

# AFS Forum – 2024: Partner Side Event

## Food Systems National Convenors – Pivotal role in accelerating the transformation of Africa’s food systems

*Jointly organised by the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and AGRA*

*Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024, 08:00-10:00 CAT*

*Venue: Knowledge Hub space, Kigali International Conference Centre*

### Introduction

National Food Systems Convenors play a critical and strategic role in leading national efforts to champion the food systems transformation agenda. They are the central thread in organizing and bringing to life the “whole-government” approach, which is essential for fostering a food systems perspective. This approach significantly enhances a government's capacity to plan, implement, and achieve results aligned with food systems transformation goals and targets. The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub plays a crucial role in providing an integrated UN support to National Convenors in fulfilling these responsibilities.

This side event is organized as part of ongoing engagement and collaboration to support National Convenors. It takes place at a pivotal moment when the consolidation of country-specific operational frameworks and the activities of National Convenors is crucial. This timing is particularly significant as the continent embarks on a comprehensive and inclusive review of the CAADP-Malabo framework and the development of the post-Malabo CAADP.

### Objectives

The side event offers a unique opportunity for National Convenors and the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and other stakeholders to exchange insights, share perspectives, and co-create strategies to advance national food systems transformation. The event will focus on the following objectives and sub-themes:

- **The National Convenors (NCs):** Defining the unique value NCs bring and ensuring its realization. Positioning NCs within the broader landscape of national and regional food systems transformation actors, examining their roles and responsibilities, key enablers, challenges, and opportunities. Offering insights and perspectives on how countries and the continent can and should maximize the value NCs contribute to accelerating the implementation and achievement of systemic capacities necessary for food systems transformation goals and targets.
- **Cross sector (agriculture-food-climate) convergence:** The country-based dialogue on key success factors for the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub Convergence Initiative. Participants will share insights and lessons from ongoing programs and initiatives operating within the nexus of food, climate, energy, and social security.

## Session Outcomes

In addition to fostering an informed network of National Convenors and strengthening peer relationships, the side event aims to:

- Streamline the key aspects of the National Convenor's roles and responsibilities, along with the practical steps they can take to effectively coordinate and facilitate matchmaking within the food systems ecosystem.
- Enhance understanding of the factors and incentives that drive successful inter-sectoral collaboration, involving both state and non-state actors.
- Develop practical measures and strategies to incentivize collaborations across agriculture, food, climate, and livelihoods sectors.

## Methodology

The event will feature the participation of National Food Systems Convenors and their teams, with moderated discussions and participant-driven dialogue.

## Program

**Session Moderator:** Khaled Eltaweel, Senior Programme Coordinator, UNFS Coordination Hub

Time	Agenda Item	Remarks / Specifications
8.00am – 8.20am	<b>Part 1: Opening session and meeting purpose</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening remarks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abebe Haile-Gabriel, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, FAO (tbc)</li> <li>• Khaled Eltaweel, Senior Programme Coordinator, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub</li> <li>• AGRA</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meeting purpose and expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin Bwalya, Senior Food Systems Specialist, UNFS Coordination Hub</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
8.20am – 8.35am	<b>Setting the scene: Lead presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Convenors – their value and functionality in championing food systems transformation</li> <li>• Cross-sector (agriculture-food-climate-livelihoods) convergence</li> </ul>	Martin Bwalya, Senior Food Systems Specialist, UNFS Coordination Hub
8.35am – 9.50am	<b>Open Plenary moderated discussion:</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Discussion round: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ What elements of the NCs' setup and functions make them best suited to champion the national food systems transformation agenda? Which aspects need to be changed, adjusted, or strengthened to enhance their effectiveness?</li> </ul> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Discussion round: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The agriculture-food-climate-livelihoods nexus is central to the food systems transformation agenda. In your specific country context, what would be the three most pressing success factors in driving mutual convergence across these interest areas?</li> </ul>	Open floor discussion with National Convenors and representatives.
9.50am – 10.00am	Synthesis and closing remarks -	UNFS Coordination Hub and AGRA

For further information, kindly contact: M. Bwalya ([Martin.Bwalya@fao.org](mailto:Martin.Bwalya@fao.org)); K. Eltaweel ([Khaled.Eltaweel@fao.org](mailto:Khaled.Eltaweel@fao.org)) with cc to N. Murad ([Nozheen.Murad@fao.org](mailto:Nozheen.Murad@fao.org)).