



Rio Convention Pavilion

12. May 2022, 9:00 – 17:30

Food Day at UNCCD COP15 The Seeds of Change for a Nature-Positive Future

Co-hosted by WWF, CGIAR, CFS, FAO, CIFOR-ICRAF, UNEP, TMG, OPN and IICA

The **UNCCD Food Day - Seeds of Change for a Nature-Positive Future** will focus on cross-cutting policy responses spanning multiple global agreements, the interdependence of food system demand-side drivers and supply chains, and capacity to deliver a coherent suite of on-the-ground actions

It will help countries, science and organizations to develop stronger plans to achieve the UNCCD Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) of the Paris Climate Agreement, and work towards an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Concept

The way our food systems work has a direct impact on biodiversity, climate and livelihoods. Today, agriculture accounts for 70% of all freshwaters withdrawn and drives 80% of deforestation worldwide (FAO, 2017), causing natural habitat conversion into croplands. It also contributes around 25-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2019), mainly from changing land use, livestock production, and soil and nutrient management, leading to climate change. Unsustainable land use such as intensive agriculture also results in soil degradation and reduced nutritional value of food through lower concentrations of vitamins and micronutrients.

Land degradation and biodiversity loss are among the most pressing environmental challenges facing humanity. Land degradation has reduced the productivity of nearly one-quarter of the global land

surface, affected the well-being of about 3.2 billion people and cost about 10% of annual global gross domestic product in lost ecosystem services.

Even with all these impacts, we are failing to provide nutritious and healthy diets to everyone. Globally, our diets are too narrow. Of the thousands of plants and animals used for food in the past, less than 200 currently contribute to global food supplies and only 9 account for 70% of total crop production. Rice, wheat and maize alone provide more than 50% of the world's plant-derived calories ([FAO, 2019](#)). In only 48 years, from 1961 to 2009, diets worldwide have become increasingly homogenous, dominated by staple crops rich in energy but poor in macronutrients (Khoury et al, 2014). Everywhere in the world, people are not consuming enough nutrient-rich foods such as fruits, nuts and seeds, vegetables and whole grain (Afshin, et al, 2019). This is particularly true for the poor. As a result, people often do not acquire the adequate amounts of the full range of nutrients essential to human health.

Losing these nutrient-rich varieties of plants and animals is not only a conservation issue: it undermines the resilience of our food systems to pests, diseases, droughts and climate change ([IPBES, 2019](#)). Loss of biodiversity on farms leaves farmers with fewer options to diversify their production and cope with risks.

Despite the precarious state of our food systems, there is still a chance to feed 10 billion people with healthy diets while respecting planetary boundaries and leaving at least half of natural ecosystems intact. What we need to do is take a food systems approach to respond to the climate and biodiversity challenge.

By 2030, we want to see 50% of all the area used for agriculture and aquaculture sustainably managed. Improving the traceability of food and driving the private sector to remove foods which cause deforestation and conversion from their supply chains is an essential step in driving more sustainable practices. Ceasing conversion will depend on successfully rehabilitating the 30% of farmland which is currently degraded or disused. These lands have huge potential to be returned to food production, not simply planted with trees. Adopting agroecological practices and other innovative approaches, such as conservation agriculture, agroforestry and regenerative agriculture, can restore and maintain ecosystem services like soil health, flowing waterways and the ability to keep carbon out of the atmosphere, while also helping close yield gaps.

These changes must be achieved through culturally and agro-ecologically diverse solutions including recognizing and supporting the role of women in different dimensions of local and Indigenous food systems across regions and countries. Such a holistic approach requires complementary interventions on both the **supply-side** (such as sustainable food production practices) and on the **demand-side** (focusing more broadly on consumer and industry behaviour such as dietary change, reduction of food loss and waste). There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to bring change, but with deep cooperation and empathy, we can achieve healthy and sustainable diets for all while restoring biodiversity and reversing land degradation.

Objectives:

Through this first **Food Day @ UNCCD COP15** we aim to call upon countries, private sector and other actors to take up food systems approaches in the LDN targets, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and the biodiversity targets of the three conventions.

- Build momentum for transforming food systems in the context of the Rio Conventions and harness synergies in the implementation of the Rio Conventions.
- Raise awareness and gain support on the need to adopt a holistic approach to promote solutions that take into account all dimensions of sustainable development, simultaneously addressing environment, agriculture, nutrition and health

- Linking the UNCCD goals to the transformation of food systems.
- Discuss challenges and opportunities of improving soil health, scaling up restoration of degraded land, strengthening land tenure, promoting agrobiodiversity, mainstreaming sustainable diets, empowering women and youth and transforming food systems with specific focus on UNCCD goals

Specific targets:

We will do so by applying three levers recommended in the report on LDN for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security.

- **Cross-cutting policy responses spanning multiple global agreements**
By adopting a ‘food systems lens’, LDN response actions can further enhance the impact of existing policies and initiatives focused on environmental sustainability, inclusive economic growth, climate stability, and improved public health that are embedded in a range of key global agreements, most notably the SDGs and the Paris Agreement and the post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- **Interdependence of food system demand-side drivers and supply chains**
The interdependence of food system demand-side drivers and supply chains provides a singular focus for LDN response actions that simultaneously encourage the uptake of plant-based diets while at the same time reducing food loss and waste.
- **Capacity to deliver a coherent suite of on-the-ground actions** (including finance)
Nature-positive food policies that incentivize more sustainable practices and ensure supply chain transparency could help unlock the constraints in our current food systems. Developing the capacity to deliver a suite of coherent LDN response actions at the national level will necessarily include monitoring and evaluation protocols to guide future investment and including soil health

Target Audience

Target Audience will be state actors, cities, civil society, policy makers, indigenous groups, youth, media and more.

Food Day Agenda:

- 09:00-10:00 **High-level Opening Session:** Importance of Food Systems Transformation to achieve Rio Convention objectives
- 10:00-11:00 **My Land My Rights:** - Legitimate Tenure Rights for Food Security, Climate Resilience and Ecosystem Restoration
- 11:00-11:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:30-12:30 **Healthy Soil for a Healthy Planet:** Building resilient food systems for increased food and nutrition security
- 12.30–13:30 *Planet-based Lunch*
- 13:30-14:30 **Agrobiodiversity: Our Past Our Future**
- 14:30 - 15:30 **Food Systems Transformation** - ways to strengthen implementation of the Rio Conventions
- 15:30–16:00 *Coffee Break*
- 16:00-17:00 **Guardians of our Planet** - the impact of women and indigenous groups to Food Systems transformation
- 17:00-17:30 Closing session: **My Diet Our Health:** Shifting consumption and diets for healthy people and healthy planet
- 18:30 - 20:00: *Reception and networking (on invitation only)*

**9:00-10:00 High-level Opening Session: Importance of Food Systems Transformation to achieve Rio Convention objectives
(Livestream tbc)**

The Rio Conventions—on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification—are intrinsically linked, operating in the same ecosystems and addressing interdependent issues.

Land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change are three different faces of the same central challenge: the increasingly dangerous impact of our choices on the health of our natural environment. We cannot afford to tackle any one of these three threats in isolation – they each deserve the highest policy priority and must be addressed together. Radical transformation of land use is necessary to combat the climate, nature and food crises.

Many of today's global challenges are related to the food systems, particularly the way our land is used and managed to produce food. Mitigating and adapting to climate change, halting biodiversity loss, combating desertification, and providing nutritious food, depend on restoring landscapes and maintaining soil health. Today, agriculture accounts for 70% of all freshwaters withdrawn and drives 80% of deforestation worldwide (FAO, 2017), causing natural habitat conversion into croplands. It also contributes around 25-30% of global greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2019), mainly from changing land use, livestock production, and soil and nutrient management, leading to climate change. Unsustainable land use such as intensive agriculture also results in soil degradation and reduced nutritional value of food through lower concentrations of vitamins and micronutrients.

Land degradation has reduced the productivity of nearly one-quarter of the global land surface, affected the well-being of about 3.2 billion people and cost about 10% of annual global gross domestic product in lost ecosystem services.

During the coming months, key negotiations and conferences will take place to set the agenda for a decade of action. These include UNCCD COP 15, UNCBD COP 15, UNFCCC COP-27 and Stockholm+50. These global events will provide key opportunities to amplify the role of food systems in achieving global and national climate, restoration and food security goals. A better alignment of the three conventions is urgently needed, implementation on the ground based on committed targets such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement, the National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions (NBSAPS), - the implementation mechanism of the UNCBD and the Land Degradation Neutrality Targets (LDN) under the UNCCD.

The session will discuss how alignment of the Rio Conventions could be improved and how Land restoration could contribute to leverage the synergies of implementation and support food systems transformation actions.

10:00 – 11:00

My Land My Rights - Legitimate Tenure Rights for Food Security, Climate Resilience and Ecosystem Restoration

Secure tenure rights are a precondition for investments in land, soils, and the sustainable production of food. As underlined by the UNCCD in its recent land tenure decision (26/COP.14), responsible land governance is a fundamental component of sustainable land management and important to addressing desertification, land degradation and drought. Land governance is also key to adapt to climate change and create resilience among local communities.

UNCCD parties are encouraged to recognize legitimate tenure rights, including customary rights and invited to legally recognize equal use and ownership rights of land for women. The enhancement of women's equal access to land and land tenure security as well as the promotion of gender-sensitive measures to combat desertification/land degradation and drought and achieve land degradation neutrality are also key issues for tackling food system challenges.

This session will highlight the interconnections between grassroots work to improve land governance and the opportunities and challenges on local, national and international levels to increase women's, Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' tenure security enabling sustainable food systems. This will contribute to informing future policy debates on the linkages between governance of tenure and Sustainable Food Systems from local to national and international level.

11:30 -12:30:

Healthy Soil for a Healthy Planet: Building resilient food systems for increased food and nutrition security
Livestream tbc

Healthy soil is the very foundation of our food system. Over 90 per cent of our food production depends on soil. Soil is also one of the Earth's most important carbon sinks. Yet, it is estimated that over a third of the Earth's surface is degraded, limiting the ability of the soil to deliver these vital ecosystem services and functions. To stop this trend, individuals, countries and companies alike must unite in their efforts to bring life back to degraded soils.

One of the most efficient and cost-effective solutions to ensure food and nutrition security, address climate change and biodiversity loss is to restore degraded soils by building healthy soil ecosystems. In recognition of this, the Coalition of Action for Soil Health (CA4SH) established during UN Food Systems summit, brought together actors to mobilise investment and strengthen the enabling environment to scale soil health, which will ultimately support the achievement of the Paris Agreement, the Agenda 2030 and the UNCCD Land Degradation Neutrality targets simultaneously.

By transforming our food systems from the soil up, and expanding the use of approaches such as conservation and regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and other integrated systems, we can rebuild healthy and resilient food systems, restore degraded soils, help ensure clean water, conserve biodiversity, and support livelihoods.

The session will showcase the prominent role of healthy soil in contributing to the goals of the three Rio Conventions, and in particular, the LDN targets. Speakers will share their experiences of how they are working to reverse land degradation and restore soil health. The session will highlight experiences from a policy perspective, investment angles as well as implementation and research. Advances with the multi stakeholder platform launched during the UN Food Systems Summit last year (CA4SH) and ways to get engaged will also be highlighted.

13:30-14:30

Agrobiodiversity: our past, our future
Livestream tbc

Biodiversity in the field and on the plate is more important than ever. In a world where hunger is rising, agrobiodiversity can help to ensure access to safe, nutritious, affordable and sufficient food and provide livelihoods, especially for those living in poverty, while contributing to climate adaptation and mitigation and land restoration. Yet, we are rapidly losing this diversity. Of the thousands of plants and animals used for food in the past, less than 200 currently contribute to global food supplies and only 9 account for 70% of total crop production. Moreover, just three of them (rice, maize and wheat) provide 60% of the calories consumed by humans. Such a decline has far-reaching consequences. Diets worldwide have become increasingly homogenous, dominated by staple crops rich in energy but poor in macronutrients, increasing malnutrition. Loss of biodiversity in the field has also left farmers with fewer options to diversify their production, exposing them to climate change, pests and diseases.

This session will explore how agrobiodiversity can help to restore degraded land, improve soil health and reduce climate risk, while ensuring food security. The session will showcase country level examples and discuss policy levers to scale up agrobiodiversity mainstreaming in the Rio Conventions.

14:30-15:30

Food Systems Transformation – ways to strengthen implementation of the Rio Conventions

A sustainable future requires us to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and limit climate change to no more than 1.5°C, while meeting the fundamental human right to healthy food for all. This depends on an equitable and nature-positive transformation of our food systems and requires a paradigm shift from maximising production at the expense of nature, to optimising production with the support of nature. To achieve the SDGs, we need to redesign our food systems through agroecological approaches that minimise pressures on biodiversity, climate, land and water, shift towards sustainable consumption and production and rethink our agricultural support schemes.

The session will discuss and present opportunities and solutions how food systems transformation can strengthen the implementation of the UN Rio Conventions. Based on the outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit and its follow-up processes by state and non-state actors, the UN FSS coalition on Agroecology and the ONE Planet Network programme for Sustainable Food Systems, ways of implementation will be identified, and practical solutions presented.

16:00-17:00

Guardians of our planet – the impact of women and indigenous groups to achieve LDN targets in Food Systems transformation

Important COP decisions (24/COP.14; Decision 26/COP.14), multilateral agencies, studies, and global reports recognize that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, will make an important contribution to the halting of land degradation and help build resilience for the health of nature and good living/human well-being. Crucial to the nexus of women, land and resources, and production, especially agricultural production, is tenure security and women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other natural resources.

A gender just, transformative and equitable food system is one where women, men, girls and boys have equal access to nutritious, healthy food, safe food, and access to the means to produce, market, and consume food. It is a food system where women in most fragile environments and vulnerable conditions are supported and empowered to invest in sustainable practices for the land and the environment while able to produce enough food for their own family/community, and also able in fair value chains and food trading schemes. The Rio Conventions — the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) —, include gender provisions reinforced by subsequent COP decisions. Moreover, all three Rio Conventions have adopted a Gender Action Plan (GAP) or a Gender Plan of Action (GPA).

The session will highlight approaches of empowerment of women and showcase practical approaches on implementation on the ground and promote the integration of gender considerations into actions against biodiversity loss, climate change impacts and desertification to maximise the results of interventions and lead to gender-sensitive policy- and decision-making.

17:00 – 17: 30 Closing session: My Diet Our Health: Shifting consumption and diets for healthy people and healthy planet

Despite the current precarious state of our food systems, we can feed 10 billion people a healthy diet within planetary boundaries and still leave at least half of natural ecosystems intact if we take a food

systems approach to climate change and biodiversity. Governments must include all parts of food systems in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the LDN and agree to ambitious food systems targets in the CBD's post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Transformative coherent policies must begin by examining food systems as a whole, from production to consumption, and be implemented by working together with relevant stakeholders to take action on NDCs and biodiversity action plans.

The session will build the bridge between all conventions and summarise the main findings of the day. It will also look at up-coming events such as Stockholm+50, UNCBD and UNFCCC in 2022.

18:30: Reception and networking (on invitation only)