

## 2<sup>nd</sup> United Nations Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4)

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Dates: 28 – 30 July (28 July – Preparation Day; 29-30 July – UNFSS+4)

Draft Concept Note

Public Version 2 as of 18 February 2025

### BACKGROUND

The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), convened by the UN Secretary-General (SG), ushered in the emergence of a new narrative for sustainable food systems as a key lever for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite slow progress, it catalysed considerable momentum in countries and amongst the Ecosystem of Support (EoS) to set the needed transformations in motion by 2030. The SG further committed to convening “a global stock-taking meeting every two years to review progress in implementing the outcomes of this process and its contributions to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda,” thus demonstrating, with the joint leadership of the Rome Based Agencies (RBAs), the mutual accountability required from all actors to set transformations in motion.

The first Stocktake (UNFSS+2) showed that food systems remain a top priority for governments across the planet and that momentum has not abated. The concluding SG [Call to Action for accelerated Food Systems Transformation \(FST\)](#) called on the global community to accelerate actions towards sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems that deliver equally for the people, the planet and shared prosperity. The Call to Action further committed the UN system to collectively model a new way of working in service of government-led food systems transformations. This call was further echoed in the 2023 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) [Political Declaration](#), as well as by the 2023 SDG Summit identifying food systems as one of six key transitions to accelerate the SDGs and the COP28 Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action in which the large number of signing countries committed to expedite the integration of agriculture and food systems into climate action (NDCs) and, simultaneously, to mainstream climate action across policy agendas and actions related to agriculture and food systems.

The UNFSS+2 Call to Action set, *inter alia*, six concrete priorities:

- A. Incorporating food systems strategies into all national policies for sustainable development, for people’s livelihoods, nutrition and health, for economic growth, climate action and nature, and to address post-harvest losses, leaving no one behind.
- B. Establishing food systems governance that engages all sectors and stakeholders for a whole of society approach, combining the short and long term.

- C. Investing in research, data, innovation and technology capacities including stronger connections to science, experience and expertise.
- D. Deepening joined-up participatory design and implementation inclusive of women, young people and Indigenous Peoples at the local level, with knowledge sharing, cross-sector programming, multi-stakeholder partnering, context and place-based actions, stronger and more diverse production, and mutual accountability.
- E. Promoting increased engagement of businesses, including through public private partnerships, to shape the sustainability of food systems and establish and strengthen accountability mechanisms, recognizing their centrality for food systems.
- F. Ensuring access to short and long-term concessional finance, investments, budget support and debt restructuring.

Since then, the global context for food systems transformation has evolved significantly. Geopolitical challenges, including the continued conflict in Ukraine, Sudan, and more recently in the Middle East, have intensified concerns around food, health and nutrition security – underscoring the urgency for resilient food systems.

Building resilient food systems is essential to sustainably reducing the impact and frequency of food crises, and to reduce future humanitarian needs. However, only 3 per cent of development funding goes to food-related sectors in fragile settings; likewise, a person living in a fragile context will receive, on average, only US\$ 2.10 from multilateral climate funds – a stark contrast with the US\$ 161.7 per person in non-fragile states. Therefore, there is heightened recognition that there needs to be increased investments on food systems strengthening and transformation also in countries affected by fragility.

At the same time, ground-breaking shifts are also underway as a result of the intersections, interdependence and convergence of food systems with finance, energy, nutrition, climate action, biodiversity land degradation and rural livelihoods.

## OBJECTIVES

Building on the momentum of the 2021 UNFSS and the UNFSS+2 Stocktake, the UNFSS+4 responds to the evolving global context where food systems face heightened challenges. Guided by the SG's Call to Action and its six concrete proposals, the UNFSS+4 will be **documenting progress** on the implementation of the integrated approach towards food systems transformation expressed through whole of government approaches and collaborations between different ministries, **strengthening accountability**, and **investing** to sustain and accelerate food systems transformation. On this basis, the proposed overarching objectives of the UNFSS+4 are:

### 1. Documenting progress

Documenting progress in food systems transformation four years after the UNFSS 2021 and five years before the 2030 milestone will involve thorough reflections on what has been accomplished, the lessons learned, and the challenges that remain.

This will include examining how Member States are defining their food systems transformation goals, assessing progress, and achieving tangible results. Positive examples of country-level transformation and investment planning – including from countries affected by fragility – will be analysed to reveal the factors that have enabled their progress, such as government policy coherence, public sector budget reallocations, private sector engagement, finance engineering, data diagnoses, digital innovation, ongoing cross-sector dialogues and decision-making platforms.

Assessing the needs of countries and matching these needs to the tools and approaches available for advancing food system transformation will be a central feature. Discussions will also highlight progress in food systems governance and coordination mechanisms that engage all sectors and stakeholders through a whole-of-society approach, combining short- and long-term goals.

This objective is aligned with the UNFSS+2 Call to Action to (A) incorporate food systems strategies into sustainable development policies and (B) establish inclusive governance frameworks for food systems transformation.

## 2. Strengthening accountability

The roles, commitments, and contributions of both state and non-state actors in driving food systems transformation will be looked at with the purpose of surfacing critical gaps, missing actors and strengthening engagement that is essential for accelerating progress.

Accountability mechanisms, such as the FSCI2030 and CAADP Biennial Review process and scorecards, will provide the foundation for identifying needs and shaping collective efforts in the coming biennium towards the UNFSS+6 Stocktake that is expected in 2027.

The Corporate Accountability initiative, amongst others, acknowledges the pivotal responsibility of businesses and private sector actors in shifting food systems towards greater sustainability. It will offer them a coherent framework of accountability to which they can collectively commit.

Food systems transformation is everybody's business. This exploration will identify opportunities to further institutionalize and accelerate the collective agenda for food systems transformation between now and UNFSS+6, and inform the Countdown Initiative. By deepening participatory processes for design and implementation, the exploration will also prioritize inclusivity, ensuring that women, young people, persons living with disability, smallholder farmers and Indigenous Peoples are at the forefront of food systems governance.

Encouragement of knowledge-sharing platforms, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and place-based actions bolster results-oriented working and stimulate progress on means of implementation through increased engagement of financial institutions. Furthermore, the exploration will promote the increased engagement of businesses, including through public-private partnerships, to shape sustainable food systems and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

This objective is aligned with the UNFSS+2 Call to Action to (D) deepen participatory design and implementation and (E) increase business engagement for sustainable and accountable food systems.

### 3. Unlocking Investments for food systems transformation

The scaling of impactful solutions requires unlocking investments for transformative action. This calls for supporting countries to build strong enabling environments and addressing the barriers to investment, the reinvigoration of partnerships, application of new tools, and deployment of innovations that facilitate action-oriented outcomes. Leveraging and integrating across Rio Conventions and key national pathways – NDC’s, NBSAPs and LDN (land degradation neutrality) targets also provide opportunities for investments and scale.

UNFSS+4 will enable delegations to unlock investment opportunities. Emphasis will be placed on transformative investments in key areas such as precision agriculture, innovative water management practices, managing post-harvest losses, climate-resilient technologies, and leveraging innovations like digitalization and artificial intelligence to support small-scale food producers and young farmers, to name a few that can be considered. Better harnessing governments’ public procurement for institutional feeding (such as school meals, hospitals, military) as well as for strategic grain reserves represent an opportunity to further unlock food systems transformation.

In the immediate follow-up of the 4<sup>th</sup> Financing for Development (FfD) Conference, a priority will be to investigate options for reforming the financial architecture so it becomes more conducive to sustainable food systems. Means for de-risking catalytic investments and mobilizing climate finance will be central themes.

Under this objective, high-level political leadership will be incentivized to present updated national pathways with ambitious and adaptive visions, and local investments in the pathways. As countries intensify their emphasis on implementation, the focus will be ensuring they have access to short- and long-term concessional finance, investments, budget support, and debt restructuring that are needed to facilitate these efforts. By connecting national delegations with global investment opportunities and platforms, the UNFSS+4 will promote scalable, sustainable solutions.

This objective is aligned with the UNFSS+2 Call to Action to (C) invest in research, data, innovation, and technology capacities and (F) ensure access to finance and investments for food systems transformation.

## OUTCOMES, PREPARATION PROCESS AND HIGH-LEVEL AGENDA

### Outcomes

Two documents will provide the main evidence and foundation for a robust agenda and meaningful outcomes of the UNFSS+4:

- The UN Secretary-General's Stocktaking Report will include an update on progress and gaps with the implementation of national food systems transformation and the use of pathways. It will review the effectiveness of the EoS and identify levers to accelerate investments in food systems transformation. This report will use information gathered from the countries' reports and the Food Systems Countdown Initiative
- An analysis sharing the perspective of a variety of food systems Non-State Actors (NSAs), will complement this institutional report with "voices from the ground". It will provide constructive critical reflections and recommendations to further raise the ambition of UNFSS follow-up efforts by 2030. Framed and drafted independently by self-organizing food multistakeholder constituencies, the authors will also be encouraged to reflect on NSA accountability by setting out key objectives for different actors of the food systems community, against which they will be invited to report at regular intervals, thus showing the way for greater NSA accountability.

A Chair's Summary that, though not negotiated, brings the consensus emerging from Member States' experiences might also be considered.

### Preparation process

The timely implementation and analysis of national progress reports will shape the UNFSS+4 programme. This process will help identify and shed light on inspiring national trajectories relevant to food systems transformation in various contexts, identify existing gaps, and re-engage all stakeholders, including businesses.

The UN Food Systems Coordination Hub (the Hub) will facilitate an agile process, leveraging regional-level mechanisms to gather contextualized, credible and value adding inputs.

Two technical background papers will be developed in preparation for the UNFSS+4:

- A paper with successful positive examples of country food systems transformation highlighting the factors that enabled progress. This paper will be prepared by GAIN, AGRA and other civil society partners, in collaboration with the Hub.
- A short paper summarizing the future needs of countries and outlining tools available to governments to meet these needs. This paper will be prepared by the Hub, GAIN, AGRA and other agencies supporting pathway implementation at the country level.

A targeted questionnaire will be distributed to all countries, accompanied by interviews with National Convenors and actors of the EoS during the Regional Preparatory Meetings.

NSAs, from farmers to the civil society and social movements, the IFIs, regional MDBs the private sector and beyond, will be actively engaged in an effort to strengthen mutual accountability at all levels. This will ensure constructive co-creation of national, regional and global objectives towards the next Stocktake.

The mobilization of the private sector will be an important element of the preparations for the UNFSS+4 and for the event itself. Consideration will be given around the opportunities for businesses linked to transforming our food systems, such as new products, innovation in foods that can increase profits and well-being and health, advancing food security, reducing the environmental impact of food production while developing new product lines, etc. The UN Global Compact and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) will take an active lead on this process. Initiatives such as the Private Sector Accountability Framework will showcase a nascent movement within the private sector to align business practices with the global sustainable food systems narrative. Better engagement with countries to advance streamlining and harmonizing of reporting requirements – across ministries, setting up an accountability system that enables action, making the case for 1) physical risks and 2) opportunities through innovation and the need for blended finance – are examples of areas for dialogue and action.

Global events and processes of key strategic value to the UNFSS+4 outcomes – either towards their development or ensuring they feed into relevant subsequent discussions – include the Nutrition 4 Growth Summit (March, Paris), the Financing for Development Conference (June, Spain), and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July, New York).

After July and as part of the efforts to shape a coherent global narrative on sustainable development, the outcomes of UNFSS+4 will feed into the UN General Assembly, the Stockholm Food Forum, the World Food Forum (October, Rome) COP 30 (November, Belém), the Second World Summit for Social Development and support the ambitions of the G20 Presidency (Brazil) and the UN Environmental Assembly (Nairobi).

Annex 1 presents a roadmap of main global and regional events towards UNFSS+4. The roadmap will be updated with additional inputs.

### High-level agenda

The three-day event will begin by reflecting on accelerators and catalysts of progress and highlighting successful country-level transformations and food systems governance, including through high-level field visits. The second day will focus on strengthening accountability, assessing progress since the 2021 Summit, and setting goals for the future, including contributions to the SDG Countdown. On the third day, discussions will centre on investments in food systems transformation, encouraging updated national pathways to drive local investments.

The high-level opening will see the participation of the UN SG, the head of state or government of the host country, and a group of heads of state and government.

Regular briefings to Member States in New York, Rome, Nairobi and Geneva will inform the process and keep all actors engaged. The day before the Summit will be dedicated to a pre-Summit with civil society session – where women, Indigenous groups, farmers, young people, etc. will take the lead and self-organize.

## HOSTING

- Ethiopia has shown remarkable leadership during the UNFSS+2, alongside global stakeholders, and has agreed to host the UNFSS+4 Stocktake.
- With its long-standing leadership in the agenda of Food Systems Transformation, Italy has also agreed to co-host the UNFSS+4 Stocktake.

Details on host arrangements are yet to be defined.

## AGENDA SETTING TASK TEAM

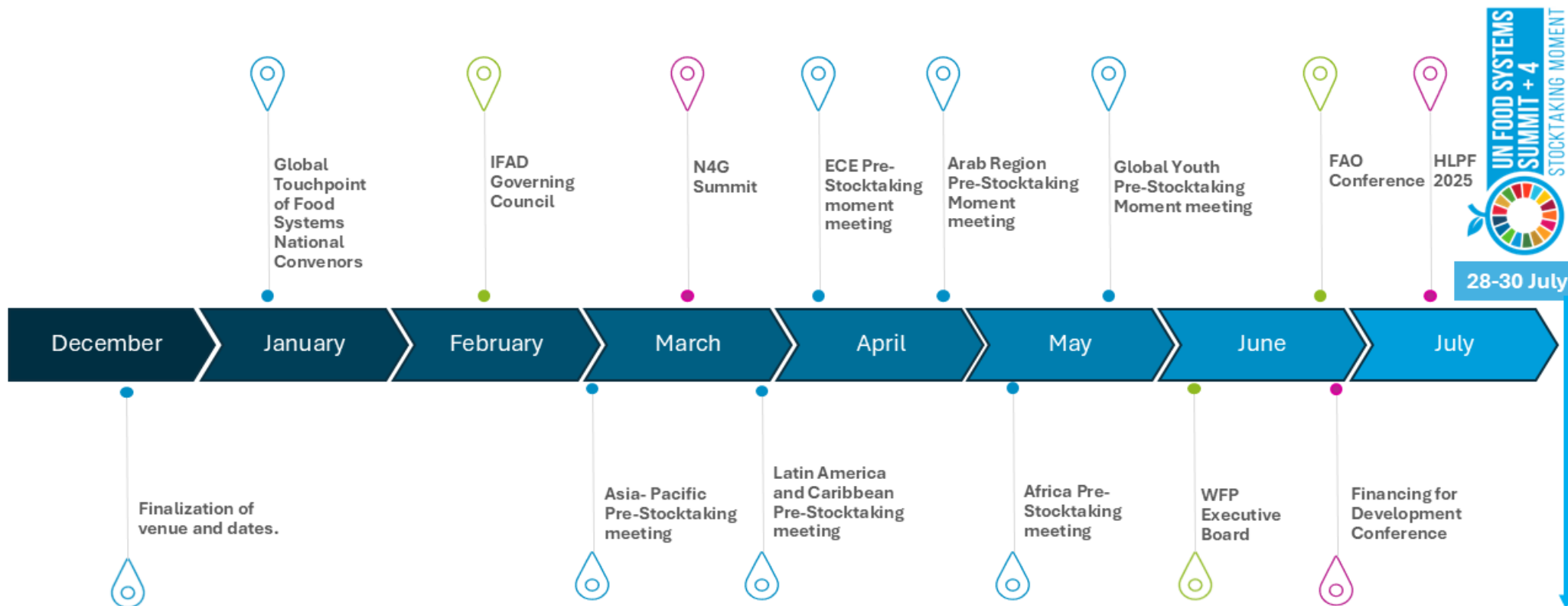
A UNFSS+4 Agenda Setting Task Team, comprising members of the UN Food Systems Advisory Group, has been established to inform the shaping and refining of action and the ambition and objectives of the UNFSS+4 and to ensure a clear link between action and accountability for the public and the private sector.

A potential outcome for the action would be to enhance the capacities of the Hub to operate as a food systems transformation accelerator in at least 50 countries, drawing on global, regional and national partnerships and working in tandem with other existing mechanisms such as the Hunger and Poverty Alliance, the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection, among others.

The Agenda Setting Task Team will be supported by the Hub. The proposals of the Agenda Setting Task Team will be reviewed by the RBAs and the other agencies supporting the Hub, [via the Hub's Management Consultative Group](#).



## ANNEX 1: A ROADMAP OF REGIONAL AND GLOBAL EVENTS TOWARDS UNFSS+4



UNFSS+4 Preparatory Events

Events for UNFSS+4 strategic alignment

Main RBA events

Following the UNFSS+4 (28-30 July 2025) a series of platforms will be used to take forward the UNFSS+4 messages and ensure strategic alignment. These include, but not limited to, the following

- 80<sup>th</sup> UNGA
- Stockholm Food Forum
- World Food Forum (WFF)
- UNFCCC COP30
- World Social Summit
- UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)