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IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA

PATHWAYS FOR THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Independent Food Systems Summit Dialogues



FOOD SYSTEMS
SUMMIT 2021
DIALOGUES



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Convened by FAO, CIHEAM, UfMS, the One Planet Network's Sustainable Food Systems
Programme and PRIMA Foundation

27 April 2021

21 June 2021

PATHWAYS FOR THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

CONCEPT NOTE

Context: the UN Food Systems Summit and its preparatory process

The UN Secretary-General has called for a Food Systems Summit to unleash the power of food and deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In preparing for the Summit, a diverse range of stakeholders are invited to **identify the most powerful ways to make food systems more sustainable** and to indicate how they will contribute to making this vision a reality for all. The [Food Systems Summit Dialogues \(FSSDs\)](#) will serve this purpose, being conceived as thoroughly organized events where a broad and diverse range of stakeholders explore the challenges faced in food systems, reflect on the [Summit's objectives](#), and learn from the perspective of others who participate in order to make change happen.

Within this framework, the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (**CIHEAM**), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (**FAO**), the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean (**UfMS**), the One Planet Network's Sustainable Food Systems Programme (**OPN-SFSP**) and the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area (**PRIMA**) Foundation, will jointly convene **two Independent Food Systems Summit Dialogues** with the aim of fostering a broader common understanding of the complex environment of Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) for coping with the growing and interdependent challenges facing the Mediterranean region.

Rationale

Food systems are not on track to deliver on food security, nutrition and sustainability; they are the main driver of environmental degradation, and they are failing to provide decent livelihoods to large parts of the population in a context of increasing disparities and the advent of climate breakdown. These unprecedented challenges are complex and deeply interrelated, and thus require **solutions that are systemic and dynamic**, that go beyond single disciplinary approaches and actively engage the voices of food systems stakeholders.

The **Mediterranean region** is no exception to this: population growth, demographic changes, urbanization and globalization are changing consumption and production patterns, in a context of climate change and decline of ecosystems. Today, more than ever, the region is facing **unprecedented and interdependent environmental, economic and social challenges** that affect food security, health, nutrition, sustainability, and, thus, the livelihoods of all people across the Mediterranean. However, countries do share the common precious heritage of the **Mediterranean Diet**, which constitutes a powerful lever for bridging food consumption and production to accelerate food systems transformation in the whole region.

Tackling food system transformation in the Mediterranean region is a very complex and dynamic process that requires considering sustainable food systems as a whole rather than in separate pieces, going beyond disciplinary approaches and silos. Policy-makers are constrained to take into consideration a web of **interconnected and interdependent components**, within a decision-making environment concerning food systems that is very fragmented, with a wide range of voices from different interest groups and agendas, with diverse institutional and agro-ecological constraints in countries and territories on all shores of the Mediterranean.

A **holistic SFS approach**, context-specific for the Mediterranean and with multi-dimensional perspectives, is urgently needed to cut across sectors and create synergies overcoming the “silo” effect. Getting there will certainly require new forms of innovative, **multi-stakeholder dialogue and multi-dimensional knowledge sharing** which will support the acceleration of food systems transformation on the Northern and Southern/Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, simultaneously advancing progress on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

The “SFS-MED” Independent Food Systems Summit Dialogues (SFS-MED FSSDs)

Convened as a Mediterranean multi-stakeholder and multi-disciplinary forum for scientific, technical and policy dialogue, the SFS-MED FSSDs are expected to highlight collaborative and science-based **pathways leading to the transformation of food systems in the Mediterranean** towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda goals, directly contributing to the Summit’s vision and objectives. The two dialogues will link the [outcomes of the 2nd World Conference on the Revitalization of the Mediterranean Diet](#) (May 2019) and the [recommendations of the 3rd Global Conference of the OPN-SFSP](#) (November-December 2020) to the Summit’s [Action Tracks](#) and [Levers of Change](#). A **diversity of stakeholders** will come together to jointly identify concrete and cross-cutting solutions to face the Mediterranean-specific challenges.

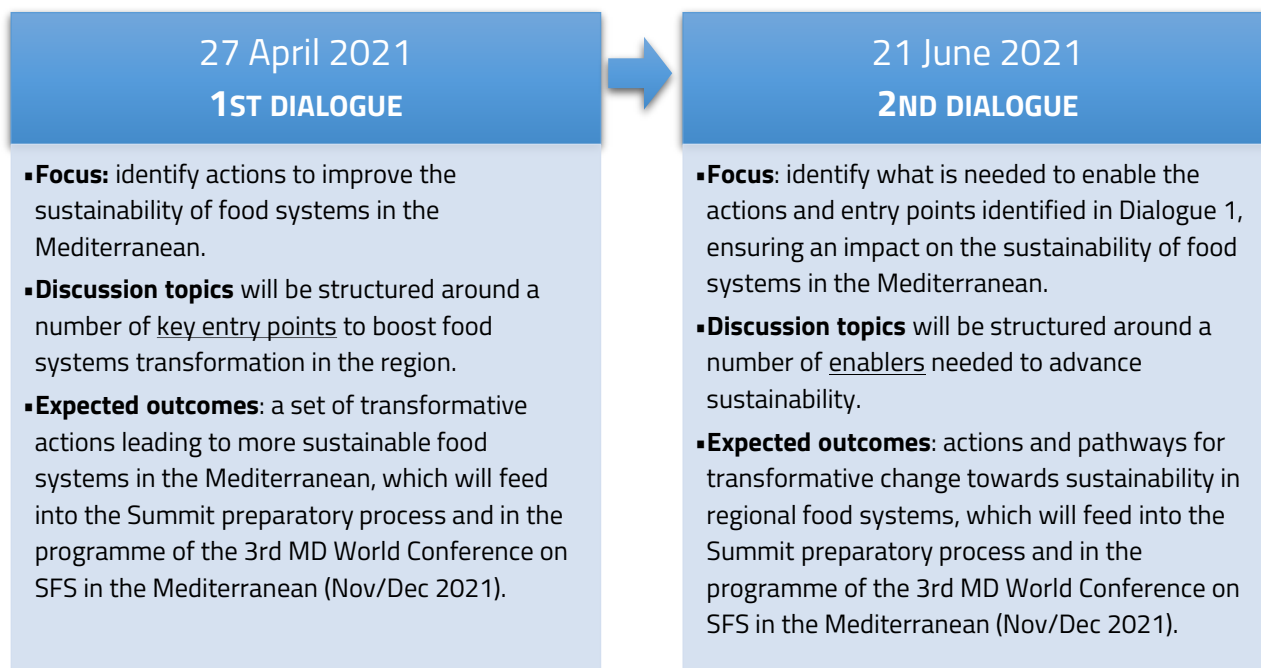
A **standardized approach** will be used, which ensures that each dialogue engages a diversity of participants in productive and purposeful discussions, has a clear focus and offers topics in line with the Summit’s objectives, provides qualitative and quantitative outcomes, which will ultimately be uploaded on the Summit Dialogues gateway, also becoming a deep resource for researchers and practitioners on food systems for the decade ahead.

The first SFS-MED Independent Dialogue is expected to:

- Ensure a deeper **understanding of the interconnections and interdependences within Mediterranean food systems** at every stage (from production, processing, distribution, marketing to the consumption of food, including food waste), based on consolidated scientific evidence and local knowledge.
- Catalyse **joint action**, using the Mediterranean Diet as lever to improve the sustainability and resilience of Mediterranean food systems, by bridging Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP).
- **Engage a wide network of food systems stakeholders** within the broader frameworks of green, blue and circular economy, to design future scenarios of sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean region.

The SFS-MED UNFSS Dialogues are expected to be linked as well to the outcomes of **Member State Dialogues** in the region, to provide Mediterranean countries and stakeholders with key elements, to formulate their pathways towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030, within a wider regional SFS approach.

The two SFS-MED Independent Dialogues will be developed as follows:



The SFS-MED FSSDs will also contribute to setting the stage for the **inception of the SFS-MED Platform**, a multi-stakeholder initiative currently under co-development by CIHEAM, FAO and UfMS as an affiliated project of the OPN-SFSP. By means of its collaborative nature, the Platform will develop a **context-specific framework for collaboration and cooperation on sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean**. The SFS-MED FSSDs will be instrumental in collectively building the Platform’s **programme of work** for the coming years.

