the share of ODA to food systems, increase the capital bases of Multilateral, Regional and National Development Banks and International Financial Institutions providing long-term high concessional financing for food systems, and support the channeling of SDRs to countries most in need through international financial institutions to generate additional liquidity for investment in food systems. Facilitating the access of countries to comprehensive information on funding windows for food systems transformation is a must that should be delivered as an immediate outcome of UNFSS+2.

Learning from best practices in forging effective **multistakeholder**, multi-sector collaboration and policy dialogue will help sustain the necessary process of discovery and trust-building, where Producers, Youth, Women's groups, the Private Sector and Indigenous Peoples' perspective become central. The powerful UNFSS pledges to action by various groups of stakeholder constituencies, from the private sector to food producers, SMEs, and youth have not been fully exploited in countries; it is time to connect the dots between global and national, to deliver concrete results. Actors along the private sector value chain such as SMEs and cooperatives offer significant opportunities for collaboration towards system-based transformation.

Summit coalitions have great potential to scale-up systems-based transformations in the next biennium by adopting a systems (cross-coalition) approach in their activities, scaling up successful pilot projects and identifying new solutions to address externalities, elevate political will, commitment, and ambition by bridging the gap between local and global efforts and leveraging existing tools.

Other **global processes** are also mainstreaming food system issues in their agenda. To this extent the recent G7 Summit has continued a stream of work on food security and food systems. In addition to the launch of Food Coalition, FARM (Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission), GAFS (Global Alliance for Food Security) and ELPS (Enhanced Linkages between Private sector and Small-scale producers) initiatives, the "Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security" issued at the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023 highlights the relevance of this work, in the follow up on to the UN Food Systems Summit 2021 and the UN Food Systems Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment.

C. Towards UNFSS+4 and 2030: From Rome (UNFSS+2) to NY (SDGs Summit), Dubai (COP28) and beyond

Before it is too late, we must Integrate Sustainable Food Systems transformation objectives across global and national policy discussions, commitments, and targets. Doing so conditions our collective ability to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. Several milestones pave the way towards 2030: SDGs Summit (September 2023), the Climate COP 28 (November 2023), Nutrition for Growth (2024), the Summit of the Future (2024), as well as the annual High-Level Political Fora and Financing for Development conferences. They are critical in accelerating the convergence of sustainable food system objectives with efforts to reach poverty eradication, health and nutrition, climate, biodiversity, and water goals. They must be strategically identified, leveraged and maximized to speed up collective delivery.

The **Sustainable Development Goals Summit** in September 2023 in New York will provide an immediate opportunity for world leaders and stakeholders to reinforce the link between sustainable food systems and integral development, and due consideration must be given to food systems both in the Summit programme, Declaration, and national statements.

With the **upcoming Climate Summit (COP 28)**, an example of walking the talk on the climate-food nexus is being set by a championing Presidency and a number of front-running countries. A Leaders' Declaration on Food Systems, Agriculture, and Climate Action is under preparation to secure the place of food systems in the climate agenda and COP process over the years ahead, with parallel efforts for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) to better integrate food systems; to boost non-state actor leadership and action; to scale up climate-smart food systems innovations, particularly of importance for smallholder farmers; and to increase finance for food systems transformation. At non-state level, private and public actors will commit to specific targets and tangible actions in their own contexts, including through a COP28-30 Action Agenda on Regenerative Landscapes currently under development.

Similar opportunities to advance nexus action are offered, amongst others, by the Nutrition for Growth Summit to be hosted in France in 2024; the World Trade Organization's 13th Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi in February 2024, in the context of WTO members' commitment to effectively address the challenges facing global trade or the next Conference of Parties on Biodiversity hosted by Türkiye to take stock of the targets and commitments set by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Leaders steering critical intergovernmental processes can play a unique role in championing the centrality of transformed food systems for other sectoral or overarching sustainable development objectives and strategic partnerships should be forged to steer accelerated integration of sustainable food system objectives in other action-oriented roadmaps and frameworks.



One such example is the strategic partnership between the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and the COP28 Presidency, brokered with the objective of establishing a global narrative and roadmap for a synergetic approach focused on food systems transformation and climate action. The goal of the partnership is to convene mutually supportive processes with respect to food systems transformation and climate action in the broader landscape of global events and milestones related to sustainable development, including the 2024 UN Summit of the Future, the first and second UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moments in 2023 and 2025, COP29 in 2024 and COP30 in 2025.

UNFSS+4 in 2025 will offer the opportunity for the global community to reconvene and assess progress in transforming food systems for sustainable development. With their 2023 reports, countries have offered a granular picture of their strengths, challenges, and ambition for the future. This baseline should enable even deeper analysis of progress and impact achieved during the upcoming biennium, through evolved 2025 voluntary progress reports, which will inform the 2025 Report of the Secretary General on Progress on food systems transformation. In the meantime, regional sustainable development meetings will offer countries a precious platform to convene and continue learning from each other in between biannual stocktaking moments.

The 2025 Stock Taking Moment (UNFSS+4) will take place shortly before the mid-point between the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and the 2030 horizon. Following a UNFSS+2 oriented towards identifying early signs of transformation, it is imperative that the next biennium witnesses significant acceleration, allowing the next stocktaking moment - UNFSS+4, to focus on measuring impact. This will serve as a compelling demonstration that concerted and decisive action can effectively steer us towards “the world we want”.



Italy 2023

**UN FOOD SYSTEMS
SUMMIT + 2**

STOCKTAKING MOMENT