

FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES (FSDs)

BOGOTA, 08 MAY 2019, PM SESSION

CO-ORGANIZED BY THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM(WEF) AND THE FOOD
AND LAND USE COALITION (FOLU)

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

Executive Summary

On 08 May 2019 a Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) event took place in Bogotá, Colombia co-organized by the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU) and the World Economic Forum (WEF). This FSDs event was held in the context of Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA) Annual Meeting and was framed by the FOLU Colombia Roadmap for a New Food and Land Use Economy for Colombia. The language of the event was Spanish. This event focused on proposals for action to transform food systems in Colombia; earlier the same day, another FSDs event was held with a focus on proposals for action at the global level.

Approximately 50 participants attended, reflecting a range of actors working in Food Systems, ranging from researchers, to personnel from wildlife conservation societies, to government, to children's advocacy groups, to private sector companies.

Tables were asked to present one or more proposals to address a specific area of food systems, with a focus on Colombia. Ideally, the proposals were to be achievable within 3 years. The prompt themes for dialogue at this event addressed the following areas: improving productivity in agriculture and aquaculture in a sustainable manner, ensuring universal access to nutritious food in Colombia, reduction of food loss and waste, strengthening infrastructure to support shortening value chains, incorporating traditional knowledge to achieve sustainable agricultural practices, achieving behavior change among food producers, establishing new coalitions and governance models among food systems actors and government, and developing a common information and monitoring system for food systems.

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: Create a coalition between government, the private sector and universities

Creating long-term solutions to Colombia's food system will require a coalition between government, the private sector and universities. This coalition should involve the establishment of research centers and the creation of a platform for businesses to listen to and support producers.

There should be participation by a diverse government ministries, including trade, health, environment and agriculture, as well as the transport ministry to address the subject of infrastructure. Currently, there are many isolated regions in Colombia where food production is significant, but which produce considerable waste due to inefficient transport centers. The coalition could develop a plan to improve infrastructure for the most remote territories in the country.

Proposal 2: Strengthen the transfer of traditional and local knowledge through technology

In order to ensure that agriculture production in Colombia is culturally and environmentally sustainable, traditional practices and regional differences must be integrated into any solution; technology should be leveraged to achieve this.

There should be a platform created for stakeholders from different sectors and levels to exchange knowledge of new technology which can aid in promoting traditional knowledge. It is important to build on existing platforms in country and regional areas.

Relatedly, there should be public policy that outlines technical assistance available from businesses, civil society, and public entities.

Proposal 3: Design a communication plan for all food systems stakeholders

A communication plan, using thoughtful techniques to target different actors across the whole food system, should be created.

Messages and recommended actions should be tailored to different audiences such as producers, government, consumers and industry. For each of these audiences, as well as segments within each audience, it would be important to assess the best communication channel and the best allies to deliver a message that will resonate with specific groups.

Additionally, involving stakeholders from each target group, will help ensure that each group take ownership of recommendations and actions.

Proposal 4: Reduce poverty in order to improve nutrition

Increasingly, nutritious diets are inaccessible to Colombians due to poverty. Creating policies to improve household income will help improve consumers' access to nutritious food.

Families' incomes need to be protected in the context of a country that is developing as quickly as Colombia. Changes in income directly affect Colombians' ability to access good food; reducing poverty will help increase the consumption of nutritious food.

Proposal 5: Create incentives for consumers to shift to more nutritious foods, through policy

There is a need for public policies that increase the demand for sustainable food produced by local farmers. There should be incentives for these outcomes built into every stage of the food chain.

Incentives should focus on encouraging Colombians to eat more fruit and vegetables and discourage consumers from eating more processed foods.

Incentives should involve awareness campaigns from territorial governments and organizations. It is also important to introduce laws that would lead to the consumption of real food instead of processed foods.

Proposal 6: Improve knowledge sharing between the public and private sector

There should be a knowledge network that creates cohesion between existing information systems. This network could provide the basis for decision-making. It would be important to have a state policy to produce and share this information.

The creation of public-private alliances would assist in building this system, incorporating input from all sectors of food systems. It is likely that, in order to achieve this kind of public-private sector collaboration, additional efforts to improve trust between the sectors would need to take place.

The Rural Agricultural Planning Unit of the Colombian government may be able to support the design and coordination of communication in the agriculture sector. Perhaps, in addition to Colombia's government, organizations such as the World Economic Forum (within initiatives such as the New Vision for Agriculture) would have the ability to provide space in their network to share initiatives, experience and benchmarks.

Proposal 7: Better define and measure national goals for decreasing food loss and waste

To properly address food loss and waste, there first needs to be better-defined national goals and more accurate measuring of wastage across the whole value chain.

There is currently insufficient data regarding food waste in Colombia, especially in relation to small-scale farmers. An important first step in reducing food waste is to begin measuring current levels of food waste, and identifying the points in the value chain where the most wastage occurs.

The broader context of this measuring initiative should be a national policy to address food waste. The policy should incorporate crop diversification given that, with more diversification there would be less wastage over time. This policy should be supported by a specific goal in the national development plan to reduce wastage.

Proposal 8: Reduce food waste through connecting consumers to local producers

More should be done to strengthen short and medium value chains. Produce should be consumed as close as possible to the place it was farmed.

Supporting farmers' markets could be an effective way to achieve this.

In addition, current rural extension programs should include components on food wastage and loss, framed by shortened value chains.

Proposal 9: Strengthen regulation of the food industry

It would be impactful to improve the regulation of the food industry, especially with regards to what is produced and what is promoted to consumers. Currently, the Colombian government does not adequately regulate or discipline industry players.

There should also be increased monitoring of the effect of regulation. This should include measuring the level of monopolization of markets.

Proposal 10: Develop inter-institutional projects to strengthen family farming associations

Inter-institutional projects should be developed in order to strengthen family farming associations, through technical and financial support.

These projects would contribute to increased productivity, diversified production, and improving agroecological practices. They would also have positive impacts on water and biodiversity, and the quality of life of the farmers.