



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS



# TRANSFORMING AGRIFOOD SYSTEMS TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

*HAND-IN-HAND WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR*

**DIALOGUE**

Monday, 12 July 2021 | 11:00-13:30 (Cairo/Rome time)

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# BACKGROUND

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets the stage for transforming our world through the achievement of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, and to strengthen universal peace. It recognizes that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, are called to implement this plan.

Transforming the world's agri-food systems, the way we produce, process, distribute and consume food has been identified as one of the key avenues to achieving many targets of the 2030 Agenda. This means better production, better nutrition, and a better environment, for a better life.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Its goal is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active and healthy lives and that food is produced in a sustainable way. With over 194 member states, FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide. The FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (NENA) supports the 19 countries of the region in achieving these goals.



# PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

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The 2021-2025 FAO strategy for private sector engagement reflects a new forward-looking vision for strengthening strategic engagement with the private sector towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It recognizes that mobilizing the capacities and resources of the private sector is essential for achieving the SDGs, particularly SDG2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

For the NENA region, this is probably nowhere more evident than in the agri-food systems, where the private sector plays such an important role along the whole food chain. Today, the region's food and agriculture sectors are poised to meet some of the world's biggest challenges in our common pursuit of SDG 2; from providing a growing population with affordable, accessible, and nutritious food, to reducing hunger and malnutrition, combating growing obesity, dealing with the already stark impacts of climate change, addressing water scarcity and other environmental concerns, and tackling emerging threats from pests and diseases.

The private sector plays a central role in addressing these challenges; offering innovative tools, resources, knowledge and technologies that are critical to achieve SDG 2 through agri-food systems transformation; adopting more inclusive and resilient practices in their businesses; and investing in more efficient and sustainable technologies. A broad array of private sector actors, from farmers, including small holders and family farmers to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and large companies as well as financial institutions will be instrumental to drive these efforts.

Governments, civil society, development partners, research and the private sector have much to gain in engaging in the kind of collaborative partnership that is needed to achieve the SDGs. Each stakeholder group has different and complementary roles, and brings different capacities and skills that, combined, have the power that is needed to radically transform the region's agri-food systems. However, too often, collaboration between these groups is hampered by lack of understanding of each other's business models, apparent conflicting values and mistrust. Engaging into a dialogue on common objectives has the potential to open new opportunities and achieve common goals.

With this purpose in mind, FAO is proposing to initiate a dialogue with the private sector in the NENA region in order to build a common vision about challenges faced by the region's agri-food systems and to identify opportunities for private sector engagement and action around the SDGs and SDG 2 in particular.

The upcoming FAO-private sector dialogue will seek to develop a conversation with three main categories of private sector operators:

- Micro-, small and medium-sized agri-food enterprises (MSMEs), including start-ups, who can play a critical role in achieving food security and eradicating rural poverty, with special emphasis on digital agriculture and youth-and women-led businesses;
- Large firms, including large national and multinational companies and State owned enterprises operating in the agri-food sector, including production, processing, distribution and retail;
- Financial institutions, including commercial banks and private investors, impact investors and other private investment institutions who have the potential to play a critical role in mobilizing private investment to achieve the SDGs.

# ENGAGING INTO A CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS OF THE DIALOGUE

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It is expected that this dialogue will pave the way for progressive engagement of the private sector in agri-food system transformation to achieve the SDGs in the NENA region. In particular, this dialogue aims at:

- Sharing a common understanding of the challenges faced by agri-food systems in the region;
- Further engagement in FAO planned event at the DUBAI EXPO;
- Obtaining feedback on the four priorities identified by FAO for the region and how can the private sector contribute to addressing them;
- Identifying bottlenecks and constraints to better engagement of the private sector in agri-food systems transformation to achieve the SDGs, and possible ways to overcome them;
- Discussing possible elements of a road map for PPP action in the region.

# AGENDA

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## OPENING

- Introductory remarks by **QU Dongyu** - FAO Director-General (15 minutes)

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

- HRH **Prince Naif Bin Sultan Bin Mohammed Bin Saud Al-Kabeer** - Chairman Al-Marai Group (15 minutes)

## PANEL DISCUSSION #1:

**How can public-private engagements provide large-scale solutions for addressing regional priorities and achieving the SDGs in the Near East and North Africa Region (45 minutes)**

### MODERATOR:

- **Beth Bechdol** - Deputy Director General of FAO

### THE PANEL IS COMPOSED OF:

- HRH **Prince Khaled bin Alwaleed bin Talal Al Saud** - Founder and Chief Executive Officer, KBW Ventures - Founding Chairman, KBW Investments
- **Ayman Amin Sejiny** - CEO/General Manager-Islamic Corporation for the development of the Private Sector - Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- **Soud Ba'alawy** - Executive Chairman Enspire (DIFC) Ltd.
- **Alzbeta Klien** - CEO/Director-General, International Fertilizer Association (IFA)
- **Peter Bakker** - CEO, World Business Council for Sustainable Development

Questions and answers (15 minutes)

# AGENDA

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## PANEL DISCUSSION #2

Green and inclusive technologies and investments in Agriculture – what is the potential? (45 minutes)

### MODERATOR:

- **Ismahane El Ouafi** - Chief Scientist, FAO

### THE PANEL IS COMPOSED OF:

- **Beatrice Maser** - Regional Director of IFC for MENA Region
- **Yousef Hamidaddin** - CEO, AgriTech Accelerator (Jordan)
- **Moez El-Shohdi** - President of the Food Banking Regional Network
- **Reggie Lee** - Director of Partnerships, Grow Asia Association
- **Chandra Singh** - Director Business Development, Elite Agro

Questions and answers (15 minutes)

## CLOSING

Closing remarks by **AbdelHakim Elwaer** - Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative of FAO's Near East and North Africa Regional Office (RNE) (10 Minutes)

**Languages:** Simultaneous translation in Arabic, English and French.

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**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**  
Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

**Website:** <http://www.fao.org/neareast/en/>

**Email:** [RNE-Private\\_sector@fao.org](mailto:RNE-Private_sector@fao.org)

**Twitter:** [FAOinNENA - FAOinNENA\\_EN](#)