

Food Systems Dialogues Reference Group (RG) Meeting 23rd August 2018

The convener reported on the initial Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) in Stockholm, plans for the next FSDs and proposals for developing support for FSDs to be undertaken by multiple organizations in different localities.

Part 1 of this meeting note is the convener's report, part 2 is a summary of comments in the reference group and part 3 is a listing of next steps.

Part 1: Convener's report to Reference Group

1 Summary report¹ of 13th June Stockholm Food Systems Dialogues: When members of the FSDs Steering Group met on August 8th they concluded that the arrangements for the Dialogue Tables in Stockholm generally worked well. Dialogue tables had up to 10 participants generally selecting themselves so that they reflect a range of stakeholder interests. Each table had a Process Facilitator (PF). At the start of a Dialogue the PF ensured that participants have agreed on a code of conduct which ensured that all participants were enabled to engage as they wish as long as they limited the duration of their comments and respected the positions of others. One participant was nominated to be the Output Producer (OP) – to ensure that the results of the Dialogue are noted. Towards the end of the Dialogue (after 50 minutes) the OP and PF ensured that participants agreed on the Output which was then reported back to the other Dialogue Tables by the PF, OP or another nominated participant. The notes of the Output Producers, together with comments from the report back, were then synthesised into an overall report of the different tables in the Dialogue session which was then made available to participants for their comment and reactions before being posted on the Food Systems Dialogues website. The tasks for the Process Facilitators and the Output Producers were not straightforward. The synthesis of the conclusions was challenging.

2 More specific themes: One view expressed was the need for Dialogue Tables to examine specific questions related to the transformation of food systems as focusing on general themes may not contribute to useful outcomes. The questions will relate to the multiple local-level trade-offs associated with ensuring that food systems contribute to the well-being of all who consume food, the prosperity of those who are involved in producing food and the regeneration of the planetary resources needed to produce nutritious food and ensure sustainable livelihoods. The questions will include some "burning issues" that need to be resolved.

3 As a result of the 13th June experience we propose different types of SDs in the coming months: Open FSDs (like Stockholm) with general discussion themes and focused FSDs which consider specific questions. We also encourage "Red Thread" series of FSDs in which the same group of people have repeated Dialogues at intervals: these could be open or focused, at global or local levels.

4 Following the guidance from the Steering Group we continue to plan for FSDs at country level, at regional meetings and during international events. Initial country FSDs are planned for Norway (September) and India with Bharat Krishak Samaj (October). We have a number of ideas for November and December. We are working on a system to support the advancement of local- and national-level FSDs – "FSDs in a Box". We are building up a Design Team of experienced facilitators to help develop this system. We have received specific proposals from groups advancing their own FSDs indicating that they would wish to align with this FSDs initiative and will be following up with them shortly. We are keen to hear from others.

¹ Available on <https://foodsystemsdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/180906-Summary-Report-FSDs-13-June-Stockholm.pdf>

5 We are hoping that several people who were at the Stockholm FSDs event will also be at the FSDs session during the NY Sustainable Development Impact Summit on 24th September: if so this will be the start of an international level “Red Thread” series of FSDs which could be continued at the World Bank Group meeting in Bali during October.

6 We will offer Introductions to the FSDs (often within other events – such as at the Stockholm Food Forum on June 12th 2018) so that participants can be briefed about, and help to shape, the Dialogues. We will seek opportunities to introduce the Dialogues in Kigali, Rwanda (African Green Revolution Forum) and at the UN General Assembly in September (including among participants from Member States and Civil Society), in Des Moines, USA (Borlaug Dialogues), Rome, Italy (Committee on World Food Security) and Singapore (WBCSD Council meeting) in October; and in Bangkok, Thailand (IFPRI and FAO meeting) at the end of November.

7 In the coming weeks the Steering Group encourages us to establish a FSDs Secretariat, consider the indicators for the success of the FSDs initiative, mobilize funding for the initiative after January 2019, set up the design team to advise on development of “Dialogues in a Box”, start to mentor process facilitators and output producers for Dialogue tables, develop a reliable process for synthesis and posting of FSDs read-outs (www.foodsystemsdialogues.org), and chronicle the learning history, We will maintain contact with people who we know are interested to stay engaged with the FSDs and sustain this FSDs reference group.

Part 2: Reference Group Comments

The following is a summary of points raised by reference group members during the meeting and in subsequent emails or texts. In keeping with usual practice there is no attribution of comments. Action points are indicated.

1 Both during the RG meeting and in follow-up messages members of the reference group shared the view that the FSDs initiative is evolving, can be expected to play a useful role in helping concerned actors to advance the transformation of food systems, and that – over time – should be designed so that it is efficient in the use of people’s time and other finite resources.

2 The Dialogue Table arrangements in Stockholm generally worked well and positive multi-stakeholder dialogue did take place. In future, (a) Dialogue tables should receive specific questions to discuss and should be offered access to evidence that would facilitate informed discourse; (b) each Dialogue table would consist of people with diverse interests (c) FSDs will have the greatest impact if the same group of people discuss similar issues on a regular basis – these are the “red thread” Dialogues: they should be encouraged at global or local level (d) It is particularly valuable if Dialogues are “piggy-backed” onto other events, or hosted by organizations with the capacity to organize a sequence of Dialogues. (Action: Convenor and FSDs Secretariat)

3 When local Dialogues take place the themes chosen should reflect issues that are deemed important within that locality.

4 There are a number of themes that could usefully be introduced into the FSDs including (a) options for enabling all people to access nutritious and sustainable diets, (b) ways to pursue the agreed goal of eliminating trans-fats in diets; (c) the potential of a charter for food systems transformation that could be pursued by all stakeholders.

5 The dialogues could also consider the interrelation of food and nutrition, climate change and humanitarian situations.

6 There will be national-level Food Systems Dialogues in Oslo, Norway (contributing to Norway’s international positioning on food systems) on September 13th organized by the Norwegian

Government and EAT; and in New Delhi, India on October 25th and 26th organized by Bharat Krishak Samaj. FSDs will also be introduced at the African Green Revolution Forum in Kigali, Rwanda (September 7th) and the Sustainable Development Impact Summit in New York (September 24th).

7 Given the challenges of synthesizing progress and building up a consistent set of messages and proposals throughout the dialogues, while still honouring their dispersed and generative nature, we will establish a “communications red thread” through all the external communications we do (in addition to having detailed narratives that record and honours the diverse inputs and commentary that are so fundamental to the underlying principles of the dialogues). One possibility is to use the structure that was developed during the preparation of the Dialogues (see below). Action: The convenor and secretariat will look for partners to help with this structuring of outputs

Policies and incentives	Science based targets & pathways	Innovation, inclusion and monitoring
Increased appreciation of the relationships between desired food system goals, benefits and costs as they relate to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, national plans and local realities.	The use of scientific research, systems analysis and modelling techniques can help policymakers to devise pathways that reflect human needs and planetary boundaries.	As innovations are applied within the food system they should ensure that they are of value to and accepted by all the people for whom they are designed.

8 Proposals (a) Global Compact CEO Forum New York September 24th (b) Nutrition Africa Investor Forum in Nairobi on October 16 to 17 as a platform for introducing the FSDs (hosted by GAIN, DSM and SUN’s Business Network), (c) Vienna People’s Food – People’s Health: towards sustainable European Food Systems November 22nd, (d) Hawaii local dialogues January 2019, (e) Dialogues in China during early 2019. The composite list of planned Dialogues, Information Sessions and Proposals is in part 3 below.

9 Dialogues in a box: The convenor will move ahead with developing materials for different kinds of FSDs and a mentoring system for facilitators and output producers as the Secretariat is established.