

UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021

SCIENCE DAYS

Highlights note – Side Event to the Science Days of UNFSS (July 6, 2021)

Strengthening international research cooperation on food systems



- Reaching a large-scale transformation of food systems within less than a decade requires an unprecedented worldwide research and innovation effort.
- However, universities and public research organizations leading food system research in each world region do not yet cooperate internationally at a strategic level.
- Such a strategic cooperation could be a game changer to scale out research, innovation and capacity building and to deliver actionable knowledge supporting food systems transformation.
- An international alliance (or network) of the main universities and public research organizations working in each world region on food systems transformation could be launched. It would develop a joint vision and a mission statement.
- A lean design is essential to maximize benefits and minimize costs. All member organizations would be on equal footing and a revolving presidency could be adopted.
- This alliance would share best practices and raise funding to train next generation leaders on food systems, support interdisciplinary research, modeling and foresights, as well as the co-design of place-based innovation with multiple stakeholders.
- Building on existing initiatives (including those presented during the side event: Agrifood 5 Alliance; African excellence center on food systems; Alliance for food production and quality; Global Research Alliance on agricultural greenhouse gases) would be needed;
- Cooperation with research agencies (e.g. through the Belmont Forum programs), development agencies, foundations, governments (e.g. through the European Commission programs) and private sector would support the development of this alliance (or network);
- In autumn 2021, a meeting of heads of universities and of research organizations from different world regions will be convened to further discuss these options.