

FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUES (FSDs)

DAVOS, 22 JANUARY 2020

CO-ORGANIZED BY THE SWISS FEDERAL OFFICE FOR AGRICULTURE (FOAG)

SUMMARY REPORT*

Executive Summary	2
Proposals	3
Proposal 1: Improve access for farmers to critical resources	3
Proposal 2: Update government priorities in relation to sustainable food systems	3
Proposal 3: Expand the UN's role in de-risking the private sector	3
Proposal 4: Incentivize products which are healthy; tax those which are not	4
Proposal 5: Devise children's education programs that are enjoyable	4
Proposal 6: Develop science-based agreements on nutrition composition	4
Proposal 7: Use pricing mechanisms to minimize the exploitation of valuable resources	5
Proposal 8: Ensure clear metrics are in place for biodiversity	5
Proposal 9: Invest in underutilized crops	5
Proposal 10: Invest in research and education	5
Proposal 11: Leverage foreign trade agreements to promote change	6
Proposal 12: Create a monitoring system that accounts for geographic difference	6
Proposal 13: Adopt a multi-stakeholder, consultative approach	6
Proposal 14: Invest in research and development at all levels	7
Proposal 15: Build a system to accumulate knowledge in regards to successful initiatives	7
Proposal 16: Invest in brand marketing for healthy and sustainable foods	7
Proposal 17: Support farming technology for rural workers and by female workers	8
Proposal 18: Paint a vision for the future of healthy and sustainable food systems	8
Proposal 19: Improve governance standards	8
Proposal 20: Promote policy coherence through dialogue	8
Proposal 21: Promote investment through transparency	9
Proposal 22: Shine a light on 'bad' behavior	9
Comments from the FSDs Curator	10

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

Executive Summary

On 22 January 2020 a Food Systems Dialogues (FSDs) event took place in Davos, Switzerland, co-organized by the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG). This FSDs event was held in the context of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, following the High Level Dialogue "Investing in Food Systems Transformation" with distinct panelists.

Approximately 70 participants attended, reflecting a range of actors working in Food Systems, ranging from global nutrition and environmental advocacy organizations, to multinational food and fertilizer manufacturers, to representatives of national ministries of agriculture.

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

The discussion topics for dialogue at this event addressed the following areas:

- All groups of food producers are enabled to be involved in the transformation of food systems everywhere;
- All consumers are enabled to make sustainable choices, and have access to healthy and sustainable diets that are affordable and competitive;
- All food systems actors are adequately incentivized to make contributions to biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate action;
- All food systems incorporate the necessary innovations to make them more efficient, resilient and equitable;
- All countries are putting in place processes towards the development of holistic food policies that put people at the center, reflect local experience and are based on best-available science;
- All food producers are accompanied and supported as they make changes to their production systems in ways that reflect holistic, science-based and locally-specific food policies;
- Policies for food systems transformation reflect the importance of just rural transitions and urban-rural linkages.

Each discussion topic is shown in the report below, followed by the proposal(s) which emerged in response to that topic. Discussion topics are phrased as ambitious 'ideal future states' of 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

'All groups of food producers are enabled to be involved in the transformation of food systems everywhere.'

Proposal 1: Improve access for farmers to critical resources

Policies should be supported to improve access for farmers to land and natural resources, as well as to critical services, and to markets and finance.

Relatedly, as a strategy to improve farmers' access to credit, it would be beneficial to organize and collectivize producers. Banks could, as some already are doing, support building farmer cooperatives.

Proposal 2: Update government priorities in relation to sustainable food systems

Governments' policies should be reoriented towards priorities that respond to the current needs of farmers, the environment and sustainable food systems more broadly. In many cases, government policies remain linked to issues that were important in the 1980s and 1990s; conditions have since changed and issues which were relevant at that time have been superseded, requiring an updated response from government.

As one component of this, policy could be devised to ensure that research and development initiatives, by both the public and private sector, are geared towards improving the resilience and nutrition value of crops and supporting livelihoods and the environment.

Proposal 3: Expand the UN's role in de-risking the private sector

The UN has a critical role to play in de-risking actions for the private sector. It should continue to act in this capacity, to increase the appeal for companies to launch initiatives which support positive change.

'All consumers are enabled to make sustainable choices, and have access to healthy and sustainable diets that are affordable and competitive.'

Proposal 4: Incentivize products which are healthy; tax those which are not

Products that are not healthy and not sustainable should be subject to taxes, to create a disincentive for consumers to purchase them, and ultimately for companies and farmers to produce them. Revenue from taxes (e.g. a sugar tax) should be redirected towards improving the food system for all.

In parallel to a system of taxing unhealthy food, good farming and production practices should be actively incentivized. Incentives should take the form not only of direct subsidies but also of other forms of monetary incentives for farmers, encouraging them to pursue good practice.

Proposal 5: Devise children's education programs that are enjoyable

To ensure good habits are ingrained from a young age, programs should be devised to educate children through the medium of fun. Education programs are often perceived by children as boring and unappealing. Given this, new approaches such as creating entertaining apps, pop-up stores and enjoyable school programs have a greater chance of success in regards to informing the next generation about what to eat and where their food comes from.

Proposal 6: Develop science-based agreements on nutrition composition

All initiatives which support a shift towards foods which are healthier and more sustainable are underpinned by a need to invest in science-based agreements in regards to what constitutes 'good' food. If clearly defined and broadly accepted standards do not exist, it is problematic for government to impose taxes on certain foods, and it is challenging to teach good eating habits to children.

'Nutriscore', a nutrition labelling system developed by the French government, is an example of an initiative designed to create measuring standards for the health content of foods, and to communicate these standards in a clear way to consumers, through packaging. Nutriscore has also launched an app to inform consumers.

'All food systems actors are adequately incentivized to make contributions to biodiversity, ecosystem services and climate action.'

Proposal 7: Use pricing mechanisms to minimize the exploitation of valuable resources

Pricing mechanisms should be further explored as a tool to minimize the exploitation of valuable resources. Carbon pricing is an important component of this; however, there is a need for pricing mechanisms to be devised for other types of valuable resources also, such as soil.

Notably, at this Food Systems Dialogues event, this proposal for pricing mechanisms benefited from in-principle support from participants representing both the private and public sectors.

Proposal 8: Ensure clear metrics are in place for biodiversity

It is important to ensure that clear and science-based metrics are in place to underpin targets for preserving biodiversity, as well as in regards to the traceability of food systems.

Proposal 9: Invest in underutilized crops

Greater investment should be made in underutilized and neglected crops. Considerable inventories of under-utilized crops do exist, each with the potential to support the biodiversity of local ecosystems. The next step is to identify farmers who are working with under-utilized crops, and to provide greater support to them through investment.

Proposal 10: Invest in research and education

Increased investment in research is a key component of supporting best practices across all sectors related to healthy and sustainable food systems.

For example, in order to promote leadership models with a focus on systems-thinking and -management, increased funding for research in this area is needed. Likewise, a greater number of research grants and funds should be allocated into understanding those agriculture and livestock-rearing practices which support biodiversity.

Proposal 11: Leverage foreign trade agreements to promote change

Sustainability chapters in foreign trade agreements and investment agreements should be revised so that they are more robust. These types of agreements act as a forcing mechanism for change in the private sector.

Relatedly, in anticipation of the Food Systems Summit to be held in 2021, countries should be encouraged to make pledges for the transition towards sustainable food systems.

'All food systems incorporate the necessary innovations to make them more efficient, resilient and equitable.'

Proposal 12: Create a monitoring system that accounts for geographic difference

To promote innovation, it is important to create an effective reward mechanism to be applied to government organisms, private companies and other actors which invest in innovation programs. However, in order to devise suitable rewards, it is necessary to create a monitoring system, underpinned by clear targets which should be reached in order to attain reward.

Devising a coherent monitoring system on a global scale is a challenging exercise, primarily because the variables to be monitored are numerous, and vary across geographies. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; for example, metrics which apply to a small country in Europe may not be the same as those which apply in countries in Africa or South America. Indeed, tropical agriculture is different to other kinds of agriculture.

Proposal 13: Adopt a multi-stakeholder, consultative approach

To achieve convergence when addressing the needs of different countries and actors, a multilateral approach is important. In this way, all actors are able to have a voice. Therefore, fora which favor the simultaneous participation of governments, the private sector, and all other stakeholders, are ideal. Stakeholders could be understood by the short-hand of the "6 Cs": cities, companies, capital, consumers and chefs. In addition to these "Cs", banks should be included, given their important role in providing credit to food systems actors.

A multistakeholder approach contains challenges which must be managed. For example, it is important to streamline the output from conversations between multiple stakeholders, which are

inherently complex. Solutions must be communicated in a simple manner, so that they can be understood both by consumers and by producers.

Proposal 14: Invest in research and development at all levels

There is a need to invest in research and development, as well as infrastructure at every level. In order to promote investment, the approach can be taken of articulating the business opportunity that sustainable food systems change represents. Or, as an alternative or complementary approach, policy and regulations could be used to encourage investment.

Ultimately, when actors have a clear understanding of the true value of food, articulating a business case for investment in healthy and sustainable food becomes a simpler and more productive exercise.

Proposal 15: Build a system to accumulate knowledge in regards to successful initiatives

In order to efficiently transition to practices that support healthy and sustainable food systems, it is important for information to be collected and shared, in regards to those innovations and practices which, when trialed or rolled-out, are successful, and those which are not.

Investment in innovation is costly; countries, companies and non-profits would greatly benefit from a system that enables information-sharing about models which have proven to be successful. It is important not to reinvent the wheel, wasting precious effort and money.

Proposal 16: Invest in brand marketing for healthy and sustainable foods

Brand recognition is effective in influencing consumer choices; it should be leveraged to orient consumers towards purchasing healthy and sustainable foods. There is a lot of discussion about how to encourage change in the food value chain through 'pushing' (e.g. incentives for farmers to change the set of foods they produce); yet, change requires a two-sided approach, and it is important to generate a 'pull' from consumers, increasing demand in the market for healthier and more sustainable foods.

Social media marketing is a powerful tool, used heavily to generate appetite among consumers to buy unhealthy and often sugary foods. Social media marketing should be equally used by companies to promote good foods.

'All countries are putting in place processes towards the development of holistic food policies that put people at the center, reflect local experience and are based on best-available science.'

Proposal 17: Support farming technology for rural workers and by female workers

It is important to support the development of technology that is suitable for, and available to, farmer communities in far remote rural areas, and which supports women's involvement in agriculture production.

Proposal 18: Paint a vision for the future of healthy and sustainable food systems

In order to encourage motivation and action across a broad set of stakeholders, there should be a clear and inspiring narrative, which depicts a vision for the future of healthy and sustainable food systems.

Food and nutrition are linked to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Given this central place of food systems in the 2030 Agenda, it is all the more important to articulate a long-term cohesive perspective. The future vision must be inclusive, leaving no one behind.

Proposal 19: Improve governance standards

It is important that countries around the world demonstrate strong and ethical governance in relation to food systems transformation, providing a reliable voice about the change required. In some parts of the world, governance is not sufficiently clear and robust; this needs to be tackled.

'All food producers are accompanied and supported as they make changes to their production systems in ways that reflect holistic, science-based and locally-specific food policies.'

Proposal 20: Promote policy coherence through dialogue

Policy coherence is key to achieving the necessary scale of change in food systems. Specifically, policy coherence requires creating the conditions for actors to make aligned decisions promoting healthy and sustainable food systems; it also involves coordinating different actors along their

respective pathways, so that they may collectively maximize the effect of their actions. Opportunities for dialogue among these actors should be prioritized.

'Policies for food systems transformation reflect the importance of just rural transitions and urban-rural linkages.'

Proposal 21: Promote investment through transparency

Initiatives to promote transparency in practices and outcomes could incentivize more investment in food systems transformation. The Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), for which Michael Bloomberg is the Chair, is an example of an initiative that aims to increase transparency with the aim of promoting investment. Similar initiatives, or purpose-built regulation, could be transformative in this regard.

Proposal 22: Shine a light on 'bad' behavior

It may be useful to find a means to shine a light on cases of bad behavior and dishonesty in relation to food systems transformation. At events such as Davos, many companies and countries discuss commitments and priorities that support a sustainable future while, in parallel, they may be engaged in lobbying and other activities which contradict their commitments.

Comments from the FSDs Curator

The below is a transcript of comments and key-takeaways presented by the FSDs Curator, David Nabarro, at the conclusion of this event.

Systems change

We are all involved in systems change. Systems change does not mean one nice linear direction, one simple set of actions. It involves working with multiple variables and multiple processes, and it also means, especially when you are trying to get a large group of people to come together on systems change, finding ways to bring people together.

What you have just done in the last hour and a half is participate in an example of the kind of processes that have to happen if we are going to get large groups of people to come together on systems change, because no two people look at the same human systems in the same way. It is this process of dialogue, as you heard in most of the report back, that is absolutely key. And do you know, we come to somewhere like Davos and we spend our time listening to panels and hearing speeches - and that is okay, that is part of what has to happen. But the other part is to engage ourselves in listening to and working with others. And it is true that, through that combination of getting new knowledge and, at the same time, sharing perspectives, we develop the ability to work together for systems change.

There is one small problem: when you are doing systems change in this way, you never know whether you have done any good because you are part of a large collective process and you cannot dissect out what is your influence and what is somebody else's influence. Unless you are terribly lucky and you have a particular process or invention, that only you put into the system.

In most of real life, when we are doing systems change, we have to cope with the discomfort of not knowing whether we have actually, ourselves, done any good. I ask you, as you leave here today, to first of all be comfortable about the fact that through dialogue an extraordinary number of really cool ideas emerged, but also to be realistic about the possibility that you will never know how much you contributed to it and it can, for some people, be deeply uncomfortable. But if you can live with this discomfort, then you can be extraordinarily powerful.

Key takeaways from the Dialogues

I would like to just give you five things that I really noted [from the table facilitators' report-back].

First of all, get ourselves better informed. There was a lot of focus on making sure that we had information, not just about science and facts, but also about emotions and opinions.

Secondly, we have to invest in new ways of working. Many of you talked about dialogue, engagement, inclusion, involvement, stuff that does not normally happen.

Thirdly, we need to reward, reward, reward. Some of you talked about penalization, but most of you said real change happens through people being rewarded.

Fourthly, we may need some new systems, such as a TCFD for nature and other disclosure pathways, and I really do hope that in this room there are some executives who are prepared to say to us and each other, “yes, I will work for this over the next five to ten years, and possibly quicker”, because as we have seen on climate, these task forces on disclosure are really important for getting the boardrooms to work.