

## **Eighth Meeting of the UNFSS Scientific Group (ScGroup)**

**16 June 2021, 14.00-16.00 (CET)**

### **Meeting Notes**

#### **Agenda of the Meeting**

1. 14.00-14:30 Introduction and Update on Food Systems Summit (FSS) Processes
  - emerging Pre-Summit and Summit agenda, and
  - new research products from ScGroup and its partners, and emerging modelling focus
  
2. 14:30-15:00 The Science Days
  - Program and Side Events.
  - An update will be given at the meeting, strategy for mobilizing global science communities, and discussion of desired outcomes of the Science Days
  
3. 15:00-15:50 The draft FSS Science and Innovations Agenda Paper
  - Draft from June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, to be discussed by the ScGroup
  
5. 15:50-16:00 Any other business

*The meeting agenda, draft program of the Science Days and the draft FSS Science and Innovations Agenda Paper of the ScGroup was shared with the meeting participants prior to the meeting. Here the PPT and background information on modelling and the G20 Agriculture Science Directors are shared in addition.*

#### **Introduction and Update on the FSS Process:**

The Chairperson of the ScGroup, Joachim von Braun started the meeting with an update on the FSS processes. The Chair reported that two important reports of the ScGroup, “**The True Cost and True Price of Food**” and “**Achieving Zero Hunger by 2030 – A Review of Quantitative Assessments of Synergies and Trade-offs amongst the UN Sustainable Development Goals**” had been published on the website of the ScGroup ([sc-fss2021.org](http://sc-fss2021.org)). The publication of six important Briefs by the partners of the ScGroup including a Brief on indigenous food systems drafted by the members of indigenous communities, “**The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples’ food systems**” was also reported. These UNFSS Briefs including the Wiphala paper are available the website of the ScGroup. Meeting participants were encouraged to visit the website (<https://sc-fss2021.org/materials/fss-briefs-by-partners-of-scientific-group/>).

A series of **meetings of the modelling team** for the ScGroup were held with members of the ScGroup and UNFSS special envoy Agnes Kalibata to discuss the aims of the modelling exercises. The discussions in these meetings have identified a set of five/six interventions to be

scrutinized from a modelling perspective to identify synergies and trade-offs. These scrutinized interventions will inform the action proposals of the Secretary General of the UN Food Systems Summit.

ScGroup member, Maximo Torero was called on for a **brief update on the modelling exercise**. He noted that the impacts of the proposed actions of UNFSS on livelihoods and wellbeing, access to nourishment and healthy diets and on poverty reduction were being assessed. The priority set of actions for which the first simulations for which will be presented at the pre-summit had been identified in the series of meetings. These actions include 1. Scaling up social protection 2. School meals and 3. Waste reduction, and 4. Agri-food policy and repurposing subsidies, 5. Local production for local consumption and trade 6. Enhancing productivity through science and innovation. In addition to the effects of these interventions on the above-mentioned outcomes, trade-offs are assessed focussing on environmental sustainability, systemic risk, land and soil and water and GHG emissions. The aim is to identify the synergies and present an optimal package of policies. Other potential actions to be assessed in the modelling exercise include innovation and knowledge intensification, digital infrastructure and digital technologies, and local production for local consumption (*for added information see a new presentation on modelling attached, that was presented at a meeting of the Integrating Team for the UNFSS 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021.*).

The ScGroup Chairperson Joachim von Braun shared the draft plan of the Pre-summit to be held in July 2021. The Chair highlighted the role of the ScGroup in the Pre-summit. The ScGroup's ***FSS Science and Innovations Agenda Paper*** will be presented in one of the Plenary Sessions. A session after the opening plenary will be under the auspices of the ScGroup. Key sessions, for example hunger and malnutrition, are to include the input of the ScGroup (see PPT for the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting). The list of proposed deliverables of the **Pre-summit and the Summit** were also shared with the ScGroup. The Statement of Action (SoA) from the Summit that will include a summary of key insights and lessons from UNFSS processes.

The Vice Chairpersons, Louise Fresco, Mohamed Hassan and Kaosar Afsana gave their feedback to the Chair's introductory remarks. Louise Fresco emphasized a need to identify the critical places for the participation of ScGroup in the Pre-summit. On the SoAs, she proposed the inclusion of science and evidenced based quantified targets for maximum impact. These targets may include national commitments to investments.

Mohamed Hassan stressed that given the importance of science, innovations, and technology (STI) in delivering food systems transformation there is a need to ensure that science is at the forefront of the Pre-summit and the Summit agenda. To this end, the active participation of ScGroup in the Pre-summit will be critical. Mohamed Hassan also noted that statement of the Secretary General of the UNFSS must also note the importance of STI in driving food systems transformation. That this role is highlighted in the introduction of the statement must be ensured.

Kaosar Afsana noted that the authors of the statements from the Pre-summit and the Summit should be consider the audience of the statements. The audience will not be the scientific community. A wider audience, including the civil societies may be addressed in these statements.

In the following open discussion ScGroup member Ismahane Elouafi echoed the recommendations of Louise Fresco that ScGroup must be strategically placed in the Pre-Summit event to amplify the voice of science. ScGroup member Urs Niggli and Chairperson supported the proposal to include quantified targets in the summit SoA, but targets should come from political processes and ScGroup can scrutinize them.

*The materials presented at the meeting will be circulated with the members and written comments on the material were invited by the Chair.*

The meeting was briefed on the participation of ScGroup Chairperson Joachim von Braun and member ScGroup Ismahane Elouafi at the **meeting of the Agriculture Science Directors of the G20 on June 15, 2021**. Joachim von Braun and Ismahane Elouafi gave separate presentations at the meeting. The focus areas of the meeting were 1. new technologies such as gene editing and new breeding techniques, 2. food safety and science and innovation to achieve food safety agenda 3. one health 4. antimicrobial resistance. The coherence of the ScGroup and an alignment of the group's agenda with the G20 communique with its emphasis on science and innovation was noted. *The G20 Communique is attached, it makes reference to the Scientific Group.*

## **Agenda Item 2: The Science Days**

The program of the Science Days to be held on July 8-9, 2021, is available on the website of the ScGroup. The Chairperson thanked the ScGroup members for their commitments to the event. In a brief overview of the program, the Chair noted the expected participation of science writers, and science editors as moderators of the plenary sessions. Special sessions focussing on youth, indigenous, food industry and start-ups were mentioned. In addition to the main event, about 15 Side-events organized by partners of the ScGroup are expected.

The draft FSS Science and Innovations Agenda Paper will be tabled on the Science Days and will be revised in the light of the deliberation of the Science Days. The event will go on record with a statement.

The Chair opened the meeting for discussion on the Science Days. The following points were raised by the participants in the discussion:

- In addition to a one-page document from a side-event, consider including organizers/speakers of the Side-events to present the summaries of the deliberations in the relevant Science Days sessions. To effectively utilize the outcomes of the side events.
- Consider articulating the position of the scientific community on the role of regulatory frameworks in hindering the use of new technologies, such as CRISPR-cas9 in the statement.
- The statement on regulatory frameworks responsible for increasing the costs of technology in low-and-middle income countries may be considered.
- The audience of the statements of the ScGroup are to be national governments and ministries, the language and the content of these statements may consider its audience.

- The scientific knowledge to overcome the challenges faced by humanity is available. The translation of this scientific knowledge into actionable policy, nested within socio-economic-cultural contexts.
- Call for commitments from countries on investment in science and technology.
- Reflections on Making science available for the low- and middle-income countries. Democratization and affordability of science.

*A media pack of the Science Days will be prepared and circulated with the ScGroup.*

### **Agenda 3: The draft FSS Science and Innovations Agenda Paper**

The Chairperson presented the draft agenda paper of the ScGroup for the FSS, that had been revised by Chair and Vice Chairs following the inputs from ScGroup in 7<sup>th</sup> meeting and thereafter. Seven action areas highlighted in the agenda paper were briefly presented. The draft of the Agenda Paper from June 12 had been circulated among the members of the ScGroup prior to the meeting. Members Jikun Huang, David Zilberman, Ousmane Badiane and Kaoru Kitajima had been requested to critically review the draft. These members shared the following observations:

#### **Jikun Huang:**

1. The paper is comprehensive and covers Action Tracks 1 to 5:
2. Bioscience and digital technologies have been discussed separately in the paper, these two types of technologies can be subsumed under one theme and discussed together.
3. The discussion in the paper on equitable distribution of food focusses on/highlights only women and youth. Vulnerable groups/peoples such as small farmers, small enterprise, indigenous people, may also be included in the discussion on equitable food systems.
4. There are inconsistencies in the terms used in the different parts of the paper; for example, parts of the paper referring to agriculture includes notes such as “agriculture includes livestock”, “agriculture includes fishery”. Another example of inconsistent use of terms is “socio-economic environment”, “economic, socio-culture and environment”. *Comprehensive definitions of the terms used throughout the paper may be presented in the introduction for clarity and brevity* and the use of the terms must remain consistent.
5. The discussion in on digital technology has overlooked inequitable access to digital technologies. The paper rightfully notes the importance of digital technologies in food chains; however, many remain (poor, less educated) excluded from access to digital technologies. The paper may emphasize/highlight the aspect of inequitable access to digital technologies. The aspect of digital access/access to digital technologies may be explicitly included in the discussion on inclusive foods systems.
6. The risks and loss aspects of policies (and (policy)decision making) may be expressed.

#### **David Zilberman:**

1. The paper can be more focussed and action oriented, the role of science in general has been adequately emphasized in the paper however the paper lacks in focus on the transfer on science and knowledge from the universities and the private sector to

citizens and the masses. The paper has paid insufficient attention to the ways of democratization of science.

2. Scientific knowledge on solutions to the global challenges such as climate change are available, however, the science also provides the ways of translating technological solutions into feasible solutions (through social sciences research). This aspect is weak/underemphasized in the paper.
3. The paper may emphasize, key elements of inclusion, access and democratization of science.
4. Ensuring access to scientific knowledge and innovations requires investments, these targets/quantitative measures may be indicated in the paper.
5. We have to calculate risk because we face challenges. On the development of science, overcoming the gaps between nations that are educated risks, educating people about risks is usually need.

**Ousmane Badiane:**

1. The paper is comprehensive, in terms of different categories of science driven innovations, all bases are covered.
2. The paper talks in detail about science and its potential role in the transformation of food systems, however, insufficient attention has been paid on the ways of delivering science/scientific knowledge for successful implementation. A discussion on effectively delivering science for successful transformation of the food systems and linking the knowledge supply and knowledge demand where it matters is needed in the paper. These links are pertinent where actions need to be taken, where policy has to be formulated, so that scientific evidenced can be fed into action. The paper may engage with these questions:
  - a. How can science ensure that the summit outcomes and deliverables turn into local policy actions?
  - b. How to collaborate with actors who are charged with making policy into reality?
  - c. And how to get to successful implementation of science for fs transformation?
3. To answer these questions, the discussion in the paper may consider the following key dimensions/elements have to be part of that thinking:
  - d. delivering science will require that science aligns with local policies agenda; a proximity of science to decision making is important, connect timeliness and relevance for the science to when these are needed to advice on policy.
  - e. The development of local infrastructure and local expertise to effectively link science to decision-making is important. These channels may spelled-out in the paper.
4. The paper is soft on governments in the (global) south. Science and technology systems, (and food systems) have been decimated in these countries and the paper can be bold in the call to governments of the global south to scale up investments in science and technology.
5. The call for true pricing of food needs clarity; price is a poor policy instrument for food, especially in the (global) south, where fiscal space and capacities are limited and using food prices as policy instruments bears risks. The paper needs to be more explicit on the promises in order to not encourage over-active governments play havoc with the

food systems trying to play with proves in the food systems. This may be clearly expressed and conveyed in the paper.

6. There is a need for investments to understand the nature of chronic vulnerability; the more and better it is understood, more effectively it can be responded to. The importance of understanding the key drivers of chronic vulnerability may be emphasized.
7. Discussion on food reserves and the role of trade may emphasize trade as first line of defence for market and price stability. Food reserves may only complement trade; the effectiveness of reserves depends on the trade lesser investments are needed to scale up reserves. This is important for countries where fiscal space is limited.
8. Improving productivity in dry areas may not be enough, breaking the cycle of intergenerational vulnerability in countries with limited fiscal space through social protection. Social protection choices boosting the productivity and skill generation. Both may be emphasized.
9. Bio science agenda in the paper could be bolder, governments of the global south need to invest in the creation of capacities and expertise in biosciences, apply bioscience. Investments are also needed to scale up infrastructure in the and for universal access to digital technologies.

**Kaoru Kitajima:**

Expressed her agreement with David Zilberman's comment that science is not just technology and on the importance for global cooperation.

1. A large part of global fisheries is harvesting nature's produce; ecological science perspectives on optimizing harvesting of these natural resources may be included in the paper. This optimizing also rests on global cooperation on the optimal harvests. Ecological sciences have modelled these optimal harvests; these theories and models may be used for understanding.
2. The relevant "trade-offs" in these "optimality" as used in ecological theories may be brought to the fore in the document.

Joachim von Braun agreed and commented, *unless we stop treating the oceans as a commons that can be exploited without more expanded rules, we go nowhere*

**Patrick Caron:**

1. The wording of the statement on the role of science, "*Science offers two contributions to achieve food systems summit goals*" may be changed as science offers more than that.
2. The integration of technological and institutional dimensions of innovations is important. The paper may build the case for the need for such an integration of the institutional and technological dimensions of innovations, and address the major challenges faced to this integration. Both types of innovations, technological and policy have institutional, and political dimensions that need to be integrated.
3. The discussion in the paper on institutionalizing science policy interface is unclear, it refers to platforms, or institutional organizations, the proposals/recommendations could be made more precise/clearer. On this suggested science policy interface, the need to

take advantage of what existing bodies, for example, the presentation on the HLPE may also be taken note of.

**Lynnette Neufeld:**

1. The paper may increase its focus on the need and ways of implementation of science, innovation, and technologies (as other participants have noted consistently)
2. The discussion on healthy diets requires emphasis on constraints. To achieve healthy diets for all, accessibility and affordability are fundamental, however, even when these are not a constraint, consumption of healthy diets is not assured. Approaches needed to create demand for healthy diets and nutrition may be suggested. It may be emphasized that even when affordability and accessibility are not constraints, people do not consume healthy diets.
3. Minor comments on the use of nutrition, and forms of malnutrition will be provided via email.

**Maximo Torero:**

1. The paper may explicitly articulate the conceptual framework and the logic behind the seven proposals of the paper.
2. The paper may demystify and better explain the potential pros and cons and the major restrictions, for example, the discussion on healthy diets should state that an increase in income does not linearly lead to increase in consumption of healthy diets.
3. The paper is missing in terms of the processes that lead to the materialization of scientific innovations into reality. The management of scientific innovations, property rights and data are key. Technologies run the risk of exclusions through creating monopolies. The type of governance structures needed to ensure that access to technologies is not hindered. (Innovations in governance institutions that need to be in place to avoid these exclusions)
4. Resilience actions discussed in the paper need not be restricted to resilience to climate; other dimensions that food systems need to be made resilient to may be included.
5. On fisheries and aquaculture, the statement on ecological theories made earlier is agreed with additionally the trade-offs involved and the institutions needed for optimalities may be discussed.

**Urs Niggli:**

1. The report is wonderful, agreed to the comments made by other participants I agree with the comments.
2. Transformation is not possible without participation, the paper talks about inclusiveness, and not participation. Citizen participation in decision making and research is necessary for transformation of farming, application of new technologies, promotion of healthy diets, Development of sustainable farming. The term participation should be included in the paper/summary.

**Tom Hertel:**

1. The paper is weak on the trade front right now, it needs to be alleviated.

2. Complementing Ousmane Badiane's statement on trade, the paper must emphasise open global markets as a public good. Better trading systems are needed to avoid volatility, while national borders prevent domestic volatility attempting to contain volatility within the national borders push that volatility outside their borders as we learned from the global food crises. A stronger statement on the trade front needed.
3. An open trading system also needs a clear (global) governance structure particularly in a climate exposed food economy. As more (climate induced) rains and droughts are expected, trade can provide insulation from these shocks.
4. Trade not only means international trade but also integrating rural markets.

**Louise Fresco** (chat): fully agree on the issue of markets and trade!

**Jean-Francois** (chat):

1. The paper draft is comprehensive, but the key messages could be even stronger. There are also a few redundancies and some minor edits still needed.
2. We should not only ask for more STI, but also for an increased efficiency in the way we develop and share knowledge concerning food systems. International cooperation should be strongly enhanced to meet the challenges.
3. We should really have something on how science technology research is organized.

**Aman Wirakartakusumah** (chat): I have noticed that behaviour misconduct especially in millennial and Z generations has strongly diverted the direction towards healthy diets. The marketing strategy by using BTS-McD product has caused traffic jam in Jakarta where this young generations willing to line up and not following covid 19 protocol. The issue how can we engaged social sciences and culture to handle this particular youth group. As it was mentioned that education must play important role in changing this behaviour.

**Sheryl Hendriks** (chat): We have to be very careful not to put all the blame for poor nutrition on consumer behaviour. We need considerably more science to understand the drivers in the processing, marketing and food environments. Moreover, nutrition science is conflicted and much of our real understanding of these nutrition issues is only starting to emerge.

**Ismahane Elouafi**: Developing world has to be encouraged to invest in research and development.

In response to the Chair's call for a response on the comments the Vice Chairs made the following remarks. Mohamed Hasan thanked the participants for their comments and suggestions. Participants' concerns regarding the delivering science and innovation for food systems transformation are important. Innovations that have transformed agriculture in several countries may be highlighted to hare these best practices with low- and middle-income countries. Links between food systems, sustainability, climate change and biodiversity are to be dealt with in the paper. Kaosar Afsana noticed the importance of emphasizing global cooperation but reiterated the importance to addressing the grassroots. Louise Fresco agreed that capacity building of countries of the south should be on the agenda of the summit. A marshal plan for Africa and Asia can be envisioned, to build bridges and to build capacity. The call for investments and commitment for these can be made in the summit.

The Chairperson emphasized the need among scientists for self-criticism and a re-imagining of global cooperation. The **FSS Science and Innovations Agenda Paper** will be



revised in the light of the discussion and shared with the participants. The revisions will maintain the framework of a brief paper. The paper will be tabled at the Science Days and at the Pre-summit.

**Agenda 4: Any other Business. No matters were brought up**

The chair encouraged the ScGroup to bring up any other business through email, he thanked ScGroup members for their active engagement in the task of assuring an evidence based summit. The meeting closed at 16:00 h CET.