

FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES (FSDs)

DAVOS, 25 JANUARY 2019

SUMMARY REPORT*

Executive Summary	2
Proposals	3
Proposal 1: Decrease the risk for politicians to support improved food systems	3
Proposal 2: Create partnerships to increase consumer education and choice	3
Proposal 3: Repurpose subsidies and other public finance mechanisms	3
Proposal 4: Increase connections between food sectors in a way that improves climate outcomes and livelihoods	4
Proposal 5: Make transition pathways for people in sectors that will decline	4
Proposal 6: Increase farmers' information and knowledge	4

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

Executive Summary

On 25 January 2019 a Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) event took place in Davos, Switzerland. This FSDs event was held in the context of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting. Approximately 50 global leaders in Food Systems attended, ranging from CEO / Founder of an indoor farming company, to Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Change, to Executive Director of a global nutrition movement, to the Chairman of a leading global coffee roasting company.

Tables were asked to present one or more proposals to address a specific area of food systems, with a focus on the USA. Ideally, the proposals were to be achievable within 3 years.

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

Proposal 1: Decrease the risk for politicians to support improved food systems

In order to create change it is necessary to convince politicians that the change is in their interest. This can be achieved with a combination of scientific evidence, consumer support and economic arguments. In addition, it is crucial to find voices in the industry that will support the change - and the politicians championing the change.

There is a lot to be learnt from the efforts undertaken to stem the tobacco and deforestation industries. There are examples where politicians were asked to be courageous but then left unprotected when they acted. Instead, politicians should be supported with the right strategies.

Proposal 2: Create partnerships to increase consumer education and choice

To change consumer behaviour there needs to be increased education as well as better choices available. One approach to achieving this is through better partnerships that can drive action and change. These partnerships need to be inclusive; for example, small holders should be a part of them.

Proposal 3: Repurpose subsidies and other public finance mechanisms

When it comes to public goods, there is always tension between public and private goals. For example, with a hectare of invaluable rainforest, the farmer that wants to support their livelihood will cut it down despite the public benefit of preserving it. This highlights the tension between private self regulation and public regulation.

Mechanisms to address this include repurposing subsidies and other public finance. The scale of food subsidies at present is enormous; however, most of this is unproductive. There is an opportunity to repurpose these finances to incentivize private interest to serve the public interest.

Proposal 4: Increase connections between food sectors in a way that improves climate outcomes and livelihoods

Currently not all food chains are connected and yet food systems requires connected markets. This provides an opportunity to build towards better food systems by connecting the dots between the different spheres of, for example, farm, finance, fertilizer, and healthy food.

This could be done in a way that drives climate results, increases productivity and improves livelihoods.

Proposal 5: Make transition pathways for people in sectors that will decline

Transition pathways need to be created for those who have the greatest risk in the new food system, such as the livestock sector. Civil society should take the lead on this, and learn from other transitions that have taken place.

Finance is the key to make the transitions less jarring. However, there is an inherent contradiction in this because finance flows to safe havens.

Proposal 6: Increase farmers' information and knowledge

Delivering more information and knowledge to farmers about production, markets and weather is critical for their survival.

There is currently an emphasis on educating farmers about better agricultural practices, but there could be benefits to also including education about health. If farmers better understand the health risks and benefits to themselves and their families of certain types of agriculture they may change their practices.

Encouraging multiple crops should be the default approach - except where there are exceptional circumstances where monoculture makes sense. In terms of resilience, the natural behavior of farmers is to have intercropping, so that should be encouraged.