



September 2021

SDC Food Systems Dialogues 2021 - Executive Summary



Context

2021 has turned out to be the most notable year in decades for agriculture and food security. In this year, UN Secretary-General António Guterres convened the United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS) as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

So far, efforts to encourage rapid and joint action to transform food systems have been hampered by deep disagreements among different stakeholders. To break the impasse, ensure a “people’s summit”, and bring in the localised voices and concerns from around the world, the secretariat of the Food Systems Summit set up standardised Food Systems Dialogues as a preparatory activity for the summit. These multi-stakeholder dialogues aimed to increase participation and contribute to a common understanding of priorities.

Within the broader Swiss Food Systems Dialogue, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation was the natural convening agency to mobilise a broad landscape of potential dialogue participants from all its partner countries and organisations. Therefore, the Global Programme Food Security (GPFS) of SDC together with its [Agriculture and Food Security \(A+FS\) Network](#) hosted a series of independent Food Systems Dialogues in English, French and Spanish. The deliberations were guided by the following lead questions:

- What targets and action plans are needed to make progress in: food security; agroecology and climate resilience; socially and culturally acceptable and affordable nutrition; healthy diets; a circular economy of food based on more sustainable supply and value chains, a reduction of food loss and waste, social equity, better use of new knowledge, social organisation of producers and consumers, competitiveness and import & export regimes, policy, data & certification and improved rural livelihoods?
- How should Swiss funded development stakeholders shape their programmes and activities in order to enhance sustainability of food systems?

The organisers used these questions to develop 12 vision statements around food systems, with each of the visions representing ambitious projections of the future that provoked participants of the dialogue to imagine something that is altogether better. The visions provided a comprehensive exploration of food system challenges and actors, focusing on a specific area, like fair trade policies, conducive research partnerships, or healthy school meals.

It is important to note that the dialogues consisted of short sessions of brainstorming and discussion. The emerging recommendations are not prescriptive, but should serve to inspire local actors and participants of the UNFSS. The agents and actions of change (the Who and the How) need have not been determined, and should be chosen according to the needs of the particular local context. Similarly, the groups did not have the opportunity to discuss in-depth the complexity of power dynamics and diversity of contextual factors. The visions and recommendations will serve as important guidance for SDC’s activities in its commitment to sustainable food systems.

Format of SDC dialogues

The independent Food Systems Dialogues organised by SDC took place between 27th April and 8th June 2021. A total of 290 people from 69 countries around the world took part in the dialogues. The participants represented a broad spectrum of stakeholder groups, such as: local and national governments, NGOs, research institutions, farmers, international organisations, and the private sector, from a large amount of countries, from Brazil to China, from Switzerland to Haiti. Each dialogue (streamed into separate online symposiums in English, French and Spanish “language dialogues”) took place in 2 rounds. Round 1 to engage participants topically, while Round 2 focused on defining pathways for action. Within each language dialogue participants were divided into 12 discussion groups, with each reflecting on a different vision around food systems and submitting ideas to take action and reach the vision in light of the 2030 agenda.

The three separate sessions in the three languages provided an opportunity to enable fluid discussion without simultaneous interpretation. The outcomes of these discussions were then compiled into one common synthesis, to be shared across all three languages. Accordingly, the following summary of findings combines the outputs of all language groups.

Key Findings

Emerging findings across the different language dialogues and visions can be condensed in three core needs:

- (1) the need for the international community to create **inclusive, facilitated dialogue platforms** (digital and in-person);
- (2) the need to reduce the gap between consumers and farmers, and change behaviour through **awareness-raising campaigns**, and
- (3) the need to develop **enabling policies and environment** to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The discussion groups also stressed the central role of **appropriate responsible co-production and use of data for agriculture** (production, logistics, demand, weather etc.) underpinning most proposed solutions.

Inclusive dialogue platforms (digital and in-person) would **close knowledge gaps**, such as access to information on prices and markets. **Delivery of training** and knowledge management resources via a digital platform would enable peer-to-peer exchanges and would facilitate collection and **operationalisation of agricultural data**. Having a peer-to-peer element at its core, the platforms would enable the actors to not only share, but also **co-produce knowledge related to agroecology**, and other knowledge-intensive and context specific areas.

A critical success factor for such platforms is the use of participatory approaches in the design of technologies to enhance access and openness, rather than a roll-out of platforms developed by the international development community and governments. Multi-stakeholder dialogues with the most relevant actors that need to be at the core of platform development, can then be also used to develop the base for national digital strategies and data platforms. At the same time, developing inclusive dialogue platforms requires strong involvement and investment from the private sector.

Another core finding is the need to overcome the gap between consumers and farmers and change behaviour through awareness raising campaigns. The participants felt that a way to bridge the information and knowledge gap was by **implementing large-scale awareness campaigns** on the value of food production and its role in environmental sustainability, health and socio-economic development, targeting both consumers and producers.

The next step in moving from awareness raising to behaviour change for healthier and more sustainable food choices is to focus on **youths at schools and local women’s groups**. Involving the next generation of change makers through dedicated school programmes, and engaging women as potential agents of change at the community level, is a possible pathway to influencing family decisions. Another mechanism for raising awareness is through legislation, and the **promotion of packaging and labelling standards**. Packaging and labels need to inform

consumers on the nutritional value of their consumption. Here there is a wealth of experience to build on, particularly in North America and Europe.

Some of the key quotes related to awareness raising included:

- Do not limit awareness-raising actions to knowledge but also to practice (e.g., planting vegetable gardens and cooking).
- Where trade is involved, build capacity for border staff so they know which laws exist and understand them.
- Disseminate Information on healthy and sustainable diets as well as agroecological management on a large scale while valuing local knowledge and know-how. Also, disseminating good consumption criteria, reducing huge post-harvest losses, incentives and scaling up certain practices that facilitate access to food - such as e-commerce - will help the transition.
- Provide regular information on product prices, taking advantage of social networks so that small producers know where to sell their products and do not sell at below-market prices.
- Generate public information platforms ensuring that collected information also reaches food producers.

Participants of the dialogue emphasised that in order for the actions, solutions, and strategies to deliver progress, there also needs to be a set of **enabling policies, partnerships and investment opportunities developed at national levels**:

- Transparency related to large scale land investment (domestic and international) is essential: contracts should be made open. To balance access to data with privacy concerns, national governments should have a clear role in indicating how data privacy/safety/security as well as sharing are guaranteed.
- Another core area for national governments is the focus on favourable fiscal policies that would lower border taxes for sustainable products (e.g. reducing CO2-emissions) and help strengthen local supply-chains.
- One prevalent idea in Spanish language dialogues is that governments need to set up and/or strengthen the functioning of traditional (so-called informal) markets, short marketing circuits or EcoFairs in peri-urban and urban areas on a massive scale (without many restrictions on agroecological products).
- It is critical that the international community invest in building public-private-partnerships (governments, civil society, and private sector) to foster policy-engagement and mobilise marginalised voices. The private sector, presented with the right set of incentives, can create an interface between informal and formal economies. At the same time, research partnerships built on a participatory approach should inform policies and exchange knowledge with communities providing various options/products for local partners to choose from.

Summary of group discussions – How to achieve 12 visions

During the dialogues participants discussed 12 visions relating to: 1) [fair prices](#), 2) [strong social networks](#), 3) [sustainable production](#), 4) [conducive policies](#), 5) [nutrition awareness](#), 6) [healthy school meals](#), 7) [access to land](#), 8) [fair trade policies](#), 9) [reliable data & certification](#), 10) [conducive research partnerships](#), 11) [agroecological farming](#), 12) [intact natural resources](#).

Below, the main actions identified by the participants to achieve each vision are summarised, regrouping all the exchanges which took place in the three languages.

Vision 1: Fair prices

Because society will valorise the role that farmers play in food systems through real costing/pricing, rural populations, especially youth, will have improved economic and social perspectives and farmers will be better included in relevant economic and political decision-making processes.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Develop platforms for discussion to ensure prices reflect the value of goods

Farmers' remuneration needs to improve and there should be equal participation and integration of all stakeholders in decision-making on food markets. This can be achieved through dialogue between food systems stakeholders with the setup of inclusive platforms, allowing for open, transparent, and evidence-based discussion and negotiation on food costing/pricing. A neutral convener should be tasked with setting up and leading those platforms and farmers' organisations should play a leading role in managing the platforms.

2. Launch awareness campaigns targeting both producers and consumers

The participants felt that there needs to be a radical change in valorisation of food triggered throughout society; production and services delivered by farmers need to be valued beyond production costs; consumers should be more aware of all ecosystem services. This radical change can be achieved through awareness campaigns targeting both producers and consumers on issues of fair trade and the value generated by farming to society and the environment.

3. Organise lobby and political advocacy in favour of fair and more equitable trade

The national, regional, and global trade regimes need to shift to become more favourable to smallholders in developing countries and incentivise sustainable production methods. This can be achieved with the help of international institutions focusing on global communication, lobby, and political advocacy in favour of fair trade and a more equitable food system.

4. Ensure higher levels of productivity and profitability for farmers

The higher levels of productivity and profitability for farmers will be achieved by establishing an enabling environment (water, electricity, infrastructure including innovative technology), expanding contract farming, supporting trade fairs and marketing to advertise local foods, leveraging the potential of new tech to communicate on innovative farming techniques, and capacity building for youth wanting to start agribusinesses. Governments should help set up and/or strengthen the functioning of traditional markets, short marketing circuits or EcoFairs in different places in peri-urban and urban areas.

5. Facilitate access to healthy food for the poor or fragile groups/communities

Achieving sustainable food systems requires decoupling the issue food accessibility for vulnerable groups/communities from food price regulation. Governments need to thus adopt social measures to facilitate access to healthy food for poor groups/communities, through programmes like healthy food as part of school meals, and issuance of vouchers for healthy food at responsible distributors/ (re)sellers.

Comments

It was highlighted that Inter-governmental organisations/institutions need to consider specific actors (producers) and context in their strategies and procedures. For example, WFP is among the largest food buyers (seeds, cereals) in the world, with nearly 2/3 of its purchases coming from large economic actors. This in part is due to quality guidelines and criteria not being adapted to small-scale producers (lack of resources for infrastructure or certification). Two groups also discussed the use of subsidies and their role in fair pricing.

Vision 2: Strong social networks

Strong social movements and networks between households, at national and community levels promote not only healthier nutrition and sustainable food systems, but facilitate better economic cooperation along the value and supply chains and in family/care work and thus allow equal opportunities for men and women in economic activities as well as equal political participation.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Promote participatory approaches in design of technologies

To enhance access and openness the participants felt that farmers need to be incorporated in the design of technologies and promotion of available toolboxes (sets of technologies and innovations) and platforms that integrate communications. It is critical to create partnerships with the governments and link in with the private sector and academia in these initiatives.

2. Integrate social networks as an extension tool

Make use of available tools such as social media, working through seed groups, incorporating the private sector, making use of digital technology to close knowledge gaps. Some best practice examples have been cited notably in Ghana and Nigeria.

3. Reduce the gap between consumers and farmers and shorten value chains

This can be achieved by influencing structural changes and food consumption patterns, such as direct trade, direct communications between the producers and consumers, segmenting the markets, creating awareness about the food products that we consume. There is a need to enhance trust in the value chains and promote value networks rather than individual actors. The palm oil industry is an example of positive steps towards these consumer-producer changes. At the same time, it is important to support the most vulnerable in the communities so that their situations don't deteriorate. Gender is a core part of social networks: by encouraging women and young people to form associations, by involving men to encourage and enable them to engage in production.

4. Promote agroecological production without polluting the environment

Promotion of agroecological production without polluting the environment, without degrading nature and incorporating local practices can be achieved by incorporating local seeds in the value chain, focusing on territorialisation of agri-food systems, and recognising local capacities and territorial complementarities between primary producers and processing. Strategic alliances can play a key role for the exchange of knowledge and technology, which allow for developments that are more nature-positive and build on local capacities.

5. Differentiate local products and export products.

Current international certification standards often impose limitations on local products, and it is important to introduce differentiation of food sanitary measures, certification and labelling from the local market to the global market. It is necessary to promote the labelling of local production to improve their appeal on the market access.

Comments

While all three language groups highlighted the importance of participatory dialogue it was also discussed what support should be given to producers' and consumers' organisations for quality participation in business dialogues and in dialogues with the authorities and how to reduce the effects of power imbalances. In one of the groups, it was stressed that the Summit needs to ensure that the interests of social networks of local producers and local markets in the South are protected.

Vision 3: Sustainable production

Because production will be more sustainable and supply chains shorter, producers and consumers will be more closely linked, food and food choices will be healthier and prices be fairer and livelihoods more decent, while food loss and waste, the use of natural resources and impacts to the environment and emissions will be minimised.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Develop an enabling environment

This needs to be based on a systems perspective that includes a change in power structures (land rights), farmers empowerment (through farmers organisation) and economics (access to capital). The role of the state should be that of an investor to guarantee sustainability, infrastructure, and the required support. Specific actions can include ensuring better rural roads so smallholder farmers have access to markets, adopting policy that supports land rights for farmers, and working more closely with the private sector to ensure easier access to capital and investment for farmers, especially women and youth.

2. Promote digital solutions across value chains

All smallholder farmers need to have access to digital technology that is free for especially vulnerable groups. It is crucial that companies develop a viable business model for digital service provision to farmers.

3. Increase demand for more sustainably produced products

Consumer behaviour is one of the strongest instruments for change. By focusing on awareness-raising campaigns and promoting transparency for consumers, it is possible to affect the demand. These efforts should be specifically targeting school children and women, as actors of change and duty bearers in families and communities.

4. Shift to local products and invest in local markets

The need for shorter supply chains requires global market regulations, as the current free trade systems favour big corporations. National governments need to develop public policies focused on small enterprises, with public funds and provide access to smart credit. Municipal governments could also form alliances with neighbourhood councils and territorial or indigenous farmers' organisations. The private sector should provide efficient digitally supported logistics systems, large corporations need to adopt a higher degree of global responsibility (this can be influenced by shareholders, investors, and customers).

5. Invest in natural resource management

Water and soil are key elements to sustain biodiversity and lower climate impact. There needs to be a dedicated effort to balance the demand and utilisation of water through solutions like the smart water system (Internet of Things), guided by better soil data. To improve soils, governments need to encourage the use of biodegradable products and promote the use of technology to valorise biodegradable waste, as well as invest in capacity building activities for agroecological practices. Communities and farmer organisations can promote ancestral practices, where importance was placed on the planting of diverse species of "lesser" economic utility but containing other values (notably nutritious). Governments and communities should organise small areas that rebuild natural biotopes (protected micro areas).

Comments

All three language groups highlighted as areas of concern the difference in approaches that needs to be considered when applying the vision to small-scale family farms and large-scale commercial production.

Vision 4: Conducive policies

National agriculture and food policies support sustainably produced regional and seasonal food and information on healthy and sustainable diets, thereby promoting agroecological management of resources and the access to and affordability of safe and nutritious food for the whole society.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Increase awareness and build dialogue

It is important to increase awareness on principles of agroecology, sustainability, and nutrition. The government should engage in dialogue with local communities, the private sector, and the population, and increase public awareness about agroecology e.g., through TV, education, including school meals. The consumer could be informed about the sustainability and nutritional quality of a food through traffic light type communication systems. This labelling should be regularly updated with the best available data. Also, labelling could include aspects of "storytelling" to give a voice to the producers behind the products.

2. Shift to systemic vision in public policies and education

Public policies should adapt to the systemic character of food systems, moving away from sectoral organisation and towards coherent and systemic management. There needs to be a paradigm shift from an agricultural policy to a food policy by putting forward a systemic approach, with coherent sectoral policies (for example, it is important to have an agricultural policy that promotes family farms and small-scale producers, and at the same time a trade policy that would potentially protect the local producers. Market access should be promoted by small farmers and indigenous peoples. Civil society can provide support to the government, since a number of the institutions already work applying a systemic vision. In line with the public policy focus on systemic vision, public education should be cross-cutting, including concepts such as good living.

3. Ensure accountability and standards in policy measures

The measures required and implemented must be clarified at each level (national, regional, communal) and by each actor. The principle of subsidiarity (taking decisions as close as possible to the problems) is key in clarification of responsibilities of the actors at different political levels. There is a need to focus on effective decentralisation. This will allow policies to be implemented locally with much more effective implementation (framework for the implementation of the policy).

4. Set-up monitoring systems

Monitoring systems should be put in place to measure policy improvements. Potential indicators include the proportion of food produced in the country compared to food consumed; child malnutrition rate; malnutrition rate; proportion of food produced and processed in the country; innovation rate; biodiversity rate; impact indicators (including footprint and thus sustainability of products). A global framework should be put in place as has been done for biodiversity and water to define indices and targets at regional level (South America) and for each country, with a monitoring system to be able to observe evolutions. The summit should encourage the role of academia, as it plays an important role in validating data and statistics. Scientists should be able to actively participate in decision-making. The concept of "science" should be broadened to include empirical, social, indigenous knowledge

Comments

Two of the three language groups mentioned that the UN Food Systems Summit needs to have a very concrete outcome in support of this vision. As part of the Summit, member States should be called upon to play a leading role in the transformation of food systems. Market access should be promoted by small farmers and indigenous peoples. According to the groups, the Summit should stretch beyond standardisation of food systems and food security interventions.

Vision 5: Nutrition awareness

The systematic integration of nutrition in school curricula, maternal and infant care, etc. contributes to people's preference for a healthy diet and the production of diverse and sustainable foods, leading to improved demand, availability and accessibility of healthy and sustainable food for all.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Develop awareness-raising strategies on healthy eating

Multiple actors need to be involved in awareness-raising strategies on healthy eating and responsible consumption aimed at the general population, considering the intercultural nature of communities. The school canteen must be a vector in society for the message of healthy eating. This will require accompanying school canteens with didactic/educational tools such as school gardens, as seen in the example of "[Zero-waste schools](#)" project in Switzerland, and field trips on sustainable food production. It is necessary to promote sustainable production system by strengthening the capacities of support institutions, farmers, and partner operators. All this must be included in national programmes and appropriate school modules developed in school curricula. Dedicated programmes should reach canteen operators and parents. Raising awareness on healthy nutrition should not only focus on school and maternal-infant care, it should target the entire value chain and consider the specific context.

2. Integrate nutrition topics into political discourse

Healthy nutrition should be better integrated into the political discourse and programmes at various scales (local, national, and international) and should also be integrated into other programmes (e.g. food security). Better integrating "nutrition" in political discourses implies better coordination between food-related policy messages (e.g. in terms of food production, food security, markets). The critical stakeholders need to be brought together: Ministries of Agriculture (and Livestock), Ministries of Education, and Ministries of Health. More clarity on budget and mandates is essential. Achieving this, needs people that understand all 3 areas and are able to convene and facilitate policy dialogue.

3. Use the appropriate terminology

It is important to ensure adequate term definition: "healthy nutrition / diets / foods" and include water aspects (e.g. safe drinking water), in policies, guidance and curricula. The use of the term agroecologically produced does not guarantee healthy food. In connection to school meals and awareness raising efforts it is important to emphasise safety and diversity of foods, and recognizing that due to seasonality and locality, some food will necessarily be imported or not local. In school meals it is important to use diversified food products (and include them if necessary, in the programme at production level) whose combination will ensure nutritional balance. However, fortification of food products as appropriate could be recommended.

Comments

The groups flagged the importance of connecting the school programmes and awareness activities to the production of healthy and nutritious food. There needs to be a stronger tie with the quality and nutrition of the farmer production. All groups also highlighted the multitude of stakeholders that all need to be connected in identifying solution pathways for this vision.

Vision 6: Healthy school meals

The promotion of agroecologically sourced meals in school & community kitchens will ensure a constant demand for agroecologically produced foods and healthy diets for all pupils/people of society and improve performance of students in school and people in their work.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Ensure schools have access to adequate food production infrastructure and knowledge

Schools need to have adequate access to land, vegetable beds, water, and complementary infrastructure, specifically storage and canteen facilities and the administrative capacity to manage the entire process from procurement to serving food on premises. Other recommendations include providing recipe books for school chefs, opening school canteens to local communities (e.g., in the evening as income generating opportunities), using nearby food kiosks to assist and complement school meals.

2. Involve parents and communities in developing menus for schools

One of the recommendations focuses on management in the design and implementation of awareness-raising strategies that encourage the participation of parents in development of local menus for students. In addition, strategies should focus on informing the role of women as part of the committees that create and design the menus.

3. Facilitate procurement and access to finance for suppliers

Farmers' organisations supplying food, buyers, donor organisations, bank and non-bank financial institutions should facilitate procurement and access to finance for school meals suppliers. Governments should identify and provide information on bank and non-bank financial entities that have as services "bank guarantee credit lines for food suppliers" that allow the financing of suppliers that have signed contracts with buyers at the school level.

4. Raise awareness on nutrition in communities through school canteens

The school canteen must be a vector in society for the message of healthy eating. This will require accompanying school canteens with didactic/educational tools, such as school gardens and field trips on sustainable and healthy food production. It is necessary to remain within a sustainable production system by strengthening the capacities of support institutions, farmers, and partner operators.

Comments

It is important to ensure that the vision statement focuses not only on promotion of agroecologically-sourced, but also nutritious meals to guarantee healthy diets. This vision was strongly linked to Vision 5 in its ties to curriculum development and awareness raising activities – recommendations 1-3 from Vision 5 broadly apply also to Vision 6.

Good practice example from Bolivia: Peasant Organisations supplying food have potential school buyers for their produce, but do not receive timely payments. To mitigate this, certain banks have a service of payment by bank guarantee (contract between the two parties). This ensures timely payment to the organisations and recovery of the money by the bank. SDC and PROFIN (SWISSCONTACT) partners have extensive experience in financial education.

Two groups highlighted the role and experience of the World Food Programme (WFP) in School Feeding. Many issues discussed in the groups have been documented in two reports on school feeding programmes in 46 countries: [wfp263529.pdf](#) and <https://www.wfp.org/publications/homegrown-school-feeding-resource-framework>

Vision 7: Access to land

Land and judicial reforms allow the improved and equitable access to land and justice for all, explicitly also for women and youth, thus securing all farmers' investments made on the land and the sustainable and resilient development of decent livelihoods and economic independence.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Harmonise modern land laws and traditional land management systems

Formal legal texts need to be disseminated, people need to be made aware of actual land laws and regulations (e.g., in Togo women have been excluded from the right to land due to traditional land management practices) without creating problems at community level.

2. Secure agricultural areas and implement structural investments

Due to low economic returns from agriculture, farmers are selling off land they have received through individual property rights (in countries where land ownership was state-owned). This must be prevented by revaluing agriculture (which will restore the value of agricultural land) and by regulating investment in real estate. It is important to secure agricultural areas and implement structural investments (irrigation, storage, and conservation of products) for optimal use of agricultural land notably by women and young people.

3. Integrate Indigenous Peoples' visions of land tenure

National land policies need to take into account biodiverse communal lands considered by the indigenous populations as ancestral/community lands and ensure their integrity and protection via legislation.

4. Develop dialogues

It is important to develop permanent dialogues between land custodians (i.e. landowners), land users and local authorities so that access to land is facilitated. Development and cooperation agencies can contribute with dialogues and information management, so that marginalised groups (Indigenous Peoples, Women, Youth) are aware of their rights, and of tools such as the "Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas".

5. Create a cadastre to avoid land selloffs and speculation

The cadastre would help to monitor and verify land transactions to avoid land selloffs, land grabbing and land speculation. It is necessary to define/confirm production/agricultural areas and prohibit land transactions to other parties. Transparency related to large scale land investment (domestic and international) is essential: contracts should be made open (allocation of land rights, sales, payments for concessions, environmental impact assessments, M&E report) be made available by investors and concerned governments (host and target countries).

Comments

The three language groups provided a wide range of context specific approaches and issues. In the Spanish language dialogues, an important issue raised was that of guaranteeing land rights, and accountability to Indigenous Peoples in their use of natural resources. In the French language dialogues the issue was raised around topics such as "land grabbing" and decentralisation of land management (in West Africa) not being accompanied by the necessary resources for implementation. The English language dialogue had also highlighted the need to identify solutions for both smallholders and large private sector companies, and address as part of the landscape approach also fisheries, lakes, and water.

Vision 8: Fair trade policies

Appropriate import, export and tax regimes in countries will allow farmers to focus on products that are competitive on national, regional, and international markets, allowing the creation of income and job opportunities along rural-urban supply and value chains.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Develop rural areas and provide jobs

Governments need to address urban migration by developing rural areas and providing the youth and women (gender mainstreaming) with meaningful jobs and income. The producers should be well organised to contribute to the rural development and be competitive in the food systems that affect them.

2. Build public-private-partnerships to foster policy engagement

It is important to include civil society and the private sector in order to widen policy engagement on particular inefficiencies, as well as mobilise the marginalised voices. Participants felt that such actions would make food systems more inclusive and relevant.

3. Formalise trade

To formalise trade, there should be incentives for the private sector and a defined agenda, where it is clear what will be achieved, what actions are required and stakeholders this will affect. At the same time there should be a bottom-up approach based on principles of Fairtrade (safe working conditions, protecting the environment and transparency) to move from informal to formal trade and capture all relevant information in statistics. Part of the solution would be to develop dialogue roundtables or other spaces through federations, cooperatives, farmers' associations, SME chambers, chambers of industry and commerce, to develop inclusive and attractive enabling conditions.

4. Develop standards and an effective monitoring system

It is necessary to have standards and transparency around the adoption of import/export and tax regimes, as well as a monitoring mechanism for how the policy and taxes are applied at national and international level, to which all actors commit (producers & consumers). There needs to be a clear baseline and a set of indicators for tracking progress. The WTO could take on the coordination role.

5. Develop tax and tariff incentives for sustainable products

It is necessary to reduce taxes and remove unnecessary trade procedures and costs from products. To achieve this, actors like customs unions and governments should find actionable solutions and measures by engaging in dialogue, and round tables. Trade should be used to promote sustainable development, and improvement of production systems with producers at its core. The focus of these actions should be on promoting self-sufficiency, and inclusive and sustainable production, transformation, and commercialisation through adequate and intelligent incentives. There need to be clear incentives for ecological/regional complementarities.

6. Simplify cross-border-trade

Cross-border trade can be simplified through facilitation of borderless alliances using a certification system and a uniform set of rules on products (cacao, palm oil), as well as lower border taxes for sustainable products (e.g. reducing CO₂-emissions). Governments and trade unions should analyse international trade instruments (tariff policies) between countries to make them contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Comments

The group participants across three languages touched upon the need to go beyond policy and focus on implementation and capacity development to ensure that the proposed solutions would have a real effect on the countries.

Vision 9: Reliable data & certification

A national system on accurate, safe, and reliable data and certification in production, distribution, processing, marketing, and consumption of agricultural products will inform

on the necessary elements of appropriate legal frameworks and appropriate resource use for agricultural value-chains.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. Map data and stakeholder landscapes

The first step in achieving the vision is to hold dialogues to inform and map data and stakeholder landscapes - who is capable to provide/collect data by what means/tools, who is interested in using data, is there a platform to match these two. This can be achieved by bringing together the most relevant actors in data/certification space within a country. These consultations can be used as a base for a digital strategy and data platform(s). During the discussion the actors need to identify which data is needed immediately, and which data is still valid after a year or ten. The actors providing their data should be aware of the benefits of this action, and its value throughout the entire value chain, from production to consumption. As an example of incentives, it could be - in countries without health benefits - to provide health insurance to all producers involved in data delivery actions.

2. Develop national digital strategies, policy, and legal framework

The effort should be led by a public/private body, with leadership from representatives of the different social/productive organisations. Based on the outcomes of key stakeholder dialogues governments need to develop Digital Strategies (including data architecture: how data is organised and used for policy making), establish independent certification bodies/ expert panels to validate data before sharing (symbiotic relationship between the certification bodies and the National Institute of Statistics could help to reduce the costs of certification), and identify required capacity building/training on the job/coaching (strengthening institutions with the right skills and tools). All data should be shared unless embargoed.

3. Invest in infrastructure

Infrastructure investment is key in supporting digital solutions. The effort should be led by Ministries of Infrastructure / Communications + private actors (mobile companies). National governments need to invest in mobile networks and power access, as well as ensure connectivity to digital data services (foreseeing demand and the need for scale).

Comments

Availability and access to data, and certification is crucial not only for legislative purposes, and resource allocation, but also to inform and guide consumer actions.

The three groups had different areas of focus with two of the groups focusing more on national level data strategy and policy, and one of the groups more focused on the farm-level and consumer-level data. However, all three stressed that there are disparities between countries in their access and use of data and digital strategies. All three groups also highlighted that data protection, as well as data certification/validation need to be core tasks of national governments, with support from the international community.

Vision 10: Conducive research partnerships

International agricultural research partnerships focus on the elements of agroecology and climate resilience and take into account different regional contexts, especially also low income and/or fragile countries, and make their findings available to all.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. **Adopt a participatory approach**

Local stakeholders (especially farmers and consumers) should have a stronger voice in agricultural research. The decision on the orientation of research should not be left to governments but involve civil society actors to assure that research is based on real demand. Research itself should be organised as a participatory process with a strong role for local actors. This setup needs mechanisms of participation and enabling spaces; some may already exist (for example farmer field schools), some may have to be developed. A continuous exchange between research and application should lead to innovations that are in the interest of all stakeholders.

2. **Share research results:**

In all discussion groups participants saw the need to share research results. They should be made freely available, exchange and cross-learning should be encouraged, transparency is key. This also ensures that existing knowledge is considered. One group stated that research results should be used for advocacy of an agroecological transformation of food systems.

3. **Rethink the role of donors**

Especially one discussion group mentioned that the dependence on funding from the North is problematic. Rather than define research priorities, governments in the North and international institutions should act as facilitators accompanying local processes. Donors should also increase support for agricultural research that considers the priorities of the South.

4. **Question the research focus:**

The discussion participants agreed that research should be demand-led and that it should involve all relevant disciplines. There was not a clear agreement whether agroecology should be the guiding principle. One group mentioned neglected species and livestock farming as important research topics that should not be overlooked.

5. **Ensure participatory monitoring and evaluation**

One group in particular mentioned the need for participatory monitoring and evaluation as it empowers actors to demand accountability. While it makes sense to use internationally recognised indicators (such as the SDGs), participants underlined that regional and local indicators and development strategies should also be considered.

Comments

The positions regarding the focus on agroecology differed somehow between the groups. One group saw it as an important long-term movement, that requires the support of research and the rethinking of research models. Another group saw it as one of many approaches and recommended to take a broader view, and to listen to producers.

There were some reservations regarding the representativity of the dialogue in view of the fact, that farmers were rather underrepresented, and some discussion groups were quite small.

Vision 11: Agroecological farming

An agroecological diversification of production and low-impact farming practices reducing the use of fossil fuels and chemical inputs lead to more sustainable management of natural resources, safer food consumption and the creation of more employment opportunities.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

1. **Launch a peer-to-peer programme**

The programme should be focused on application of agroecological concepts for farmers (potentially also for other actors in the food system). This would require in-person exchange and inclusion of the farmer communities (both small holder farmers, as well as large scale exemplary farmers). It is important that the platform builds on traditional networks and offers offline face-to-face peer exchanges and opportunities. The effort needs to build on established social networks in the communities.

2. **Support knowledge management via a digital platform**

The digital platform would enable peer to peer exchange, as well as collect and operationalise agricultural data. Having a peer-to-peer element at its core, the platform would enable the actors to not only share, but also co-produce knowledge related to agroecology. Building networks around agroecology and developing a collection of good/ best practices could then also influence relevant policy change towards agroecological principles. It is important that there is a dedicated space on the platform for women / women's groups / female farmers.

3. **Promote agroecology with governmental support**

At the public policy level, it is necessary to develop a national strategy, including a roadmap with dedicated milestones, to promote agroecology with governmental support. Governments can provide technical (including quality) and financial support to producers for the promotion of agroecological production and consumption and shorter value chains; improve the accessibility of roads and distribution routes for agroecological products; ensure policies are disseminated to relevant stakeholders and producers using media. These actions would ensure formalisation of agroecological farming, as well as national ownership and accountability of processes.

4. **Promote development of green finance**

Promote development of green finance to contribute to the development of agroecology. The UN has created a line of financing contributing to sustainable development by mitigating the effects of climate change. Development banks at the national level also manage this financial model, which needs to be made more widely accessible to national level agroecological producers.

Comments

The groups identified the need for knowledge management and knowledge transfer as an integral part of the solutions. They also stressed the importance of engaging the private sector and building on public-private collaboration.

Vision 12: Intact natural resources

By switching to locally adapted crops, soil conservation methods and sustainable irrigation systems, which use as little water as possible, (cost-) efficient food production can be maintained, while preserving water resources & aquaculture, improving soil quality, reducing soil-erosion and better adapting to adverse effects of climate change.

Summary of group discussions

Actions to achieve the vision

- 1. Orient nations towards sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity** The global community needs to orient towards sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity; guide territorial planning considering the potential for land use, generating a balance between conservation of natural resources and development. To make the landscape approach practical and applicable on the ground, the stakeholders, their roles and linkages between them, will need to be clearly identified at different levels – local, regional, and global. It is important to consider “hotspots” - priority conservation areas and intact resources, which contain high biodiversity. National governments should consider enhancing these environmental functions and orienting towards a sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity, such as wild cocoa, açai, jatata, etc. - food systems that enhance the use of forest resources.
- 2. Develop better land use policy**
Governments need to be encouraged to have strong policies on land use and land use functions on different surfaces. Land encroachment free of charge needs to be avoided on the local, regional, and national level. It is critical that civil society and consumers are engaged and empowered to drive development of public policies, and that the policies are developed in partnership with communities that are supposed to benefit from / deal with the policies and to account for how policies are translated into implementation.
- 3. Raise awareness**
Governments should invest in largescale campaigns to raise awareness about the food production system and its processes, to encourage the consumers to shift to healthier food and broaden the food base and reduce food waste.
- 4. Take a systems approach and include circularity**
Preserving intact natural resources calls for a systems approach revolving around an integrated landscape. Such an approach should focus on preserving/promoting (agro)biodiversity, broadening the food base, but at the same time, making it less extractive and more nature friendly or nature positive. So, the approach should focus on diversifying the food base, and therefore, the agroecosystem, and at the same time maintaining a healthy balance with nature and biodiversity. A biodiverse positive system or nature friendly agriculture and aquaculture system should also ensure that no new forests or wetlands are destroyed, no habitats are converted into agriculture cultivation, and food production is less extractive. Civil society has an important role to play in awareness raising and transforming the consumer behaviour, as well as all the actors in food supply chain to minimise the food loss and food wastage. The use of circularity would ensure reduction of the use of natural resources by design, and lifecycle thinking.

Comments

All three groups highlighted that to achieve the vision, it is important to strengthen the interface between academic research and the needs for information and responses on the part of governments. The different levels of government all play a key role in preserving intact natural resources. The Spanish language group highlighted the importance of defining key national actors, such as the National Protected Areas Service, as the competent entity to strengthen the management of natural resources and biodiversity, and the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Rural Development and Lands responsible for management of these resources.