

Towards Affordable and Resilient Food Systems in Pakistan

Background

Globally 2.4 billion people are facing the problem of moderate to severe food insecurity. Similarly, 42% of the world's population cannot afford a healthy diet. In 2022, the average Food Price Index peaked at 143, the highest since 2005 (FAO 2023). Climate change, conflicts, and global economic crisis are aggravating existing food insecurity and hunger across the world. The *UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stock Taking Moment* report pointed out that of the 140 targets set to transform global food systems, only 15% were on track and showing significant improvements (UNFSS2 2023). However, 30% of the targets showed no improvement at all or had regressed to pre-2015 (pre-SDGs) levels (Ibid.). To cope with the challenges of food insecurity and hunger, the global community has opted for a 'Food System Approach' to holistically transform the food, agriculture, and nutrition ecosystem across the value chain from production to consumption.

Food Insecurity in Pakistan

The global surge in food commodity prices in 2022, attributed to the Russia-Ukraine War and local climatic events or export restrictions, has exacerbated the hardships faced by the underprivileged in Pakistan (Khetran 2022). 42.3% of the population is facing moderate or severe food insecurity. For the majority, accessing and affording a healthy diet is the most pressing issue, with 82.8% of the population unable to sustain such a diet. The cost of a healthy diet is USD 3.89 per person per day (FAO et al., 2023). However, approximately, 40% of people have a daily income below USD 3.65, making it impossible for them to consume a diet that adequately meets their energy needs (The World Bank 2023).

Frequent natural disasters, due to climate change, such as floods, droughts, storms, and heat waves have negatively impacted agricultural productivity and livestock in Pakistan. For instance, the 2022 floods led to the destruction of about 9.4 million acres of cultivated land and 1.2 million livestock. Similarly, extreme heat waves also reduced overall crop production by 9%, leading to a significant reduction in food supply in markets, which also resulted in higher prices (FAO et al., 2023).

Against this backdrop, this session, in partnership with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), aims to understand the potential pathway for Pakistan towards a sustainable and resilient food system to address the issues of hunger and food insecurity which is becoming a major threat. GAIN is at the forefront of food systems transformation and working with global, national, and subnational public/private entities to achieve SDG 2.

The session will bring together professionals from diverse policy areas, implementing authorities, the SUN Business Network, academia, and development sector representatives to discuss the following key questions:

| Discussion Points | | |
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| Speakers | | |
| Global Context | 1. | What best strategies, practices, and policies are being employed globally for food systems transformation? |

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| Regional Context | 2. | What regional initiatives are being implemented to cope with the problem of hunger and food insecurity? How can partnerships for food systems transformation be sustained at the regional level? |
| | 3. | How can these initiatives be improved and adapted in Pakistan? What are the potential benefits as well as challenges Pakistan's public and private sectors should be prepared for? |
| National Context | 4. | What does Pakistan's food policy landscape reflect in terms of challenges and gaps in the country, and what are partners like GAIN doing to address these gaps? |
| Panel Discussion | | |
| 1. | What are the challenges and possible solutions for strengthening data to support food systems policies? | |
| 2. | What systemic weaknesses and gaps have emerged during recent shocks, such as the 2022 floods and rapid inflation? Which responses have proved the most impactful and why? | |
| 3. | How can Pakistan make its food supply chains resilient to external shocks? | |

References

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