



Achieving healthier, sustainable and inclusive food systems requires input from all fields of science

Bonn/Rome, 9 July: Participants engaged in lively debates on the first day of the [Science Days](#) to discuss how to best accelerate the transformation to healthier, more sustainable, more equitable and more resilient food systems. Organized by the [Scientific Group to the UN Food Systems Summit](#) and facilitated and hosted by the [UN Food and Agriculture Organization](#) on 8-9 July, the Science Days are bringing together researchers, policy-makers, civil society and industry from a wide range of countries and disciplines to debate challenges and opportunities for science, technology and innovation to contribute to food systems transformation.

During the opening session, **QU Dongyu, Director-General, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**, highlighted the need to adopt *“a holistic, coordinated approach to transform our agri-food systems”*. He stressed that *“to achieve the ambitious transformative changes required, we need to change policies, mindsets, behaviours and business models.”*

Amina Mohamed, UN Deputy Secretary-General and Moderator of the Summit Advisory Committee commended the work of the Scientific Group and its contribution to better understanding the complexity of food systems. She emphasised that *“food systems transformation demands that we deepen our understanding of how to best calibrate our policies and investments, so they address all dimensions of sustainable development... It's no longer enough to think only of enhancing productivity. We must also account for the relationship with human and Planetary health.”*

Agnes Kalibata, UN SG's Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit, underlined that food systems transformation will contribute towards achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals. *“The complexity and importance of agri-food systems need to be recognized, not only to combat hunger and malnutrition, but also to reduce inequalities and eradicate poverty.”*

Joachim von Braun, Chair of the Scientific Group, presented a set of [science-driven innovations](#), put forward by members of the Scientific Group, to catalyze, support and accelerate food systems transformation to achieve the Summit goals. He stressed the need for an interdisciplinary approach to food systems transformation: *“All sciences – natural sciences and social sciences, basic sciences and applied sciences – can and must deliver the innovations needed for food systems transformation.”*

PRESS RELEASE

Following the opening plenary, participants delved deeper into the different dimensions of food systems transformation towards healthy diets, sustainability, inclusiveness and resilience. They also discussed how to strengthen the science-policy interface; invest in capacity for science and innovation; and address contentious issues hindering science. Discussions on the second day will focus on how to more fully engage indigenous peoples, women, youth and the private sector in food systems transformation; push the frontiers of science including in the areas of bio-science, digital and policy innovations; and prioritize urgent actions needed by 2030 and beyond.

Notes to Editors:

- The **Science Days** are taking place on 8-9 July from 13:00-18:00 CEST (sc-fss2021.org/events/sciencedays).
- The [strategic paper of the Scientific Group](#) was presented in the opening plenary on 8 July from 13:00-14:00 CEST.
- The virtual event is organised by the Scientific Group of the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and facilitated and hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- In **17 different sessions** speakers from all over the world are discussing science, technology and innovation for food systems transformation. The goal is to support the agenda setting process of the Food Systems Summit with scientific evidence and perspectives (sc-fss2021.org/events/sciencedays/program)
- **Registration page** for the Science Days: <http://bit.ly/RegisterScienceDays>
- The Science Days was preceded by **more than 40 Side-Events on 5-7 July** which offered an opportunity for research and knowledge organizations to present their insights on the topic (sc-fss2021.org/events/sciencedays/side-events).
- The **Scientific Group** was established by the UN as an independent body of leading researchers from around the world to ensure the robustness and independence of the science that underpins the Food Systems Summit (sc-fss2021.org).
- The reports of the Scientific Group can be found at: sc-fss2021.org/materials/scientific-group-reports-and-briefs
- Over 40 FSS Briefs by Partners of Scientific Group can be found at: sc-fss2021.org/materials/fss-briefs-by-partners-of-scientific-group
- The **United Nations Food System Summit 2021** will be convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in September as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The Summit will launch bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems (www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit).

Contact

Media enquiries for the Scientific Group can be sent to info@sc-fss2021.org.

Information about all moderators and panellists at the Science Days can be found at sc-fss2021.org/events/sciencedays/panellists

Key Messages:

- Global food systems are **failing to end hunger** or provide sufficient foods for healthy diets which compromises the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.
- **Poverty and inequalities** between and within countries are widespread and getting entrenched. Ending them remains essential for the achievement of the SDGs.
- Investments in science- and technology-based innovations must be accompanied by **institutional and policy innovations** to include poor and marginalized populations with special attention to indigenous peoples.
- **Agriculture must be part of the solutions** for tackling climate change, and must not only be seen as part of the problems.
- Food systems need to be made **more resilient to health shocks**, pandemics and other crises, just as more attention is being paid on how to make food systems more resilient to weather shocks and the climate crisis.
- **Equity and the role of women and the youth** is very important for productive, healthy and sustainable food systems and needs to be strengthened.
- Innovations and technologies need to be **adapted to local conditions** while being accessible and affordable to farmers, especially smallholders.
- Greater emphasis must be given to the development of **green technologies** that deploy indigenous perennial species to boost nature-positive production.
- Science-based innovations for **sustainable “blue foods”** that protect and harness oceans and coastal areas can play a growing role in ending malnutrition and in building healthy, nature-positive and resilient food systems.
- Facilitating **peace, security, sound governance and conflict resolution** is crucial to enable food systems transformation.
- **The science and policy interface** at local, national, and international levels needs to be strengthened with a strong international and independent voice for science-informed and evidence-based food systems policies.
- To end hunger and achieve SDG2 **additional investments of US\$ 39 to 50 billion** per annum are necessary.
- Governments need to allocate **at least 1% of their agricultural GDP** to food systems science and innovation.