

# Food Systems Transformation and Climate Action: Successes, Challenges, and Lessons from Countries

18 November, 13:15 – 14:00 (local time)

COP29 Nordic Pavilion

Side event concept note

Live stream link: <https://www.norden.org/en/live-stream-cop29>

## Background and objectives

Food systems are responsible for over a third of global greenhouse gas emissions and stand as a key barrier to achieving climate goals. However, they also represent a vital solution to the climate crisis and biodiversity loss. The Global Sustainable Development Report identifies food systems as a critical entry point for sustainable development, while the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report underscores the role of integrated "land, water, and food" strategies for adaptation and mitigation.

In 2023, two significant global processes highlighted the urgency of aligning food systems transformation with climate action. The UN Secretary-General's Call to Action during the UNFSS+2 urged countries to align their food systems pathways with updates to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). Additionally, the COP28 Declaration, endorsed by 160 countries, emphasized that agriculture and food systems must be central to any successful climate action strategy.

Launched by the UN Deputy Secretary-General at COP28, the Convergence Initiative seeks to enhance synergy between food systems and climate action. In its first phase, pilot countries have developed Convergence Action Blueprints to guide national actions towards holistic systems change, supported by coordinated efforts among Convergence Groups.

## The expected outcomes

This event will bring together representatives from national governments, UN agencies, and non-state actors to spotlight ongoing efforts in aligning climate action with food systems transformation since COP28. It will focus on the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub's Convergence Initiative, a strategic framework that addresses critical gaps and seizes opportunities for integrated action across food systems and climate goals.

The session will highlight key challenges and lessons learned, emphasizing the urgency of accelerating this convergence to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and meet the Paris Agreement's targets. Attendees will benefit from a showcase of best practices, particularly from Nordic countries that have successfully synergized food systems and climate strategies.

## Key discussion points:

1. **Accelerating Convergence for SDGs and Paris Agreement Goals:** Exploring how governments and stakeholders can expedite the integration of food systems transformation with climate action.

2. **Lessons from Pilot Countries:** Showcasing experiences from countries that have developed Convergence Action Blueprints, highlighting practical challenges, successes, and opportunities for scaling these frameworks to achieve system-wide transformation.
3. **Actionable Strategies for Stakeholders:** Identifying concrete steps for governments, the private sector, and civil society to accelerate the convergence of food systems and climate action at the national level.
4. **Strengthening Multi-Sector Collaboration:** Emphasizing the importance of cross-sector partnerships and governance mechanisms

### Agenda

Timeframe: 45 mins

Time	Topic	Speaker
5'	Opening and Scene Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Dan Koivulaakso</b>, Head of Unit for Growth and Climate, Nordic Council of Ministers.</li> </ul>
30'	Panel Discussion: Aligning Food Systems Transformation with Climate Action – Challenges, Lessons from countries, Best Practices, and Strategies for Multi-Sector Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Stefanos Fotiou</b>, Director, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub.</li> <li>• <b>Mr Markus Hoffman</b>, Sustainable Food Expert, Swedish Farmers Federation</li> <li>• <b>Ms Xinyue Han</b>, Alumna of the Hub Youth Leadership Programme.</li> </ul> <p><u>Moderator:</u> <b>Mr Khaled Eltaweel</b>, Senior Programme Coordinator, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub</p>
5'	<b>Q&amp;A with Audience</b>	Moderator: <b>Mr Khaled Eltaweel</b> , Senior Programme Coordinator, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub
5'	<b>Wrap up and closing remarks</b>	<b>Mr Khaled Eltaweel</b> , Senior Programme Coordinator, UN Food Systems Coordination Hub