

Food Systems and Climate Action Convergence Initiative Concept Note for Regional Touch Points with National Convenors

Summary

The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub is organizing five regional touchpoints to introduce the *Food Systems and Climate Action Convergence Initiative*. The initiative is developed under the partnership between the Hub and the COP28 Presidency and in collaboration with 4SD to bolster national food systems and climate action convergence processes through dialogues and collective actions, with leadership provided by National Convenors and the active involvement of diverse stakeholders.

These touchpoints serve as a platform for Convenors to share reflections based on their existing experiences, collaborate on providing inputs to the Convergence Initiative, which aims to tackle the complex challenges of food systems transformation and climate action with a unified approach that supports the acceleration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The touchpoints are open for participation by National Convenors and their teams, other government officials, UN Resident Coordinators, UN country teams, and the broader support ecosystem.

Dates:

Region	Day	Timing (CET)	Languages (English in all sessions)
Asia and the Pacific	Tuesday, 14 November	08:00 – 10:00	+ Chinese
Near East and North Africa	Tuesday, 14 November	12:00 – 14:00	+ Arabic, French
Europe and Central Asia	Wednesday, 15 November	12:00 – 14:00	+ Russian
Latin America and the Caribbean	Wednesday, 15 November	16:00 – 18:00	+ Spanish, French
Africa	Thursday, 16 November	14:00 – 16:00	+ French

Context

The Secretary-General Report of the Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) emphasized interlinkages between food systems transformation (FST) and climate action, underscoring that current food systems continue to generate soil, water, and air pollution. Moreover, food systems contribute to over one-third of greenhouse gas emissions, are responsible for up to 80 percent of biodiversity loss, and consume as much as 70 percent of freshwater resources.

In response to these challenges, the UNFSS+2 “Call to Action” encourages leaders to incorporate food systems strategies into their national policies, including those related to climate action and nature. Specifically, efforts were urged to reduce vulnerabilities faced by communities, particularly rural communities, food producers, women farmers, and indigenous peoples who rely on natural systems and livestock for their livelihoods¹. The call to action also highlighted the importance of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) Loss and Damage Fund’s

¹ Secretary-General’s Call to Action for accelerated Food Systems Transformation (FST). 26 July 2023. Point 9. <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/fs-stocktaking-moment/documentation/un-secretary-general-call-to-action/en>

design and operationalization, the full funding of the Green Climate Fund, and the implementation of the Sharm El Sheikh Adaptation Agenda's Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST) as top priorities².

The United Arab Emirates COP28 (UAE COP28) Presidency has elevated the role of food systems in achieving the SDGs and Paris Agreement targets. The COP28 Food Systems and Agriculture Agenda, launched in Rome during the UNFSS+2, prioritizes key food system objectives, such as aligning national food systems and agricultural policies with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) by 2025. A central aspect of this agenda is securing the commitment of Heads of State and governments attending COP28 to implement these actions, solidifying global ambition and firmly establishing food systems transformation as a prominent item on the climate agenda and within the COP process for years to come.

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 and climate action. 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 the right to food and participation in a just, equitable, sustainable, and resilient future, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This initiative encourages countries to undertake a national convergence process, supported periodic orientation and connection sessions for Convenors and their teams, resources to facilitate the convergence process, including convergence dialogues as a tool, and guidance throughout the journey towards COP30. This guidance encompasses cross-sectoral collaboration across ministries responsible for agriculture, finance, environment, climate, health, and energy, as well how to engage various stakeholders, including food producers, processors, distributors, and consumers. The convergence process will involve familiarizing food and climate actors with each other's perspectives, enabling different units within both local and national governments to adopt more integrated and systemic approaches and policies that align food systems transformation and climate action. National Convenors will be encouraged to organize convergence dialogues that bring together multiple stakeholders that explore this nexus. Hub and 4SD will also mobilize the ecosystem of support, at global, regional, and national levels, to ensure that countries can access the technical assistance they need for their convergence process. Regular opportunities to share and learn from each other will also be provided throughout the initiative.

The upcoming international gatherings and global high-level political forums such as COP28, COP29, COP30 and UNFSS+4, among others, will play a pivotal role in highlighting the significance of aligning food systems transformation and climate action to attain the SDGs. These events will serve as a platform not only to showcase progress of convergence processes in countries but also to underscore its profound influence on the ongoing transformation of food systems, the realization of climate objectives, and the advancement of the 2030 agenda.

Objectives and Structure of the Regional Touchpoints

The primary focus of these touchpoints is to gather valuable insights and best practices that effectively align food systems transformation with climate action, all aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Each Regional Touchpoint has a two-hour duration, commencing with a brief introduction, followed by a presentation from the UAE COP28 Presidency and a presentation of the Convergence initiative. Subsequently, there is 80 minutes dedicated to National Convenors (or their designated representatives) who are encouraged to express their perspectives on the topics outlined below

² Secretary-General's Call to Action for accelerated Food Systems Transformation (FST). 26 July 2023. Point 12. <https://www.unfoodsystemshub.org/fs-stocktaking-moment/documentation/un-secretary-general-call-to-action/en>

and pose questions regarding the initiative. At the end of each touchpoint, a summary of key messages is offered.

In preparation, National Convenors, their teams, and other representatives are encouraged to reflect on the following four questions³:

1. Are there currently any existing mechanisms, forums and/or initiatives encouraging the common understanding, joint efforts and integration of food systems transformation and climate action agendas?
2. To what extent are food systems issues integrated within climate policies and plans and vice versa? (Please consider relevant policies and plans like your NDCs, NAPs, NBSAPs, National Pathways, and National Development Plans).
3. What opportunities and challenges do you foresee in the convergence of the two agendas in the coming two years?
4. What support might be helpful to encourage the convergence of food systems transformation and climate action in your country?

Proposed outline of each session

Time	Theme	Presenters/Moderators
10 mins	Introduction and setting the scene on the convergence of food systems transformation and climate action agendas.	Hub/4SD
10 mins	Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action Agenda at the COP28	COP28
10 mins	Objectives and milestones of the Convergence Initiative	Hub/4SD
80 mins	Interactive round of interventions	All
5 mins	Summary and concluding remarks	Hub

³ For convenors and other key stakeholders who cannot attend the regional touchpoints, we encourage you to send your responses to these questions via email to fss-hub@fao.org, with copies to michelle.seck@fao.org and juana.giraldogonzalez@fao.org.