



REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

13 – 14 MARCH 2024 | HYBRID EVENT | GENEVA & ONLINE

SIDE EVENT CONCEPT NOTE

Event title

Food Systems Transformation as an Accelerator for the SDGs Implementation and Climate Action

Background and Rationale

Despite the diverse landscapes and climates across the Europe and Central Asia region, [at the UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment \(UNFSS+2\) Regional Preparatory Meeting in Europe and Central Asia \(ECA\) in 2023](#), Food Systems National Convenors recognized the interdependence of food systems and underscored the necessity for a paradigm shift. They highlighted pressing issues such as the crisis in Ukraine, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges posed by climate change.

The UNFSS+2 in 2023 provided a pivotal opportunity to advance sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the [UNFSS+2 Secretary-General's Call to Action](#) underscored the intricate connections between food systems transformation (FST) and climate action, emphasizing the detrimental environmental impacts of existing systems.

Furthermore, the COP28 Presidency has elevated the role of food systems in achieving the SDGs and Paris Agreement targets. The [COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action](#) prioritizes key food system objectives, such as aligning national food systems and agricultural policies with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) by 2025. With the endorsement of 159 countries, this declaration aims to secure the commitment of Heads of State and Government that they will intend to implement these actions across their governments and with diverse stakeholders, as appropriate within their national context, solidifying global ambition and firmly establishing food systems transformation as a prominent item on the climate agenda and within the COP process for years to come.

In this regard, a Strategic Partnership between the Hub and the UAE COP28 Presidency culminated in the development of the Convergence Initiative. This initiative aims to harness synergies between food systems transformation, climate action, and nutrition to foster climate-smart, people-centered, and nature-positive food systems in line with the 2030 Agenda and UNFSS+2 SG Call to Action.



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Session objectives and expected outcomes

The main objectives of the event will be:

- Exchange on the essential steps required at both national and regional levels to effect transformative changes in food systems. Emphasis will be placed on aligning these efforts with climate action, fostering resilience, and enhancing food security and nutrition.
- Build strategically upon the conclusions drawn from global processes such as UNFSS+2, the SDGs Summit, and COP28, while also leveraging insights and interconnectedness from regional conferences and frameworks such as the EU Farm to Fork, and Samarkand Declaration and the recent communique from the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin.
- Discuss the possible expected outcomes of COP29 in Azerbaijan, to prepare countries in the region, following the momentum of food systems announcements aligned to the Emirates Declaration.
- Foster regional knowledge sharing and collaboration using policy convergence, tools available, and case studies for the implementation of national pathways.
- Serve as a platform for governments, national convenors, and the wider stakeholder ecosystem to spotlight the strides they've taken in fulfilling their commitments to transform food systems and climate action.

Organizers

Lead organizers: UN Food Systems Coordination Hub & Issue-based Coalition for Sustainable Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia

Contributors: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)



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Agenda and Structure

Time frame: 8:15 – 9:45 am. 90 mins

Timeframe	Topic
8:15 – 8:23 (8 mins)	Opening
8:23 – 8:30 (7 mins)	Setting the scene: Outcomes of the UNFSS+2 and the way forward (including main outcomes of the SDG Summit and the COP28 related to food systems).
8:30 – 8:35 (5 mins)	Main key points and outcomes of the regional convenors meeting on March 12.
Panel discussion session	
8:35 – 9:25 (40 mins)	Implications of these outcomes, the way forward, and the call to action for the Europe and Central Asia region
Roundtable session	
9:25 – 9:35 (20 mins)	Convergence of climate action and food systems transformation initiatives: The UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action, and its roadmap for COP29.
9:35 – 9:45 (10 mins)	Wrap-up and closure



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List of Panellists

1. *Mr. Dmitry Maryasin. Deputy Executive Secretary. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).*
2. *Ms. Sylvia Ekra. Deputy Director of the UN Food Systems Hub.*
3. *Representative of UN Issue-Based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems in Europe and Central Asia (TBC).*
4. *Mr. Arman Khojoyan. Deputy Minister. Ministry of Economy. Armenia. (on behalf of the convenors from the region)*

Panel 1: Panel discussion through guiding questions.

Moderator: Khaled Eltaweel. Senior Programme Coordinator. UN Food Systems Hub.

1. *Dr. Francesco Branca. WHO Director Nutrition and Food Safety.*
2. *Mr. Alwin Kopse. Head International Affairs and Food Security. Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG). Switzerland.*
3. *Dr. Lucy Wallace, Chief of Staff, European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT)*
4. *Ms. Hannah van Zanten, Full Professor of Farming Systems Ecology group, Wageningen University and Visiting Professor, Department of Global Development, Cornell University.*
5. *Ms. Rosemary Brotchie, Senior Manager of Health & Sustainability, Consumer Goods Forum*

Panel 2: Roundtable with guiding questions.

Moderator: Dr Radics Kornelia, Director of the WMO Regional Office for Europe on behalf of the IBC-SFS

1. *Mr. David Nabarro, Strategic Director of the 4SD Foundation*
2. *Ms. Liliana Martin. Head of the Public Policy Coordination and European Integration Department. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry. Moldova.*
3. *Youth Representative: Mr. Alexis Balimann. Switzerland Climate Youth Delegate.*

Sign-up / Registration Link

https://fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UkQjVoMzR6ClpttM8uMHUg#/registration