



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP



Mid-Term Technical Segment of the 26th Senior Officials Meeting

29th April 2020

GoToMeeting (connection details in logistics note)

from 3:00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Geneva time

EMG SOM26/mid-term/04c

Distribution: EMG members

Proposal by UNEP

A brief concept for a high-level EMG Nexus Dialogue on sustainable food systems and resilient agriculture at UNEA 5

The world's current food systems are in need of transformation – for people, for the environment, and for our shared future. The COVID-19 pandemic is only further exposing dangerous deficiencies in our food systems and actively threatening the lives and livelihoods of people around the world, particularly the most vulnerable and those in fragile contexts.

Even before the onset of the current crisis, the evidence for transformation had never been clearer. Despite living in an age of unprecedented wealth and progress, where we produce more than enough food for everyone, poverty and hunger remain stubborn and often interlinked challenges. Over 820 million people are hungry, even as one-third of all food is either lost or wasted. Despite a 300 per cent increase in global food production since the mid-1960s, malnutrition in all its forms is now the number one factor contributing to the global burden of disease and reduced life expectancy. More than 2 billion people are overweight or obese. Food systems contribute up to 29 per cent of all GHG emissions, including 44 per cent of methane, significantly contributing to climate change. Agriculture is also responsible for up to 80 per cent of biodiversity loss and continues to overuse increasingly limited natural resources – including water, forests and land. Indeed, agriculture accounts for up to 70 per cent of all freshwater use and 80 per cent of all deforestation, and more than one-quarter of the energy used globally is expended on food production and supply. In addition, ongoing political crises continue to undermine the building of inclusive food systems in fragile contexts.

The emergence of this evidence is no coincidence: food systems as they currently operate at the global and local level are having negative effects on the climate, environment, human health, and social welfare. This is only getting more difficult with continued population growth in parts of the world, changes in diets, and increasing challenges from climate change.

Called by the Secretary General in October 2019, the UN Food Systems Summit, planned for September 2021 will offer a critical opportunity to raise global ambition, to understand the problems we must solve, and to set a course to radically change the way in which we produce, process, and consume food.

In the context of the summit and building on the highly successful nexus dialogue at UNEA 4 in March 2019, UNEA 5 will be an excellent opportunity to hold a high-level nexus dialogue on sustainable food systems and resilient agriculture. UNEP would like to propose to the EMG that a nexus dialogue at UNEA 5 convened by the EMG would:

- Convene Champions from member state delegations, private sector, civil society, research and the UN family to consider the best emerging recommendations from across the world for the Summit that are truly holistic across action tracks and across regions,
- Provide a strong statement of actions where appropriate and recommend top messages/priorities to the Summit where appropriate
- Follow up on the outcomes from the UNEA 4 nexus dialogue
- Be co-chaired by the UNEP ED and the UN Special Envoy for UN Food Systems Summit

UNEA 4 Background: Member states chose food systems and food security as a sub-theme for the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly held in Nairobi March 2019. To respond to this, UNEP and the EMG held a nexus dialogue on the margins of UNEA 4 called Sustainable Food Systems: ensuring food security for future generations. The objectives of the nexus dialogue were to:

- Highlight the need for a collaborative and integrated approach when addressing food systems
- Raise the profile of Sustainable Food Systems on the global policy agenda and with Member States
- Showcase best practices and lessons learnt from existing collaboration on Sustainable Food Systems
- 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.
- Promote the development and adoption of new governance models needed to transform production and consumption of food to Sustainable Food Systems

Outcome of this meeting can be found [here](#)¹.

¹ <https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Outcome-Nexus-Dialogue-on-Sustainable-Food-Systems-02-FINAL.pdf>