

# Action for the Future of Food: Panel Series with UN Food Systems Summit Champions Network

## ABOUT THE PANEL SERIES

From January to June 2021, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Food Tank, and the Global Alliance for the Future of Food partnered for a series of panel discussions featuring members of the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UN FSS) Champions Network.

These events each focused on one of the Global Alliance's seven calls to action to create more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food systems. Speakers came from around the world and a variety of professional backgrounds, including government, the non-profit sector, farming, research, the private sector, philanthropy, journalism, and activism. With a focus on pathways to systems transformation, the dialogues addressed some of the most critical issues currently facing global food systems, including hunger, the impact of climate change, biodiversity loss, governance, human rights, inequality, malnutrition in all its forms, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Creating linkages across geographies, sectors, issues and siloes, these interconnected conversations generated valuable insights about the future of food, surfaced areas of convergence and divergence, and will help set the stage for action coming out of the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021.



## PANEL EVENTS:

### **1: Addressing Power Imbalances Through Shared Power and Inclusivity**

**Call to action:** Ensure participatory, integrated, rights-based approaches to governance at all levels in order to address the structural inequities in food systems.

### **2: Public Research for the Public Good**

**Call to action:** Increase research in systems-based approaches, with an emphasis on indivisible ecological, health, social, and economic goals.

### **3: The Hidden Costs of Food Systems**

**Call to action:** Recognize the environmental, social, and health impacts of food systems policies and practices, and use this understanding to inform decision-making.

### **4: Developing Sustainable Fiscal Policy for the Food System**

**Call to action:** Direct public sector finance and fiscal policy towards regenerative and ecologically-beneficial forms of farming, healthy food, and resilient livelihoods and communities.

### **5: Investing in a More Resilient Food System**

**Call to action:** Unlock investment opportunities in sustainable food systems and align private, philanthropic, and multilateral funders with national actors for greater impact.

### **6: Agroecological and Regenerative Solutions**

**Call to action:** Create enabling environments for agroecology and regenerative approaches to flourish.

### **7: Enriching and Diversifying Diets**

**Call to action:** Promote nutritious, whole-food diets underpinned by sustainable, diversified food production adapted to local ecosystems and socio-cultural contexts.

# EVENT SUMMARIES

## **Event 1: Addressing Power Imbalances Through Shared Power and Inclusivity**

Speakers explored how inclusive, participatory processes and approaches to governance are imperative to addressing the structural inequities in food systems. They emphasized the role of women and gender equality in transforming systems, the need to provide tools to allow people to hold their governments accountable, and how smallholder farmers, fisherfolks and Indigenous Peoples need agency in the development of agricultural and other food-related policy making in order to transform the food value chain. All panelists emphasized the intersectional issues regarding food; therefore, to solve the food problem, we must look beyond food.

## **Event 2: Public Research for the Public Good**

Speakers asserted that the public and private funders of food and agricultural research have a responsibility to encourage holistic approaches, connecting ecological, health, social, and economic agendas for the greater social good. They underlined the role of citizen knowledge, science and diverse evidence, and discussed barriers to the dissemination of research, arguing that research results are not relevant without the participation of smallholder farmers and local solutions.

## **Event 3: The Hidden Costs of Food Systems**

Speakers discussed how finance and tools like True Cost Accounting can serve as powerful drivers for sustainability and help decision-makers to prioritize positive impacts. They considered how to move away from the current economic system and to make food a public good, while also discussing the need to establish ecological systems that are in harmony with the environment through agroecology and regenerative agricultural practices.

## **Event 4: Developing Sustainable Fiscal Policy for the Food System**

Speakers considered how the public sector has a responsibility to use finance and fiscal policy to build sustainable food systems and uphold planetary health. Profound reforms are needed to channel public funding to new sources. The panelists tackled the ways in which the public sector can improve food access through production, taxes, subsidies and supply-chain transformation. They also argued that the adoption of tools that capture the externalized impacts of food systems and that policy must be combined with action, science, and evidence.

## **Event 5: Investing in a More Resilient Food System**

Speakers discussed the role that private, philanthropic and multilateral funders and investors can play in food systems transformation. They identified the importance of infrastructure in unlocking investment opportunities and the need to reduce risks associated with investments. They also spoke about the challenges posed by power differentials prominent in the financing world.

## **Event 6: Agroecological and Regenerative Solutions:**

Speakers discussed the transformative potential of agroecology as a way to break out of many current crises afflicting the planet, help to restore ecosystems, build climate resilience, ensure food security, and promote sustainable livelihoods. They called for strong connections to be made between generations, countries, and sectors and also emphasized the need to create political will. Speakers discussed how public sector finance, philanthropic grants, and impact investment can accelerate the transformation process.

## **Event 7: Enriching and Diversifying Diets:**

Speakers presented differing ideas of the kinds of change that can promote nutritious, sustainable, whole-food diets according to local and cultural contexts, indicating a clear need for a systems perspective when creating solutions. They presented connections between food systems, diet, the pandemic, and national security, among other concerns, and agreed that food is a human right.

# SPEAKERS

Each of the seven conversations were moderated by Danielle Nierenberg, President and Co-founder of Food Tank: The Think Tank For Food and Ruth Richardson, Executive Director of the Global Alliance for the Future of Food

## Event 1: Addressing Power Imbalances Through Shared Power and Inclusivity

**Jessica Vega Ortega**, Global Indigenous Youth Caucus

**Ajay Vir Jakhar**, Bharat Krishak Samaj (Farmers' Forum India)

**Mamadou Goita**, Institute for Research and Promotion of Alternatives in Development (IRPAD)

**Michelle Nunn**, CARE USA

**Christine Ciccone**, International Fund for Agricultural Development



If we're not engaging and empowering and giving equal platforms to 50% of the worlds population [women], there is no way that we are going to have equitable, sustainable food systems.

- Michelle Nunn

## Event 2: Public Research for the Public Good

**Kanayo Nwanze**, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Special Representative to the Food Systems Summit

**João Bosco Monte**, Brazil Africa Institute and General Coordinator of the Brazil Africa Forum

**Claudia Martínez Zuleta**, Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU), and E3



There is a need to come up with new methodologies, with new approaches and ways to do research that reach a wider audience and are more effective to ensure transformations.

-Claudia Martinez Zuleta

## Event 3: The Hidden Costs of Food System

**Joao Campari**, Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)

**Sandrine Dixon-Declevé**, Club of Rome

**Naoko Ishii**, Center for Global Commons, the University of Tokyo

**Michael Taylor**, Global secretariat of the International Land Coalition



We need to be aware that what we put on our plates has the power to transform and reduce the hidden cost of the food system on the planet.

- Joao Campari

## Event 4: Developing Sustainable Fiscal Policy for the Food System

**Gabriela Cuevas Barron**, UHC2030, Mexican Congress

**Lasse Bruun**, 50by40,

**Vijay Kumar**, Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS)



There is an urgent need to use evidence smartly. We need to assess different taxes and policies to understand long term impacts, so assumptions and vested interests underpinning fiscal policies can be discussed and agreed upon. Significant action can come from this.

- Vijay Kumar



# SPEAKERS

## Event 5: Investing in a More Resilient Food System

**Andrew Mushita**, Community Technology Development Trust

**Ndidi Nwuneli**, Sahel Consulting / Nourishing Africa

**Bettina Prato**, Smallholder and Agri-SME Finance and Investment Network (SAFIN)

**Geeta Sethi**, World Bank



Finance itself does not unlock investment opportunities that are transformative and aligned with the agenda of more sustainable food systems. We need to build up those investment opportunities, design them, de-risk them, and connect them to break the fragmentation of the finance landscape.

-Bettina Prato

## Event 6: Agroecological and Regenerative Solutions

**Helena Leurent**, Consumers International

**Vijay Kumar**, RySS, INDIA

**Denisa Livingston**, Diné Community Advocacy Alliance and Slow Food International

**Lana Weidgenant**, Zero Hour International

**Emile Frison**, the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food)



As an Indigenous woman, it is really important to recognize the investment into Indigenous communities to build the power at the local level when Indigenous knowledge meets science and technology, and as well as the traditional ecological knowledge that is needed to address the healing frameworks in our work...

everyone is a change-maker, everyone has a seat at the table, everything is related, and we have to grow through COVID-19.

- Denisa Livingston

## Event 7: Enriching and Diversifying Diets

**Dorit Adler**, Israeli Forum for Sustainable Nutrition

**Mike Nkhombo Khunga**, SUN Civil Society Network

**Rick White**, Canadian Canola Growers Association



We need to confront this from multiple entry points and a multidimensional approach. Education for the consumers alone cannot confront the massive marketing and advertising. There is enough evidence to show that we need to change our food environments, and we have to change the food systems by regulations and taxes. We have huge vulnerable populations that need to be brought to the main focus.

- Dorit Adler



# KEY TAKEAWAYS



## IMPERATIVES FOR ACTION

- The growing and unequal impact of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and structural inequalities along racial, gendered, and geographic divides necessitates transformative action.
- Meeting these challenges requires a paradigm shift in the way that we produce, distribute and consume food, centred on the principles of sustainability, equity and a commitment to human rights.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound and enduring consequences for food security and shows how unsustainable practices can lead to crises.
- Creating a more sustainable and equitable food systems requires the involvement of those most affected: smallholder farmers, Indigenous groups, women, youth, and those living in poverty.



## PATHWAYS FORWARD

- Sustainable food systems are necessary to mitigate the impact of climate change, prevent future conflicts, and reduce global inequality.
- Action requires systems-thinking so that we avoid siloed thinking and single-issue solutions.
- Bottom-up and co-created processes are imperative to ensure meaningful, substantive inclusion and agency of diverse stakeholders in decision-making about the future of food
- Governments have an important role to play in promoting sustainable agriculture through policy mechanisms such as taxes and incentives, but all stakeholders have a role to play in transforming the system towards greater sustainability, equity and resilience .
- Multilateral investment - by public, private and philanthropic actors - and the adoption of holistic tools to create alignment will enable sustainable, nutritious food environments to flourish.
- Agroecology has the potential to transform food systems in a way that is environmentally and economically sustainable.
- Consumer ability to choose alongside consumer awareness, public guidance and education campaigns, as well as better pricing, can influence food systems through demand for sustainable and nutritious products.
- The diverse world views and wisdom held by Indigenous Peoples, smallholder farmers, pastoralists, traditional rural communities, fisherfolks, food workers and other caretakers of our food systems must be attended to and protected in any action on food systems.
- An explicit set of principles is needed to guide shared action and help us realize an equitable, healthy and resilient future of food for all.