

Context

In support of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, the UN Special Envoy invited all sectors of society to share their perspectives and solutions via a global dialogue process. Dialogues were conducted around the world both before and after the Summit, effectively crowdsourcing sustainable solutions to strengthen local and global food systems. CARE country offices engaged in the dialogue process by connecting marginalized communities in food systems to program and policy conversations happening locally, nationally, and globally. This document serves to report on the findings from the dialogues held in Nepal and highlight the key policy takeaways for Country Offices to advocate to their governments to achieve food systems transformation. There is a need for inclusive and participatory policies and laws that focus on local and provincial level needs and realize the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act 2018.

Despite local governments recognition of agriculture as a leading sector, most agencies have not fully realized either the Right to Food Act or the Food Sovereignty Act. Even those ministries who have implemented portions of these acts, the process has lacked inclusivity and failed to recognize the significant contributions of small-holder farmers to the country's food system. The provisions have failed to integrate the protection of land, water, animals, and the people whose livelihoods rely on food systems. Policies, laws, and strategies are failing to recognize the unique farming and farmer reality which limits farmer's ability to access climate smart and modern technology and trainings. Local governments are best connected with the small holders and landless farmers, and are well positioned to make policy, legal, and institutional arrangements that are inclusive to their specific needs. Locally focused policies need to focus on enacting public awareness on sustainable food system, promoting appropriate agricultural tools and technologies, promoting climate-smart techniques, and enacting social protection mechanisms for vulnerable farmers.

Land is treated as a commodity and viewed purely for its commercial purposes. The commodification of each component of the food system is undermining the noneconomic attributes of food, such as nutrition and culture. Indigenous knowledge around sustainable food production has largely been ignored by policy makers. This has caused significant inefficiencies in modern food systems because proven approaches that promote sustainable food production, promote nutritious diets, and conserve biodiversity are being abandoned. Despite the formation of several land commissions over the last years, land tenure rights are still highly problematic in the



Dialogue Background

In 2021, CARE Nepal supported the government and the National Farmer Groups Federation (NFGF) to host seven independent dialogues to garner inclusive participation in the UN Food Systems Summit and support the creation of Nepal's National Pathway. Dialogues were held in all seven provinces and centered around the theme "The Rights of Marginalized Communities are the Basis for a Sustainable Food System." Following the dialogue series, a national print media campaign was launched to highlight the relevant issues raised during the dialogues.

country. Current land reform attempts have not effectively incorporated the needs of marginalized groups, especially women and indigenous communities. Access and rights to the means of production must be guaranteed to vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Food systems transformation must focus on local production and promote agro-forestry based on local needs, geography, climate, and capacity. The Local Level Agriculture Act, Forest Act, and the Food Security and Sovereignty Act all need to all ensure the rights of local communities are realized and upheld. Without focusing on the needs at the local level, Nepal risks losing local seed varieties, healthy and arable soils, and traditional and organic production systems. To effectively implement sustainable, climate-smart, and inclusive land use plans all levels of the governments must work in tandem with local community leaders and organizations.

Bold actions to transform food systems is possible, but only when local communities, the private sector, market actors, civil societies, food producers and consumers are actively engaged and mobilized. Civil society organizations that have an extensive network, capacity, and skills must take the lead in advocating with policy makers to ensure equitable and just food systems become a reality through a disciplined, inclusive, and rights-based approach.



Policy Actions



Local Capacity and Rights

- Enact a formal identification system for small holder farmers that recognizes their contribution to food system and ensures access to social protection mechanisms.
- Protect the rights of small holder, marginalized, indigenous, landless, and women farmers to control land resources and the means of production.
- Implement the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act, 2018 through the formulation of regulations and localization of the act.
- Develop formal mechanisms that ensure enacted policies, strategies, and decisions reflect the voices and needs of small holder, marginalized, indigenous, and women farmers.
- Food regulation policies must be enacting through a local food systems lens.
- The capacity of local governments and communities must be strengthened so the management of local knowledge, skills, community seed banks, food banks, food vendors, emergency preparedness, and response mechanisms are focused on the specific needs of local communities.



Nutrition

- Local governments must have the skills and capacity to enact nutrition education campaigns, promote locally available nutritious foods, and implement effective nutrition monitoring services.



Food Production

- Policies must be locally focused so that regulations around production and land use reflects the specific needs of the community culture, geography, climate, and capacity.
- Increase access to agriculture extension that promotes the use of local resources, local agrobiodiversity, and indigenous knowledge for sustainable food production.
- Policies that focus on commercialization should not impact local food system workers ability to earn a livelihood, be food secure, and access reliable and productive markets.
- Enact policies that conserve local seeds, soils, and organic production systems while building the capacity of indigenous production and conservation mechanisms.



Land Rights

- Enact an apolitical land commission that can perform without biased restrictions, which have historically marginalized smallholder and landless farmers.
- Establish land banks that focus on effective land reforms and ensure smallholder, indigenous, women, and marginalized farmers' ownership of land.
- Local governments must develop land acts and land use plans that facilitate landless farmers' access to land as a means of production.