

UN Environment Management Group Nexus Dialogue

Sustainable Food Systems: ensuring food security for future generations

12 March 2019

Conference Room 13 (15.00 – 18.00)

United Nations Environment Assembly IV, Nairobi, Kenya

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a transformative vision for overcoming the complex challenges that the world faces, embracing the principles of sustainability and tackling the root causes of poverty and hunger to leave no one behind. Sustainable Food Systems are at the centre of this framework, connecting many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); without meeting the dietary needs of people and protecting the land that produces our food, the SDGs cannot be achieved.

Food systems do not currently provide nutritious food in an environmentally sustainable way to the world's population. Current food systems are unsustainable. Although yields per hectare have gone up significantly in many parts of the world in the last few decades, over 800 million people still go to bed hungry every night while many more suffer from food system failures to deliver on much needed micronutrients. Soils, biodiversity and habitats are increasingly degraded. Local and native crops, many of which are climate resilient – and nutrient-rich, are rapidly disappearing. Approximately 75% of the world's food supply draws on just 12 crops and only five livestock species, while 940 species cultivated by humans are under threat, making food production highly vulnerable to diseases and climate change related impacts. Current food systems are also key drivers of environmental pressures, with major commodities such as palm oil, beef and coffee causing major deforestation and contributing to and being impacted by climate change.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from food systems and agri-food value chains account for about half of all human GHG emissions. In return, climate change global warming is damaging food production through extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. Furthermore, about one third of all food currently produced is lost or wasted rather than consumed, with a significant environmental footprint in terms of the water and land used for production.



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Today the world food production amounts to 2800 calories per person, yet 795 million people go hungry and two billion are malnourished, lacking the essential micronutrients they need to lead

healthy lives. Conversely, 1,4 billion adults are overweight and obese. Current food systems are not only failing the environment, they are failing nutrition. Poor diet from current food systems are now the number one driver of ill health and public health costs globally. People in many parts of the world are shifting to diets that are high in calories, animal proteins and low-nutrient, highly processed foods. Unhealthy diets have become the main risk for human health, and non-communicable diseases like diabetes and obesity are on the rise.

These issues are interrelated and require a holistic and multi-sectoral approach that involves all relevant actors and addresses all elements across the entire food system, rather than focusing only on one or a subset of food system components. In addition, many large-scale food production practices limit the opportunities for small-scale farmers and workers to benefit from and contribute to more sustainable agricultural solutions, including women and other marginalized groups.

Given the close link between food production and consumption, health and wellbeing, poverty alleviation, climate change and nature protection, food systems offer a unique opportunity to view the Sustainable Development Goals from a cross-cutting and integrated perspective. Sustainable food systems can facilitate the achievement of many of the Global Goals worldwide by addressing current and urgent challenges in the food and agriculture sector. The fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly provides an excellent occasion to discuss enhanced collaboration across sectors, among UN agencies and other stakeholders on this important issue. In this light, The UN Environment Management Group in close collaboration with UN Environment, will organise a Nexus Dialogue on Sustainable Food Systems in the margins of the UNEA IV. This Dialogue will bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to discuss innovative solutions to food systems and food security.

Objectives of the Dialogue:

1. Highlight the need for a collaborative and integrated approach when addressing food systems
2. Raise the profile of Sustainable Food Systems on the global policy agenda and with Member States
3. Showcase best practices and lessons learnt from existing collaboration on Sustainable Food Systems





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4. Encourage more integrated approaches to addressing food consumption, production and supply chains on a national level by highlighting the interlinkages of environment and climate change, agriculture, education, health, livelihoods, and participatory governance.
5. Promote the development and adoption of new governance models needed to transform production and consumption of food to Sustainable Food Systems

The outcome of this Dialogue will be a set of key messages to be considered in policy debates, implementation and for advancing the Sustainable Food Systems agenda. These key messages will be presented to the Leadership Dialogue on Sustainable Food Systems at UNEA IV and other relevant events.





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Provisional agenda:

Date: 12 March 2019, 15.00-18.00

15.00 – 15.15 Welcome and setting the stage by EMG and UN Environment

While speakers for next session get seated - SFS team has a video that explains why we need to change our food systems and need for collaboration – (3:46 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcL3BQeteCc>

15.15 – 16.00 High-Level session highlighting the importance of Sustainable Food Systems for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Moderator: Ms Stineke Oenema, UNSCN Coordinator

Speakers:

- **Mr Satya S. Tripathi, UN Assistant Secretary-General; Head of New York Office, UN Environment and Secretary, UN Environment Management Group**
- **Mr David Nabarro, Strategic Director, 4SD**
- **Mr Philip Lymbery, CEO Compassion in World Farming**
- **Prof. Hamadi Boga, Principle Secretary Ministry of Agriculture, livestock, fisheries and irrigation**
- **Ms. Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, Climate and Natural Resources, FAO (TBC)**

16.00 – 16.30 Coffee Break

16.30 – 17.45 Opportunities for collaboration in transforming the production and consumption of food into integrated Sustainable Food Systems

Moderator: James Lomax, UN Environment

- **Lusike WASILWA, Director Crop Systems, Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO)**
- **Joao Campari, WWF Int – SFS global leader**
- **Jamie Morrision, FAO – SFS lead**
- **Polly Ericksen, Program Leader, Sustainable Livestock Systems, International Livestock Research Institute (to be invited)**

17.45 – 18.00 Closing and Next Steps

