

## UN FSS Lever of Change - Innovation Public Forum

June 7, 2021 | 9:00-10:00AM EST

Link to Livestream: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/05/food-systems-summit-lever-of-change-second-innovation-public-forum>

### *Summary*

On June 7, 2021, the Innovation Lever of Change held its second public forum that heard five expert panelists discuss their game-changing solutions and the role of innovation in improving global food systems. The discussion was moderated by [Olga Petryniak](#), Senior Director of Resilience and Food Security at Mercy Corps. Closing remarks were provided by [Sean de Cleene](#), Head of the Food Systems Initiative at World Economic Forum.

The discussion emphasized the importance of adopting a broader understanding of innovation. Panelists framed innovation as a way of thinking, not just technological advancement. Each of the four panelists represented one of the four clusters of the innovation lever (data and digital, knowledge and technology, national and regional, and societal and institutional). Other topics included the measurement of innovation's success in increasing sustainability, financing innovation, as well as the importance of engaging youth. Regarding predictions for what we might see at the summit, Dinish, the Innovation lead for Action Track 3, will announce an ambitious goal at the summit to help 100 million farmers work to net zero, or "nature positive," production by 2030. He discussed his framework for how to follow through on this goal.

### *Detailed Meeting Notes*

Opening Remarks - Olga Petryniak, Senior Director, Resilience and Food Security, Mercy Corps

- UN FSS aims to make innovation a significant enabling factor for food system transformation across the 5 Action Tracks
- There are 4 key working groups within the innovation lever of change:
  - Data and digital, knowledge and technology, national and regional, and societal and institutional
- This panel has public, private, and social sector partners representing each facet of the innovation lever

[David Nabarro](#), Senior Advisor on Food Systems Summit Dialogues, 4SD

- Proud of the number of dialogues occurring - 483 dialogues have been announced so far, and they are on track for over 1,000 by the summitt
- Technological innovation is occurring in many areas (water, fertilizer, food preservation, food safety, etc)
- They are hearing a real interest across the globe in innovation to increase engagement of different countries in global supply chains, and increase access by more actors to contribute to the sustainability of the food system
- Asked how we can make innovation most tangible and meaningful on a national level:

- People who participate in dialogues will likely not find the word innovation easy to use on a daily basis
- Innovation is broader than just technology and new gadgets, it's about doing things differently to get better results. It's a way of thinking - about how we organize ourselves and our engagement style

Dhanush Dinesh, Head of Partnerships and Outreach, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research CGIAR

- Knowledge and technological cluster lead on the Innovation lever of change, and Innovation lead for Action Track 3
- Working on an initiative to help 100 million farmers achieve net zero production ("*nature positive*") by 2030, one of the game changing solutions from a public forum
  - How will they reach 100 million farmers?
    - 1) accelerate base and scale of technology adoption 2) how can we get at least 10,000 entrepreneurs and business models around them 3) linking to the finance lever of the summit to inspire confidence among the group of the farmers
  - How will they track/measure this goal?
    - Need to measure or quantify 1) who they are reaching 2) impact on biodiversity 3) climate benefits (which has traditionally been a huge challenge and very costly)

Andrew Bovarnick, Global Head, Green Commodities Programme, United Nations Development Programme

- Solution cluster lead on the societal and institutional pillar
- Innovation is not just about technology
- Innovations are only as effective as the degree of adoption by users, this is where institutions come in
  - We need policy reform, a diversity of stakeholders in the conversation, companies to improve supply chain measures, small farmers to participate
  - Need to innovate in our ability to construct safe spaces for inclusive dialogue between stakeholders and encourage relationship building
- How do we know if institutional innovation is working?
  - If we look post summit, how can we continue supporting these dialogues? Building relationships between stakeholders takes years
  - Eye should be on 2030
  - "Progress moves at the pace of trust"
  - Difficulty in measuring more process oriented innovations

Thule Leneiye, Coordinator, Agriculture Transformation Office, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Kenya

- Data and digital cluster champion
- Leading initiative focused on digitalization and coordination of Kenyan food systems to achieve 100% food security by 2030
  - Ensure policies are driven by data, and intended beneficiaries of policies are actually benefiting
- Ground-up approach
- Mobile penetration is now very high in Kenya. This initiative is taking advantage of these networks
- Usability and uptake is key - are farmers actually using an app that we made?
- Kenya used these digital tools to respond to Covid-19. They had data on food accessibility and affordability.
- The government's role is to create an enabling environment for digital innovation, not be the creators themselves as to avoid stifling innovation
- Important to encourage more youth involvement in the value chain

### Question/Answer

**Question:** We know that innovation needs funding at development, implementation, and scaling levels - can you talk about how you see innovation connected to funding streams beyond what is happening now, where will the money flow from?

David

- The future is not going to be taking one activity and pushing it really hard, but rather a systems innovation, working on multiple channels simultaneously
- We need an innovative and localized approach to financing, as systems innovation will look very different in different locations

Thule

- Make funding catalytic
- Allow the market to play, and maybe provide some government support where required

**Question:** Can you talk a little bit more about how you see involving youth towards building food systems for the future?

Dhanush

- Each action track has a youth component
- We need to make farming more attractive to young people, economically and culturally

Andrew

- We need representation and organization of youth themselves at the table

**Question:** Breaking down silos is key...but how can a country's digitization strategy link to reforms in law and policy across various sectors?

Thule

- Kenya has a one government approach, trying to improve cross ministerial work

Closing Remarks - Sean de Cleene, Head of the Food Systems Initiative at World Economic Forum.

- Latches on to the broader sense of innovation discussed during the forum
- The FSS dialogues have been an example of innovation in their own right
- Highlights that the committee on food security launched their principles around agroecology and innovation yesterday
- The purpose of the forum was to inspire people to get engaged and be innovative