

**FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES (FSDs)**  
NAIROBI, 15 MARCH 2019  
CO-ORGANIZED BY FOOD FOREVER

SUMMARY REPORT\*

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\*The format of FSDs Summary Reports is under development. This report may be subject to change

## Executive Summary

On 15 March 2019 a Food Forever Dialogues event took place in Nairobi, Kenya, as part of the Food Systems Dialogues. It was co-organized by Food Forever, an initiative under Crop Trust. This FSDs event was held in the context of the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA).

37 participants attended, reflecting a range of actors working in Food Systems, ranging from Nairobi City County, local urban farmers to regional and international NGOs.

One round of facilitated Dialogues was held at the event, with participants seated at 5 tables.

Tables were asked to present one or more proposals to address a specific area of food systems, with a focus on the Kenyan context. Ideally, the proposals were to be achievable within 3 years. The prompt themes for dialogue at this event addressed the following areas: health, environment (agrobiodiversity), humanitarian concerns, multi-stakeholder engagement and inciting action.

High-level messages to emerge from dialogues pivoted around education on diet choices, increasing political awareness, better support of smallholder farmers and ways to increase their bargaining power, and additionally to hold more dialogues on food systems in Kenya.

The following is a summary of the tables' proposals for food systems transformation as well as the discussions that led them to their conclusions.

As is the norm at FSDs events, all Proposals outlined in this Summary Report are not attributed to any particular individual or organization. Each proposal did not necessarily receive universal support from all participants at the event; rather, the aim of this report is to capture recommendations made at the event, in order to allow continuity and consensus - a 'red thread' - to emerge across all FSDs events.

# Proposals from the Dialogue Tables

## Proposal 1: Focus on educating consumers on nutritious diets

The Kenyan population does not have adequate knowledge about nutrition. Therefore, more information needs to be provided in order to help people make better food decisions. Where possible, this information should be in accessible formats such as simple pictograms, and existing guidelines and good practices should also be communicated to the population to increase their understanding.

It could be effective to focus on schools and introduce education on nutritious foods and how to have a balanced diet.

If this was done properly, it could lead to decreased childhood mortality and infant mortality. It could also help to prevent the double burden of undernutrition and obesity.

## Proposal 2: Make food a political issue to increase agrobiodiversity

There is a need to create more awareness among producers and consumers on how agrobiodiversity is essential for diverse diets. The production of, and access to, underutilized foods should be scaled up - both for crops and livestock. National and local gene banks should also be utilised to increase diversity.

Access to safe and nutritious food should be made into a political issue. This will increase political will and pressure on political actors to take action.

If successful, this approach could lead to foods that are currently underutilized becoming more affordable and available, and to increased diversification in consumer food baskets.

## Proposal 3: Improve the bargaining power of smallholder farmers

In any discussion about food systems and food production it is crucial to look at smallholder farmers. This group is very vulnerable in Kenya and currently there are many farmers who are going hungry. The key to changing this situation is to improve market access and the prices that farmers can access at market.

A stronger farmer movement and collective action institutions should be created. These entities could work with the government to get better informed prices that are set on the global market. If

smallholder farmers were helped to work collectively, they would be able to get easier access to the market as a larger group.

Collective action could also improve their bargaining power to access inputs and different channels for subsidies on inputs and move away from dependency on chemical fertilizers that are degrading the soil.

Shortening the value chain could also help small farmers as well as consumers. Consumer activism could lead to people demanding better food and also giving the remuneration to smallholders.

Proposal 4: Better support farmers to grow food that is sustainable and nutritious

Soil is key for good nutrition and healthy diets, however the quality of soil in Kenya has been largely destroyed due to mono-cropping and using the soil in the wrong way.

To address this situation, indigenous species must be promoted in order to increase nutrition as well as resilience. More could be done to grow awareness about plant species in Kenya and which ones are able to be sustainably produced.

Extension services have decreased in Kenya, which has affected livelihoods. There should be more extension services along the whole value chain - from farmers to those who supply inputs, to markets and traders. These services should focus on how to grow crops sustainability and with maximum nutrition. Development aid, distributed in an efficient way to smallholder farmers could also have the flow-on effect of helping nutritious products reach consumers, to support their good health.

Organisations can help through capacity-building and training for farmers, to support them in producing food more sustainably. Other organizations can also help this process by supporting policy development at the political level.

Proposal 5: Hold more food systems dialogues across Kenya

There is not enough agreement or even awareness of the steps required to transform Kenya's food system. Currently, there is no political will to initiate change, and not enough consumer interest in driving change forward.

Holding more food systems dialogues across the country could help to bring actors on the same page, and could lead to real policy and practical change. These dialogues should include national and county councils, and a calendar of dialogues should be published to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to participate. The dialogues could be covered by mainstream media and on social media to build momentum for change.