

UN Food Systems Summit - Action Track synthesis papers (wave 1)

Each UN FSS action track released in late March a “synthesis paper,” highlighting solutions chosen from wave 1 submissions which the action track leaders believe should be further advanced. The methodology varies by action track, with no clear overarching rationale or indication of Member State review. Across the action tracks, many of the solutions are extraordinarily broad, offer little detail on implementation or governance, and take a negative view of the private sector and of international trade. Apart from the very few business groups that have been permitted direct participation in action tracks, the synthesis papers generally do not reflect submissions from U.S. agriculture and food stakeholders. The following comments are not exhaustive but provide highlights of opportunities and challenges. Full list of game changers is available [here](#).

Action Track	General comments	Potential opportunities	Challenges
<p><u>Action Track 1</u> <i>Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all</i></p>	<p>AT1 solutions represent perhaps the greatest mix of both challenges and opportunities for U.S. agriculture and food perspectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solutions 2, 5, 6, and 16 support use/expansion of technology (e.g., clean energy, precision ag, cold chain, digital connectivity, biofortification) but miss opportunities to include crop protection, GMO, or other new breeding technology. There is also no mention of the necessary evidence-based regulatory frameworks. ● Solution 9 supports multisectorial approach to workplace wellness. ● Solution 13 offers opportunities to promote investment in R&D for product formulation, storage, and distribution, but should be careful not to denigrate food processing, which is integral to these innovations. ● Solution 15 seeks to tackle iron deficiencies and should be sure to reflect the full potential of animal-source foods as critical sources of easily digested iron and other nutrients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solution 1 calls for establishment of a massive new global fund, with no clarity on how such a fund would operate or be administered, nor its interaction with existing funding/organizations with this mandate (e.g., FAO). The proposal takes an inherently negative tone toward the private sector. ● Solution 7 includes a call for "guaranteed institutional markets" for local producers and references to redirecting current crop subsidies are not specific as to goals or outcomes. ● Solutions 8 and 14 single out individual foods as “unhealthy” (whether related to content or level of processing) and call for restrictions like taxes and marketing bans, which are not consistent with previous international consensus nor with evidence related to overall balanced and healthy diets.
<p><u>Action Track 2</u> <i>Shift to sustainable consumption patterns</i></p>	<p>The AT2 synthesis paper reflects many elements that are not consistent U.S. perspectives and practice, do not reflect previous international consensus, and may</p>	<p>NOTE: AT2 misses opportunities to promote multisectorial, evidence-based approaches to helping consumers build and maintain overall balanced and sustainable diets (e.g., workplace nutrition programs as in solution 1.9).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solution 4 could offer opportunities on education about food systems, but the current phrasing is overly narrow and unjustifiably targets specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many of the solutions unjustifiably single out specific foods or categories (e.g., solutions 3, 8, 9, 10, 15) for restrictions like taxes. Evidence does not support the effectiveness of such approaches, which may also have negative unintended consequences and/or undermine the work, mandate, and expertise of international standard setting bodies like the Codex Alimentarius (e.g., solutions 8 and 9 on food labeling and breastfeeding, respectively, where work in Codex is already underway).

	<p>conflict with existing regulatory frameworks and legal obligations.</p>	<p>foods (including nutrient-dense meat and dairy) as “unhealthy.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solution 12 is an opportunity to encourage public-private partnerships and reduce food waste. ● Solution 17 could be an opportunity for agriculture companies to partner with different entities to empower women by providing farming knowledge and knowhow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solution 1 (similar to solution 1.1) calls for creation of a massive new global fund, with no clarity on how it would operate or be administered. ● Solutions 2 (city region food systems) and 6 (civil society engagement based on the Bloomberg model) take an inherently negative view of the private sector and rules-based international trade. More broadly scoped solutions that think through private-sector involvement in supporting locally procured food could support local economies while not replacing the benefits of trade.
<p><u>Action Track 3</u> <i>Boost nature-positive production</i></p>	<p>Some AT3 proposals may offer opportunities, but the proposed “Codex Planetarius” is of concern.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solutions 6, 7, 8, 13, and 23 may offer opportunities to incorporate U.S. experience, perspectives, and practice as relates to regenerative agriculture, land use, conservation, sustainable livestock production practices, soil health, carbon sequestration, and land use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solution 4 proposes to create a “Codex Planetarius” as an international standard-setting body modeled on the Codex Alimentarius. The solution does not propose further detail on this new organization’s creation, governance, mandate, scope, funding, etc. ● Solution 12 implies that policies are outdated but neglects that as soon as land use is factored in, increasing productivity via sustainable intensification is an important factor to remove pressure from wild habitats for nature conservation.
<p><u>Action Track 4</u> <i>Advance equitable livelihoods</i></p>	<p>AT4 takes an encouragingly broad view of the livelihoods involved in food systems, but proposed solutions tend to focus on only a narrow subset of workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solution 10 proposes to increase digital connectivity, particularly in rural areas, with a focus on both producers/workers and consumers (e-commerce, teleworking, online learning, dealing with social distancing, etc.). ● Solutions 2, 3, and 7 address national and international labor standards and could be revisited to ensure they better reflect U.S. perspectives and practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solution 1 proposes to expand the issues included in the mandate of the Codex Alimentarius and to alter the UN agencies participating in the Committee on Food Security. ● Solution 8 promotes agroecology generally, which has been used to encourage recommendations and policies that discourage innovation and efficient production. ● Solution 11 calls for food retailers to erect de facto trade barriers by preferencing only local production, ignoring the benefits of rules-based international trade.

<p><u>Action Track 5</u> <i>Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress</i></p>	<p>AT5's proposals are a mixed bag (even within solutions (e.g., 16).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solutions 11 and 20 offer opportunities to include U.S. experience, perspectives, and practice with regard to soil health and water management. ● Solution 13 calls for ensuring FSS outcomes reflect and support implementation of previously negotiated CFS outcomes. ● Solution 16 incorporates some, limited elements related to regenerative agriculture and U.S. experiences, which could be further expanded upon and balanced to reflect the benefits of modern agriculture. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solutions 2, 16, and 18 could result in direct or indirect barriers to rules-based international trade and focus narrowly on specific practices like agroecology and preferencing local suppliers.
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