



Global Donor Platform  
for Rural Development



# The increasing imperative for resilient food systems in times of crisis: What can donors do?

An event organized by the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)

20 April 2022 - 14:30 p.m. - 16:30 p.m. CET

## 1 BACKGROUND

The UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) underscored the need for the transformation of global food systems. Central to this transformation is a requirement of greater **resilience** in food systems to ensure sufficient access to nutritious foods, even in times of crisis. This is particularly relevant now, given that Covid-19 triggered a rise in global hunger, from 8.4 to 9.9 percent of the population, in just one year<sup>1</sup>. While the immediate effects of the pandemic are finally starting to fade and recovery begins, new crises are now in view as food prices in February 2022 reached the highest levels ever recorded<sup>2</sup>. Further, the conflict in Ukraine and associated sanctions are impacting oil prices and grain flows, which will lead to further increases in food prices. As seen in the 2011 food price crisis, there is significant potential for civil unrest in places where staple food prices starkly increase. In fact, the lack of global coordination in 2011 exacerbated the increase in prices, and the consequent conflicts led to the deterioration of trade and escalation of the crisis.

The newly released GDPRD white paper on **“Transforming Food Systems - Directions for Enhancing the Catalytic Role of Donors”** will be presented during this event.

While consumers in the Global North can often absorb these current price increases, in low- and middle-income countries millions of people are pushed into hunger and poverty, which will make the target of Zero Hunger by 2030 (sustainable development goal 2- SDG2) even more difficult to achieve. With three failed rainy seasons, 13 million people are now battling hunger in the Horn of Africa<sup>3</sup>, and acute malnutrition is exceeding the 15 percent emergency

<sup>1</sup> SOFI, 2021 (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4474en/>).

<sup>2</sup> FAO, 2022 (<https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/fao-food-price-index-rises-to-record-high-in-february/en>).

<sup>3</sup> WFP, 2022 (<https://www.wfp.org/news/13-million-people-facing-severe-hunger-drought-grips-horn-africa>).



threshold in many parts of West and Central Africa<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately, Ukraine and Russia are both major suppliers of grains for these regions, meaning that these already food insecure areas will be further compromised. Additionally, many countries in the Middle East and Asia also import up to half their cereals from Russia and Ukraine<sup>5</sup>. The global community must therefore combat this increasing food insecurity in the Global South, alongside the conflict and associated massive refugee influx from Ukraine.

## 2 THE ROLE OF THE DONOR COMMUNITY

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The FSS demonstrated the critical importance of donor coordination for driving the changes necessary to make food systems more resilient. Coordination was critical during the past two years of the pandemic, and it is now clear that crises will continue for the foreseeable future, with massive impacts on rural development and food systems, due to conflict and climate. Improving resilience in food systems is therefore essential for the health and security of people across the globe. **In both the short- and long-term, global donors can use their catalytic and leveraging potential to effectively support food systems transformation and resilience.**

The current crises highlight even more **why** food systems transformation is necessary, and makes the need for improved resilience evident. There is growing acknowledgement of **what** is necessary to achieve healthy diets, zero hunger, decent earnings for all food system actors, the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, and climate adaptation and mitigation. The White Paper on “Transforming Food Systems - Directions for Enhancing the Catalytic Role of Donors”, just released by the GDPRD, attempts to provide clear directions on **how** food systems transformation can be realized.

The white paper has three overarching implications for donors:

1. **Coordination, alignment, integration and coherence:** Food systems transformation will not be achieved without coordination among actors, alignment of investments and initiatives, integration across sectors and a commitment to policy coherence.
2. **Tackling the structural barriers to change:** To be effective in supporting food systems transformation, donors will need to pay more attention to the structural barriers and enabling conditions for change, and the associated power dynamics of differing stakeholder interests.
3. **Adopting a systemic approach:** The FSS has made explicit the importance of a systems approach in addressing food-related issues and development challenges. It means accepting and working with the complexity and uncertainty inherent in intervening in human and natural systems and managing in a flexible, adaptive and learning-oriented way.

It is critical that donors use their catalytic potential to foster food systems transformation, particularly for improved resilience. The white paper outlines seven key ways in which donors can achieve this:

1. **Strengthening coordination** among donors and other actors to support national pathways for food systems transformation;
2. **Mobilizing responsible investment** in food systems from the public and private sectors;
3. **Promoting engagement of private sector** actors and value chain innovation for sustainable development;
4. Supporting **policy innovation**;
5. Investing in **research** and data systems;
6. Strengthening **governance** for food systems transformation; and
7. Strengthening **universal social protection mechanisms**, disaster preparedness and emergency relief programmes.

Through these seven points, the white paper attempts to provide guidance on how this can be achieved. The opportunity is now to consider how donors can support proactive and long-term measures, which lead to resilient food systems, and avoid the need for reactive, emergency assistance measures during times of crisis.

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<sup>4</sup> WFP, 2021 ([https://www.wfp.org/news/conflict-economic-fragility-and-rising-food-prices-drive-hunger-west-and-central-africa#:~:text=In%20the%20Sahel%20and%20West,CH\)%20report%20on%20food%20security](https://www.wfp.org/news/conflict-economic-fragility-and-rising-food-prices-drive-hunger-west-and-central-africa#:~:text=In%20the%20Sahel%20and%20West,CH)%20report%20on%20food%20security)).

<sup>5</sup> IFAD, 2022 ([https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/impacts-of-ukraine-conflict-on-food-security-already-being-felt-in-the-near-east-north-africa-region-and-will-quickly-spread-warns-ifad?p\\_l\\_back\\_url=/en/web/latest/news](https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/impacts-of-ukraine-conflict-on-food-security-already-being-felt-in-the-near-east-north-africa-region-and-will-quickly-spread-warns-ifad?p_l_back_url=/en/web/latest/news)).



### 3 THE EVENT

The virtual event on “*The increasing imperative for resilient food systems in times of crisis: What Can Donors Do?*” will take place on **20 April 2022, from 14:30 to 16:30 p.m. (CET)**. The event will have the following objectives:

- a) Discuss the directions of donor assistance to improve resilience in agriculture, rural development and food systems;
- b) Understand how the deliberations of the Food Systems Summit contribute to development thinking in times of crises, when food prices are soaring and agricultural value chains are increasingly disrupted;
- c) Assess and discuss modalities for donor cooperation and coordination for food systems resilience.

#### 3.1 PARTICIPANTS/AUDIENCE

The virtual event will encourage participation from all geographic regions, with representation from governments, international organizations, agribusiness companies, academic and research organizations, think tanks, civil society, farmers’ organizations and others.

#### 3.2 EVENT ORGANIZERS AND CORE PARTNERS

The GDPRD Secretariat will organize the event, under the leadership of the Platform Board, which will contribute to the event’s design and organization, including by: mobilizing participants and speakers; reviewing background documents to facilitate dialogue at the event; identifying authoritative individuals as possible speakers and panellists, or making other forms of contributions.

### 4 PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Time	Description
14:30-14:40	<b>OPENING</b> , by GDPRD Co-Chairs
14:40-15:10	<b>KEYNOTE</b> , by <b>Jennifer Clapp</b> , Professor, University of Waterloo and Vice-Chair, High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the UN Committee on World Food Security ( <b>confirmed</b> )
15:10-16:20	<p><b>MODERATED PANEL</b></p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> <b>Henry Bonsu</b>, International Broadcaster and Media Consultant (<b>confirmed</b>)</p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rhoda Peace Tumusiime</b>, Former Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, African Union Commission and Chairperson, HOPE (<b>confirmed</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Satu Santala</b>, Associate Vice-President for External Relations and Governance, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (<b>confirmed</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Martin Bwalya</b>, Ag Director, Knowledge Management and Programme Evaluation, Africa Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) (<b>confirmed</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Leonard Mizzi</b>, Head of Unit, Sustainable Agri-Food Systems and Fisheries, Directorate-General International Partnerships (DG INTPA), European Commission (<b>confirmed</b>)</li> <li>• <b>Jim Woodhill</b>, Director of AgriFoodNexus Consulting and Honorary Research Associate (<b>confirmed</b>)</li> </ul>
16:20-16:30	<b>CLOSING</b> , by Maurizio Navarra, GDPRD Secretariat Coordinator