

OACPS, FAO and partners discuss challenges and solutions for food systems ahead of UN Summit

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2021/OACPS/FAO: Given that most of its 79 members are Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries or Small Island Developing States, the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) is looking forward to the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) as an opportunity to rethink and find appropriate solutions to address many of these countries' systemic issues and challenges related to their sustainable development.

This was a widely held view by participants at the UN Food Systems Intergovernmental Dialogue led by the OACPS and co-convened by the FAO Liaison Office in Brussels, which included interventions from several Ambassadors and representatives of OACPS Member States, the UNFSS Secretariat, EU, regional and international organizations, civil society, the private sector and youth representatives from Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific.

While mindful of the five action tracks guiding the UNFSS and designed to promote a systems approach to transforming food systems, the dialogue focused on ensuring access to safe and nutritious food and building resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress.

After a short introduction by OACPS Assistant Secretary-General for the Environment and Climate Action Cristelle Pratt, OACPS Secretary-General George Rebelo Chikoti highlighted the need to "address some of the most pressing environmental and public health concerns related to food production and consumption in our countries and regions. By extension, we would make significant contributions to global efforts to transform food systems," he added.

In a keynote speech, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Congo Paul Valentin Ngobo emphasized his concern regarding the interlinkages between conflict and hunger, since these affect several dimensions of food systems: food supply, food security, food transport and access to healthy diets, with a deep impact, particularly in rural areas.

The event also saw the participation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the 2021 Food Systems Summit Agnes Kalibata. She delved into opportunities of the UNFSS for improved agrifood systems in OACPS Member States and flagged the UNFSS Science Days and Pre-Summit, due to be held later in July, as important events in the run-up to the UNFSS itself in September.

In a recorded video message, Minister for Development Cooperation ad interim of the Republic of Slovenia Stanislav Raščan provided perspectives on how the European Union can work with the OACPS to achieve sustainable food systems around the globe. The Government of Slovenia currently holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Deputy Director-General of the European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships Marjeta Jager underlined the importance of international and interregional cooperation to achieve food system transformation, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

The session followed with interactive panel discussions led by three different UN agencies and regional organizations, which included fruitful exchanges and interventions by Ambassadors to the EU from Barbados, Côte D'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Suriname and Zambia, as well as from the Chair of UNFSS Action Track 1 and Executive Chair of non-profit EAT, Gunhild Stohalen, and the Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, Gerda Verburg.

The first of three panels focused on sustainable value chains and the production of 'blue' and 'green' food. In this session, FAO Chief Economist Máximo Torero Cullen observed that "we need to achieve blue transformation, so that we can continue

to feed our growing population with nutritious food”.

The second panel discussion, chaired by the World Health Organization (WHO), addressed ‘Food systems for health and wellbeing’ and included interventions by the Director-General of the Pacific Community Stuart Minchin and WHO Technical Officer Temo Waqanivalu. Food systems resilience was on the agenda at the third and final panel discussion, where Director of the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Liaison Office in Geneva Ricardo Mena and Technical Specialist in Agriculture of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Lench Fevrier provided insightful remarks.

Wrapping up the event, the Chair of the OACPS Committee of Ambassadors and Ambassador of Solomon Islands in Brussels, His Excellency Moses Mose reminded the audience “that fostering sustainable food systems has strong links with most of the Sustainable Development Goals”. The Liaison Officer of FAO Brussels Paulo de Lima, who was representing FAO Brussels Director ad interim Rodrigo de Lapuerta, concluded that “OACPS Member States need solid multistakeholder investment to achieve food system transformations”.

A recording of the session is available [here](#) [1]

See the event announcement and video [here](#) [2]

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[1] <https://www.dropbox.com/s/84kjtccc9jy2r7/ACP%20Recording1.mp4?dl=0>

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