

SE24: Healthy diets, sustainable future; bridging nutrition, biodiversity and climate change policies

Organized by: Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS), Initiative on Climate Action and Nutrition (I-CAN), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Alliance of Bioversity International - CIAT, CGIAR

Summary of the side event

To enable sustainable and healthy diets for all, comprehensive policy actions are required to promote consumption from sustainable agrifood systems which align with global climate and biodiversity targets.

Ms. Beatrice Ekesa Onyango, Head of Nutrition, IFAD, stressed the importance of examining which domains, factors, and sectors need to be actively engaged to achieve the desired results in addressing malnutrition globally and locally. She outlined the background to creating the HDSFS coalition at the UNFSS in 2021, and its role in catalyzing collective impact on healthy diets from sustainable food systems. So far, 40 countries are members of the coalition, with over 20 partner entities.

H.E. Marcel Beukeboom, Permanent Representative to the Kingdom of Netherlands, opened the event with an important message: we cannot achieve healthy diets without diversity in production. He emphasized the issue of countries using harmful agricultural subsidies instead of investing in regenerative agriculture, stating “*it indeed takes political courage to move the needle*”.

Ms. Teresa Borelli, from the Alliance of Biodiversity International - CIAT, presented the nexus of climate change, biodiversity and nutrition, highlighting the importance of neglected and underutilized species.

Presenting the results of a GEF-funded project that supported the roll-out of the Initiative on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition in four countries, she highlighted the desirable traits of these species, such as resistance to pests and diseases, or droughts, and are proven pivotal for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as increasing dietary diversity in rural areas. She emphasized the need to continue documenting biodiversity for food and nutrition, to use these data to inform nutrition policies such as school feeding programmes, to conserve and sustainably use the full range of biodiversity for food and nutrition, and the importance of raising public awareness.

During the international panel discussion, Mr. Daniel Peter Beniamino, Director of Environmental Rural Policy Management, Ministry of Environment in Brazil, highlighted the latest policy advancements in Brazil on how to further integrate biodiversity in the multi-sectoral fight against hunger and poverty. Dr. Ghulam Sadiq Afridi, Secretary of the Pakistan Food Systems Transformation Secretariat, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, showcased the diversity of Pakistan's production in relation to the consumption of products, leading to various forms of malnutrition, especially micronutrients deficiency and non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes. Lastly, Ms. Risma Rizkia Nurdianti, Head of Sciences and Innovation, World Food Forum, recalled the leading role played by youth in sustainable beekeeping, which not only supports local economies, but also contributes to biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and healthy diets in Indonesia.

In her closing remarks, Dr. Nancy Aburto, FAO Deputy Director, reminded the audience that our aim is centered around healthy people and a healthy planet. By adopting a 'system thinking', multiple entry points to coherently work together can be identified, and the UNFSS has prompted the adoption of these in more coherent ways. She closed the session by appreciating the multi-stakeholder platform of the CFS, as it "*gives us a chance to move ahead that momentum together, using all tools available*".