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# UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021

**“Transforming food systems is crucial for delivering all the Sustainable Development Goals.”**

— ANTONIO GUTERRES, UN Secretary-General

## CONTEXT

Rich or poor, young or old: Everyone needs to eat. Nutritious and safe food allows for healthy and productive lives. It’s as important as the air we breathe and the water we drink.

The term “food system” refers to the constellation of activities involved in producing, processing, transporting and consuming food. Food systems touch every aspect of human existence. The health of our food systems profoundly affects the health of our bodies, as well as the health of our environment, our economies and our cultures. When they function well, food systems have the power to bring us together as families, communities and nations.

But too many of the world’s food systems are fragile, unexamined, and vulnerable to collapse, as millions of people around the globe experienced first-hand during the COVID-19 crisis. When our food systems fail, the resulting disorder threatens our education, health and economy, as well as human rights, peace and security. As in so many cases, those who are already poor or marginalized are the most vulnerable. Some countries and regions face unique circumstances, which can increase their vulnerability.

In 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will convene a Food Systems Summit as part of the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. With only 10 years remaining, many of the 17 SDGs remain far out of reach. In many cases, unsafe or unsustainable food systems are part of the problem.

The UN Food Systems Summit will serve as a turning point in the world’s journey to achieve all the SDGs. We know what we need to do to get back on track: Scientists agree that transforming our food systems is among the most powerful ways to change course and realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda. Rebuilding the food systems of the world will also enable us to answer the UN Secretary-General’s call to “build back better” from COVID-19. We are all part of the food system, and so we all must come together to bring about the transformation that the world needs.



**UNITED NATIONS  
FOOD SYSTEMS  
SUMMIT 2021**

## VISION

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The need is urgent, and our ambition is high. The UN Food Systems Summit will launch bold new actions, solutions and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs, each of which relies to some degree on healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems. The Summit will awaken the world to the fact that we all must work together to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food.

**“We believe in a world where healthy, sustainable and inclusive food systems allow people and planet to thrive. It is a world without poverty or hunger, a world of inclusive growth, environmental sustainability and social justice. It is a resilient world where no one is left behind.”**

— AGNES KALIBATA, Special Envoy for the UN Food Systems Summit

## OBJECTIVES

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The Summit will pursue five specific objectives in support of its broader vision of delivering progress on all 17 SDGs:

1. **Ensuring access to safe and nutritious food for all** (enabling all people to be nourished and healthy, progressive realization of the right to food)
2. **Shifting to sustainable consumption patterns** (promoting and creating demand for healthy and sustainable diets, reducing waste)
3. **Boosting nature-positive production at sufficient scale** (acting on climate change, reducing emissions and increasing carbon capture, regenerating and protecting critical ecosystems and reducing food loss and energy usage, without undermining health or nutritious diets)
4. **Advancing equitable livelihoods and value distribution** (raising incomes, distributing risk, expanding inclusion, promote full and productive employment and decent work for all)
5. **Building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress** (ensuring the continued functionality of healthy and sustainable food systems)

## PREPARATORY PROCESS

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Preparations for the Summit are underway. This inclusive process is informed by the best evidence, ideas, initiatives and alliances from around the world. It also builds on the many existing global events, agreements, collaborations and platforms that already support the transformation of our food systems. In this context, the Summit has five priority work streams:

1. **Action tracks** will offer multi-stakeholder constituencies a space to share and learn, with a view to supercharging their progress by fostering new actions and partnerships and by amplifying existing initiatives. The initial action tracks are aligned with the Summit’s five objectives, as listed above. Actors in these tracks will be called on to explore key cross-cutting levers of change such as governance, finance, data, the empowerment of women and young people, culture and innovation.
2. **Food systems dialogues** in all parts of the world will provide an opportunity for governments and communities to discuss their food systems and identify ways they might be strengthened. This approach will allow the Summit to meet communities where they are in their food systems discussions.
3. **Advocacy, communications and mobilization** efforts will engage a wide range of constituencies to raise awareness, shape the narrative and inspire action on food systems in support of the SDGs. This will include a robust online and media presence, as well as strategic coalitions to drive a global movement toward and beyond the Summit.
4. **Knowledge and policy** efforts will enable the Summit to facilitate, collect and further develop the science to underpin the Summit’s vision, positions, recommendations and actions. Those working in this stream will ensure that action tracks, food systems dialogues, the Scientific Group and other initiatives are linked.
5. **A powerful digital platform** will provide a universally accessible, dynamic and inclusive platform where the Summit process will be accessible 24/7. It will support knowledge management across all work streams; enable outreach, mobilization and coordination of different stakeholder groups; and track contributions and actions to support the Summit.

## OUTCOMES

The above work streams will culminate in the Summit in late 2021. The entire process will result in the following outcomes:

1. **Significant action and commitment to action**, with measurable outcomes and impact that enable achievement of the SDGs by 2030. This will include highlighting existing solutions and celebrating leaders in food systems transformation, as well as calling for new actions worldwide by different actors, including countries, cities, companies, civil society, citizens, and food producers.
2. **Dramatically elevated public discourse** about the importance of food systems leading to the achievement of the SDGs and how to get the public working for people and planet.
3. **A high-level set of principles** established through the process that will guide Member States and other stakeholders to leverage their food systems capacity to support the SDGs. Distilled through all elements of the preparatory process, these principles will set an optimistic and encouraging vision in which food systems play a central role in building a fairer, more sustainable world.
4. **A system of follow-up and review** that will drive new actions and results; allow for the sharing of experiences, lessons and knowledge; and incorporate new metrics for impact analysis.



## SUPPORT STRUCTURES

The UN Secretary-General has put in place several structures to support the Summit process.

- **The Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the UN Food Systems Summit**, Dr. Agnes Kalibata, provides leadership, guidance and strategic direction for the Summit. The Special Envoy is responsible for cooperating with key leaders, including governments and other strategic stakeholder groups, to galvanize action and leadership for the Summit.
- **The Advisory Committee** provides strategic guidance and feedback on the Summit's overall development and implementation. The committee is chaired by the UN Deputy Secretary-General and comprises Member State representatives, as well as senior officials of relevant UN agencies, other international organizations and a wide range of individual experts, including farmers, indigenous peoples, civil society, researchers, academics, young people and business leaders.
- **The Scientific Group** is an independent group of leading researchers and scientists from around the world. The members of the Scientific Group are responsible for ensuring the robustness, breadth and independence of the science that underpins the Summit and its outcomes.
- **The UN Task Force** seeks to ensure that the Summit can build on the knowledge and unique capabilities of the entire UN system to deliver on the food systems agenda beyond the Summit.
- **The Champions Network** serves to mobilize a large and diverse group of stakeholders representing a broad range of constituencies in every region of the world to call for a transformation of the world's food systems. The Champions Network will inspire and facilitate coordinated action before, during and after the Summit.
- **The Summit Secretariat** is responsible for supporting the efforts of the Special Envoy as well as each of the Summit's support structures. The Secretariat is headquartered in Nairobi, with the Special Envoy; it also has satellite offices in Rome.