



Global Donor Platform
for Rural Development

MINUTES

SENIOR MANAGERS MEETING

7 SEPTEMBER 2021

PARTICIPANTS

Senior managers

- Dominik Ziller – IFAD
- Andrew Egan – Australia
- Satu Santala - Finland
- Wilma van Esch – The Netherlands
- Jim Barnhart – USAID
- Nicolas Fairise – France
- Leonard Mizzi – European Commission
- Fiona Becker – Germany

Board members

- Conrad Rein – GDPRD Co-Chair
- Tristan Armstrong - GDPRD Co-Chair
- Ron Hartman – IFAD
- Sanna-Liisa Taivalmaa – Finland
- Manon Bellon - France

- Maurizio Bonavia – Italy
- Bruce Campbell – Switzerland
- Chris de Nie – The Netherlands
- Sung Lee – USAID
- Fabrizio Moscatelli – Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

GDPRD Secretariat

- Jim Woodhill – Consultant
- Kristal Jones – Consultant
- Maurizio Navarra
- Michelle Tang
- Alessandro Cordova
- Lise Saga
- Petronilla Wandeto

AGENDA

Time	Item
1	Introduction and welcome , by the Co-Chairs
2	Framing session: The role of donors in the current and future food systems architecture Moderator: Ron Hartman, Director, Global Engagement, Partnership and Resource Mobilization, IFAD Included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation of the GDPRD Strategic Plan 2021-2025 Followed by Q&A by senior managers
3	Thematic session 1: A coordinated donor response to the outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit (UN FSS) and the role for the GDPRD. Moderator: Jim Woodhill, Senior Policy Advisor, GDPRD Secretariat Included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of the stocktaking report on past donor support for food systems• Discussion on the Declaration of Intent on Food Systems Transformation• Discussion of key elements of GDPRD white paper for responding to FSS Followed by Q&A by senior managers
4	Thematic session 2: Implementing the GDPRD strategy and optimizing its value add for the coming 3 years Moderators: Co-Chairs of the GDPRD <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectations of members• Priority areas for attention• Key opportunities for donor coordination/alignment through GDPRD
5	Wrap up, by the Co-Chairs Closure of meeting

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. INTRODUCTION

[GDPRD Co-Chair, Conrad Rein]

- Established in 2003, the GDPRD recently underwent a reform process, which reinforced the Platform's strategic influencing role, to foster engagement between donors involved in rural development and food systems.
- Outcomes from this reform process and review were incorporated into a new strategic plan, a key conclusion of which was the need to have stronger engagement of senior managers in the Platform's work. This is now supported through an annual Senior Managers Meeting.
- Increasing attention on food systems and the upcoming UN FSS placed this Senior Managers Meeting at an important juncture, with increased focus on the linkages between poverty, rural development, food systems and climate change. Much more coordinated and cross-sectoral efforts will be expected from donors as they respond to the outcomes of the UN FSS. The Platform can, therefore, help align views across the donor community.
- Based on this context, the objectives of this Senior Managers Meeting are three-fold:
 1. Discuss the changing role of donors in supporting food systems transformation and achievement of the SDGs;
 2. Develop a framework for an aligned donor response to the outcomes of the UN FSS, and agree on the role of the GDPRD; and
 3. Clarify pathways and opportunities to realize the potential of the GDPRD and deliver on the objectives of its new strategy.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

[IFAD]

- The food systems framing demonstrates the need to take a more integrated view of the centrality of food to all development issues. Donors will have to look much more closely at the interactions, trade-offs and synergies across the traditional silos in food systems.
- Food systems are not the only cross-cutting issue. We need other issues to also move away from operating in silos.
- Coordination of donor funding and initiatives is even more critical under a food systems approach.
- However, donor coordination is always a challenge. It is hampered by the trend towards more bilateral initiatives at the expense of multilateral cooperation (Duke Report, 2020).
- It is impossible to effectively work on the food systems agenda without effective coordination at the national, regional and global levels.
- To be effective, donor funding must capitalize on catalysing systemic changes and address underlying structural constraints.
- The GDPRD is one of the forums that can foster better coordination and harmonization of donor policies and strategies around food systems.

[Finland]

- Pleased to see the work of the GDPRD.
- Donors need to work holistically and connect the different dots in the role donors have in moving the food systems agenda forward.

[Australia]

- Australia has had a long association with the Platform and looks forward to the discussions with other senior managers, particularly in regard to the additional work the Platform can do in the lead up to and after the UN FSS.

[Netherlands]

- Very interested in discussions on the role of donors ahead and after the UN FSS.

[USAID]

- The GDPRD is a very unique platform, due to its ability to bring donors together to discuss their strategies and interests around food systems.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has been a reminder that the hard-fought gains over the past decades can be threatened. It is therefore more important than ever for donors to get together in discussions such as this.

[European Commission]

- It is a very timely juncture for the Platform's members to reconvene.
- The Platform needs to show how it will follow up on the outcomes of the UN FSS in a targeted way.
- The Platform's membership can be expanded, while also devising ways to form strategic partnerships within and beyond its membership.
- We need to take stock and track what the donor community is going to do in the post-Covid-19 context. This stocktaking should examine whether food and nutrition security remains at the core of donor priorities and portfolios.
- Donors should not only pay lip service to the issues that will be discussed, but also follow up with coordinated resource commitments in the coming years.

[France]

- More discussions on food systems are needed ahead of the UN FSS and more so on actions that will be taken afterwards.

[Switzerland]

- It will be important to intertwine the outcomes from the UN FSS with those from the upcoming COP 26. Donor coordination will therefore become even more crucial as donors combine the challenge of food systems transformation with climate change mitigation.

[Germany]

- Germany appreciates the Platform's role in the alignment of donor investments and activities with the expected outcomes of the UN FSS, particularly against the backdrop of intensifying debates over the need for more systematic approaches in combating hunger and poverty.
- The Donor Declaration of Intent on food systems transformation captures these relevant pathways.

[Italy]

- Congratulations to the Platform Secretariat for organizing this event.

2. FRAMING SESSION: THE ROLE OF DONORS IN THE CURRENT AND FUTURE FOOD SYSTEMS ARCHITECTURE

[Moderator: Ron Hartman]

- We are on the cusp of the UN FSS, which opens many opportunities for tackling rural development in a wider context.
- Dialogues around the UN FSS have highlighted the need for better coordination, increased finance and innovation, as well as the review of what the international architecture around SDG 2 should look like in order to move forward a sustainable food systems transformation.

- Research, such as by CERES2030 and the DUKE Report, reveals there are needs to a doubling of aid to achieve zero hunger, while also complying with the Paris climate agreement.
- These reports and discussions highlight an increasing expectation of the role donors will play in influencing the global food systems architecture and in responding to the emerging outcomes from the UN FSS.
- The focus of this session will be on discussing how development partners can coordinate, to ensure that the vision of the UN FSS comes to fruition, to rectify the underinvestment in food systems to achieve zero hunger and other development goals. Additionally, the role that the Platform can play to support this coordination and collective action in delivering more effective and efficient results will be discussed.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

[Presentation: GDPRD Secretariat - Maurizio Navarra] – Presentation annexed

- Key considerations behind the development of this strategic plan:
 - Move of the Platform Secretariat host from GIZ to IFAD;
 - The global context which featured issues such as the climate and food systems crisis as well as the Covid-19 pandemic and the changing international aid architecture;
 - The need to look at the Platform's niche and value add to its members in order to focus its overall objectives;
 - The Platform's membership and contributions;
 - Services offered to members and operational issues such as funding, organization and communication.
- The changes involved:
 - A revision of the Platform's strategic orientation towards strategic influencing, knowledge sharing and networking, its role and functions;
 - An update of its membership framework;
 - An analysis of its outreach and communications;
 - A review of the Thematic Working Groups;
 - Streamlining the Secretariat's annual planning and budgeting.
- Proposed key annual activities:
 - Horizon scanning to identify emerging issues and set the Platform's agenda;
 - Senior Managers Meeting to link the Platform with members' policy making;
 - Annual General Assembly to connect with and influence a wider constituency.

DISCUSSION ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

What kind of coordination do you see going forward from the UN FSS and what role can the Platform potentially play?

[Finland]

- It is critical that the donor community does not turn inwards after the Summit. It should see its role as one that pushes key agendas together with other partners.
- It would be a false perspective that donor funding can solve the world's problems. It never can. It is therefore crucial to connect with other sectors such as civil societies, national governments and the private sector, whose roles are bigger in creating sustainable food systems.

- It is particularly important to coordinate around knowledge and advocacy, especially for partners who may not necessarily have the analytical capacity.
- Connecting the Platform with other collective initiatives such as the Team Europe Initiative is also useful in broadening coordination.

[France]

- It is hard, at this stage, to clearly grasp what the outcomes of the UN FSS will be, particularly with regards to follow up modalities.
- A food systems approach should not dilute previous efforts made towards food security and nutrition. It is important that donors are cautious that the adoption of a food systems approach does not lead to confusion, as it should strengthen synergies within existing structures and fora. This will necessitate the strengthening of existing institutions and increasing the prioritization among all multilateral institutions of food systems issues.
- Informal fora such as this Senior Managers Meeting where donors can exchange and align their views are crucial, and more actors should be invited to join.

[USAID]

- The Platform's new strategic orientation and structure is well geared towards helping its members clear the way for actors at the country level to effectively implement programmes in the field.
- The Strategic Plan's emphasis on the donor's catalytic role is particularly important in increasing private sector engagement in providing the solutions needed to address climate change and increase levels of food and nutrition security.

[European Commission]

- More collaborative platforms to share knowledge and ideas are needed.
- It is crucial to critically assess where the gaps are in the current food systems institutional architecture, particularly in the participation of major multi-lateral institutions.
- The focus of the Platform and its members needs to be on impact. This impact should also be demonstrable on the ground where it is most needed.
- For instance, there is a shortage of expertise on the ground level in core food systems and sustainability issues. The Platform is in a position to tap into and pool together such expertise from its membership.
- Strategic communication is a core element in effective donor coordination. There is currently a gap in how the global donor community communicates on key issues.

[Moderator - Ron Hartman]

What are the Platform secretariat's responses to:

- a. The importance of strategic influencing and the impact that the Platform has in this regard and how the Platform will move forward in ensuring coordination among partners.
- b. The constraints that members face and the opportunities that exist in highbred collaborative approaches.
- c. The gaps in participation: What is the Platform secretariat doing to get more partners on the table?
- d. Strategic communication with and among members on key areas of interest.

[GDPRD Co-Chair - Tristan Armstrong]

- Donor organizations are increasingly stretched as they respond to more local and regional crises in food security and beyond. Carving out the resources and time requires a mindful commitment, and the creation of a culture that values sitting around a table with colleagues from other organizations to share information, to help build a better model of outcomes the donor community can aim for.

- For this to work, it is crucial that senior managers from the membership commit to these principles and appreciate the fact that through such discussions, their own mandates and capacities will be strengthened.

[GDPRD Co-Chair - Conrad Rein]

- The Platform secretariat has been actively reaching out to new potential members to increase its membership.
- Strategic influencing is paramount. The Platform and its membership have the capacity and ambition to do it.
- Strategic communication is also key. To achieve its objectives to this end, the secretariat hired a new communications coordinator.
- The Platform cannot act on every single issue. It needs to focus on its areas of strength.

[GDPRD Secretariat - Maurizio Navarra]

- The Platform will not undertake an annual reporting exercise, as had been understood by some members from the presentation of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025. It will, however, conduct a horizon scanning exercise among the board members to shape the Platform's priorities for the coming year.
- The Platform is developing a Resource Mobilization Strategy to engage more donors in the board and as members. The secretariat has so far reached out to Japan, Canada and Norway and is planning to reach out to the World Bank and the African Development Bank before end of 2021.
- Communication is a critical function of the Platform. A new communications coordinator was recently hired, and she has already started streamlining the Platform's strategic communication.

3. A COORDINATED DONOR RESPONSE TO THE OUTCOMES OF THE UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT AND THE ROLE FOR THE GDPRD.

THE STOCKTAKING REPORT ON DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FOOD SYSTEMS

The report aims to:

- Provide an overview of how donors are contributing to food systems.
- Inform other stakeholders engaged in the UN FSS of the role and scope of support from donors.
- Provide a basis for analysis of how investments and programming might need to change in response to the UN FSS.

The report's main conclusions and implications are:

- Food systems framing goes far beyond semantics. It signals the need for an integrated approach and calls for attention to trade-offs and synergies in a much broader frame. It also brings out significant data gaps that exist in taking a food systems perspective.
- The small relative scale of Official Development Assistance (ODA), whereby only 8% of ODA goes to food systems, necessitates a catalytic approach to donor investment in order to achieve SDG 2.
- The breadth of funding covers a broad range of areas but a question of whether the right balance of funding still exists.
- ODA supports much of the global response to food systems issues and has a big influence on the global architecture.
- **Coordination:** The food systems framing makes coordination even more critical.
- **Resilience:** With emergency funding on a rise, the need to prioritize funding for resilience measures proves central to tackle issues a head.

- **Catalysing systemic change:** Donor funding has a unique role to play in tackling underlying structural constraints and championing interventions that align with the complex systems in which they operate.

DISCUSSION ON THE DECLARATION OF INTENT

[France]

- The declaration is well written and has a strong basis.
- There are some issues that will need to be confirmed internally, such as references to reforming subsidies and taxes, as well as trade issues which may be politically sensitive. It was recommended to reduce the amount of emphasis placed on these issues.
- Further comments on the declaration would be shared with the secretariat.

[USAID]

- USAID is in agreement that improved nutrition should be one of the top outcomes from the Food Systems and Nutrition for Growth Summits.
- USAID's priorities also align with the need to prioritize more investments in long term and inclusive solutions. This includes enabling farmers' access to a wide variety of solutions to achieve their aspirations.
- We need an ambitious investment in agricultural innovation, research, and development to create a surge of climate solutions and address the growing climate challenges.
- More specific comments will be forwarded to the secretariat.

[Italy]

- Initial comments have been submitted, but certain segments of the declaration are still being discussed with the Director-General and other ministries.

[Finland]

- The declaration is comprehensive and well-balanced.
- It is critical to underline a genuine multi-stakeholder approach for systemic transformation to happen. A food systems transformation requires exceptional coordination, which is a challenge but must be seen as a real opportunity for change.
- The mobilization of resources from a wide range of partners as well as a role of engaging youth and rural women in this transition are also important issues that the declaration should emphasize.

[Australia]

- The declaration sends an important signal of the platform members coming together around the UN FSS.
- Given the critical importance of climate smart approaches, there is not a clear enough flow through of the climate change imperative, particularly in mentioning the forward-looking agenda in the declaration, so this should be added.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE WHITE PAPER

[Switzerland]

- The current themes are useful at the conceptual level but are also quite aspirational. The clearer and more practical the paper can be, the more effective it would be in helping leaders take concrete actions.

[European Commission]

- How will the paper be operationalized and what will its timeline be?

Response by Jim Woodhill

- The target timeline is the end of 2021/early 2022. This would provide sufficient time for substantive consultations on donors' plans, based on the outcomes of the UN FSS and have it feed into the Platform's Annual General Assembly in 2022.

[France]

- It is currently unclear what the outcomes of the UN FSS will be and the roles that donors will play in supporting countries in their national pathways.
- It is therefore important that the white paper take a short and streamlined approach to avoid a lengthy, burdensome process.
- Why were the proposed themes chosen?

Response by Jim Woodhill

- The themes, which have also been brought out in the declaration of intent, were developed around the modes of operationalization that donors can focus to bring about change.

[USAID]

- The white paper will be an excellent opportunity to further demystify and clarify in a practical, action-oriented way how partners in the field can work together and how the Platform can provide concrete guidance in doing so.

[Finland]

- The white paper is indeed a very good idea in turning the UN FSS into action. For better utility, a short and practical white paper would be best.
- It is crucial that whenever vulnerable people are mentioned in the white paper as well as the Declaration of Intent, people with disabilities are factored in.

Conclusions by Jim Woodhill

- There is support for the white paper. However, the process of developing it and opening up further discussions on how to respond to the outcomes of the UN FSS across the members of the Platform are just as important as the production of the paper itself.
- The white paper also needs to be a communication document to reach out to a broader audience.

4. IMPLEMENTING THE GDPRD STRATEGY AND OPTIMIZING ITS VALUE ADD FOR THE COMING 3 YEARS

[GDPRD Co-chair – Tristan Armstrong]

- This is a critical time for the Platform and for the donor community involved in food systems. Not just because of the Summit and the uncertainty about its outcomes, but also because of the roles that donors will need to play in taking key ideas forward.
- The donor community is facing some significant challenges, such as the unknown impacts of Covid-19 on food systems and the growing impacts of climate change.
- This Senior Managers Meeting is an invitation to all members to discuss how they can work better together to become stronger and more effective. It is also a call to rethink how the donor community can build a stronger multilateral system.

[USAID]

- The Platform can help articulate the donor community's collective vision. There is a need as a platform to take leadership on how members will put the Summit's outcomes into practice. It should therefore play a central role in rethinking donors' roles as the Summit has demonstrated the need for discipline in addressing the challenges that food systems face.
- Following through on the Strategic Plan will not only bring vitality to the Platform, but also increase members' collective contributions to achieving the SDGS.

[European Commission]

- Outcomes from the Summit will need to be distilled into operational terminology for them to be effective at the country level.
- Outcomes need to be as pragmatic as possible about what they need to do at different levels from the global, regional, and national levels, and hold each other accountable.

[Germany]

- We are glad that the Platform has a new communications coordinator. This will go a long way in improving the Platform and its members' visibility as well as communicating the concrete outcomes of donor coordination.

SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS			
AGENDA ITEM	ISSUE	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
3	Launch of the stocktaking report on 'Donor Contributions to Food Systems'.	9 September 2021	Secretariat
3	Release of the Declaration of Intent	After approval by the board	Secretariat
3	The white paper	After the FSS, towards the end of 2021	Secretariat
4	The next Annual general Assembly (AGA)	Tentatively Feb/Mar 2020	Secretariat



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