

THE CONVERGENCE INITIATIVE – CONVERGING FOOD SYSTEMS AND CLIMATE ACTION FOR BETTER FOOD SECURITY AND A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Organized by: UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, The Netherlands, South Africa, United Arab Emirates COP28 Presidency, European Commission, NDC Partnership

Summary of the side event

The side event entitled *The Convergence Initiative – Converging Food Systems and Climate Action for Better Food Security and a Sustainable Future* focused on strategies to integrate food systems and climate action through multi-stakeholder collaboration and policy development at both national and regional levels.

FAO Chief Economist Maximo Torero presented the FAO Roadmap, *Achieving SDG 2 Without Breaching the 1.5°C Threshold*, which promotes a balanced approach to transforming agrifood systems in a sustainable way. He outlined how this roadmap recommends specific actions and policies that align food security goals with environmental targets, and he emphasized the Convergence Initiative's role in coordinating efforts within countries and partners to create integrated solutions for food systems and climate action.

The COP28 UAE Presidency highlighted the importance of the COP28 Declaration on Food and Agriculture, a commitment by 160 countries to address agriculture in the context of climate action. To support this, the UAE launched the Technical Cooperation Collaborative (TCC), an initiative aimed at uniting key partners, optimizing resources, and focusing on national priorities. This collaborative approach is intended to streamline implementation and maximize the collective impact of global food systems initiatives.

UN Food Systems Coordination Hub Director Stefanos Fotiou elaborated on the Convergence Initiative, describing it as a vital tool for aligning national food systems transformation pathways with climate strategies such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). This alignment aims to help countries develop cohesive strategies that maximize impact, strengthen resilience, and foster collaboration across sectors to address food security, climate, and biodiversity challenges.

During the panel discussion, Marcel Beukeboom, the Netherlands' Permanent Representative to the UN in Rome, emphasized the value of multilateral collaboration to turn global agreements, like the Paris Agreement, into actionable national strategies. He noted that innovation should build upon existing solutions and leverage multi-stakeholder engagement to address the food systems and climate agenda effectively.

Representing Brazil, Laura Delamonica from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed Brazil's commitment to the Convergence Initiative. As one of the first Latin American countries to adopt this approach, Brazil aims to align its climate and food systems policies with a focus on resilience and sustainable development through its "RESPECT" framework, covering key areas such as efficiency, science, and trade. This aligns with Brazil's preparations to host COP30 and its role as a major agricultural producer.

Amanda McKee of the NDC Partnership highlighted the growing demand from developing countries for support in integrating food systems into climate action. Many countries have requested assistance in areas such as agriculture, clean energy, and nutrition, underscoring the Convergence Initiative's potential to bridge resource and technical gaps.

The event concluded with a call for streamlined coordination across ministries and partnerships with development agencies, focusing on achieving SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) through policy alignment and results-driven collaboration. As a next step, six pilot countries will conduct national inception workshops to develop Convergence Action Blueprints (CAB) and establish Convergence Groups, both of which will guide and monitor efforts to align food systems with climate action. This initiative sets a unified path for sustainable food systems transformation and climate resilience leading up to COP29 and COP30.