



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

TOWARDS THE ARAB REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS DIALOGUE

Arab Youth Dialogue on Food Systems

9 March 2021, 11:00-12:30 pm (Beirut time, GMT +2)

INFORMATION NOTE

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are organizing the Arab Youth Dialogue on Food Systems in preparation for the Arab Regional Food Systems Dialogue that is taking place on 29 March 2021. The Arab Regional dialogue will consolidate regional views, perspectives and experiences. A Regional Outcome Document to reflect those discussions will be presented at the Food Systems Summit (FSS) to be convened by the United Nations Secretary-General in September 2021.

The Arab Youth Dialogue on Food Systems aims at providing an integrative and engaging platform to enable youth as key stakeholders to share perspectives, experiences, and issues on making the region's food systems healthier, more inclusive and more sustainable, in addition to enhancing their resilience within the COVID-19 context.

Background

Food systems, the way the world produces and consumes food, need a revolutionary transformation to deliver on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Food Systems Summit will be held in September 2021 with a broad vision to launch actions, solutions and strategies and identify pathways to accelerate progress towards more sustainable, inclusive and healthy food systems that are resilient to shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Youth (aged 15 to 29) account for one-third of the total population in the Arab region. Nonetheless, 110 million young people suffer from pre-existing structural inequalities even before COVID-19 pandemic. These include discrimination, exclusion, restricted access to information and services, and high unemployment; Arab youth unemployment is the highest worldwide and the fastest growing, increasing from 19.5% in 2012 to 23% in 2020 where Arab women unemployment rates is double that of young men. COVID-19 has unveiled the vulnerability of systems and the need to build better through enhancing resilience especially that of the youth, the agents of change and the leaders of tomorrow.

Dialogue Objectives and Output

The Arab Youth Dialogue on Food Systems will be organized around the five action tracks of the Summit to engage the Arab region youth in process and to provide them with the opportunity to identify priority actions to support the SDGs within the context of current realities. Key messages generated from these discussions will be presented during the Arab Regional Food Systems Dialogue to be held in March 29, 2021. A Regional Outcome document will be submitted to the Summit Secretariat in preparation for the Food Systems Summit in September 2021

Participants

This dialogue will bring together diverse youth groups from the Arab region that are engaged in agriculture, climate change, water security, and food systems to discuss "game changing" solutions for current food systems.

Tentative agenda

Opening remarks: ESCWA, FAO, 5'

Presentation on the Food Systems Summit and five tracks 10'

Discussion group on priority action areas to transform the region's food systems? 60'

Track 1: Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all

- What are the challenges to fill the hunger gap and provide nutritious and safe food to people?
- What game-changing solutions are needed to ensure equity, sustainability and focus on young people?

Track 2: shifting to sustainable consumption patterns

- What are the challenges to changing consumer behavior?
- What solutions to motivate and empower consumers to make informed, healthy, safe and sustainable choices for reducing food waste and changing consumer behavior?

Track 3: Boosting nature positive production

- What are the challenges faced by the current food production environments?
- What solutions to sustainably manage existing food production systems and restore degraded ecosystems and rehabilitate soil function for sustainable food production?

Track 4: Advancing equitable livelihoods

- Why do we have inequality and in current food systems practices?
- What solutions to transform current structures and eliminate practices and norms that limit equitable livelihoods.?

Track 5: building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

- What are the causes of vulnerability of Arab food systems?
- What solutions to address food insecurity and build resilience to future sources of shocks and other stresses on food systems?

Feedback from Discussions 10'

Closing Remarks 5'

Dialogue information

The meeting will be conducted in the English language. Simultaneous interpretation into the Arabic language will be provided.

Approved and registered participants will be provided with a link and password to participate in the dialogue. All meeting-related correspondence should be sent to the following:

Ms. Julie Abouarab

Associate Coordination Officer
Food and Environment Policies Section
CCNRS, UN-ESCWA
E-mail: abouarab@un.org

Ms. Layale Gedeon

Research Assistant
Food and Environment Policies Section
CCNRS, UN-ESCWA
E-mail: gedeon1@un.org