

INDIA HOLDS NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

The United Nations Secretary General has called for the first ever UN Food Systems Summit to be held in **September 2021** to strategize the actions for positive change in Agri-food systems in the World to realize the vision of the **2030** Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Summit will focus on levers and pathways to shape food systems nationally and globally to accelerate progress in the SDGs. The Summit 2021 is planned to be essentially participatory and consultative and needs the game changing ideas from the experiences through the National, Sub-national (State) and independent consultation for the five Action Tracks related to safe and nutritious food, sustainable consumption patterns, nature-positive production, advance equitable livelihoods, and resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress. The COVID-19 pandemic led vulnerability and challenges faced by the humanity in food and related system has further added to the need for reorienting our actions and strategies beyond specific cropping or farming systems to entire agri-food systems covering production, distribution and consumption.

India with close to 18% humanity on the Globe owes paramount stake in this Food System Summit. India has volunteered, but not limited to, to the Action Track 4: Advance Equitable Livelihoods for the UN Food System Summit 2021. To take the process further the Government has constituted a high level Interdepartmental Group under the Chairmanship of Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog along with the representatives from Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoAFW), Rural Development and others. The prime function assigned to this group is to conduct National Dialogues with all the stakeholders of agri-food systems for exploring national pathways towards creating sustainable and equitable food systems in India and suitably contribute to transformation in global food systems to meet the needs of present and future. The consultative processes shall culminate in the Food System Summit in September, 2021 in which Hon'ble Prime Minister is likely to participate along with other Global leaders.

The first National Level Dialogue on Agri-Food Systems-Advancing Equitable Livelihoods has been conducted on 12 April, 2021. The National Dialogue was facilitated by the Inter departmental Group constituted by Department of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmers Welfare and the representatives from UN Agencies in Delhi. The day long deliberations were attended by farmers organisations, farmer producer organisations, civil society organisations, research institutions & experts and the government agencies.

Chairman of the Group and National Convenor for the dialogue Prof. Chand urged the participants to share their ideas, experiences, success stories, transformative innovations, evidence based suggestions relating to policies, infrastructure, institutions, and the commitments India should be making to align food system to achieve SDGs towards 2030. He added that we should plan for the elimination of poverty, zero hunger, nutrition security and health for all, raising incomes across food value chains, and ensuring economic, social and environment sustainability. Several game changing ideas for reimagining India's Agriculture like agro climate based farming, agro-ecology based farming, farmers owned and managed value chain systems, statutory backing for sustainable innovations, adopting best practices from the states, linking production incentives to nutrition goals, nutrition sensitive production and diets, regulatory framework for food safety of low income consumers, selective biofortification, FPOs of women farmers etc were suggested by participants.

On the pattern of National Dialogues, the State Governments have also been requested to conduct the state-level dialogues with all the stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in the agri-food systems in India. Such grass root dialogues offer a unique opportunity to various stakeholders to involve and provide inputs for sustainable food systems in India. The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has created a website for this purpose to seek the inputs and ideas of all the stakeholders and the public on the Action Track 4, and other Action Tracks of the UN Food System Summit-2021. Chairman of the group appealed to the stakeholders, experts and public to contribute their ideas and thoughts on the web page <https://farmer.gov.in/fss/index.aspx> specially created for this purpose.

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