

Fifth Meeting of the FSS Scientific Group

16 February 2021, 14.00-16.00 (CET)

Meeting Notes

Agenda of the Meeting

1. 14.00 Updates on the FSS processes
2. 14:15 Food Systems Summit Briefs with Partners
 - a. guidance for Briefs
 - b. draft status of list of Briefs
3. 14:30 Scientific Group Agenda paper
 - a. Draft Outline
 - b. reviewing Sc. Group's support of other FSS Actors
4. 15:00 Conferencing by Scientific Group
 - a. Workshop on Science and Innovations for a Sustainable Food System April 20-22
 - b. Science Day July 8-9
5. 15:45 Any other business
6. 16:00 end of meeting

Agenda 1. Updates on the FSS processes

The chairperson of the FSS Scientific Group (ScG) opened the meeting. The Chair thanked the members for their engagement with the group. He emphasized that the ScG must not be over-burdened with FSS related work. He reiterated the top priorities of the ScG; first, to comment and review the proposals of the Action Tracks and other stakeholders. Second, to come up with meaningful, evidence based proposals from a science perspective for the UN and political leadership for the Summit.

The Chair updated the members on the **progress of the Scientific Papers**. Members were informed that the seven Scientific Group Papers had now been reviewed by high-calibre, senior reviewers and the comments of reviewers are being addressed by authors. Member ScG Maximo Terero and ScG Chair are in discussions with the journal Nature and Nature Food for the potential publications from ScG products.

The Chair informed on the first meeting and composition of the **Integrating Team** for the FSS.

The Vice Chairpersons of the FSS Scientific Group, Loiose Fresco, Koasar Afsana and Mohamed Hasan gave their opening remarks. Mohamed Hasan noted that the gaps highlighted by the reviewers in the Action Track paper must be addressed. He maintained

that the papers remain solutions orientated. Koasar Afsana and Louise Fresco reiterated the Chair's comments on the need to prioritize ScG's commitments keeping in view its constraints and limitations.

Updates on the FSS related conferences were also shared. An event organized by member ScG Patrick Caron on "**Bonding science and policy** to accelerate food systems transformation" was held on February 4, 2021. More than 500 participants. A paper synthesising the main messages of the event into actionable knowledge will be circulated among the ScG members.

The Chairperson and members provided updates on **engagement with partner organizations**:

- Discussions with the Director for Nutrition and Food Safety in the **WHO (World Health Organization)**.
- The Chair participated in a conference with **FARA (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa) and regional partners in Africa** on February 16, 2021. More than 300 participants.
- Ousmane Badiane reported the concept for consultations of **African think-tanks** and African universities on most relevant FSS themes in the African context.
- The Chair held a meeting with regional partners in Latin America and the Caribbean including the **IICA (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture)** and others. Rattan Lal reported a program "Living Soils Latin America" was launched by IICA in December 2020. A draft paper on **preserving soil and resources while fulfilling the need to produce nutritious food** has been prepared and will be shared with the ScG.
- Discussions with the members of the European Commission for a regional brief on for the **FSS from a European** perspective. The Brief will be facilitated by Frank Ewert in context of FACCE.

Agenda 2: Food Systems Summit Briefs with Partners

The Chairperson briefed the ScG on the progress of FSS Briefs and collaborating partners. He noted that:

- A guidance document had been circulated among the Partners and the ScG
- The list of Briefs and the respective partners has been shared with ScG and is on the website <https://sc-fss2021.org/>
- A Brief on Oceans, Fishery and Blue economy has recently been included.

In the open discussion following the Chair's remarks, the following matters were raised:

- How to react to partners approaching members of the ScG for potential collaboration on the Briefs and the process for their inclusion?
- Collaboration with the IPCC on the Climate Change and FSS.
- Clarity on the Brief requirements.

- Overlapping themes and collaboration of different partners on overlapping themes
- Brief on Fisheries and Livestock,

In response, the Chair clarified that members may convey to the Chairperson or to the Vice Chairs recommendations for Briefs of appropriate partners.

Lee Hoesung, member ScG and Chairperson of the IPCC responded that the IPCC's role was to assess the scientific evidence on issues related to Food and Climate Change but not to contribute FSS Briefs. Aman Wirakartakusumah noted input on the blue economy from Indonesian Academy of Science. Mario Herrero volunteered to contribute a livestock brief with colleagues.

Agenda 3: Scientific Group Agenda Paper

A draft outline of the **Scientific Group Agenda Paper** was shared with the ScG before the meeting. The Agenda Paper will draw inputs from the ScG Scientific Papers and from the FSS Briefs. Deliberations of the workshop of the ScG planned to take place at the Pontifical Academy in April will also serve as input for the paper. The Chair requested the members to share their feedback and comments on the circulated outline via email.

In the discussion the following observations were made:

- Distortions in international trade at regional and global level due to agricultural subsidies should be addressed.
- Clarity on issues for which there is scientific evidence must be maintained, relevant issues on which scientific evidence is thin should also be noted.
- The ScG may provide unanimously agreed definitions of key concepts and terms, these definitions may be conveyed with clarity to the policy makers and the relevant stakeholders.
- The trade-offs involved in the set of solutions proposed must be detailed.
- Private sector science may be included in the FSS processes.
- While the focus of the recommendations of the ScG is to highlight the role of science in policy, the role of policy for scientific research may not be ignored.
- The ScG may highlight the importance of investments in scientific research in low- and middle-income countries.
- The ScG must clarify its position on contested issues such as agro-ecological approach, genomics.
- The challenge of the implementation of technologies related to “solutions” may be recognized.
- Obstacles rooted in cultures of societies may be addressed in the paper.
- The deliberations of the events related to science and food system shall be taken into account.

Participation of members of the ScG in the upcoming **Action Tracks retreat** was also discussed. The engagement of the ScG in the Action Tracks retreat was encouraged. The proposals from the Action Track retreat will be appraised by the ScG thereafter, too.

Agenda 4: Conferencing by Scientific Group

- **“Workshop on Science and Innovations for a Sustainable Food System”** will take place on April 20-22, 2021 hosted by Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS).
- **Science Days** organized by the Scientific Group and facilitated by FAO will be held on 8-9 July. A planning committee was formed of ScG Chair and vice Chairs and the two ScG members from FAO. The event will cover science insights on how to address key FSS challenges such as nutrition and healthy food, climate and food system, and inequalities and poverty. The proceedings of the Science Days to be compiled for the pre-summit.
- Comments included: A call for engagement and inclusion of the general public in the FSS; Networking with universities should be strengthened. The ScG should connect to science bodies related to other UN summits.

Agenda 5: Other business

Next meeting is scheduled for March 15th

The meeting closed at 16h CET.