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Submission of Proposal on Joint Policy Paper (JPP) on Food System Resilience

Background

The complexity and uncertainty of natural/socio-ecological systems combined with both natural and human-caused crises have exposed inadequacies in the food production and distribution systems that can only be rectified by well-designed food policies and programmes. Food insecurity does not exist in isolation, but rather is stimulated by multiple processes of global change (e.g. climate change, urbanisation, population growth), unexpected shocks (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic, agroclimatic shocks, financial and political crises), and the unpredictable responses of food systems to these situations. Understanding food and agricultural systems as integrated systems dominated by complex inter-relations is key to influencing their ability to respond and adapt to these continuous streams of disruptions and stressors (i.e. food system resilience).

The Food System Resilience through Integrated Natural Resource Management Nexus Dialogue, organised by the UN Environment Management Group (“EMG”), in collaboration with the UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources (“UNU-FLORES”) was conceived as an independent dialogue of the Food Systems Summit. The Dialogue emphasised the conducive role of Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) to mitigate complex, non-linear, and dynamic food systems. Accelerating the effect of INMR is an effective tactic to address the nexus of issues between food systems components, competing priorities, and alleviating trade-offs at various levels and scales. Although policy efforts have gained begun encompassing the global narrative of “food systems transformation”, the cross-level and cross-scale interactions and their implications must be accounted to design and implement effective policy and management interventions. The adoption of an INRM approach and fostering science-policy interfaces in programmes and mandates were highlighted by the ‘Nexus Dialogue’ to bypass simple linear expectations in favour of considering systems in their entirety and interactions between sectors.

Bringing resilience into food systems is among the most powerful ways to change the course of our future, to realise the vision of the 2030 Agenda, and a bold step toward answering the call to “Build Back Better”. As the UN begins to initiate its first-ever Food Systems Summit to raise global awareness and secure international commitments and actions to transform food systems, a number of high-level meetings have been organised to contribute more effectively to the governance of food systems. This Joint Policy Paper (JPP) proposal would aim at bringing together the partners involved in the ‘Nexus Dialogue’ to drive forward the initiative launched by the CBD Secretariat’s Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, UNCCD’s Land Degradation Neutrality Framework, and UNFCCC’s Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture. The JPP will contribute to the transformation of food systems by drawing on the key outcomes of the ‘Nexus Dialogue’ respectful of the Summit’s [key principles of engagement](#). The involved partner will be contacted and asked for consensus.



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Objective

The JJP Joint Policy Paper will present the common vision and efforts of the key agencies to promote and implement multiple regional and national initiatives in support of the transformation of food systems. The objective of the JJP is to synthesise the expertise of partners to address the strong sectoral silos that currently fail to capture the interlinkages between systems, insufficient incentives for integrated planning and policy making at all levels, and the vision and practical experience needed to guide successful implementation. As a deliverable that will strategically address Food System Resilience via Management recommendation, the JJP will put forward a proposal to mainstream INMR through a Nexus Approach into policy as high-impact leverage points to rebalance and transform food systems.

Potential outputs

The conclusions of the JJP will feature a series of recommendations to urge governments and other key stakeholders to develop and implement strategic priority actions to balance policies and investments in favour of structural transformation of the food systems from global to the local levels, and in the short, medium and long term. The JJP will ensure the robustness, breadth and independence of the science underpinning the Summit; inform the Summit's content, and reinforce the efforts of relevant international and intergovernmental platforms.

The 'Nexus Dialogue' has recognised the need for a joint effort to pave a way forward for discussion on food systems resilience as a crosscutting component of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, to create a complete picture of resilience across the global food system. In leveraging the strong momentum established by ongoing high-level intergovernmental efforts, the JJP will serve as a stepping stone to engage multi-level stakeholders (including governments, communities, academia, etc.) in discussions of food systems, as well as identifying ways to improve their resilience – particularly with regard to fortifying against future pandemics and other crises.

In striving for the mission of contributing to collaborative policy making processes and efforts to resolve the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations, its Peoples and the Member States, the UNU could act as a connecting institution to link multiple intergovernmental stakeholders with the objective of building and improving food system resilience. Based on the outcomes of the Nexus Dialogue, the UNU proposes the consensus for a strong voice toward food system resilience and the establishment of the Issue Management Group (IMG) tasked by UN Environment Management Group (EMG), led by multiple actors focused on Food System Resilience. This concentrated action will ensure a more coherent and consistent UN system-wide approach.

The resulting communication between the partners agencies regarding the JJP will provide an inclusive and unique platform for all stakeholders to draw upon the collaborative efforts of multiple intergovernmental agencies to ensure pathways for food security and nutrition for all. The well-timed process of JJP development will bring variety and a wealth of knowledge tools, assets and methodologies developed by the partners to equip EMG with a concise overview of resources available to accelerate efforts for this important cause.



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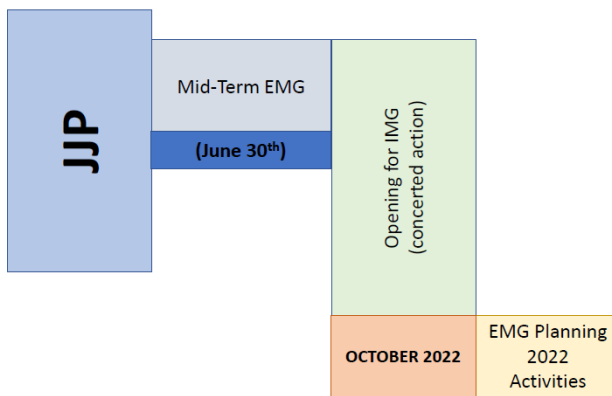
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Deliverables

The proposed Terms of Reference, including deliverables related to (1) improvements in the measurement and the promotion of better policies and investments for integrated natural resource management through a Nexus Lens to enhance food security; (2) the assessment of the institutional constraints and determinants of the inequalities between leading and lagging countries to demonstrate the structural vulnerabilities of the food systems, and the consequences of climate change for food production; and (3) the facilitation of enabling environments conducive to long-term innovation funding earmarked for environmental and social sustainability in food systems, with substantial positive spill-over effects in the water and food sectors.

Timeline

TIMELINE



The coalition between the UN EMG, key UNU institutes, UNEP, IWMI-CGIAR, FAO, and other relevant UN system agencies will lay of the foundations for a common INRM approach, support current and future food systems resilience, and endorse policy recommendations and guidance across a wide range of food security and nutrition topics. The JJP and the Dialogue initiated by the UNU are expected to be the cornerstone of actioning bodies to meet food system challenges from a holistic, integrated perspective by breaking down the disciplinary and sectoral silos and current general concepts of resilience, and concretely connecting to the state-of-the-art understanding of food systems, their goals and their challenges. As follow-up, a joint discussion on the opening of an IMG on Food System Resilience could be foreseen at the EMG for 2022 for the purpose of initiating an actionable narrative and solidifying recommendations to be included in the CBD, COP 26, and Stockholm+50 ongoing intergovernmental processes.