



AN INDEPENDENT
DIALOGUES SPECIAL
SYNTEHSIS REPORT
Food Systems Governance

Written by Kristy J. Buckley, PhD

November 2021

Contents

Blue Marble Evaluation Preface 3

Acknowledgements..... 4

Executive Summary..... 5

Brief Author Bio..... 6

Synopses of Governance-focused Independent Dialogues 7

Introduction..... 11

Section 1 | How did the Dialogues address the deep dive issue (governance)? 12

Section 2 | What guiding themes emerged about how the issue (governance) should be addressed? .17

Section 3 | What were the variety of perspectives and divergences that emerged? Where was there agreement, if anywhere. Where did perspectives diverge? 25

Section 4 | What implications emerged about the future of food on the topic? What guidance was offered on the future of food systems related to the topic? 29

Conclusion 36

Annex A: Independent Dialogues with a Focus on Governance 38

Blue Marble Evaluation Preface

by Michael Quinn Patton, Blue Marble Evaluation Team Leader

Independent Dialogues Supporting the 2021 Food Systems Summit

UN Secretary-General António Guterres convened a Food Systems Summit on September 23, 2021, as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Summit aspired to launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems.

To prepare for the 2021 Food Systems Summit (hereafter referred to simply as “the Summit”), Independent Dialogues took place around the world. Independent Dialogues were one of three main components of the Food Systems Summit Dialogues (FSSD), the other two being Member State Dialogues and Global Dialogues. Independent Dialogues could be convened by any interested group. A guidebook for conducting Dialogues and training of conveners offered a standardized process for facilitating dialogues and a standardized feedback reporting form. Dialogues typically lasted an hour to two hours at most. They often included a presentation on the topic of the Dialogue followed by panel discussions or breakout groups. Independent Dialogues aimed to offer a seat at the table to food system stakeholders who have an opportunity to “debate, collaborate, and take action towards a better future” (<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/dialogue>).

A synthesis of Independent Dialogues was published prior to the Summit. The synthesis process involved retrieving, organizing, coding, and analyzing Independent Dialogue reports to identify themes and patterns emerging from the Dialogues. All 447 Independent Dialogue reports submitted by July 23, 2021 were included in the synthesis. That cut-off date was necessary to allow time for coding and analyzing the results and writing the synthesis report in time to inform the Summit deliberations. The Dialogue reports show great variation in depth and quality of reporting. Some are quite brief listing a few highlights. Some are detailed with links to supporting documents. All Dialogue reports are accessible at the Dialogues online portal (<https://summitdialogues.org/explore-dialogues/>).

The synthesis report presented 22 Guiding Themes organized and presented in answer to four questions:

- What food systems transformations are needed and envisioned?
- Who should engage in transforming food systems?
- How should the transformation of the food systems be undertaken?
- What success factors are key to transformative results?

This synthesis report on themes that emerged across reports is available here: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/unfss_independent_dialogue_synthesis_report_3_0.pdf

Deep Dives

The synthesis report provided a high-level overview. To go more deeply into special issues related to Food Systems Transformation required what we’ve called “Deep Dives.” The first deep dives examined

the perspectives of several key stakeholder groups: smallholder farmers, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and women. Those Deep Dives are available here:

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/unfss_independent_dialogue_deep_dive_synthesis_report.pdf

Deep Dive reports are presented in two parts. Part 1 presents a synopsis of Independent Dialogues that focused on the issue being addressed in the Deep Dives. The Blue Marble Evaluation coding team selected relevant dialogues for in-depth review as well as relevant quotations on the issue across all dialogues. Part 1 is therefore descriptive to provide readers and users an in-depth look at what emerged from dialogues focused on the issue of interest. Part 2 of the Deep Dive turns to interpretation of what emerged, identification of implications and gaps, and suggestions for addressing the issue going forward. The interpretations expressed in the Deep Dive reports are solely those of the report authors.

Because this is a “deep dive,” the report is lengthy and detailed to capture the richness of the dialogues. Typically qualitative reports summarize the themes and findings and put the detailed data in an appendix. We have chosen to feature and spotlight the scope, nature, and content of the dialogues by providing the actual data in the opening of the report, not in an appendix. That’s what makes this a *deep dive*. We invite readers to dive deeply into the dialogues.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge support for the Synthesis of the Independent Dialogues from the McKnight Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, IKEA Foundation, the Global Alliance for the Future of Food, the United Nations Food Systems Summit Secretariat, and the Blue Marble Evaluation Network.

Executive Summary

Among the Food Systems Summit Independent Dialogues convened, only eight had an explicit focus on governance. However, the theme of governance emerged strongly across many of the 447 Independent Dialogues analyzed to inform this report. This deep dive on governance is organized into sections based upon four key questions:

1. How did the Dialogues address the deep dive issue (governance)?
2. What guiding themes emerged about how the issue (governance) should be addressed?
3. What were the variety of perspectives and divergences that emerged? Where was there agreement, if anywhere. Where did perspectives diverge?
4. What implications emerged about the future of food on the topic? What guidance was offered on the future of food systems related to the topic?

Each of the four sections outlines a set of key themes that emerged from the analysis. These key themes are summarized below. Within the report, each theme is elaborated upon and supported by quotes from the Independent Dialogues.

How did the Dialogues address the deep dive issue (governance)?

- **Aspects of governance.** The concept of governance is multi-faceted in the context of food systems.
- **Role of Government in Governance.** Governments have a seminal role to play in food systems governance, though governance is not limited to governments.

What guiding themes emerged about how the issue (governance) should be addressed?

- **Organizing ourselves for systems approaches.** A significant aspect of governance is about organizing individuals, society, and institutions to be able to conceive of, and effectively take action in, complex systems.
- **Multi-level coordination, communication, and collaboration communication.** Recognizing the complexity of food systems, it is imperative to consider ways of fostering multi-level connectivity for effective food systems governance.
- **Innovation, Information, Communications & Technology (ICT).** The future of food depends upon fostering innovation, data, and information flow (and protection), and appropriate fit-for-context technology.
- **Financing, Investment, and Prioritization.** Governance has significant roles to play in creating the enabling conditions for food systems change and in providing supporting resources.

What were the variety of perspectives and divergences that emerged? Where was there agreement, if anywhere. Where did perspectives diverge?

- **Convergence on important role of government.** The Dialogues showed broad convergence on the important role of government in food systems governance
- **Convergence that governance is not limited to governments.** The concept of food systems governance is not limited solely to governments. Many sectors, scales, and stakeholders have roles to play.

- **Divergent perspectives on the particular roles governments should play in food systems.** Dialogue reports indicated a diversity of views on the types of roles governments should play and diverging opinions on the degree to which certain government interventions are constructive.

What implications emerged about the future of food on the topic? What guidance was offered on the future of food systems related to the topic?

- **Section 4 offers an array of insights and guidance of governance issues across** all guiding themes from Section 2. Dialogues also shared insights on tackling an array of governance issues across existing food systems challenges such as food loss and waste, water management, fisheries, and promoting healthy diets.

In summary, many of the Independent Dialogues strongly emphasized the concept of food systems governance. In sharing experiences from many different food systems contexts, scales, and perspectives, the Dialogues support a more comprehensive, collective understanding of governance—what it means in food systems and how to work together to support collective aims.

Brief Author Bio

[Kristy J. Buckley, Ph.D. Senior Advisor to the Global Alliance for the Future of Food. Former Chair of the UN Food Systems Summit Governance workstream.](#)

Kristy is an independent consultant based in Vancouver, B.C. Her work centers around research and strategic advising on the design and execution of multi-stakeholder processes to address complex systems challenges. In this role, she brings a cross-disciplinary perspective based upon work across diverse sectors, from climate change to public health.

Currently, Kristy is working on technical Internet governance with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), advising on the implementation of multi-stakeholder evaluation and continuous improvement. She also works on global food systems as a senior advisor to the Executive Director of The Global Alliance for the Future of Food and formerly, as the Chair of the Governance workstream in the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS).

Previously, Kristy served as a Senior Mediator and Program Manager at Meridian Institute. She has 14 years of experience designing, facilitating, and advising on multi-stakeholder processes spanning science and policy at the global level. She brings substantive expertise on food systems, climate change, land use, forestry/REDD+, technical Internet governance, and public health. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from The George Washington University and an LL.M. in International Law with International Relations from the University of Kent, Brussels School of International Studies. She earned a doctorate in Sustainable Development Diplomacy from Wageningen University in The Netherlands while working full time and raising two young children.

Synopses of Governance-focused Independent Dialogues

While dozens of Independent Dialogues discussed governance issues as evidenced in this report, there were eight Independent Dialogues that focused explicitly on the topic of governance. These eight Dialogues reports are briefly described here, along with information to access their detailed Dialogue reports.

April 29, 2021	Belgium	EU Dialogue: Exploring Options to strengthen our Global Science Policy Interface for improved Food Systems Governance https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/10758/
----------------	---------	--

The EU Dialogue convenors (EU Commission, DG Research and Innovation) summarized the main findings of the dialogue as focused on knowledge in relation to policy. The report notes that knowledge should not be limited to scientific publications, but also incorporate diverse sources such as gray literature, local knowledge, and cultural aspects of food systems. However, there were divergent views on this, with some participants calling for food systems change to be informed solely by objective science.

The convenors also underscored the importance of having legitimacy and a mandate—calling them “precursors to impact.” Importantly, the report notes that having a mandate on food systems will require going beyond the buy-in of Member States or national governments. Noting the role of the World Committee on Food Security (CFS) and its High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE), the convenor highlighted this as another area of divergence—with some participants emphasizing the importance of the CFS/HLPE as “the only legitimate-UN embedded body” while others contended that legitimacy of any body must be based upon local participation.

May 5, 2021	Kenya	Building Collaborative and Effective Food Systems Governance Frameworks in Kisumu County https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/16701/
-------------	-------	---

The convenors of Building Collaborative and Effective Food Systems Governance Frameworks in Kisumu County (ICLEI Africa, FAO, Kisumu County) described the main focus of the Dialogue as enhancing “the resilience of Kisumu’s food system.” The convenor noted that much of Kisumu county’s food is dependent on imports from elsewhere, making the region more vulnerable to outside stressors and actors. The Dialogue findings focused on creating “enabling policy frameworks” that foster diverse participation, particularly from women and youth, and that provide support for Kisumu food system actors to thrive.

The Dialogue touched upon an array of topics—from trade and marketing, to urban food planning, financing for small-scale farmers, and the need for more collaborative governance approaches to bring food system actors out of their silos and to realize the “benefits of synergistic relationships.”

May 25, 2021	No borders	Policy and governance issues to transform food systems in Europe and Central Asia https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/17447/
--------------	------------	--

The Policy and Governance Issues to Transform Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia Dialogue was convened jointly by FAO, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNECE, WMO. In its Dialogue report, the convenors emphasized the role of policy and governance in driving systemic change across Europe and Central Asia. Dialogue participants shared experiences on how to support nutritional needs of vulnerable populations, how government and society can play a role in influencing more sustainable consumption patterns, and how to align policies with nature positive production.

The convenors noted that priority policy and governance issues centered on nutrition and food value chains. Specifically, participants emphasized the need to foster more targeted approaches to urban and rural nutritional needs among the most vulnerable. The report also underscores the need to focus on small-scale farmers and small and medium enterprises—improving those value chains and market opportunities while providing policy support through incentives, as well as access to resources and technologies.

July 8, 2021	No borders	Territorial governance for sustainable food systems https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/30090/
--------------	------------	--

The Dialogue on Territorial Governance for Sustainable Food Systems was convened by the UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University. The Dialogue focused on the role and benefits of territorial governance approaches for food systems transformation, noting that these approaches “can enable functional, sustainable food system transformation and is rights-based, ensures access to nourishing food for all, and protects biodiversity, equity and livelihoods.”

The Dialogue report provides significant guidance on what is needed to design and implement territorial governance for food systems (see Section 4 of this report) or the Dialogue report link. Among the guidance provided was a need for policy reform that considered the multiple levels, scales, sectors, and stakeholders involved in food systems. To be effective, the report contends that communities need to be actively participating in food systems governance and policy development.

May 18, 2021	Russia	Independent Dialogue in Support of the 2021 Food Systems Summit: "Different routes, similar goals" https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/11634/
--------------	--------	---

The convenors of Independent Dialogue in Support of the 2021 Food Systems Summit: "Different routes, similar goals" (Kovnat K, Tagieva S) outlined the main focus of the Dialogue as “restoring supply chains in the post-pandemic period and effectively integrating into these chains the most diverse producers from

large companies to local farmers.” The main findings point to a need for “monitoring and analyzing the state of food systems and supply chains across countries and continents.” Doing so, participants contended, would require international cooperation, collective education, and standardization since food supply chains transcend borders. Therefore, our knowledge and understanding of them need to as well.

June 10, 2021	No borders	Asia-Pacific Regional Food Systems Dialogue https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/24475/
---------------	------------	--

The Asia-Pacific Regional Food Systems Dialogue was jointly convened by ESCAP, FAO, UNDRR, UNEP, WFP, and WHO. The Dialogue report emphasized the role that national and regional food systems play in supporting global food systems and in particular, the role that regional level food systems have in “harnessing synergies” between global and local levels. Noting the importance of the Asia-Pacific region in the world’s food systems, the Dialogue report emphasized the need for communities, stakeholders, national and local authorities to collaborate in transforming food systems and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Among an array of topics, Dialogue participants focused on the role of technology in supporting regional food systems. This included the need for technology transfer to support climate resilient crops and agricultural practices and promoting new technologies through regional platforms.

June 16, 2021	No borders	Healthy food systems that are closer to small agroecological producers in Latin America. https://summitdialogues.org/es/dialogue/26437/
---------------	------------	---

The Dialogue on Healthy Food Systems that are Closer to Small Agroecological Producers in Latin America was convened by Mone S. The Dialogue focused on discussing “the issues and challenges of the current food systems, as well as the role of agroecology and small-scale organic production systems in dealing with these problems.” The Independent Dialogue was seen as a change to elevate the voice of small-scale farmers and marginalized populations—to share their views with the international community in the hopes of supporting Summit solutions that are “pro-farmers, pro-people and pro-planet.”

The Dialogue report emphasized the importance of bringing diverse organic producer perspectives from Latin America to the fore. For example, the report indicated that the consumer pressure for monoculture production is having serious consequences for local producers and landscapes—impacting water availability, biodiversity, and soil health.

May 3, 2021	No borders	Making Nutritious and Healthy Diets Available to All: Empowering a Sustainable and Resilient Fresh Food Supply Chain Worldwide - African Dialogue https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/13853/
-------------	------------	--

The Dialogue, Making Nutritious and Healthy Diets Available to All: Empowering a Sustainable and Resilient Fresh Food Supply Chain Worldwide - African Dialogue—was convened by Carrara E, Le More A. This Dialogue was part of a series focusing on the “role of Wholesale Markets in shaping a sustainable food system and its relationship to other stakeholders, including local authorities, smallholder farmers, and logisticians...” The report underscored the importance of food security in Africa, especially in the Sub-Saharan regions, noting that food security concerns are further exacerbated by a changing climate, shifting demographics, and pervasive poverty.

Dialogue participants called for governments and municipalities to “reinforce their capacity in food governance, urban planning, and upgrade accordingly all the basic infrastructure needed to ensure food security.” Providing infrastructure and institutional supports through governance interventions at multiple levels, participants contended, will foster an “important...shift from a sectoral approach to a systemic one.”

Introduction

Governance emerged as a prevalent topic across many of the Food Systems Summit Independent Dialogues. Eight Independent Dialogues focused explicitly on the topic of governance (see Annex A). The Blue Marble Evaluation team qualitatively evaluated all the dialogue data and coded all statements related to governance. These statements were further analyzed to assess:

- How did dialogues address the issue of governance?
- What key themes emerged about how governance should be addressed?
- Where did perspectives on governance diverge or converge?
- What guidance was offered on governance to inform the future of food systems?

Each of these questions is explored in four sections of this report, drawing from Dialogue reports and direct quotes from the data. While eight Independent Dialogues focused explicitly on the topic of governance, it is clear through the diversity of Dialogue reports cited in this analysis, that many more Dialogues explored the topic of food systems governance, underscoring its critical role in food systems transformation.

Section 1 | How did the Dialogues address the deep dive issue (governance)?

Aspects of governance

The Cambridge Dictionary defines governance as “the way that organizations or countries are managed at the highest level, and the systems for doing this.”¹ Based upon review of the Independent Dialogue data, a few different aspects of governance emerged, which may offer a more complex, nuanced definition in the context of food systems. In the Dialogues, governance was seen as a way of organizing people and process to:

- 1) inform or influence governmental (e.g., policymakers’) processes, decisions, and structures through sharing diverse perspectives and evidence;
- 2) foster shared understanding in support of collective decision-making (e.g., multi-stakeholder processes, building consensus); and/or
- 3) coordinate, communicate, and implement these decisions across relevant jurisdictions, sectors, communities, and stakeholders.

These aspects of governance often intermingled in the Dialogue reports, examples of which are elaborated with quotes below.

Inform or influence via diverse perspectives and evidence:

*Establish partnerships to demand effective policies from government officials to re-establish formal governance structures and the allocation of funding to ensure the right to food.*²

*Bring Indigenous communities and those using traditional practices to the table as decision makers to include knowledge that has supported sustainable food systems for millennia. Document and support different knowledges and different diets that are adapted to territorial circumstances.*³

*There is a need for a governance system for food security for all, one that leaves no one behind.*⁴

In line with a Leave No One Behind (LNOB) framework, stakeholders should aim to create inclusive food systems that center socially and economically disadvantaged people and

¹ “Governance.” Cambridge Dictionary online. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/governance>. Accessed 22 November 2021.

² O acesso à alimentação saudável é um direito de todos. Como garantir o acesso universal à alimentação saudável e frear o aumento da insegurança alimentar e da obesidade no Brasil? 11 May 2021, page 18

³ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 12

⁴ 157:22 p 6 in 278_May_18_21_Gregorio B

involve them in policy creation. The role of the state, then, is to fulfill and support strategies that center a right-to-food framework.⁵

Inform or influence & processes that foster shared understanding:

***Frames and strategies for institutional, policy and democratic innovation towards new multilevel model of food governance must be implemented [emphasis added].** In the inclusion of indigenous voices and processes as well as other marginalized groups, there is a co-creation of knowledge that helps design more resilient and equitable methodologies of both food systems and land management; we reorient towards interculturality, a result of multiple ways of knowledge co-existing, in order to reterritorialize food systems and rebuild local knowledge.⁶*

Inclusive food systems governance - participatory processes by as many stakeholders from the start to enhance ownership.⁷

***We need more empathy facilitating institutions [emphasis added]-** Gaps have been identified as related to a lack of knowledge of 'Other' stakeholders' context for short and long term decision making, as well as representation, and we need to think of additional formats and approaches to bridge them.⁸*

*Complexity: We recognize that food systems are complex, and are closely connected to, and significantly impact, human and animal health, land, water, climate, biodiversity, the economy and other systems, and their transformation requires a systemic approach. Multi-stakeholder inclusivity: **We support inclusive multi stakeholder processes and approaches within governments and communities that bring in diverse perspectives, including indigenous knowledge, cultural insights, and science-based evidence to enable stakeholders to understand and assess potential trade-offs and to design policy options that deliver against multiple public goods across these various systems [emphasis added].⁹***

***Collaborative leadership is vital [emphasis added],** bringing together a wide variety of perspectives and paying special attention to those who are marginalized. Food systems change will only happen when enough people see how they can benefit from and contribute to that systemic change.¹⁰*

⁵ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 13

⁶ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 13

⁷ Towards a Future of Food that is Sustainable, Equitable and Secure in Nairobi City County. 19 May 2021, page 8

⁸ Exploring the impact of different role identities on empathy in the food system and on attitudes towards food systems transformation, 19 July 2021, page 6

⁹ Transforming Latin American food systems to build back better from COVID-19 and tackle climate change & nature loss, 5 November 2020, page 2

¹⁰ 107:17 p 6 in 047_Feb_19_21_O'Doherty M

Coordinate, communicate, and implement decisions across scales

Despite progressive guidelines and standards in certain jurisdiction, implementation of those fall far short of expectations. Bring attention and resource investments to legal and policy implementation with the involvement of local communities as relevant.¹¹

Support multi-stakeholder governance at local level, such as Food Policy Councils, food alliances or similar governance tools in Mediterranean cities to include all voices in the decision-making related to food in cities, as well as to facilitate alignment among different levels where food policy is developed and/or implemented.¹²

Role of Government in Governance

Many reports of the Independent Dialogues emphasized the role of government in governance. At times, governance and government seem to be used interchangeably or as one in the same. In other cases, there was a strong focus on multi-stakeholder processes and the need to involve diverse stakeholders in food systems governance—both in the decision-making processes and in the coordination, communication, and implementation of those decisions. This reinforces the three aspects of governance that emerged from the Dialogues, outlined in the previous section.

The role of government in food systems governance emerged as a guiding theme in terms of how Dialogue participants conceived of governance. Many of the quotes throughout this report refer to the role of government. As illustrated by the Dialogue quotes below, the role of government was seen as multi-faceted. It included: promoting the rule of law; protecting the human right to food; public expenditures and investment; delineating government responsibility vis-à-vis other actors such as civil society and private sector; fostering innovation, data protection, and technology adoption. Some of these themes are further elaborated in Section 2, as this section focuses primarily on the role of government in food systems governance overall.

Promoting Rule of Law & Protecting Rights

Challenges that might be anticipated: The governance of public policies only takes place if the responsible governments are committed to society in the sense of fulfilling the rights that have been acquired and ensured with the competent institutions. How can there be governance without government?¹³

Additionally, discussion addressed the need for governments to prioritize rule of law, governance, and more favorable enabling trade, policy, infrastructure, and security

¹¹ Securing Land Tenure Rights for Sustainable and Inclusive Food Systems – Africa / Europe / Middle East, 11 May 2021, page 12

¹² 23:100 p 13 in 205_Apr_27_21_CIHEAM_Multi

¹³ O acesso à alimentação saudável é um direito de todos. Como garantir o acesso universal à alimentação saudável e frear o aumento da insegurança alimentar e da obesidade no Brasil? 11 May 2021, page 18

*environments to drive productivity growth and support private sector investments in agricultural research and development.*¹⁴

*There is a need for Governments to be better equipped to address food systems trends and disruptors such as urban growth, increasing population and changing market systems.*¹⁵

*Public authorities at the federal, state, and local levels have a key role in advocating for and protecting food and nutrition security policies, in building effective governance structures – such as the establishment of parliamentary fronts for food and nutrition security – and in regulating the advertising of ultra-processed foods. Educators and health professionals can support the construction of a healthy diet culture.*¹⁶

Delineation of Roles with other Actors

*Emergency vs structuring: carrying out collective efforts against hunger while understanding that the urgency of hunger is not sufficiently attended to by civil society. It is crucial to demand public policies to ensure a permanent minimum income, price control, strengthening of existing programs, participatory governance structures, and access to equipment such as community kitchens.*¹⁷

*This is the shared role of all key actors in the Food System - all Ministries are therefore encouraged to be more proactive in factoring Nutrition in their their [sic] programmes and Ministerial Plans.*¹⁸

Public Expenditures

*Participants also stressed the importance of how public money is spent to ensure that food remains affordable.*¹⁹

*The Ministries of Finance in most African countries have indicated that food security is not a priority as captured in most their national development plans. A mind set change is needed in general.*²⁰

¹⁴ Multi The Critical Role of Research and Development in Achieving Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems, 7 July 2021, page 7

¹⁵ Strengthening Food Systems transformation for increased productivity, inclusivity and resilience, 2 June 2021, page 6

¹⁶ O acesso à alimentação saudável é um direito de todos. Como garantir o acesso universal à alimentação saudável e frear o aumento da insegurança alimentar e da obesidade no Brasil? 11 May 2021, page 10

¹⁷ O acesso à alimentação saudável é um direito de todos. Como garantir o acesso universal à alimentação saudável e frear o aumento da insegurança alimentar e da obesidade no Brasil? 11 May 2021, page 14

¹⁸ 265:10 p 6 in 501_June_28_21_Kairo K

¹⁹ Mainstreaming Regenerative Agriculture, 30 June 2021, page 8

²⁰ Strengthening Food Systems transformation for increased productivity, inclusivity and resilience, 2 June 2021, page 7

There is limited government investment in agricultural transformation in many African countries and this has to change.²¹

Fostering Innovation, Data Protection & Technology Adoption

There was an opinion of some participants putting the blames on government for the low level of adoption of ICT in the farming system. They strongly believe that government should show high level of commitment in handling issues associated with food systems.²²

It was felt that government bureaucracy was a barrier in accelerating improvement in standards, engagement and innovation. it was also felt Government and multilateral financing provided through government was a sure fire way not to reach the small holder farmers and better representation can be made by civil society.²³

²¹ Strengthening Food Systems transformation for increased productivity, inclusivity and resilience, 2 June 2021, page 7

²² Timing Seasonal supply of agro inputs and taking off of farm produces with the use of ICT, 24 March 2021, page 8

²³ Pathways to sustainable and resilient food systems and communities, 13 March 2021, page 6

Section 2 | What guiding themes emerged about how the issue (governance) should be addressed?

The Independent Dialogues reviewed in this analysis covered a diverse landscape of topics ranging from more institutional and procedural (e.g., multi-level coordination through territorial governance) to more substantive (e.g., addressing food loss and waste).

Guiding themes encompassed: 1) organizing ourselves for systems approaches; 2) multi-level coordination, collaboration, and communication; 3) innovation, information, communications, and technology; 4) financing, investment, and prioritization. The Dialogue data suggests that if the above guiding themes on governance are well managed, then substantive food systems challenges such as food loss and waste, the promotion of unhealthy diets, and water governance can be better tackled (see [Section 4](#)).

This section summarizes common guiding governance themes across these topics, illustrated through quotes from the Dialogues.

Organizing ourselves for systems approaches

A central theme in the Dialogue data was around how people, institutions, and processes organize around a food systems approach and the dynamics that surface in doing so. Several Dialogues emphasized the need for multi-stakeholder approaches that foster inclusion and diverse participation from all aspects of society. At the same time, some Dialogue participants underscored the need to be aware of, and address, power imbalances while checking undue influence that some sectors or stakeholders may have in such governance processes. The multiple considerations for how we organize ourselves for systems approaches are reflected in Dialogue quotes below:

Clear roles have to be defined, and every stakeholder should have a stake in the MSP governance.²⁴

*Multi-stakeholder inclusivity: We support inclusive multi stakeholder processes and approaches within governments and communities that **bring in diverse perspectives**, including indigenous knowledge, cultural insights, and science-based evidence to enable stakeholders **to understand and assess potential trade-offs** [emphasis added] and to design policy options that deliver against multiple public goods across these various systems.²⁵*

*Finally, participants noted that most sectors and actors still operate in silos with little appreciation of the linkages and benefits of synergistic relationships. The need for a more **collaborative governance approach** [emphasis added] of the Kisumu's food system was*

²⁴ Multi-stakeholder platforms for sustainable food systems: scalable game-changing solutions from Dutch expertise and experience, 18 May 2021, page 14

²⁵ Transforming Latin American food systems to build back better from COVID-19 and tackle climate change & nature loss, 5 November 2020, page 2

therefore emphasised. This should be done by building networks and stakeholder groups, as well as creating spaces for dialogues, cooperation, sharing, co-learning and co-creation in a bid to transform Kisumu's food system.²⁶

Lack of participation and lack of access to participation can lead to unjust and skewed governance that is not representative of the local needs.²⁷

Several Dialogues spoke to the power imbalances inherent in food systems governance and the need to address conflicts of interest, especially in the context of multi-stakeholder processes:

*Foster inclusion: To address to achieve transformative territorial governance, **power imbalances** [emphasis added] must be addressed and accountability made transparent. For example, in Africa, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries linked sustainable territorial food systems and healthy diets in two projects through a bottom-up process that engaged actors at the regional and national scales. The participatory, multi-scaled diagnostic approach identified local, national and regional policy recommendation.²⁸*

*The need to address governance issues, policy coherence (or lack thereof), conflicts of interest and **power imbalance** [emphasis added] within the Summit but also in the food system as a whole.²⁹*

*Transforming corporate food systems can also include: Reassessing the partnership agreement with the World Economic Forum; Establishing clear and strong safeguards against conflicts of interest in all processes and ensure public interests over private; Fostering a holistic and systemic approach along with the multidimensional nature of food (FAO 10 elements of Agroecology). Addressing the expansionist nature of corporate agriculture and its accountability and focus on wellbeing of people and planet...There are **conflicts of interest** that are not seriously being reviewed [emphasis added]. A much more holistic process is needed, and this is where we have all talked of the multi-dimensional nature of food. Thus, there is a need to tackle this seriously and address the expansionist nature of corporate agriculture. While it does improve the economy, it also contributes to poverty and malnutrition...there is a need to strengthen human rights as the basis for the Global Management of food systems.³⁰*

Multi-level coordination, communication, and collaboration communication

Closely related to the above guiding theme on 'Organizing ourselves for systems approaches' was the strongly emphasized need for multi-level coordination, communication, and collaboration. In the

²⁶ Building Collaborative and Effective Food Systems Governance Frameworks in Kisumu County, 5 May, 2021, 326, page 6

²⁷ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 13

²⁸ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 6

²⁹ Coherent Policy for Healthy Diets (Option 1) 7 June 2021, page 6

³⁰ INDEPENDENT FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUE IN CHINA, 18 December 2021, pp 31-32

Dialogues, this was sometimes expressed as fostering connections between municipalities, communities, regional, national, and international levels of governance. Other times, the term ‘territorial governance’ was used to represent the need for synergistic connections at all levels and scales, with emphasis on managing territories or landscapes as opposed to sectors. Beyond multi-level governance coordination, some Dialogue participants emphasized the need for strong leadership at the highest levels of government. This guiding theme is further explored and illustrated through the Dialogue quotes below.

Some Dialogues highlighted how problems of coordination, communication, or collaboration would undermine food systems approaches:

***Lack of coordination or limited coordination between different departments at the provincial and federal level** [emphasis added] is another major divergence in sustaining food and water security under changing climate revealed in the discussion. In order to improve coordination, a multi-stakeholder approach may be adopted giving fair chance to all stakeholders to present their point of view and make a consensus to make agriculture resilient.³¹*

*Some things that might prevent the above solutions from happening are: **Lack of cohesiveness between the systems in place to govern farmers** [emphasis added]; inadequacy of guided human and financial support, and; a gap between updated research and grass root activities.³²*

To address these challenges, several Dialogues emphasized the need for landscape or territorial approaches to governance that promote connectivity across all levels of governance, from local to global:

*Governmental support creating enabling conditions for **developing and supporting landscape partnerships** [emphasis added] to transform food systems, while managing socio-ecological needs through effective governance. Market development for natural capital value, mainly through payments for ecosystems services, giving value to landscapes and seascapes currently not accounted for. Linking results-based financing to impacts on biodiversity and livelihoods impacts.³³*

***Coordinate across countries to establish governance structures and learning networks** [emphasis added] that support and facilitate nature positive production techniques, keeping in mind that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions.³⁴*

³¹ Role of Water-Energy-Food Nexus for achieving food security in a changing climate for Pakistan, 21 April 2021, page 18

³² 35:87 p 11 in 095_Mar_27_21_Chinapoo C_Multi

³³ Strengthening Landscape Partnerships: A “game-changing” solution? 30 March 2021, page 7

³⁴ Transitioning to Nature Positive Production: Sharing Lessons Across Land and Sea, 25 May 2021, page 8

*Additionally, an important consideration mentioned was that **local governments and institutions need to be strong to be able to drive a common agenda** [emphasis added] and create adequate public-private partnerships.³⁵*

*In this sense, it was noted that **governments and local municipalities need to reinforce their capacity in food governance** [emphasis added], urban planning, and upgrade accordingly all the basic infrastructure needed to ensure food security. This means upgrading their markets systems -including wholesale and street markets-, securing roads connections between agricultural areas/cities, and improving water facilities and access to regular electricity.³⁶*

Strengthening the State and Municipal Councils of Food and Nutrition Security that have survived the dismantling and the challenge of continuing to act with the Attorney General, to enforce their role and the agreed actions. Ensure civil society institutions as spaces for debate to rebuild the social control mechanism as well as the entire system. Establish partnerships to demand effective policies from government officials to re-establish formal governance structures and the allocation of funding to ensure the right to food.³⁷

*Food is not a commodity, it is about commons, rights and eco system services—territorial governance can connect food systems with the land and the people that live in it. **Territorialization is about empowering local actors to decide the future they want in the context they are in.** [emphasis added] Strengthening local governments along with strong transparency and accountability mechanisms for decision-making on public expenditure and strategy design for communities to have adequate oversight and influence to support their needs...In particular support for the implementation of landscape-scale action plans to support land tenure through community advocacy and reform at different levels of policy. Support for local government strengthening, through technical assistance, development of policy frameworks, policy advocacy for the mainstreaming of Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) approaches so bottom-up input stimulates national level changes.³⁸*

*Promote knowledge sharing, in particular of innovative practices on citizen-driven food system transformation and other **existing good practices and local experiences** [emphasis added] in leveraging the role of cities for more sustainable food systems. A first step could be to map and consolidate what is known already (including from traditional systems, policy, governance, technologies, etc.) within a knowledge platform on*

³⁵ Healthy cities, healthy children – a dialogue on lessons from Dutch cities’ systems approaches to prevent childhood obesity globally, 17 June 2021, page 10

³⁶ Making Nutritious and Healthy Diets Available to All: Empowering a Sustainable and Resilient Fresh Food Supply Chain Worldwide - African Dialogue. 3 May 2021, 261, page 7

³⁷ O acesso à alimentação saudável é um direito de todos. Como garantir o acesso universal à alimentação saudável e frear o aumento da insegurança alimentar e da obesidade no Brasil? 11 May 2021, page 18

³⁸ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 9

Mediterranean cities and local food systems. Another channel is organizing city-to-city exchanges and knowledge sharing events.³⁹

Several Dialogues emphasized the role of leadership, especially at the highest levels of government:

*Federalism and lack of clear authority. Pakistan has a hybrid system. Post-18th amendment the perception is that WEF is a provincial subject, however, the federal government has the final say, for instance, in setting subsidies. There is a need to outline a clear mandate if WEF is a national concern. Federal and provincial governments must spell out what is the priority they accord to Food Systems Security with support from the **highest level of government and governance**. [emphasis added]⁴⁰*

*A lack of political will and direction is also seen as a large coordination issue. The WEF nexus requires institutional buy in that requires ministries to work together, and often requires direction from the **highest level of government** [emphasis added]. This is especially important when dealing with different spheres of governance, but also on trans-boundary issues.⁴¹*

*African Presidents or former Presidents or other political figures who are committed to the food systems transformation agenda can **use their leadership and influential platforms to drive the foods systems agenda** [emphasis added].⁴²*

Innovation, Information, Communications & Technology (ICT)

Several independent Dialogues discussed barriers to investment in innovation, information (including data), communications, and technology. This included challenges in accessing and using innovative or technological approaches as well as misalignment of technologies with a particular food system context. As many of these Dialogue quotes show, there were references to government finance or investment in innovation and technology, which is explored further in the next sub-topic.

In addition to the challenges heightened by the pandemic, challenges of access to information and technical and digital infrastructure for farmers are anticipated.⁴³

Challenges include: Climate change is red herring for data usurpation. Different approaches of government engagement, continuation of top-down approach and

³⁹ 23:101 p 13 in 205_Apr_27_21_CIHEAM_Multi

⁴⁰ Role of Water-Energy-Food Nexus for achieving food security in a changing climate for Pakistan, 21 April 2021, page 12

⁴¹ Managing the water and energy we eat: advancing water-energy-food (WEF) nexus approaches to achieve food systems transformation in Southern Africa, 13 April 2021, page 12

⁴² Building Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems in Africa: Mobilizing African Voices and Building Momentum for the UN Food Systems Summit, 30 June 2021, page 9

⁴³ O acesso à alimentação saudável é um direito de todos. Como garantir o acesso universal à alimentação saudável e frear o aumento da insegurança alimentar e da obesidade no Brasil? 11 May 2021, page 10

*consideration of farmers as non-experts. Further marginalization as data is taken away from smallholder farmers. Exploitation of aggregated data, i.e. through future trading on prior knowledge without farmers' consent. Farmers lose all data. Real danger of having a few multinational agri-food corporations privatize farmers' data.*⁴⁴

*The challenges: the government does not take responsibility on the issue: there is no permanent budget or legislation to frame solution, there is no inclusive body that integrates the multidimension of the problem, data solutions, thru the different government ministries. **Lack of data:** How many nutrition insecure people as a permanent screening process, what kind of food baskets do they get, etc. There is lack of crucial data on how many NGOs supply food for the insecure population [emphasis added].*⁴⁵

*The participants agreed it is key for government to be a **partner to innovators**, making the path to market clear. Government's also need to **catch up with innovation** to ensure that any regulatory rulebook is sufficiently adapted to new areas. It is important naturally to address sensitivities around new products but there needs to be a way to move faster. This is also important for **communicating to consumers and the public** [emphasis added].*⁴⁶

*Panelists [sic] shared views and data supporting the idea that efforts to improve livelihoods across the board are now constrained by lack of progress in building national-level research and development capacity, particularly within [national agricultural research systems] (NARS), and extension services. **Given the highly varying farming conditions in the region, farm technologies and soil fertility management practices must be locally adapted to specific conditions.** Strong NARS and extension systems are needed to achieve this. **Technical innovation that is adapted to specific smallholder conditions is a precondition for sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems** [emphasis added].*⁴⁷

*On the subject of aid, you should know that the government often forgets to address the real questions that interest us. They provide aid that does not help us. For example, the government has just bought agricultural machinery that is so expensive farmers cannot buy it.*⁴⁸

Financing, Investment and Prioritization

As noted in the above sub-section, there were strong linkages with governmental roles in creating enabling conditions for Innovation, Information, Communications, and Technology through investment,

⁴⁴ Disrupting dominant food systems: Lessons from 5 initiatives, 15 July 2021, page 7

⁴⁵ Nutrition security, Nutrition security, agriculture and climate crisis, 17 February 2021, page 10

⁴⁶ Meat Sector in Transition: creating an inclusive approach to systemic change, 23 June 2021, page 9

⁴⁷ The Critical Role of Research and Development in Achieving Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems, 7 July 2021, page 8

⁴⁸ Who's missing at dinner? Bringing farmers into the conversation on food systems through inclusive communication platforms, 2 June 2021, page 7

financing, market, and regulatory measures. In addition, some Dialogues emphasized the need for governments to prioritize investment in the agricultural sector and in food systems overall.

*Strengthening the enabling environment was also emphasized: developing investment criteria and governance mechanisms, and ensuring that supportive legal instruments for sustainable investments are in place.*⁴⁹

*While innovations are often triggered by societal stimulations, governments have a role to play in providing the guarantees and financial safety nets that investors require. Each innovation requires a support structure.*⁵⁰

*Between a variety of stakeholders, there is a sheer magnitude of capacity gaps, both financial and non-financial. It is **essential to build up capacity at the institutional level to ensure investment possibilities and opportunities are identified and lead to the kind of transformative impact that is needed.** Institutional innovation, particularly around inclusive governance of blended finance transactions, needs to focus not only on the “hard” side of science but also on social and governance issues [emphasis added].*⁵¹

*Currently poor farmers have **limited access to formal finance** which forces them to seek loans from informal money lenders at exorbitant interest rates, that end up trapping poor families in a vicious cycle of poverty and oppression. Under current lending terms provided by the informal money lenders, **poor farmers end up losing all their resources and properties to pay back the loans. Action is needed to end such exploitation of poor farmers** by informal financial agencies. Fish farmer associations should be empowered to create and run own credit operations for fisher communities. Addition efforts can be made where loans at low or concessional interest rates may be provided. **This would require capacity building and start-up funds with close monitoring and regulation by relevant government agencies** [emphasis added].*⁵²

Several Dialogues highlighted the need to prioritize investment in agriculture and food systems to support innovation and transformation, though in some cases, the return on investment may not be clear or compelling enough to governments.

*Very few countries have fulfilled the Malabo declaration of allocating 1% of the Gross Domestic Product towards agriculture. A different approach needs to be employed to ensure that the voices of the stakeholders are heard and the resources required are appropriated.*⁵³

The major issues are related to policy, governance, and investment. According to FAO’s Agriculture Orientation Index for Government Expenditure, between 2001 and 2018, SSA has fared the worst when it comes to allocation of public investment to agriculture – it

⁴⁹ Nourishing Southeast Asia in a post-COVID 19 world: scaling nutrition and food security research for food systems transformation, 22 June 2021, page 10

⁵⁰ High Level Dialogue at CFS 47 - Innovation, 10 March 2021, page 11

⁵¹ #RestoreOurEarth: How to enable finance in game-changing food systems solutions, 22 April 2021, page 10

⁵² Transformation and Future of Aquatic Food Systems in Bangladesh, 27 May 2021, page 9

⁵³ University – Policy Dialogue for Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems in Africa-[Ministerial Meeting], 9 June 2021, page 8

*revolves around 3.3% without showing notable improvement over the period. This is notwithstanding the CAADP's commitment to allocate at least 10% of the national budgets to agriculture. The **underinvestment in [science, technology and innovation] STI shows that policymakers are not convinced about the returns (economic, strategic, and political) accruing from investment in food and agriculture versus other sectors [emphasis added].***⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Strengthening African Agricultural Research for Development Systems - One Africa Voice, 9 March 2021, page 6

Section 3 | What were the variety of perspectives and divergences that emerged? Where was there agreement, if anywhere. Where did perspectives diverge?

Previous sections and Dialogue quotes offer some insight into the diversity of perspectives, topics, and priorities across the Dialogues. Overall, there seemed to be **high degrees of convergence on the important role of government** in food systems governance including in policymaking, regulation, and in creating the enabling conditions for food systems transformation through investment and financing which, in turn, fosters innovation as well as access to data and technology.

At the same time, there was broad convergence that food systems governance is not limited to governments. Many of the Dialogues underscored the important roles that private sector, civil society, Indigenous people, and communities everywhere have in our food systems. Moreover, many Dialogues emphasized the need for food systems governance to better coordinate, communicate, and collaborate across these sectors and stakeholders, balancing power differentials and ensuring equitable participation.

With respect to the degree of diverging perspectives on governance--of the eight Dialogues with an explicit focus on governance, only three of them identified any areas of divergence. However, other food systems Dialogues that touched upon governance identified some additional areas of divergence. Across all Dialogues, the areas of divergence on governance issues are summarized below.

While the Dialogues showed a high degree of convergence about the important role of government, as noted above, the particular roles that government should play in food systems was a main area of divergence among Dialogue participants, as reflected in the below summary.

One Dialogue contended that many food systems vulnerabilities arise from poor governance or a general lack of understanding of what a food system is, saying:

Many were of the view that the vulnerabilities in food systems is due to bad governance whereas others also stated otherwise it is due to non-existent policies of what actually a food systems is.⁵⁵

Some Dialogues spoke to the role of government vis-à-vis other system actors such as civil society and the private sector. This included the degree to which government regulation plays a helpful vs. hindering role in food systems transformation.

*The issues of leadership in the delivery of extension services (dissemination of innovation) was also a point of divergence as stakeholders intimated that the **private sector can play***

⁵⁵ "Maintaining Functionalities By Building Resilience to Vulnerabilities", 11 December 2020, page 5

the leadership role as the public extension services are woefully inadequate [emphasis added].⁵⁶

*While the need for **greater collaboration between civil society actors and government** was echoed by many, the impact of the pandemic on these linkages varied across contexts. Some noted that pandemic responses strengthened linkages between civil society and governments, particularly when it came to sensitization of COVID-19 information, while others pointed to **increasingly fragmented food aid with civil society attempting to fill gaps in an uncoordinated way** [emphasis added].⁵⁷*

*The role of governments was also an important topic in this breakout room, one which led to some divergence in opinion. Some participants felt that **too much “red tape” was stifling** the seaweed industry and making it unnecessarily hard for small producers to compete. They felt that **unfair regulations in the industry resulted in the success of only big businesses, leaving little room for innovation or scientific discoveries**. Others felt that the issue of government regulations and policies was a delicate one with much complexity. While they agreed that too many harsh regulations could stifle a fairly new industry, they **felt that some regulation was needed, for example to avoid possible environmental harm** on ocean ecosystems. They cited cautionary tales from other aquaculture industries and shared lessons learned, and ultimately circled back to the need for more data to overcome fear and uncertainty in the industry [emphasis added].⁵⁸*

*Some participants felt that there **should be a lowering of standards regulating food products/agricultural produce**, particularly for those operating in the informal economy. Acknowledging challenges faced by small-scale producers with standards compliance, emphasis should be placed on facilitating these stakeholders to comply. The impact of **lowering of standards** on South African agribusinesses to competitively engage in regional, global value chains and **to assure consumers of food safety** (particularly after COVID-19) **needs to be carefully considered** [emphasis added].⁵⁹*

*Divergence emerged around the role of regulation, with discussion around the fact that **resistance to over-regulation is not limited to large scale farming enterprises, but exists in small-to-medium businesses as well**. Divergent views around the **appropriate level of regulation**, access to natural resources and instruments for supporting and enabling positive change were discussed, and supported by participant commentary including the fact that **farmers often feel dictated to and misunderstood in regulatory discussions**, versus the view that self-regulation has not been effective in shifting behaviour [emphasis added].⁶⁰*

⁵⁶ Ag. Innovations and Interventions for Food Systems Transformation in Ghana, 24 June 2021, page 8

⁵⁷ Building resilient and sustainable food systems: How can emerging lessons from communities affected by Covid-19 shape the way forward?, 9 July 2021, page 12

⁵⁸ Powering the Seaweed Revolution for Transformational Change in our Food System, 28 April 2021, page 7

⁵⁹ Driving Food System Transformation in South Africa via Agritourism Markets, 9 June 2021, page 8

⁶⁰ Transforming our food and land use systems – global trends and Australia’s opportunity, 20 July 2021, page 13

One Dialogue highlighted a few areas of divergence related to means of international or multilateral food systems governance, saying:

Role of High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) (many important learnings, strengths and weaknesses). Also: need to distinguish between HLPE/ UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS, which is a political body, while HLPE is a small scientific panel). Importantly, HLPE has a 15-person steering committee and also has a mandate to explore disagreements. Cons of CFS/HLPE: Small high-level group is fine but cannot have the level of representation needed; silos between HLPE, civil society, private sector. Pros of CFS/HLPE: It is the only legitimate-UN embedded body. However, there are different interpretations of “legitimacy” as some argue that this comes through local participation.⁶¹

The same Dialogue report also highlighted divergent views on the degree to which more subjective elements such as culture and values should inform food systems change:

Nature of evidence and role of science (Values versus evidence). One camp suggests that food is different from country to country as there are many more cultural/value-based elements in food systems so roll of a Science Policy Interface(s) for food systems must balance the need to create a space for debate and make clear recommendations. One camp suggests science needs to be “objective” and value-free. Relevance of science is the scientific evidence used to drive/inform change? If not, then it’s likely not fit for purpose.⁶²

With respect to facilitating behaviour change, there was some divergence on the role of government through incentives and policy:

People varied on the pace of change they were calling for and the methods of shifting food systems. Some advocated for all public institutions switching to plant-based as the default. Others wanted to see this happen in private sector as well. And still others felt more education was needed to aid individuals in voluntarily making the shift themselves. Some wanted a more active role of government to provide taxation and incentives, while others felt the demand side and market place might play a more substantial role in helping society to shift to more low carbon, higher nutrient foods.⁶³

Also, in response to several participants who mentioned consumer education and awareness as essential steps for a transformation, as well as the implementation of voluntary agreements, some said that such measures were not effective and that it was

⁶¹ EU Dialogue: Exploring Options to strengthen our Global Science Policy Interface for improved Food Systems Governance. 29 April 2021, 252, page 8

⁶² EU Dialogue: Exploring Options to strengthen our Global Science Policy Interface for improved Food Systems Governance. 29 April 2021, 252, page 8

⁶³ Plant-based strategies for human and planetary health, 23 June 2021, page 12

imperative to create legislation that forces a change in consumer behavior by limiting non-sustainable choices.⁶⁴

With respect to a guiding theme in [Section 2](#) on Innovation, Information, Communications, and Technology, one Dialogue highlighted the role of government as an area of divergence:

There was an opinion of some participants putting the blames on government for the low level of adoption of ICT in the farming system. They strongly believe that government should show high level of commitment in handling issues associated with food systems. While others argue that farmer should not depend on the Government for everything and that the Government has little or nothing to do with a farmer not making use of a smartphone and not having access to agro information already available on the internet.⁶⁵

Another area of divergence touched upon a second guiding theme from [Section 2](#) on Financing, Investment, and Prioritization, saying:

[there was divergence on]...the need for a balance between affordable food prices for the consumer, and decent income for farmers, which also depends on access to finance (including for young farmers).⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Sustainable diets: national biodiversity, imported deforestation and responsible seafood, 8 July 2021, page 10

⁶⁵ Timing Seasonal supply of agro inputs and taking off of farm produces with the use of ICT, 24 March 2021, page 8

⁶⁶ Policy and governance issues to transform food systems in Europe and Central Asia, 25 May 2021, 444, page 10

Section 4 | What implications emerged about the future of food on the topic? What guidance was offered on the future of food systems related to the topic?

Many Independent Dialogues, in discussing the guiding themes identified in Section 2, also offered guidance for how to advance food systems governance. To the extent that Dialogues offered guidance on the key themes in [Section 2](#), these are summarized below based upon quotes from the Dialogues.

Beyond the implications for guiding themes, several Dialogues offered guidance in the context of real-world food systems challenges participants were facing such food loss and waste, water governance, fisheries, and the promotion of healthy diets. This guidance is summarized below according to the sub-topics identified.

Organizing Ourselves for Systems Approaches

Some of the Dialogue quotes in [Section 2](#) on this guiding theme also provided insights or guidance for future food systems. More specific guidance about the role of multi-stakeholder or collaborative processes are referenced here.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are key to provide an arena for dialogue, based on equal footing among stakeholders, co ownership, co-management and co-funding, to avoid power imbalances and top-down dynamics [emphasis added]. Such processes, backed by the existing mechanisms (UNFSS, EU-F2F, etc) and building on science-based recommendations (CFS, HLPE, etc) and local knowledge, could help identify common priorities, set strategic integrated goals, pushing FST forward at national and regional level. Equitable and inclusive partnerships have the potential of fostering inclusive governance and effective policy making, which is key to generate transformative change, coupled with sustainable finance and capacity building.⁶⁷

*Ownership: Furthermore, legitimacy relies on the adequacy of the process to **engage stakeholders in a meaningful dialogue** [emphasis added] in which they feel a sense of ownership and the possibility of gaining benefits. This requires transparency, continuous communication, openness, and respect. In this regard, participants highlighted the importance of (1) having an independent convenor; (2) establishing and respecting transparent processes and governance mechanisms in the MSP; (3) defining clear principles, and in particular, making sure human rights are respected, and (4) instead of having a pre-defined agenda and solutions, ownership requires focusing on country, local and community-owned challenges and solutions.⁶⁸*

⁶⁷ 244:56 p 6 in 480_June_21_21_CIHEAM_Multi

⁶⁸ Multi-stakeholder platforms for sustainable food systems: scalable game-changing solutions from Dutch expertise and experience, 18 May 2021, page 8

Multi-level/Territorial Governance Territorial Governance

One Dialogue, in particular, had a strong emphasis on territorial governance. Its participants offered an array of guidance on how strengthening territorial governance can support an inclusive, equitable approach to transformation that incorporates the complexities of food systems across multiple scales.

Governance refers to processes of negotiating needs, interests and perspectives of various stake-holders. To promote more inclusive food systems transformation, a central goal of territorial governance should be to increase the voice of marginalized groups and increase the accountability of the state. A pre-condition to this type of governance is a multi sectorial government that is rights-based in its approach; this must be embedded into law for adequate follow through and not just theoretical value-signaling without action. Only through multi-actor governance can vulnerable people be heard.⁶⁹

Participatory and inclusive democracy is essential for good territorial governance to address power imbalances, leave no one behind (women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, displaced people) and avoid capture by local elites.⁷⁰

Coherent, functional territorial governance can foster equitable management of food systems, integrate rural and urban food governance, promote inclusive investment for territorial governance, direct support to local food actors, increase data availability and accessibility, private sector business support, and advise on issues of food security and territorial governance at ministerial levels.⁷¹

Local governments are best placed to integrate economic, environmental and social dimensions, bring together public actors, private sector and civil society and mediate trade-offs. They can help integrate sectors (e.g. restaurants and producers, promote local food hubs, facilitate access to digital technologies for aggregation) and ensure balance between food trade and local food systems.⁷²

Municipalities and local governments have a series of tools to support the re-territorialization of food systems, such as public procurement (e.g. for school meals), zoning (e.g. for public markets and community gardens/kitchens) or strategies to restore nature and culture. But the challenge is to integrate top-down and bottom-up approaches. The public sector can regain a role through the participatory construction and implementation of local food policies shifting from sectoral approaches to integrate all dimensions of territorial systems.⁷³

⁶⁹ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 9

⁷⁰ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 9

⁷¹ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 8

⁷² Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 9

⁷³ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 9

Innovation, Information, Communications & Technology (ICT)

Several Dialogues shared insights and guidance for overcoming barriers to innovation and access to ICT across food systems contexts.

*Rented land and the need for longer leases are **barriers to new practices and technologies**. Hog or poultry aggregators have specific standards for buildings, equipment, and processes – which **makes it costly or against rules for growers to innovate**. In these cases, and in others, participants said **players all along the value chain need to be part of efforts to adopt nature-positive practices**. This can help smaller and independent farms to adopt efficiencies from integrated operations [emphasis added].⁷⁴*

Co-create and re-design agricultural extension services: Extension services must integrate local and indigenous knowledge. Institutionalizing these services with cross-ministerial collaboration can ensure incentive and expenditure efficiencies.⁷⁵

*We recognised that issues related to food systems are complex and must be addressed through several other global governance processes. **Science can play a central role** in collecting data from stakeholders, identifying challenges, synergies and trade-offs and increase global partnership. In their exchange, the participants were asked to think of Science Policy Interface(s)-related issues that need most urgent attention to support “food systems transition”, and to identify the principles of strengthened or new interface and propose concrete actions, share models, templates or experiences allowing to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. The feedback received from the stakeholders showed that **we need better evidence to inform action at all scales**. In order to meet the needs of diverse stakeholder groups, we need science, but also different kinds of science, evidence and data [emphasis added].⁷⁶*

Financing, Investment and Prioritization

A couple of Dialogues shared governance insights for promoting investment, financing, and/or other forms of resource support for food systems transformation.

*Addressing food system resilience and transformation recommends that policymakers appreciate the **need for upfront long-term investment and capacity development** (e.g., groundwater management, reforestation) despite the time lag between investment and payoff. A stable and sound governance system is needed to provide an **enabling environment conducive to long-term innovation funding** earmarked for environmental and social sustainability in food systems [emphasis added].⁷⁷*

⁷⁴ Boosting Nature Positive Agricultural Solutions: U.S. Farmer, Rancher, Grower Perspectives, 6 April 2021, page 10

⁷⁵ Territorial governance for sustainable food systems, 8 July 2021, 535, page 6

⁷⁶ EU Dialogue: Exploring Options to strengthen our Global Science Policy Interface for improved Food Systems Governance. 29 April 2021, 252, page 3

⁷⁷ Food System Resilience through Integrated Natural Resource Management: A Nexus Dialogue (7 June 2021), 7 June 2021, page 7

Firstly, the policy system will need to evolve to deliver better outcomes for farmers and society. This should include **supports to incentivise and remunerate farmers for both food and ecosystem services**, encourage environmentally-friendly farming and support high-welfare systems. A coherent rural or land-use policy (across agriculture, forestry, energy, environment, rural development, local planning policy) is urgently required to **promote holistic governance and coherent decision-making**. This will help to avoid, for example, growing food for animal consumption and optimise land use and management towards sustainability goals. **Targeted supports will be needed to ensure a fair and just transition and open up new opportunities for farmers, enterprises and artisan producers. Support for the diversity of emerging sustainable livelihood strategies will be critical**, including education and training, as well as demonstration and scaling up of innovative approaches. Generational renewal will need to be reinforced, providing support for young people including women and new entrants. **Policy supports to ensure the market generates a fair return to producers** will be critical also if more sustainable, and possibly more costly, products are to dominate [emphasis added].⁷⁸

Participants agreed that there are more and **more investors looking at how to integrate environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG)** across their sector. To really drive systemic change in the food and agriculture sector, **more research is needed alongside a bigger regulatory push globally** like the EU Taxonomy initiative. Participants encouraged quality regulation to support best practices from the private sector and reflect trade-offs that are required. **Regulatory frameworks are important to keep sustainable finance at the helm of change**, and the EU Taxonomy initiative is a clear example of this [emphasis added].⁷⁹

Several participants noted that **certification schemes are more of a risk mitigation tool for food systems and may be especially useful for investment decision making**. Certification matters since **it is easy for investors to understand these schemes**. For example, if 40% of companies are ASC certified, it is clear they are managing environmental, social and corporate governance issues well. Participants felt certifications are not the be-all and end-all, but are a part of risk mitigation [emphasis added].⁸⁰

Food Loss & Waste

A couple of Dialogues offered insights on the significant governance challenges that arise in trying to address the issue of food loss and waste.

The reduction of food waste is a main challenge in the region, and faces many bottlenecks in terms of governance with the lack of governments involvement but also lack of legal

⁷⁸ The role of livestock in developing a sustainable food system, 19 May 2021, page 6

⁷⁹ Mobilizing food system change with private sector leadership: Lessons from aquaculture, 20 April 2021, page 10

⁸⁰ Mobilizing food system change with private sector leadership: Lessons from aquaculture, 20 April 2021, page 12

*frameworks to prevent food waste. To overcome this, there is a need to find a consensus among them, under a given authority and delimited governance.*⁸¹

*The reduction of food waste and losses are at the cornerstone of building a resilient and sustainable food system in Latin America and to ensure access to diet for all. Yet, the regional food system is bagged down into paradox, consisting of surplus of supply and production, while many livelihoods are still in a situation of food insecurity, further exacerbated with the outbreak of Covid-19. **The reduction of food waste is a core strand in the region, and faces many bottlenecks, that require the improvement of governance** [emphasis added] ins-and-outs and incentives on best practices platforms.*⁸²

*Recent anti food waste law indicates the commitment from government to tackle food waste. The cost of law enforcement is high and lack of objective measurement makes it even harder. Therefore, behavioral insights should be integrated during the legislation process and enforcement process. **It must be recognized that the government can play an important role in monitoring and the measurement of food waste** [emphasis added].*⁸³

Water governance

Several Dialogues shared insights and guidance for enhancing governance of water resources in relation to food systems. Much of the guidance shared reflects the overall guiding themes in [Section 2](#).

*Proper governance of water; recognise water for different uses; allocation of water (need water for irrigation, energy, agricultural production).*⁸⁴

*Groundwater governance: There is a need for introducing groundwater governance for estimation of quantity and quality for allowable extraction of water in areas of less surface water availability. Then work on system of incentives and disincentives for the introduction of renewable energy systems and high-efficiency irrigation systems.*⁸⁵

All participants agreed that the following important actions needs to implemented in true letter and spirit during the next three years:

- Implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management approach to meet increasing demand and competition among various sectors and users
- Development of water accounting system for the sectors and improvement of these databases according to water use and disposal
- Determining the

⁸¹ Poner al alcance de todos dietas nutritivas y saludables: Potenciar una cadena de suministro de alimentos frescos sostenible y resistente en todo el mundo - Diálogo de las Américas, 8 April 2021, page 7

⁸² Poner al alcance de todos dietas nutritivas y saludables: Potenciar una cadena de suministro de alimentos frescos sostenible y resistente en todo el mundo - Diálogo de las Américas, 8 April 2021, page 10

⁸³ Using Behavior Insights to tackle Food Waste in China and beyond / 运用行为科学减少食物浪费的中国和国际实践, 22 June 2021, page 9

⁸⁴ Managing the water and energy we eat: advancing water-energy-food (WEF) nexus approaches to achieve food systems transformation in Southern Africa, 13 April 2021, page 10

⁸⁵ Role of Water-Energy-Food Nexus for achieving food security in a changing climate for Pakistan, 21 April 2021, page 9

value of water for each sector and appropriate pricing for all sectors according to the uses

- Investment in drinking water supply systems with proper pricing
- Treatment, recycling, and reuse of wastewater using the decentralized approach thus protecting vital ecosystem
- Use of non-conventional water resources such as wastewater, saline water, rainwater

The institutions can help develop water accounting for all the sectors, can provide solutions – simple to complex issues and can provide science based evidence for addressing those issues through conducting adoptive research. They can also **help build the capacity of the policy makers, planners, and practitioners to adopt technically feasible, economically viable and environmentally sustainable technologies/practices**. They can also **help developing policies and regulations for better governance of water resources**. Through knowledge sharing, they can develop consensus and trust building among various stakeholders [emphasis added].⁸⁶

Promoting and introducing irrigation technologies to farmers to achieving water saving and account for that through water accounting and governance.⁸⁷

Employing a water systems approaches for food transformation including water governance analysis to support demand management.⁸⁸

Scaling up innovation for Water and Energy for Food (WE4F) through the [Middle East North Africa] (MENA) Regional Innovation Hub to produce more nutritious food with less water and energy • Building and strengthening the capacity of governmental and non-governmental organisations on water governance in the MENA region, including Egypt.⁸⁹

Fisheries

The below quote from one Dialogue shows the real-world linkages across many of the guiding themes identified in this report—emphasizing multi-level governance systems, the role of government in managing protected areas, and the need to support fishermen through investment and technology adoption.

*In the context of food security and poverty eradication, the Voluntary Guidelines for Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) should be promoted. Proper functioning of the multi-scale and multi-level inclusive governance systems should be enhanced by creating and enabling community spaces to contribute to transformative changes in the management and sustenance of SSF in Bangladesh. It is also necessary to enhance the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) to promote the balance between biodiversity and livelihoods. To improve safety at sea, fishermen should be supported and equipped with GPS and other necessary warning systems.*⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Role of Water-Energy-Food Nexus for achieving food security in a changing climate for Pakistan, 21 April 2021, page 13

⁸⁷ The Role of Water Security for Food Systems Transformation, 19 April 2021, page 14

⁸⁸ The Role of Water Security for Food Systems Transformation, 19 April 2021, page 10

⁸⁹ The Role of Water Security for Food Systems Transformation, 19 April 2021, page 10

⁹⁰ Transformation and Future of Aquatic Food Systems in Bangladesh, 27 May 2021, page 10

Promoting Healthy Diets

The Dialogue quotes below offer guidance on the governance issues surrounding consumption, including the role of government regulation in marketing and promoting of unhealthy foods.

To limit this, there is a need for increased transparency, governance and regulation in marketing/labelling so these can be trusted by consumers. The group also agreed that achieving a sustainable food system cannot rely solely on labels/marketing: it requires a multi-pronged approach from policymakers, regulators, consumer advocacy & education. These are the main solutions identified by the participants: 1. Labels are valuable tools for communicating with consumers, but these need to be transparent, regulated and governed in order to be trusted by consumers and to create meaningful impact. 2. Labels should capture social, economical and environmental sustainability metrics. 3. Labels need to be supplemented by consumer knowledge & engagement: be it through the education sector, independent research etc. 4. Small-scale farmers should be incentivised or given affordable access to sustainable certification to dismantle barriers between small-scale farmers and consumers.⁹¹

Therefore, governance has a very important role to play. Policies impact the role of accessibility to food and they need to be in line with healthy standards. Policies need to promote affordable healthy diets and authorities should have more food governance capacity-building to be able to think and plan healthy regular supply of food for the next 10 years in their country.⁹²

⁹¹ Sustainability: Just A Buzzword? 23 June 2021, page 10

⁹² Making Nutritious and Healthy Diets Available to All: Empowering a Sustainable and Resilient Fresh Food Supply Chain Worldwide - African Dialogue. 3 May 2021, 261, page 8

Conclusion

This deep dive report illustrated the diversity of perspectives on governance as well as the multi-faceted nature of the concept of governance when it comes to food systems. This may suggest the need for further exploration and continued dialogue on food systems governance. Doing so would promote a broader, common understanding of what is meant by such a ubiquitous term in the context of incredibly complex, dynamic, and globally diverse contexts.

Without greater collective understanding of the term ‘governance’ in the context of food systems, there is a risk that it comes to mean everything and nothing at the same time. Some might say there is an even greater risk that the term ‘governance’ comes to mean something quite prescriptive—prompting institutions and governments to be wary of using the term and to avoid further exploration what is actually needed to support the future of food.

Dozens of Independent Dialogues touched upon the concept of food systems governance. This report represents an opportunity to distill what was learned from the Dialogue process and to consider how to harness that momentum and knowledge moving forward.

Annex A: Independent Dialogues with a Focus on Governance

Title	Convener(s)	Date	ID
EU Dialogue: Exploring Options to strengthen our Global Science Policy Interface for improved Food Systems Governance	EU Commission, DG Research and Innovation	April 29, 2021	252
Building Collaborative and Effective Food Systems Governance Frameworks in Kisumu County	ICLEI Africa, FAO, Kisumu County	May 5, 2021	326
Policy and governance issues to transform food systems in Europe and Central Asia	FAO, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNECE, WMO	May 25, 2021	444
Territorial governance for sustainable food systems	UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies,	July 8, 2021	535
Independent Dialogue in Support of the 2021 Food Systems Summit: "Different routes, similar goals"	Kovnat K, Tagieva S	May 18, 2021	228
Asia-Pacific Regional Food Systems Dialogue	ESCAP, FAO, UNDRR, UNEP, WPP, WHO	June 10, 2021	403
Healthy food systems that are closer to small agroecological producers in Latin America.	Mone S	June 16, 2021	416a
Making Nutritious and Healthy Diets Available to All: Empowering a Sustainable and Resilient Fresh Food Supply Chain Worldwide - African Dialogue	Carrara E, Le More A	May 3, 2021	261