



Action Track Discussion Starter

Action Track 5 – Build Resilience to Vulnerabilities, Shocks and Stresses

1. What do we want to achieve?

Action Track 5 will propose actions to ensure that food systems, which are affected by conflict, environmental and economic shocks and stresses, can maintain functionality, recover from the effects of harmful events, and improve to a better-off state. These actions include a focus “productive disruption” in the context of global challenges – such as the health pandemics, biodiversity loss and the global climate crisis.

The ambition behind Action Track 5 is to ensure that food systems from land to waste are regenerative and circular where possible thus more resilient to future shocks. That all individuals and institutions engaged in the functioning and governance of food systems are empowered to prepare for, withstand, and recover from instability and participate in a food system that, despite shocks and stressors, delivers food and nutrition security and equitable livelihoods for all whilst ensuring the healthy soil and water ecosystems for continued food system resilience. The resilience of food systems needs to be strengthened in such a way that the economic, social and environmental foundations to produce sufficient healthy food and maintain healthy ecosystems for current and future generations are not compromised. It demands a comprehensive approach that integrates responses to climate, biodiversity loss, conflict, epidemics, economic crises, food insecurity and malnutrition and structural inequalities.

Achieving this will require a three-pronged fully integrated focus on food systems:

- Being equitable and inclusive (economic resilience);
- Producing broad-based benefits for all people (social resilience); and
- Generating positive and regenerative impacts on the natural environment (environmental resilience).

2. What are the key trade-offs and win-wins?

Over the next decade, food systems will face a complex challenge to deliver sufficient, safe and nutritious food for all in a context of crisis management and sustainable development. This entails providing equitable livelihoods to all actors along food value chains while at the same time ensuring access to healthy food, optimising distribution and productivity for those most in need, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preserving ecosystems and biodiversity. This track understands that the issues with food systems are not simple and will look into it from a holistic



approach taking into consideration full life cycle impacts, including social and cultural understanding and provide a win-win situation rather than compromising trade-offs between people-planet-prosperity.

In order to manage the complex trade-offs across the economic, political, social and environmental dimensions of food systems, a balance needs to be achieved between: immediate and sustainable long-term gains; rural and urban demands; diversifying and specializing functions; local and global needs; nutritious versus caloric intake; and intensified versus sustainable and regenerative use of natural resources.

Positive synergies and win-win scenarios can be found by strengthening coordination of international, national actors and local actors, targeting investments by the public and private sector towards food system and eco system resilience, developing policies to direct incentives at local and global levels, and implementing sustainable technology and production choices that reduce the negative impact of food production, processing, storage and transport on natural resources. Special importance would be given to strengthen the local food system as the COVID19 pandemic has shown how local and more sustainable food systems can ensure access to food when the global system fails. This entails a concept of resilience building that enables land to both bounce back better and guarantee food production for future generations.

3. What needs to be done?

Solutions need to be defined around cross cutting levers of joined-up policy reform, coordinated investment, accessible financing, innovation, traditional knowledge, governance, data and evidence, and empowerment of the most vulnerable. Efficiently enhancing resilience requires the following:

- **A systemic and nexus approach (multi-system, multi sectoral, multilevel, and multi-stakeholder)**

The resilience of people and community results from a combination of interlinked factors that are influenced by multiple systems, a variety of sectors and stakeholders, at different levels, and by a wide range of stakeholders. Consequently, this requires a holistic and intersectional approach to address the concurrent and multiple shocks as there is no single sector or system response option.

- **A twin-track approach linking emergency response to sustainable development**

Enhancing resilience in a comprehensive way requires addressing the immediate and acute needs in crisis and emergency situations alongside investing in long-term response to tackle the root causes of socio political and ecosystem vulnerabilities. This includes addressing and responding to risks instead of disasters and designing integrated food systems, which helps to anticipate, resist, recover and regenerate.

- **Strong local, country, and regional ownership and political leadership**

Political leadership is a prerequisite for successful complex programs requiring integrated system, multisectoral, multilevel, and multi-stakeholder approaches. A strong political



leadership at the local, regional and national -levels enables a favourable policy environment and facilitates integration of resilience-building programs across sectors and ministries (agriculture, health, trade, environment, climate, economic and so on).

- **A context-specific approach.**

Initiatives begin with an in-depth understanding of the cultural, environmental and socio-political context of each locality. This includes systems' weakness, people's needs and vulnerabilities, populations' and individuals' existing coping mechanisms, as well as environmental/ ecosystem specificity and social synergies, as key starting points to contextualize the intervention.

4. Foster Innovation and strengthening Partnerships

Food system transformation requires coordinated, multi-sector interventions that can only be achieved through strong partnerships with shared outcomes. Transformation will require both traditional and non-traditional partnerships to remove the barriers and initiate food systems transformation that enhances people's lives and livelihoods while guaranteeing healthy land-water-air. Innovations are needed in enhanced regenerative food system development, data availability for decision-making and community engagement, as well as for the technical aspects of food systems strengthening.

Actions to support food systems resilience should center around:

- (i) Investment in holistic food systems approaches addressing joint people-planet-prosperity aims;
- (ii) Identifying and addressing perverse subsidies and practices;
- (iii) Strengthen and increase capacity to monitor, measure and analyze vulnerability;
- (iv) Address inequality in access and utilization of resources, knowledge, assets, technology, markets/value chains;
- (v) Strengthen capacities and resources of stakeholders, including indigenous groups, women and youth to effectively engage at all points of the food system from producer to consumer
- (vi) Risk and security management at all levels – individual, community, government and systems.
- (vii) Coordinate policies, joint programming and investments (including aid) amongst all actors, with Governments in the lead

5. Factoring in context specificity

Actions and decisions aiming to increase the resilience of food systems will have different impacts in different geographical and development contexts depending on their agroecological and climatic setting, cultural aspects, government policies, private sector engagement, community participation and institutional capacities. There are wide differences in the determinants of resisting and recovering to the impact of shocks and stresses, reinforcing the fact that solutions cannot be "one size fits all". Different contexts must be considered: Countries across the humanitarian-development nexus, including fragile and transitioning settings; Food systems at



various phases of development from traditional to modern; Context-specific vulnerabilities to climate, socio-economic, human-social, cultural, environmental factors and biodiversity loss.

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