



Global conference to identify science-based pathways towards sustainable food systems

Bonn/Rome, 30 June: Science, research and innovation are essential to accelerate the transformation to healthier, more sustainable, more equitable and more resilient food systems. What science and innovation are needed and how they can inform related policies will be discussed at the [Science Days](#), a virtual conference 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.

Around 2000 participants from research, policy, civil society and industry will come together to examine how to unlock the full potential of science, technology, and innovation to achieve more healthy diets and more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable food systems. They will also discuss how to push the frontiers of bio-science; advance digitalization in food systems; strengthen the science-policy interface; invest in capacity for science and innovation; more fully engage indigenous peoples, women, youth and the private sector in food systems transformation; address contentious issues hindering science; and prioritize urgent actions needed by 2030 and beyond.

The conference will be opened by FAO Director General **QU Dongyu**, UN Deputy Secretary General **Amina Mohamed**, Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit **Agnes Kalibata**, and Chair of Scientific Group for the UN Food Systems Summit **Joachim von Braun**. Discussions at the conference will be informed by a **strategic paper prepared by members of the Scientific Group**, which will be presented on the first day of the conference, and a series of **papers by partners of the Scientific Group**.

The eminent scientists engaged in the Scientific Group warn that food systems at the global level and in many countries and regions are failing to end hunger and provide adequate nutritious and safe foods for healthy diets. They put forward a set of **science-driven innovations** to catalyze, support and accelerate food systems transformation to achieve the Summit goals. These include:

1. Innovations to end hunger and increase availability and affordability of healthy diets and nutritious foods.
2. Innovations to de-risk food systems and strengthen resilience, in particular for negative emission farming and climate-resilient food systems.

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3. Innovations to overcome inefficient and unfair land, credit, and labour arrangements, and to facilitate inclusion of and empowerment and rights of women and youth.
4. Bioscience and digital innovations for improving peoples' health, enhancing systems' productivity, and restoring ecological wellbeing.
5. Innovations to keep – and, where needed, regenerate -- productive soils, water and landscapes, and to protect the agricultural genetic base and biodiversity.
6. Innovations for sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and protection of coastal areas and oceans.
7. Engineering and digital innovations for efficiency and inclusiveness of food systems and empowerment of rural communities.

Statements by key organizers:

Joachim von Braun, Chair of the Scientific Group: *"The food systems of the world do not serve health, environments, and small-farm communities. We need to invest in evidence-led policy, and science-based innovations – social and technological innovations. Governments should invest at least 1% of agricultural GDP to food systems science."*

Kaosar Afsana, Vice-Chair of the Scientific Group: *"Equity in food systems can only be achieved if we engage all groups in the transformation process and make targeted efforts to include those who are currently excluded. The voices of women, the marginalized and vulnerable need to be heard and respected."*

Louise O. Fresco, Vice-Chair of the Scientific Group: *"All sciences – basic sciences and applied sciences, natural sciences and social sciences – have important roles to play in delivering innovations for food systems transformation."*

Mohamed Hassan, Vice-Chair of the Scientific Group: *"Investments in science and innovation capacities, especially in low-income countries, will be essential to strengthen food systems, and facilitate more sharing of sciences with the global South. Academies of sciences can play a key role in food systems transformations."*

Ismahane Elouafi, Member of the Scientific Group and Chief Scientist, FAO: *"There is a huge gap between what we know and what makes it to the farmers' field. We need new business models to deploy innovation widely. We need to democratize the access to science and innovation, leaving no one behind."*

Notes to Editors:

- The **Science Days** will take place on 8-9 July from 13:00-18:00 CEST (sc-fss2021.org/events/sciencedays).
- The **strategic paper of the Scientific Group** will be presented in the opening plenary on 8 July from 13:00-14:00 CEST. It will be made available online on 5 July
- 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 will discuss 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 will be preceded by **more than 40 Side-Events on 5-7 July** which offer 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.