

## **CFS 51 Side Event: Forging Resilience: Harnessing evidence-based agrifood transformation for navigating multiple crises – Insights from South Asia and the Horn of Africa**

Co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Wageningen University & Research, the World Bank, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Coalition, and CGIAR

**Date:** Monday, 23 October; 13.30 – 14.45 (CET)

**Location:** Red Room & hybrid

**Moderated by:** Dr Iftikhar Mostafa, The World Bank

Presentations:

- Ms Temina Lalani-Shariff, Regional Director, South Asia, CGIAR
- Mr Abdideeq Yusuf, Animal Health Officer, FAO Somalia

High-level Panel Members:

- H.E Marcel Beukeboom, Netherlands Permanent Representative to the UN in Rome
- Dr Dina Umali-Deininger, Regional Director, South Asia, World Bank
- Dr Jujavarapu Balaji, Minister (Agriculture), and Indian Alternate Permanent Representative to FAO, IFAD, and WFP
- Dr John Kanisio, Undersecretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security, Government of South Sudan

The increasing frequency and severity of climate disasters, conflicts, and economic downturns are major contributors to food crises on a global scale. These crises have profound impacts on people's livelihoods, safety, food security, and nutrition. In Asia, Africa and other places, communities are grappling with a complex web of concurrent and interconnected challenges, including the consequences of climate change, water scarcity, food insecurity, malnutrition, economic vulnerability, conflicts and social fragmentation, and environmental degradation. To effectively address these multifaceted crises, there is a growing recognition that agrifood systems have the potential to play a transformative role. Sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems can serve a pivotal role in providing safe, nutritious, affordable food for all, while simultaneously generating decent job opportunities, fostering strong livelihoods, and promoting environmental conservation. This integrated approach is crucial for achieving more equitable socio-economic development.

The 75-minute side event featured real-world examples from the Horn of Africa and South Asia, fostering the exchange of knowledge and innovative approaches between countries and regions. The main objective of the event was to showcase concrete, practical and actionable solutions that address a multitude of interconnected crises through transformative shifts within agrifood systems. During the event, two experts shared their first-hand experiences in implementing actions to effectively address these interrelated challenges.

Ms Temina Lalani-Shariff shared her experiences with projects in South Asia that address climate-induced disasters through nature-positive solutions. These projects involve the development and scaling of direct-seeded rice varieties and the adoption of lightweight mini-tillers in Nepal to enhance food sufficiency. She highlighted key gaps and actionable solutions to further improve the resilience of the food system including continuous evaluation of sustainable groundwater withdrawals, soil characteristics, and pest management measures; and implementation of effective behaviour change communication to enhance capacity building.

In addition, Ms. Tamina emphasized the significance of public-private partnerships and collaboration. She illustrated this with the example of the "World Bank – FAO Knowledge Session Series", jointly organized by the World Bank, FAO, and CGIAR, aiming to find integrated solutions from the best practices at national and regional levels and promote knowledge sharing effectively. The Knowledge Session functions as a crucial platform for engaging with policymakers, practitioners, entrepreneurs, and youth, facilitating the scaling up of existing solutions.

Mr. Abdideeq Yusuf, shared insights from the Food and Nutrition Security Resilience Program (FNS REPRO), which targets 98,000 households in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan and addresses the cause-effect relationship between conflict and food insecurity. Mr. Abdideeq's experience underscored the importance of localization, and the need to collaborate with local structures, institutions, and experienced partners, especially those working at the intersection of humanitarian, development, and peace efforts. Furthermore, he highlighted the significance of flexible and adaptive programming to address evolving community needs and systematize these approaches. He also stressed that involving the private sector can lead to job creation, peace, and stability; however, this should be done in a conflict-sensitive manner.

Following the two key presentations, participants were tasked with evaluating and ranking a list of actionable solutions proposed by the experts. The objective was to determine which solutions were both attainable and of utmost importance in driving the transformation of agrifood systems in regions affected by fragility and insecurity. The ranking of actionable solutions is as follows:

1. Understand the conflict context and take actions that address identified drivers in a conflict and gender-sensitive manner (23%).-
2. Collaborate with local structures, institutions, and local partners, particularly in unstable and fragile contexts (21%)
3. Systematically implement adaptive programming and implementation, especially in fragile settings (17%).
4. Foster public-private partnerships to scale up innovative infrastructure and contribute to job creation, peace, and stability (15%).
5. Implement effective behaviour change communication to enhance adoption through capacity building (12%).
6. Reevaluate policies, subsidies, and incentives to prevent groundwater depletion (12%).

Following the sharing of the ranking results, the event wrapped up with a panel discussion that emphasized the interconnectedness of climate change, food insecurity, and political and social instability.

First, Ms. Umali-Deininger discussed challenges in South Asia, highlighting projects in Nepal and Vietnam at the World Bank. She stressed the need to integrate innovative solutions into government strategies and the role of the private sector in facilitating farmers' access to these innovations, particularly through youth involvement and entrepreneurship.

Next, H.E. Marcel Beukeboom underscored the importance of a localization approach for building resilience, emphasizing a focus on food and ecosystem systems. This involves recognizing interdependencies, power structures, and the simultaneous impact on water, land, and air. Building a resilient food system requires tailored strategies rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. He also noted the crucial role that donors can play in providing partnership platforms and long-term funding.

Dr. Jujavarapu Balaji shared India's approaches to addressing climate and artificial crises, including standardized systems such as school meal programs and value chain development. Leveraging technology is also a critical component of India's strategy.

Last but not least, Dr John Kanisio discussed South Sudan's response to the challenges at hand, particularly the establishment of "The Food Security Council." This Council brings together various agencies with the aim of enhancing government capacity in climate policies, further underscoring the importance of partnerships in this work.

In conclusion, Dr Mostafa, emphasized the importance of understanding the interconnectedness of the compounding global crises, including climate change impacts, water scarcity, food insecurity, malnutrition, economic vulnerability, conflicts, social fragmentation, and environmental degradation, and shared a poignant quote: "We do not inherit the world from our ancestors, but we borrow it from our children." This underscored the importance of and need for human ingenuity, innovation, and collaborative efforts in making a positive impact in South Asia, Africa, and other regions, ultimately working towards a sustainable and brighter future for all.