

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

Outcome Statement

How an integrated and “food systems approach” can help deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ensure food security for all

Food systems are currently imposing increasing pressures on our environment. Current food systems with major commodities such as palm oil, beef and coffee causing major deforestation and contributing to and being impacted by climate change. These pressures increase along with urbanization, population growth and dietary shifts to more resource-intensive food.

Food systems are currently failing to provide for the world’s food insecure people both in terms of agricultural yield and nutritional quality. Yields per hectare have gone up significantly in many parts of the world in the last few decades, however 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.

Food waste currently amounts to about one third of all food produced. The lost and wasted food not only does not provide much needed calories and nutrition to the world’s food insecure people but also come with a significant environmental footprint in terms of the water and land used for production, including greenhouse gas emissions.

Long term food security depends largely on a shift towards sustainable food systems. Sustainable food systems offer a holistic, integrated way to address food security, environmental health, human well-being and poverty alleviation.

Embracing at all levels an integrated approach to food security and nutrition will contribute to achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals. Not only is the achievement of Goal 2

(zero hunger) directly dependent on Sustainable Food Systems but achieving other Goals such Goal 1 (no poverty), Goal 3 (good health and wellbeing), Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production), Goal 13 (climate action), Goal 14 (life below water), Goal 15 (life on land), Goal 17(partnerships for goals) would not be possible.

The following actions are highlighted as required:

Supporting member states in implementing Sustainable Food Systems and promoting policies that result in integrated approaches to food systems. The One Planet Network Sustainable Food Systems Programme offers a ‘Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation’ that sets guidance for countries to create sustainable food system pathways and roadmaps founded on a ‘food systems’ approach to policy-making.

Enhancing collaboration among food systems stakeholders and within the UN system through the creation multi-stakeholder mechanisms at local, national and regional levels, acknowledging the important roles of different food systems actors in the planning and implementation of policies and actions towards sustainable food systems.

Creating the momentum to reduce food losses and halving waste at consumption level and promote more sustainable and healthy diets. This should include clear and action-oriented communication, providing consumers with scientific evidence for behavior change and diet modification to reduce food waste and enhance wellbeing. Likewise, leveraging technical assistance and coordination among food value chain actors to reduce resource inefficiency and food losses and waste and increase the delivery of sustainable and nutritious food for all.

Investing in resilient and sustainable agriculture and value chains through incentives for the uptake of climate smart and agro-ecological production systems and technologies at the farm and landscape levels, as well as strengthening the connection between cities and nearby rural areas, improving food chains’ planning and infrastructure, and increasing inclusiveness of smallholder farmers and women.

Changing individuals’ actions and behavior to support Sustainable Food Systems through education and awareness raising around healthy and diverse diets, encouraging consumption of sustainably raised and grown foods, including sustainably produced plant-based meals, and the reduction of food loss and waste.

Promoting strategic partnerships that support integrated approaches. • The Environment Management Group in the UN System is well positioned to follow up on these key messages and to engage relevant UN agencies to promote and support countries in implementing integrated approaches and Sustainable Food Systems, in partnership with UN Environment. The Outcome of this Dialogue would be a good contribution to the EMG Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and its respective technical segment, in the margins of the UN General Assembly.