



2023 High-Level Dinner on Resilient and Inclusive Food Systems

24 October 2023 | 19:00 – 22:00 | La Serra del Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome

“Diversity is the key to achieving resilience”.

Bringing together over 160 guests, this year’s High-Level Dinner on Resilient and Inclusive Food Systems provided a forum for discussions that can contribute to the upcoming CFS Inequalities Workstream. Ambassadors, representatives of CFS, member states, UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, built on the HLPE report and explored ways to emphasize resilience and inclusion across agrifood value chains to effectively support food systems transformation. The HLD showcased the potential for all food systems actors to work together to strengthen inclusion in our food systems and the need to respond to the multi-dimensional inequalities in food systems through informed and evidence-based policies for food security and nutrition security.

It was identified throughout the discussions that addressing multidimensional inequalities and resilience in food systems required an approach with several key action areas:

- ◆ Commitments to diversity
- ◆ Coordinated interventions
- ◆ Coherence and Cooperation
- ◆ Innovation and data
- ◆ Finance and investment



We would like to thank the keynote speaker, Ms. Oluyemisi Iranloye, Managing Director and CEO of Psaltry International, Nigeria (Mentee of the 2022-2023 cohort of the FAO-IAFN Women’s Accelerator Mentorship Program for Women-led SMEs in Africa), all the facilitators, rapporteurs on the tables and guests for the very lively discussions and insights during the dinner. There is certainly an interest in this workstream, and participants provided invaluable ideas to take into the CFS policy convergence process over the coming year. **Resilience** - *“Resilience is about symbiotic relations. Science, technology, and innovation must be led by farmers and market demand working together”.*

Resilience, it was emphasized, is crucial for ensuring that food systems can withstand and recover from shocks and disruptions. Resilience is a commitment by all actors to be equitable, profitable, cooperative, diverse, innovation-driven, flexible, and sustainable. Systems which offer economic and social equity are more able to overcome shocks to the food system and not to just react to them.

Commitments to diversity

Diversity - *“In building resilience into our food systems, we also build diversity and equity”.*



Diversity emerged as a key driver to enhancing resilience in food systems. This diversity extended across actors involved in food systems and the variety of places in which food is produced. It was underscored that a one-size-fits-all approach would not be enough to tackle the complex challenges of food security and nutrition.

- Cultural barriers which inhibit inclusion for some people, communities, and marginalised populations must be addressed.
- Diversity is key to food systems resilience and incentives for inclusivity in food systems are essential to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- Resilience in food systems comes from including farmers, farmer organisations, women, youth, governments, the private sector, and CSO's in the strategies and designs behind food systems transformation and their implementation.
- Encourage more women to enter agro-processing businesses where profits are often higher and support them through increased access to local, national, and regional markets.
- Ensure governments, the private sector, financial institutions, and CSOs all implement gender transformative approaches to increase access to resources.

Coordinated Interventions



Coordinated Interventions - *“Cooperation as a vehicle to reach more people.”*

One challenge that became apparent during the discussions was the lack of coordinated responses in existing policies and initiatives. The need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach is an essential component of building resilient and inclusive food systems. Different actors must work together to bring their efforts in a coordinated way to break down inequity.

- A whole of value chain perspective is needed, as individual interventions in one part of the value chain will not be durable and address equity if it doesn't link from inputs, field, processor to consumer.
- Value addition to local food products can reduce food loss and waste, increase incomes, and improve livelihoods.
- Addressing inequality must include social protection schemes and capacity development.
- Improved access to infrastructure reduces inequalities and increases resilience to food systems shocks.

- Trade ensures different crops and food products are available all year round despite disruptions caused by climate and conflict events, and that production efficiency from geographic and climatic factors increases access to food all year round.

Coherence & Cooperation



Coherence - *“We cannot achieve common goals if we are not all sitting at the table together as equals”.*

Coherence was another important aspect that emerged throughout the evening. Ensuring various actors are integrated into value chains is essential for breaking through market issues and enhancing the food-to-market journey.

through international action to level the playing field and give everyone the opportunity to participate in food systems.

- Cooperation between small, medium, and large food systems actors allows facilitation of market access and better rewards.
- National policies that converge
- Governments can assist farmers by coordinating access to climate change adaptation solutions, water harvesting and mechanisation.
- Avoiding adding to the regulatory burden that many farmers already face and involving farmers in policy formulation and implementation are important.
- Ensure that trade agreements prioritize regional solutions, coherent policies, and non-commercial outcomes such as gender equality, environmental stewardship, and climate targets.

Innovation and Technology



Innovation and Technology - *“Quantitative and qualitative data is needed for farmers to make decisions that reduce inequalities and build resilience into the system”.*

Innovation and technology can empower women and marginalised people. Structural inequalities in food systems can be identified, addressed, and overcome, including through access to information and solutions.

- Inclusivity creates and fosters an environment for innovation and technology adoption which can, in turn, reduce inequality.
- Increasing research and development increases the resilience in food systems.

- Youth are adept nature with technology and their ability to innovate is an important part of future food systems.
- New innovations and technologies are key to sustainably scale agricultural production and can be achieved through education, technical skills training, and capacity development.
- The private sector has a body of knowledge to share with other actors and a systems-thinking approach to technical, economic, political, social, and cultural problem-solving.

Finance and Investment



Finance and Investment - *“Policy frameworks need to be developed for what we need to do tomorrow vs what we have already been doing”.*

Without adequate investment, it becomes challenging to break through the barriers that prevent vulnerable populations from participating fully in food systems.

- De-risk finance and investment for women, youth, and marginalised people through mobilising different financial service product providers to work together.
- Addressing the pressing business needs of SMEs including access to finance and creation of value-added solutions that enhance social and economic mobility.
- Investing in public-private partnerships increases trust between parties and improves the ability of food systems to absorb shocks from climate change or conflicts.
- Insurance systems against climate events for smallholder producers are essential and in the post-Covid world it is essential to revalue short supply chains and locally procured diets.
- Larger companies need to work more directly with smallholders on long term incentives to prioritise traceability, child free labour, sustainability, and a clean and safe working environment.

It is clear achieving resilience and equity in food systems will not be easy, and thus all actors must be **targeted, intentional and unified** in our approaches.

Finally, we would like to thank our 2023 HLD Sponsors, BASF and Rabobank, for supporting this event and ensuring that dialogue between member states and the PSM continues to support the work of CFS. We look forward to working with you throughout 2024 to progress policy guidelines that deliver outcomes to reduce inequalities and advance food and nutrition security.

