

2020 Food Summit Follow Up – St George's House Consultation

12th July 2021, 12:30 - 14:30 (UK time)

Briefing note

A group of leaders from across the international NGO sector came together for a strategic retreat at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in March 2020 to share information on their agendas for food systems, to explore strategic alignment and to consider collaborative action to lead the conversation on global food system reform.

The meeting agreed:

1. Food and agricultural systems are core to all our strategies, and that the scale of change needed will only be achieved by collective impact through a collaborative response;
2. To develop a joint narrative/messaging framework, as an effective way of ensuring cross-sectoral alignment on food system reform for use in advocacy and public messaging, as appropriate for each organisation, and the starting point for the next stage of our conversation (see Annex);
3. To meet again virtually to review progress, and then subsequently in-person - potentially as part of a larger conversation that would include others - with a view to developing a plan for how we can continue to collaborate in the context the UN Food Systems Summit.

Last year's meeting took place days before the global response to Covid-19 began and the ensuing disruption of the pandemic. However, with the scope of the UNFSS (and its constraints) becoming clear, as well as other key multi-lateral processes it is now timely to reconvene this agenda. It is also clear in the intervening months since we met at Kew that the need has become all the more acute.

In the last few months, work has been underway to build some of the capacity needed to develop wider collaboration between sectors of civil society on food systems change over the medium-term.

We have agreed to work in partnership with [St George's House](#) who will provide a neutral convening platform and facilitation capacity. Situated within Windsor Castle and established by the late Prince Phillip, St George's House has a long track record and global reach in bringing together cross-sector participants for high-level dialogue. This process will start off online for at least the rest of this year; however, effective collaboration requires shared leadership which is most effectively built through personal relationships. Accordingly, we plan to hold a physical event, which will be an overnight residential meeting in Windsor Castle, when this becomes feasible.

CIWFI have generously committed to help resource co-ordinating capacity for the next stage of this process.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew continue to be strong supporters of this process, in line with their new strategy, and are able to provide additional convening resources.



Annex: Initial discussion notes on a joint narrative

Output from Leaders' Summit – Food Systems, Kew Gardens, 2nd and 3rd March 2020

1 Why have a common narrative and why now?

Power of the 'why' is magnified if it is echoed across many civil society organisations. Urgency and timing. Why now? When we say this together, we increase our power. Common frame, common themes, loose coalition. Provides a route to making our individual strategies helpful to others.

2 Making the case for change – 'Why?':

Survival

Our future and the future of nature.

A dis-functional food system contributes to social instability, political instability, conflict, and displacement. It causes hunger, malnutrition (including over nutrition) and other externalities that damage public goods, and is driven by:

- Subsidies/market interventions/advertising
- Degraded quality of land, access to water.
- Markets – growing disquiet about the concentration of market power, leading to a market society not just a market economy. Power of distributors and retailers vs producers. Economy not serving society.
- Food waste
- Distribution
- Purchasing power

Our future requires:

- Diversity, resilience (adaptive capacity to change), carbon neutrality
- A food system is key to a stable and functioning society.
- Culture: harmony with nature, and with each other, what is beautiful and sacred.

3 Making the case for change: 'What?'

We want a food system that is:

Good for the people who are fed by it (children and adults) – because they have a healthy diet

Good for the people who produce for it (small holders) – because they have voice and power

Good for the environment that sustains it – because the food system is fair for current and future generations

Good for the animals who are part of it – because they have a good quality of life and an humane death

Good for all who depend on it, now and for the future (universal) – because it is resilient and leaves no-one behind

4 Framing

Which narrative motivates action? Fear vs agency to act?

More people are fed than ever before. Famine has been eliminated. There is extraordinary choice for many people. But, there's a price..... we cannot sustain this progress and the risks are getting worse.

Positive frames - Best time to be born on the planet, and Nature based solutions.