



THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM MUST START WITH COMMUNITIES

The Movement For Community-led Development: UN Food Systems Summit Advocacy Messaging Guide – 26 May 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to increase awareness about key issues the Summit will address and make recommendations for how to turn our commitments as a Movement into actions.

Intended Results

Our guide is an opportunity to build the coordinated advocacy of MCLD. We hope that this guide will help our Movement members formulate a social media presence about the Food Systems Summit. This toolkit and messaging guide was developed as an advocacy strategy for the Movement for Community-led Development based on our research and our Independent Dialogue on May 19th. It will be the basis of our strategy through September 2021.

Background Facts

- ❖ According to [IFAD](#), there are about 500 million smallholder farms globally that produce about 80% of the food consumed in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and employ more than 2 billion people. The UN estimates that 130 million more people suffer from acute famine due to COVID-19, doubling from a year ago. Structurally, almost 700 million people (1 in 9 worldwide) are hungry every day. 2 billion people are unable to access food that is safe and nutritious all year-round.
- ❖ According to the [World Bank](#), small-holder farmers “make up a significant portion of the world’s poor who live on less than \$2 a day. That is why improving the lives of this huge group is a priority in efforts to end global poverty.”
- ❖ The pandemic has presented us with an opportunity to build our food systems forward. According to [IFPRI](#)’s research, “by the end of 2020, 95 million additional people, mostly in Africa south of the Sahara, were estimated to be living in extreme poverty.” This statistic has heavy implications for the vulnerable food systems with long supply chains.

Key Messages



- Policymakers should strengthen and invest in the food systems that are based on the needs and aspirations of the 2 billion people currently unable to access safe and nutritious food, especially given that these constitute a significant amount of the world's agriculture producers. The current system helps perpetuate hunger.
- Women are critical to community-led food systems, but face countless barriers. Women's voices need to be elevated, especially higher up the value chain.
- Food systems based on global trade are fragile. We advocate for decentralized and community-led approaches that put local agriculture and local action at the center.
- Integrated, community-led solutions offer a more resilient, more equitable and more nutritious basis for national and global food systems.
- Community-level Food Systems are currently highly constrained by unjust and deeply entrenched gender norms. Studies have shown that if women had equal access to agricultural inputs as men, that alone could reduce the number of hungry people by 150 million. ([SOFI 2016](#)).
- If we want to achieve the SDGs by 2030, we must join forces with all stakeholders and act now. This includes unity between science, technology, and local knowledge.

Recommendations

The UN has put forward four outcomes for the Food Systems Summit. We have drafted recommendations based on these outcomes:

1. **Summit Outcome 1: Generate Significant Action and Measurable Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Our Recommendations:

- ❑ Governments and big organizations need to increase investments in the promotion of high-nutrition local foods. As highlighted in the [2020 SOFI report](#), the incentives in farming must shift to make nutrition-rich food more affordable. One sure way to do that is to promote locally-grown, nutrition rich foods and nutrition-sensitive agricultural programs; investments in agriculture must take into account the nutritious value and impact of foods. Biofortification allows this to be "local" rather than process-fortification common in industrial food systems.
- ❑ Governments must address existing inequalities in food systems that favor urban markets over rural producers and large-scale over small-scale producers, and which threaten land tenure for women and indigenous communities and raise barriers against small-farmers.
- ❑ Scientists and companies creating technological innovations need to improve the accessibility of their innovations so that small farming communities can be resilient. Furthermore, there needs to be a paired dialogue between scientists and community knowledge holders.



2. Summit Outcome 2: Raise awareness and elevate public discussion

Our Recommendations:

- ❑ Organizations with loud voices and broad reaches need to step up to elevate voices in food systems that have previously been silenced. Only by the elevation of these voices can the public truly understand the importance of community-led food systems. We need to understand the system before we can change it.
- ❑ Independent and National Dialogues have provided a unique opportunity to change the narrative of community-led and Indigenous food systems by emphasizing the power of local knowledge. This must be institutionalized throughout national and international food system governance.

3. Summit Outcome 3: Develop principles to guide governments and other stakeholders looking to leverage their food systems to support the SDGs

Our Recommendations:

- ❑ Organizations should campaign for devolving a “fair share” of public resources – at least 20% – to the sub-district level, and ultimately end up at the grassroots level to #ShiftThePower. Communities cannot develop resilient food systems – including processing and storage facilities – without funding, and organizations and governments should invest in grassroots civil society. Assuming the poorest communities will generate the tax revenues they need is unlikely and unjust.
- ❑ Government policies need to move away from solely focusing on increasing production patterns by focusing on achieving better natural resource management and investing in research to improve the economics of sustainable, nutritious food.

4. Summit Outcome 4: Create a system of follow-up and review to ensure that the Summit’s outcomes continue to drive new actions and progress.

Our Recommendations:

- ❑ In the creation of a follow-up and review system, we recommend looking into existing structures and systems, and ensure the follow-up and review process is inclusive and bottom-up. Civil society networks such as the Movement for Community-led Development could play an essential role in formulating and enacting this system.
- ❑ Governments need to collect gender-sensitive data regarding farming and support legislative initiatives to address gender inequality, and ensure that the leadership of women and youth carry influence in decision-making.



How to Engage

The United Nations intends to incorporate many voices and perspectives in order to make the Food Systems Summit a “people’s summit.” Here are some ways you can engage and represent the Movement for Community-led Development!

1. [Join the Summit Community](#). The Summit Community is a highly collaborative space to guide the science, solutions, concepts and outcomes of the Summit. The platform is open to anyone with an interest in food systems at all levels, and will be a key entry point for stakeholder engagement on defining the solutions.
2. [Host an independent Dialogue](#). Food Systems Summit Dialogues offer a powerful opportunity for people everywhere to have a seat at the table at this milestone UN Summit. Dialogues bring together a diversity of stakeholders, and provide an important opportunity for participants to debate, collaborate, and take action towards a better future for food systems. Official Feedback from Independent Dialogues published on and before 17:59 CEST July 23, 2021, will feed into the synthesis report for Summit preparations.
3. [Attend Dialogues and have your voice heard!](#) A complete list of official Dialogues is available [here](#).
4. [Share about the importance of the Summit on your social media](#). The UN’s toolkit is just a start! Share your solutions and recommendations with the world and be sure to tag @FoodSystems and @CommunityLedDev and use #UNFSS2021!

Resources

- ❖ [Systems Thinking for Community-led Food Systems](#) by John Coonrod, PhD
- ❖ [Feminism and Food Systems](#) March 2021 MCLD Global Zoom Call, featuring Joanna Veltri, chief of the Americas Liaison office of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit and Asma Lateef, of the SDG 2 advocacy hub, of the Food Systems Summit and the upcoming Nutrition for Growth Summit.
- ❖ MCLD curated a series of Thought leadership pieces on Community-led Food Systems, beginning May 5, 2021. Read them [here](#)
- ❖ [Key takeaways](#) and [recording](#) from our Independent Dialogue: Building Resilient, Community-led Food Systems.