

# **FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES (FSDs)**

ADDIS ABABA, 07 FEBRUARY 2019

## SUMMARY REPORT\*

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Proposals</b>	<b>3</b>
Proposal 1: Make better use of Ethiopia's rich crop diversity	3
Proposal 2: Stronger focus on coordination at community levels	3
Proposal 3: Improve agricultural practices in order to increase access to quality food	3
Proposal 4: Map current actors and activities	4
Proposal 5: Hold more Food System Dialogues at the national and regional levels	4

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

## Executive Summary

On 07 February 2019 a Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) event took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This FSDs event was held in the context of the launch of the EAT Lancet Commission Report: “Our Food in the Anthropocene: Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems”. Approximately 30 participants attended, reflecting a range of actors working in Food Systems, ranging from national government to Embassy officials to NGOs.

Tables were asked to present one or more proposals to address a specific area of food systems, with a focus on Ethiopia. Ideally, the proposals were to be achievable within 3 years. The prompt themes for dialogue at this event addressed the following areas: Agriculture, Health and Humanitarian concerns.

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: Make better use of Ethiopia's rich crop diversity

Ethiopia is rich in crops, with more than 100 different varieties. However, currently this asset is not properly utilised. In order to adequately nourish the whole population, there should be more resources invested in making the most of Ethiopia's crops. In particular, there should be a focus on infrastructure, waste management, increasing shelf life and improving packaging.

This process should start at the regional level. There should be more engagement with people who work directly in the regions that are rich in crops to better understand what has been successful in maintaining crop diversity.

The production of indigenous crops should also be a priority.

## Proposal 2: Stronger focus on coordination at community levels

There are a lot of new government policies in agriculture, health, nutrition and in other related areas. However, there is lack of coordination among actors to use these policies to work towards an outcome, especially at the community level.

Having a stronger coordination at the community levels such as district and village level is key to implementing these policies in a way that leads to real change. One of the big challenges to making any change in Ethiopia is working with and shifting social customs.

It is also important to measure accountability at the village level. Currently, it is very difficult to know what actions are underway in communities and by what actors. The private sector could be engaged to help build these accountability mechanisms.

There could also be more capacity building (information, technology, and nutritional education) at the local level, and empowerment of local governing structure to better recognise and support local ownership.

Proposal 3: Improve agricultural practices in order to increase access to quality food

Currently, a lack of accessibility to quality food is a key contributing factor to stunting and micronutrient deficiencies across Ethiopia.

To address this problem, Ethiopia's agricultural practices need to change. Initiatives to help with this, such as mechanization of larger scale farms and improving small farmers access to technology, have been stalled due to politics. However, now is the time for the government to move forward on these plans.

Proposal 4: Map current actors and activities

The land, water, agriculture and nutrition sectors are very fragmented and siloed in their approaches. There is also a lot of fragmentation in policy making and institutional arrangements. It is therefore hard to say that Ethiopia has a shared vision for food systems, and without a shared vision it is unlikely that things will change for the better.

The first step to fixing this is to undertake a study to map the different actors across all the related sectors. This study could be the basis of a future strategy on food.

Proposal 5: Hold more Food System Dialogues at the national and regional levels

Ethiopia is a large country with a lot of potential, including a lot of productive land and water sources, and yet continues to underperform in terms of food security and nutrition. There have been some positive changes, but real progress is being held up by culture, language and politics.

Increased dialogue between actors is an important way to find a path to overcome these challenges and achieve systemic change. Holding more dialogues like this one could be very useful, both at a national and regional level.

In these dialogues, it could be valuable to include the experiences of countries that have dealt with similar issues in order to learn lessons from those who have succeeded.