

FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION PROGRESS REVIEW

Regional Meeting for Europe and Central Asia

Concept Note for the meeting with the Food Systems National Convenors

12 March 2024

Palais de Nation, Building A, Salle Room V.

10:00 – 18:00

Introduction

The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub is organizing a series of regional Meetings with Food Systems National Convenors as a follow-up to the United Nations Food Systems (UNFSS+2) Stocktaking Moment which took place in Rome in July 2023. These meetings are being conducted in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions, the Regional Offices of the UN Agencies supporting the Hub, and other regional bodies. The UN Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia is co-organizing the Meeting in the ECA region.

The main objectives of these Meetings are to assess the progress made in transforming food systems, facilitate regional knowledge sharing, and identify emerging patterns and solutions across different regions in response to the UNFSS+2 call to action by the UN Secretary-General¹

These meetings are built upon the discussions held during the 2023 Regional Preparatory Meeting and UNFSS+2, where Member States shared their perspectives, best practices, lessons learned, and challenges related to food systems transformation. The importance of accelerating food systems transformation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals was emphasized during these dialogues.

The primary participants of these meetings include National Convenors from the respective regions and their teams, UN Resident Coordinators, members of UN Country Teams, and other stakeholders.

Background

The first UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) took place in Rome, Italy from 24 – 26 July 2023, at the premises of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It was Convened by the Secretary-General and hosted by Italy, in collaboration with the Rome-based UN Agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP), the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub, and the wider UN system.

The UNFSS+2 Moment built on the momentum of the 2021 Food Systems Summit and created a conducive space for countries to review progress on the commitments to action and identify successes, enduring bottlenecks, and priorities to close the implementation gap by effectively and efficiently utilizing the Means of Implementation for food systems transformation. It was also an opportunity to further socialize the powerful role of sustainable, equitable, healthy, and resilient food systems as critical SDG accelerators and advocate for urgent action at scale, building on the latest evidence that sustainable food systems contribute to better and more sustainable outcomes for people, planet and prosperity leaving no one behind.

The summit saw over 3300 participants, including delegations from 182 countries, 21 world leaders and 126 ministers, 225 Non-state Actor organizations, and close to 900 UN system representatives, gather to share efforts and steer global action towards sustainable food systems.

At the end of the UNFSS+2, the Secretary-General launched a Call to Action for accelerated Food Systems Transformation. The Call focuses on six concrete objectives: embedding food systems strategies in national policies; establishing food systems governance with a whole-of-society

¹ <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/fs-stocktaking-moment/documentation/un-secretary-general-call-to-action/en>

approach; investing in research, data, innovation, and technology capacities; promoting business engagement and accountability for sustainability; including full participation of marginalized groups including women; farmers, youth, and Indigenous Peoples; and ensuring long-term, concessional finance for food systems transformation.

The Regional Preparatory Meeting in Geneva, in March 2023, engaged National Convenors in identifying key challenges, priorities, and key messages for the Stocktaking Moment. Despite the wide variety of topographies, climates, and food systems, National Convenors in the region reported interconnectedness and the need for opportunities for peer learning and inspiration. The war in Ukraine, COVID-19, persistent nutrition challenges, and the impacts of climate change necessitate a paradigm shift to build back better through the transformation of food systems. They also stressed the importance of adopting a **nexus approach** that combines crisis response, mid-term development needs, and long-term structural changes to transform while building resilience to future shocks and threats. Member States advocate for a systemic approach that deals with coherence within the food systems and in addition the interlinkages between food systems, climate change including in COP28, food security, water scarcity, and other areas.

Within the framework of the Strategic Partnership between the Hub and the UAE COP28 Presidency, the Hub and 4SD are designing the [Convergence Initiative](#) which aims to support countries fully capitalize on the synergies between food systems transformation, climate action, as well as with nutrition, resilience and so on. The overarching goal is to stimulate progress and accompany countries between December 2023 and December 2025 (coinciding with COP 30 and UNFSS+4). It is anticipated that this will encourage progress towards climate-smart, people-centered, and nature-positive food systems at the local, national, and regional levels. Ultimately, the initiative supports the realization of the right to food and participation in a just, equitable, sustainable, and resilient future, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With COP29 taking place in Azerbaijan, this meeting will look to prepare countries in the region, following the momentum of food systems commitments aligned to the Emirates Declaration. The regional meeting will foster regional knowledge sharing and collaboration for realizing the commitments, presenting the successful initiatives for policy convergence, tools available, and case studies for the implementation of national pathways.

Structure and Objectives of the Regional Meeting for Europe and Central Asia

The Regional Meeting will be a one-day meeting to be held on 12 March in Geneva on the margins of the annual Europe Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

The meeting will build on the [Regional Preparatory Meeting in Europe and Central Asia](#) that took place in March 2023, looking at the regional priorities and good practices to transform the region's food systems.

The event objectives:

- i) Comprehensive **review of progress in food systems transformation**. It will explore the process of reviewing and assessing the progress (including updates from the UNFSS+2 National progress reports) made by participating countries in their food systems transformation efforts. Time will be dedicated to the exchange of information by national convenors and other stakeholders on i) progress and focus, ii) sharing lessons on entry points and actions, and iii) identification of emerging patterns and solutions.
- ii) A **deeper look at the thematic areas** of Monitoring food systems transformation, Convergence with climate action, Financing food systems, and working with UNFSS Coalitions. This will provide a systematic approach to evaluating achievements and identifying areas that require further attention and improvement.
- iii) **Foster regional collaboration and regional communities** by exploring strategies for planning and coordinating future collaborative efforts among participating countries and

stakeholders, emphasizing the need for continued cooperation and the setting of shared goals.

Interpretation is available in English, French, and Russian.

Expected Outcome

The expected outcome of the meeting is a summary report that will include the shared commitment among participating countries and stakeholders to strengthen their collaborative efforts in the transformation of food systems. By the conclusion of the meeting, it is expected that National Convenors will have a clearer understanding of the progress made and challenges faced in food systems transformation. This will serve as the foundation for enhanced cooperation and coordination in the pursuit of sustainable food systems and will be a tangible representation of the collective will to work together towards sustainable and resilient food systems, contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Agenda

TIME FRAME	TOPIC	SPEAKERS	GUIDING QUESTIONS
10:00–10:30	Panel opening discussion and setting the scene	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Elisabeth Türk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Mr. Viorel Gutu. FAO Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia and Co-chair of the Food Systems Issued Based Coalition. Ms. Sylvia Ekra. UN Food Systems Hub Deputy Director. <p>Moderator: Mr. Khaled Eltaweel. Senior Programme Coordinator. UN Food Systems Hub.</p>	
10:30-13:00	Progress on food systems transformation: Implementation of the National Pathways – Best Practices and Innovative Solutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Francesco Branca. WHO Director Nutrition and Food Safety Mr. Svante Helms. National Pathways Manager. UN Food Systems Coordination (10 mins) <p>National convenors (2 – 3 best practices on implementation of the national pathway) (5 mins each):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Armenia. Norway. Uzbekistan. <p>Followed by an open discussion with guiding questions.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Elisabeth Türk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Could you outline, what further steps have been taken to implement the national pathways since the UNFSS +2 last year in July, and to keep them dynamic as a driver for national food system transformation? Please emphasize entry points, specific innovative approaches or institutional changes or interesting examples at local level. Are you holding regularly national dialogues with a wide range of stakeholders? Could you share your experience regarding the usefulness of the dialogues and what are the results? How can food system governance structures effectively drive the national food system agenda? (e.g. national or also local governance structures, focused or with a wide set of actors, who is chairing?). In what ways can we enhance regional collaboration to transform food systems and bolster resilience? What are the main challenges and lessons learned within the regional approaches to food system transformation?
13:00-15:00	Lunch		

15:00-16:00	Roundtable: Alignment and convergence of food systems transformation and climate action. Country experiences.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Sylvia Ekra. UN Food Systems Hub Deputy Director/Mr. David Nabarro. 4SD Foundation Strategic Director. <p>2 – 3 country experiences, followed by an open discussion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Moldova. Switzerland. Germany. <p>Moderator: Mr. Khaled Eltaweel. Senior Programme Coordinator. UN Food Systems Hub.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are practical examples of work ongoing to better align the food systems and climate agendas at the country level? How is your country promoting collaboration between the different Ministries' and other relevant stakeholders connecting food systems and climate action? How can the convergence initiative support your efforts to converge food systems and climate action to support the SDGs? How can national convenors be effectively supported and accompanied to access the evidence, knowledge, and skills necessary to address the interconnected and complex issues at hand?
16:00-16:30	Thematic Session: Ecosystem of Support – Coalitions and SUN Movement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Lina Mahy. Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems. Ms. Marcy Vigoda, Director at the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Secretariat. <p>National convenors to share experience:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Denmark <p>Followed by open discussion.</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. Juana Giraldo. UN Food Systems Specialist. UN Food Systems Coordination Hub.</p>	Q&A from convenors and participants to the speakers.
16:30-17:00	Coffee Break		
17:00-17:30	Thematic session: Monitoring at the country level the progress on food systems transformation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Stella Nordhagen. GAIN Senior Technical Specialist (Food Systems Countdown Initiative). <p>National convenors to share experience on monitoring efforts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sweden. Poland. <p>Followed by open discussion,</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. David Nabarro. 4SD Foundation Strategic Director.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have you already established a monitoring mechanism to measure the food system progress based on the pathways/action plan? In case yes, could you share your examples or mechanisms and what are the key challenges? Are there any good examples of review or monitoring mechanisms of the national pathways/action plans in place?
17:30-18:00	Wrap-up and closure	Ms. Sylvia Ekra. UN Food Systems Hub Deputy Director. IBC-SFS (TBC)	