



The Bahamas' participation in the UN Food Systems Pre-Summit
Tuesday, July 27th, 2021

Ministerial Statement

Live Virtual Presentation

Good Afternoon Chairman,

The Bahamas at the outset wishes to commend the UN Secretary General and the Agencies and Entities of the UN System for leading the charge towards the Global Food Systems Summit. The convening of the Summit is bold action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and an exemplary and innovative approach to rethink our food systems. It is quite rightly called a 'People's Summit' and the aim of the Food Systems Dialogues is to amplify the voices of all stakeholders especially those that are seldom heard. As a Small Island Developing State the Principles of Engagement are of critical importance and it is imperative that global commitments to support food systems in SIDS are upheld.

Since The Bahamas' announcement of its participation in the Global Food Systems Summit, in January 2021, the country has engaged in independent, national, regional and international Food Systems Dialogues. Feedback from the country's national Dialogues suggests that the overarching gaps in the Bahamas' food system is linked to the need for facilitated intergovernmental collaboration; development of a centralized technological database to support extension services, the need to democratize knowledge across the food value chains and the shortage of private sector financial tools adapted to the sector. To create a paradigm shift in the Bahamian food system, a transversal approach to developing the Bahamas' Blue and Green Economies should be taken. This will require levers of change such as innovation, finance, and youth empowerment to be supported by data, policies, and governance.

The Bahamas has prioritized three main action lines to facilitate the transformation of the food systems, they are:

1. Improvement of the public sector's systemic competitiveness
2. Promote and facilitate private sector investments
3. Facilitate agribusiness financing to the sector

The Bahamas' Blue and Green Sectoral Strategy proposes to consider the growth potential of sustainable activities linked to the ocean and to the land of the archipelago, while preserving the wealth carried by these natural resources. For agriculture and fisheries, the materialization of this very great growth potential requires the adoption of clean, productive, and energy efficient technologies and innovative farming methods (such as greenhouses, aquaponics, polytunnels, aquaculture, etc.), and food that is safe for consumption and labeled for marketing to allow consumers in The Bahamas and elsewhere to meet the requirements of sustainable development.

To first implement this strategic approach there is a need to reinforce the administrative capacities of the food systems' governance ecosystem in terms of specific training to strengthen the delivery, coordination, regulatory and analytical capacities in all the ministerial departments and autonomous bodies. Digitization and professionalization of public services with the appropriate incentives is paramount to support programs for agri-food sector development, thus requiring commitment to action by all stakeholders across disciplines.

There is also the need for private sector financial facilitation and both domestic and foreign direct investment promotion to push the Blue and Green Sectoral Strategy. Focusing on enterprises in the agri-food sector that will provide innovative processes, technology transfer, and linkages with national value chains. Public financial support to the private sector will focus mainly on young entrepreneurs and farmers/fishers, as well as the introduction and adoption of new technologies and smart farming/blue & green economy applications that contribute to productivity improvement and sector competitiveness.

Through quantifying the objectives of the Blue and Green Strategy and sizing of the support for financing investments in new technologies that can capture the country's potential food import substitution and export markets, target indicators will be established to identify

expected outcomes over the medium term of five (5) years and the long term of ten (10) years to reflect the ambitious vision of transformation of the Bahamian food system.

The Bahamas is charting its pathway of transformation and looks ever forward to a new Bahamian food system.

Thank you.