

# CFS48 Side Event – Scaling-Up Agricultural Innovation: Opportunities to deliver for People, Nature and Climate at COP26

**3 June 2021**

## 200 word summary

This side event was an opportunity for speakers to share insights, experiences and practical examples on how to scale up innovative agricultural solutions towards COP26 and beyond.

The objectives of the event were multiple:

- to identify opportunities and actions needed to scale up agricultural innovation in the lead up to UNFCCC COP26;
- to share experiences and best practice approaches to transform agri-food systems to enhance their climate resilience and sustainability;
- to understand how this scaling up can help CFS implement its policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches;
- to raise ambition on investment in agricultural innovation based on evidence-based approaches and a continuous, inclusive dialogue among key institutions in the lead up to COP26

The speakers explored the latest evidence on the challenges and opportunities in scaling approaches that are proven to work.

This event - part of a global campaign led by CCAFS and FCDO - will help build momentum and gather more commitments and pledges to a climate-smart future at the UN Food Systems Summit, CBD COP15 and UNFCCC COP26.

## Key quotes

**Maria Helena Semedo** - Deputy Director-General, FAO

*"As we prepare for the UN Food Systems Summit, the UN Biodiversity and Climate Conferences, we have an opportunity to set more ambitious targets to transform the way we use our natural resources, protect biodiversity, and produce and consume food."*

**Thanawat Tiensin** - Chairperson, CFS and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN Agencies in Rome

*"We need to do a great deal more through more responsible investments in agricultural and food systems and changing both the way we produce and we consume our food."*

**The Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith** - Minister for Pacific and the Environment at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), United Kingdom

*"As global hunger rises, it's time to scale up the good work already underway to help build more sustainable, resilient foods systems."*

**Dick Nuwamanya Kamugang** - President, Uganda National Farmers Federation (UNFFE)

*"What is expected is the democratization of access to agricultural innovations to ensure smallholder farmers are brought on board and can harness the benefits of those innovations."*

**Terri Sarch** - Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the UN Agencies in Rome

*"We will not be able to address the climate and environmental crisis without ensuring that everyone has access to effective knowledge and innovation that has been purposefully developed to work and meets*

*their needs, particularly the needs of the poorest. [...] Through our work, we want to ensure no one is left behind."*

**Nicoletta Pavese** - Soft Commodities Forum Manager, WBCSD

*"The UN Food Systems Summit is an incredible opportunity to elevate the role of innovation, and to move from dialogue to concrete solutions. The Summit really needs to call for support and alignment from governments on agricultural innovation, and to support the creation of the right enabling environments at national and local levels."*

**Dhanush Dinesh** - Head of Partnerships and Outreach, CCAFS

*"We need partnerships to flow seamlessly across the innovation system. To do that, we need to shift towards end-to-end innovation models, and, ultimately, to focus on the country and local levels."*

**Zitouni Ould-Dada** - Deputy Director, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO:

*"This event is an opportunity to raise ambition and make the case for increased investment in agricultural innovation as part of the engagement efforts for the UNFCCC COP26 and UN Food Systems Summit."*

### ***Additional content for the 500-word summary***

Introductory remarks highlighted the role of innovation as a driving force for agri-food systems transformation, but also reminded that inclusivity and equity in access to innovation are essential to building resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems. Emphasis was also put on the unique opportunity 2021 represents to catalyse change at the UN Food Systems Summit, COP26 and beyond, and to elevate the role of innovation, moving from dialogue to concrete solutions.

The event allowed to hear perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders – government, research, the private sector and farmers – and to gain a comprehensive overview of the barriers and opportunities to scaling up agricultural innovation. There was a strong consensus around the need to rethink investment, policies and incentives related to agricultural innovation, and a few steps were identified as essential to driving the agricultural agenda forward:

- Involving farmers in the agricultural research and development process, to make sure research ultimately answers end-user needs (with a focus on addressing the risks that smallholder farmers face – including organizational capacity risks, market risks, finance, data and insurance);
- Connecting all agendas together and breaking siloes;
- Collaborating across the innovation ecosystem, using a mix of top down and bottom up approaches to innovation;
- Making innovation inclusive and accessible, particularly for the most vulnerable populations;
- Further developing public private partnerships to ensure delivery and access at farmer level, and improve financial sustainability of investments, especially at early stages;
- Increasing investment in agricultural innovation – with a particular emphasis on the role of agri-businesses in investing in developing countries to unlock the current untapped potential, and on climate finance.