



Background on the U.S. Approach to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit

The United States strongly supports the UN Food Systems Summit and the goals of accelerating progress towards ending hunger and malnutrition and building more sustainable, equitable, and resilient food systems. The Summit is a valuable opportunity to focus the world's attention on these shared goals and to act with urgency for the health of the planet and the wellbeing of current and future generations.

With conflict, the climate crisis, and economic disruptions from Covid-19 exacerbating already worsening trends in food security, the United States is committed to a Summit that puts addressing hunger, poverty, and malnutrition -- and their causes -- at the center of discussion for global action. We are aligning U.S. government efforts to deliver improved nutrition for the most vulnerable, empower youth, women and other disadvantaged groups for greater inclusivity, address the food systems and climate change nexus, and step-up investments in agricultural innovation to significantly improve the sustainability and resilience of food systems.

The United States is promoting a UN Food Systems Summit that reflects and serves the needs of diverse food systems stakeholders around the world, from producers to consumers and including marginalized communities, women, youth, and indigenous people. To ensure the health of the planet, the wellbeing of current and future generations, and the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – civil society, the private sector, farmers, entrepreneurs, industry, and governments – must be empowered to develop innovative and creative solutions to the challenges we face.

The United States' approach to the Summit builds on a number of key positions and concepts:

- Building sustainable food systems requires optimizing outcomes across all three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic, and environmental.
- Agricultural productivity growth and aquatic food productivity growth, focused on producing more with less – less land, less water, fewer inputs and resources – are critical for alleviating poverty, meeting the world's food needs, and shrinking agriculture's environmental impact. Increasing agricultural and aquatic food productivity not only alleviates poverty, but also improves food security and nutrition, natural resource management, and standards of living.
- Sustainable food systems are critical to addressing the climate crisis. The adoption of climate smart agricultural practices, and other low-emission practices in food systems including preventing deforestation, should be promoted to reduce emissions, enhance resilience of food systems to climate change, and support the goal of limiting global

warming to 1.5-degrees Celsius.

- The United States is a leader in agricultural research and development to improve productivity and promote more efficient and climate-smart use of natural resources in agriculture. By leveraging evidence-based innovation and science, including biotechnology, we can expand the toolbox for farmers, fishers and other producers to improve sustainability and resilience throughout food systems. We are eager to bring this expertise to the Summit. We encourage other countries to join us in the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM4C) to increase and accelerate transformative global investments in innovative research to support climate action.
- The Food Systems Summit should recognize and address the unique role of fisheries and aquaculture in the global food system.
- The Food Systems Summit should be a catalyst for action in meeting the first goal of food systems: safe, nutritious, affordable, and accessible food for all. Undernutrition is the cause of almost half of deaths of young children. Despite some progress the world is not on track to meet the SDGs nor the World Health Assembly targets on nutrition. Governments as well as the private sector have a role in meeting this challenge.
- The United States recognizes that obesity and overweight are not only growing public health problems, but also economic problems, with substantial implications for economic productivity as well as longer-term health care spending on diet-related diseases. Governments as well as the private sector have a role in reversing these trends.
- The Food Systems Summit should not seek to characterize some foods as intrinsically “bad,” or promote one-size-fits-all solutions. It should instead foster context-specific implementation and evidence-based evaluation of food policies considering efficacy, cost effectiveness, climate impacts, and health impacts across populations.
- The United States is committed to leveraging the power of well-functioning markets at the local, regional, and international levels to bolster food security and sustainable food systems by expanding income opportunities, stabilizing food supply, reducing and stabilizing food prices, reducing food loss and waste, and improving dietary diversity and nutrition.
- The United States recognizes that local food systems can bolster farmer incomes and community development and can play an important role in building more resilient and sustainable food systems.
- Reduction of food loss and waste is a critical step in building more sustainable food systems. Each year, an estimated one third of all food produced is lost or wasted, with impacts on food security and nutrition, farmer incomes and rural development, and natural resources and climate change.

- The United States is committed to a Summit that respects science, technology, and innovation.
- The Food Systems Summit should promote science-based and risk-based international standards adopted by international standard setting bodies—Codex Alimentarius Commission for food safety standards, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) for sanitary safety and improvement of animal health, and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) for standards for phytosanitary measures— as foundational to well-functioning markets and access to safe and nutritious food for all.
- Non-science based regulatory frameworks can be major constraints to innovation. The United States is advocating for a Summit that provides a platform for breaking down barriers to innovation and promoting the adoption of internationally recognized science- and risk-based regulatory frameworks.
- The United States is committed to a Summit that respects the contributions trade makes to food security and sustainable, resilient food systems.
- The Food Systems Summit should strive to complement the work currently being undertaken by other bodies to address food safety, nutrition, food security, standards, and environmental policy objectives.

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