

TANZANIA'S PATH TO FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION



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Obey Nkya, Enock Musinguzi

KEY MESSAGES

- Tanzania's comprehensive process of holding national and subnational dialogues, which informed its pathway document for the United Nations Food Systems Summit, is evidence of a strong **political commitment to food systems transformation**.
- The need to address food systems issues **systemically**, avoiding work in silos or progress in one area driving setbacks in another, is increasingly recognised.
- Tanzania's people will benefit if the country lives up to these commitments to translate its pathway vision into an **action plan** with refined milestones and targets. GAIN looks forward to participating in this process.

TANZANIA HAS RECOGNISED THE NEED TO TRANSFORM ITS FOOD SYSTEM

In 2019, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), to be convened in 2021. The Summit aimed to accelerate the transformation of food systems, thereby delivering progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Strong engagement was encouraged from member states, including through Food Systems Summit Dialogues. All over the world, countries have held multi-stakeholder dialogues at national and subnational levels to surface and prioritise needs and actions to transform food systems for better health, prosperity, and resilience of people and planet. In over 100 countries, Tanzania included, dialogues resulted in a national food systems pathway document being published in advance of the UNFSS¹.

Like every country, Tanzania can benefit from a food systems approach. While it has made progress in reducing child undernutrition, with stunting levels among children under five declining from 42% in 2010 to around 32% in 2018², this level is still too high. Climate change brings further challenges as changes in rainfall and temperature patterns will impact Tanzania's largely rainfed agricultural production. Dietary diversity, livelihoods and resilience concerns, exacerbated by the global pandemic and rising fuel and food prices add to the complexity. Having to deal with a multitude of complex and interrelated food systems issues requires stakeholders to work together across different domains like health, nutrition, environment, livelihoods, and more – to avoid progress in one area driving setbacks in another.

TANZANIA'S NATIONAL DIALOGUES PROCESS

In 2021, Tanzania joined over 145 countries embarking on a journey of convening inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogues to engage around the vision of the UNFSS. In total, 12 multistakeholder dialogues were organised around the country, in both Tanzania's mainland and Zanzibar. More than 1,500 stakeholders participated in both physical and virtual meetings. Categories of stakeholders included the public sector at national and sub-national levels, representing the Prime Minister's Office, Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Health, Education, and Industry and Trade; the business community (including food vendors); smallholder farmers; youth; academia; UN organisations; and civil society

¹ See <https://summitdialogues.org/overview/member-state-food-systems-summit-dialogues/convenors/>

² See <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/eastern-africa/United-Republic-Tanzania/>

organisations. The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) team in Tanzania is proud to have played a role in supporting and facilitating these dialogues.

Sub-national dialogues were organised in different agro-ecological zones, including Northern Zone, lake Zone, Southern Highlands and Zanzibar, while dialogues in Arusha and Dodoma focused specifically on urban food systems. The dialogues were led by the National Convener, who is the Director of National Food Security at the Ministry of Agriculture. Attendance of members of parliament and Local Government Authority political leaders, including some city mayors, demonstrated political interest, which is essential for implementing the recommendations of the dialogues.

Attendance from members of parliament in the dialogues demonstrates political interest in food systems transformation.

NEXT STEPS: FROM PATHWAYS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the outcomes of the dialogues, Tanzania submitted its pathways for sustainable food systems 2030³ document in advance of the UNFSS. The actions presented in this pathway focus on six levers: 1) production and productivity in crop, livestock, and fisheries subsectors; 2) financing agriculture and private-sector involvement; 3) nutrition, healthy diets, and safe food for all; 4) climate change mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity protection; and 5) resilient food systems and livelihoods; and 6) a cross-cutting enabling lever including information and communications technology, gender, environment, equity, and research and development. Each lever explored game-changing actions, with milestones for 2025 and 2030.

The government has committed to several next steps. First, multi-stakeholder dialogues will continue to be held post-UNFSS⁴. The intention is for stakeholders to collectively develop an action plan on food systems transformation with refined milestones and results targets. Second, the government plans to mainstream commitments into existing government strategies, programmes, and implementation plans. Lastly, the government commits to monitor progress to ensure accountability.

GAIN and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) have joined forces to support the government to further develop its vision for food systems transformation. More in-depth food systems assessments are needed, in particular assessing the impact of climate change on food systems, as well as additional peer learning events and policy dialogues. Multi-

stakeholder food systems platforms acknowledging and including a role for the private sector also need to be established, all in collaboration with the government and contributing to developing the action plan. In addition to this work, it will be critical to ensure policy coherence in food systems to advance nutrition and other food systems goals, such as improved livelihoods, resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Image 1: A photo from the Zanzibar policy dialogue that took place in December 2021



Source: https://twitter.com/GAIN_TANZANIA

A CALL FOR CONTINUED ACTION

The challenges facing Tanzania's food system transformation journey are significant, but the rewards are potentially massive. To safeguard its people and environment, Tanzania must follow through on its bold ambitions to transform its food system in an inclusive, coherent, and accelerated way. At GAIN, we welcome and look forward to continuing to support the government on this critical and urgent journey.

³ See <https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/URT-FSS-PATHWAYS-14090202-DRAFT.pdf>

⁴ Two follow-up dialogues have already taken place in Zanzibar and Arusha in December 2021.