

Second United Nations Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | 28 to 29 July 2025

Concept Note

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BACKGROUND

The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), convened by the UN Secretary-General, marked a pivotal moment in reimagining food systems as a driving force for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It catalyzed global action toward more resilient, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable food systems, prompting countries to initiate transformative national pathways and rallying a broad ecosystem of support behind them.

Despite this momentum, the global context has grown increasingly volatile. Climate change, geopolitical tensions and instability, economic shocks, and fragile contexts are disrupting global markets and supply chains, threatening livelihoods and nutrition, and widening inequalities. These compounding crises are especially severe in food-import-dependent or highly indebted nations and fragile settings, where limited fiscal space, conflict and displacement undermine the progressive realization of the right to food, people's nutrition, national economies and livelihoods worldwide. Humanitarian needs are on the rise, and everywhere the achievement of the SDGs is at risk.

To foster continued political commitment and accountability, the UN Secretary-General committed to convening a global stocktaking every two years. The first of these – UNFSS+2 in 2023 – affirmed that food systems remain a top global priority and culminated in a Call to Action for Accelerated Food Systems Transformation, which urged governments and stakeholders to deepen their efforts and committed the UN system to supporting country-led transformation.

The Call to Action outlined six shared priorities:

- A. Incorporating food systems strategies into all national policies for sustainable development, for people's livelihoods, nutrition and health, for economic growth, climate action and nature, and to address post-harvest losses, leaving no one behind.
- B. Establishing food systems governance that engages all sectors and stakeholders for a whole of society approach, combining the short and long term.
- C. Investing in research, data, innovation and technology capacities including stronger connections to science, experience and expertise.
- D. Deepening joined-up participatory design and implementation inclusive of women, young people and Indigenous Peoples at the local level, with knowledge sharing, cross-sector

programming, multi-stakeholder partnering, context and place-based actions, stronger and more diverse production, and mutual accountability.

- E. Promoting increased engagement of businesses, including through public-private partnerships, to shape the sustainability of food systems and establish and strengthen accountability mechanisms, recognizing their centrality for food systems.
- F. Ensuring access to short and long-term concessional finance, investments, budget support and debt restructuring.

Since UNFSS+2, food systems have gained further recognition as a linchpin for tackling interconnected global challenges. Key global declarations – including the 2023 HLPF Political Declaration, the 2023 SDG Summit, and the COP28 Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action, endorsed by 160 Heads of State and Government – have all underscored the centrality of sustainable agriculture and resilient food systems in climate action and biodiversity conservation, as well as the equal necessity to mainstream climate action and biodiversity targets across policy agendas and actions related to agriculture and food systems. The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, launched by G20 members in 2024, reflects growing global consensus that resilient, inclusive food systems are essential for breaking cycles of poverty and malnutrition.

At the regional level, initiatives such as the Africa Climate Summit (2023) and the Kampala Declaration (2025) are reinforcing political leadership and shared vision for transformation. Meanwhile, UN Country Teams, under the leadership of Resident Coordinators and in collaboration with Rome-based agencies, are supporting the rollout of integrated food systems frameworks. Countries, the UN System and a broad alliance of actors continue to promote the outcomes of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), which further reflect systems and rights-based approaches to transformation.

However, the global context continues to shift. Ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Sudan, and the Middle East have directly impacted local, regional and global food security in unprecedented ways in scale and pace, particularly in already fragile contexts where resilience is limited and vulnerabilities are compounded.

Adding to the effects of conflict, the escalating impacts of climate change, and economic uncertainty have intensified pressure on food systems, thereby hindering progress and funding toward the SDGs and further increasing instability. These trends reinforce the urgency of promoting a fair and equitable rules-based multilateral trading system that ensures food security, better nutrition, and sustainable development.

Conflicts and displacement continue to disrupt food systems, from production, manufacturing and marketing, to consumption and managing food loss and waste. Investing in resilience, including in fragile settings and integrating refugees and displaced people in local food economies strengthens stability, local development, and reduces future humanitarian needs.

Despite global headwinds, governments and non-state actors remain determined to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda. Transformative change is already unfolding at the intersection of food systems and climate, energy, finance, health, biodiversity, and livelihoods. This underscores the need for sustained attention to nexus issues, integrated action, and alignment across scales.

The upcoming 2025 UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4) offers a critical opportunity to assess progress, renew global solidarity, and connect high-level ambition with local action – advancing food systems transformation as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

UNFSS+4 OBJECTIVES

Building on the momentum of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) and guided by the six concrete priorities of the UN Secretary-General’s Call to Action from UNFSS+2, the UNFSS+4 will provide a critical space to **reflect on the progress** made in implementing an integrated approach to food systems transformation, and next steps to ensure that the acceleration of efforts translates into concrete results and the progressive realization of the right to food for all. These will involve whole-of-government and whole-of-society strategies, **fostering collaborations among stakeholders, tracking commitments, and unlocking investments** to ensure the necessary investments to sustain and accelerate the transformation. UNFSS+4 will serve as a key moment to assess achievements, identify challenges, and catalyze further action – aligning efforts across sectors to ensure that investments and financial resources, partnerships, and governance mechanisms are effectively geared toward achieving sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems by 2030.

A. Reflecting on Progress

UNFSS+4 will assess progress towards the transformation of food systems, focusing on how countries define and achieve their goals within their unique contexts, with special attention to nations facing fragility and displacement. It will highlight the importance of inclusive governance that prioritizes marginalized groups such as women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and small-scale farmers, offering key lessons to guide future efforts. The Stocktake will also align food systems strategies with sustainable development policies, reinforcing rights-based approaches to ensure no one is left behind. Research will play a vital role in unpacking transformation dynamics, building common visions grounded in national contexts, strengthening capacities, examining progress toward medium- and long-term objectives, and identifying factors enabling success. Discussions will also highlight progress on food systems’ governance and coordination mechanisms that engage all sectors and stakeholders through rights-based approaches that prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable, while assessing countries’ needs and match them with available tools for advancing transformation.

This objective supports Priority area (A) of the UN Secretary-General’s Call to Action by integrating food systems strategies into national policies for sustainable development, livelihoods, nutrition, and climate action, and aligns with (B) governance mechanisms that engage all sectors and stakeholders with both short- and long-term goals.

B. Partnerships and Tracking Commitments

UNFSS+4 will serve as a platform to strengthen collaboration among governments, food producers, civil society, businesses and other stakeholders, highlighting the importance of partnerships in driving food systems transformation. With a strong emphasis on mutual accountability and tracking commitments, the Stocktake will help align actions and foster shared responsibility in building sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems. The summit will ensure that diverse voices, particularly those of smallholders, fishing communities, pastoralists, women, young people, Indigenous Peoples, and other marginalized groups, are central to food systems governance. It will promote rights-based multi-stakeholder partnerships, inclusive decision-making, transparent information systems and knowledge-sharing platforms to drive collective progress toward sustainable and equitable food systems. Recognizing that food systems transformation is a collective effort, non-state actors will not only share their contributions to supporting countries and driving transformative efforts, but also aim to synergize their future objectives and roadmaps to more effectively contribute to food system transitions. The summit will foster increased engagement from the business and financial sectors, and promote dialogue between various constituencies – from governments to IFIs, public banks, large investors, and SMEs – to shape sustainable food systems, advance differentiated roles and responsibilities, and enhance accountability mechanisms. In examining the roles and contributions of both state and non-state actors, the summit will address gaps in ambition and engagement – crucial for accelerating progress toward food systems that meet the needs of present and future generations.

This objective supports (B) by strengthening governance and (D) by deepening participatory design, while aligning with (E) by promoting business engagement through public-private partnerships and reinforcing the need to bridge national and global commitments with local actions and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

C. Unlocking Finance and Increasing Investments

UNFSS+4 will underscore the urgent need to unlock significant finance and investments to transform food systems, focusing on operationalizing the outcomes of the 4th Finance for Development Conference (FFD4) for food systems, enhancing volumes through access to concessional finance and innovative financial options, enhancing quality by striving for more sustainable development impact of existing finance, empowering domestic public financing sectors to catalyse national transitions, and creating an enabling environment for private sector involvement, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Discussions will center on de-risking investments, particularly in climate finance, to support the most marginalized, especially small-scale food producers and SMEs, which are critical to local food systems. The Stocktake will also explore how national leadership can connect with emerging investment opportunities to accelerate progress toward sustainable food systems. Recognizing that today's food systems generate \$12.8 trillion in hidden health, environmental and social costs, the Stocktake will highlight the need for an additional \$300-400 billion per year to support the transition to sustainable systems – an investment that can largely pay for itself through increased productivity, repurposed subsidies, and strengthened resilience. UNFSS+4 will promote a paradigm shift,

encouraging both an increased role of domestic public finance institutions to catalyse food systems financing, as well as a stronger leadership from the private sector, including SMEs, to deliver financial gains in harmony with benefits for people and the planet. The Stocktake will also explore ways to tap into regional and national philanthropic funding to augment investment streams. Following the FFD4, a key focus will be on the international financial architecture, specifically food finance, to facilitate the transition. High-level political leadership will be encouraged to present updated and costed national pathways, with a focus on increasing access to short- and long-term concessional finance and other investments to drive effective government policies. UNFSS+4 will facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue to ensure the right investments and financial products are directed toward accelerating the transformation, addressing barriers, and promoting rights-based approaches, with a particular focus on the role of SMEs in shaping sustainable food systems.

This objective supports (C) by encouraging investment in research, data, innovation, and technology capacities, and aligns with (F) by promoting access to both short- and long-term concessional finance necessary for food systems transformation, with a particular emphasis on supporting SMEs in the process.

PREPARATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

Leading up to the Stocktake, the **UN Secretary-General's Stocktaking Report** will offer a comprehensive update on the implementation of national food systems transformation, drawing from **voluntary national progress reports** submitted by National Convenors. These reports will be the result of inclusive, participatory discussions in the first half of 2025 and will provide valuable insights into how countries are defining and achieving their food system goals within their unique contexts. Additionally, **regional preparatory meetings**, organized in collaboration with regional sustainable development fora, will provide contextualized inputs that will inform the Stocktaking Report. This collaborative process, coordinated by the **UN Food Systems Coordination Hub**, will leverage technical expertise from across the UN system, particularly FAO, WFP, IFAD, UNDP, WHO, UNEP and DCO to ensure a comprehensive approach.

In addition to the UN Secretary-General's report, **non-state actors** will develop an independent analysis reflecting a variety of perspectives on progress and priorities for the food systems transformation agenda. This report will draw from the experiences and insights of diverse stakeholders, including farmers, Indigenous Peoples, youth, civil society, and private sector actors.

The engagement of businesses and financial institutions will also be a key focus, with an emphasis on the role of public-private partnerships in scaling sustainable, inclusive food systems – aimed at strengthening mutual accountability and co-creating actionable solutions.

The **Advisory Board** of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub will provide strategic guidance and advocacy throughout the journey toward the summit. This diverse group of leaders will offer insights into emerging trends and challenges, ensuring the summit remains responsive to the evolving global landscape.

DATES AND VENUE

The **UNFSS+4** will take place on **28-29 July 2025** at the **UN Economic Commission for Africa** in **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**.

The event will be preceded by an **Action Day on 27 July** including field visits and stakeholder-organized sessions, providing an opportunity for participants to engage directly with ongoing food systems transformation efforts on the ground. The outcomes of the summit will inform key international processes, including the UN General Assembly, the World Food Forum, the Second World Summit for Social Development, UNFCCC COP30 and support the ambitions of the G20 Presidency (South Africa).

Other global events in 2025, such as the **Nutrition for Growth Summit** (March 2025, Paris), the **Fourth Financing for Development Conference** (June 2025, Seville), and the **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** (July 2025, New York) will play an integral role in setting the stage for **UNFSS+4** outcomes. These events will provide opportunities to advance discussions on key issues, including financing for sustainable food systems, and will contribute to building momentum for the summit's objectives.

REGISTRATION AND SIDE EVENTS

Information on registration and side events will be made available on the **UN Food Systems Coordination Hub** website, which will serve as the primary platform for updates and resources as the summit approaches. This platform will also facilitate engagement with diverse stakeholders, ensuring that voices from all sectors are included in shaping the future of food systems.

Towards UNFSS+4: Roadmap

