

## Flash Report

# A Sub-Regional Dialogue: Promoting Sustainable Food Consumption in Southeast and Northeast Asia through Farm-to-Fork Concept



**Date:** Tuesday 14 September 2021 | 9:30 -11:00 (Bangkok Time)

**Venue:** Online

### Disclaimer

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## List of Acronyms:

<b>AIT</b>	Asian Institute of Technology
<b>AT</b>	Action Track
<b>CE</b>	Circular Economy
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease
<b>EU</b>	The European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural University
<b>IPM</b>	National Action Plan
<b>MNUMS</b>	Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences
<b>RPAC</b>	Regional Policy Advocacy Component
<b>SCP</b>	Sustainable Consumption and Production
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
<b>SWITCH-Asia RPAC</b>	SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFSS</b>	UN Food Systems Summit

## Background:

The EU-funded SWITCH-Asia programme aims at promoting sustainable development which contributes the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and a more circular economy. The SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component (RPAC), implemented by United Nations Environment Programme, is designed to strengthen the dialogue at regional, sub-regional and national policies on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and thereby contributing to green growth and reduction of poverty in Asia.

Food system refers to the constellation of activities involved in producing, processing, transporting and consuming food, which touch every aspect of human existence. During the Pre-Summit of the UN Food Systems Summit, held from 26-28 July 2021 in Rome in a hybrid format with virtual platforms, more than 100 countries came together over the course of three-days to discuss how they will transform their national food systems to drive progress against the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, among which shifting to sustainable consumption patterns is one of key action tracks highlighted, after an extensive process of engagement and dialogues seeking new ideas and evidence-based solutions. Sustainable food systems and healthy nontoxic foods are also linked to the human right to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

In Asia, increasing food consumption by a growing population, together with changing dietary habits, poses an immense challenge for the global food system and is associated with environmental impacts, such as plastics and packaging, increasing use of harmful chemicals to increase production, and increasing food wastage. Shifting to more sustainable food consumption patterns would greatly contribute to food systems transition in the context of Asia towards a sustainable, equitable, resilient and nutritious food system. This online dialogue was designed based on the concept of Farm-to-Fork with a focus on sustainable food consumption. The event was organized by the SWITCH-Asia RPAC in partnership with Asian Institute of Technology.

## Objectives of the event

The specific objectives of the event were as follows:

- To increase understandings of the current state and challenges of sustainable food consumption in Asia through policies and case studies,
- To foster awareness on significance of the food consumption through updates from the UNFSSS and recognise the opportunities to promote sustainable food consumption in Asia
- To share government policies and showcase good practices and initiatives on promoting sustainable food consumption towards a sustainable food system.

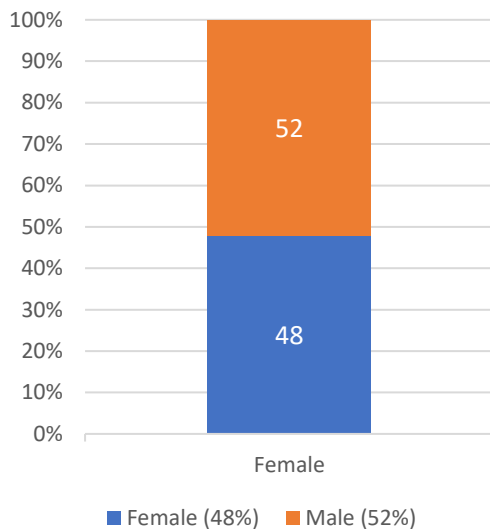
## Logistical information about the event

The event was organized by the SWITCH-Asia RPAC in partnership with Asian Institute of Technology through Zoom and was livestreamed on AIT's Facebook [page](#).

## Review on Participants:

More than 240 participants registered prior to the events. The sub-regional dialogue was attended by more than 1,750 participants belonging to different stakeholder groups on Zoom and Facebook livestreaming. Figures below present the distribution of participants who registered prior to the event by stakeholders. Based on the registrations, 52% of the participants were male and 48% were female. Both of them represented mainly by Academia sector.

### Registration by Gender (%)



#### Overtop stakeholders

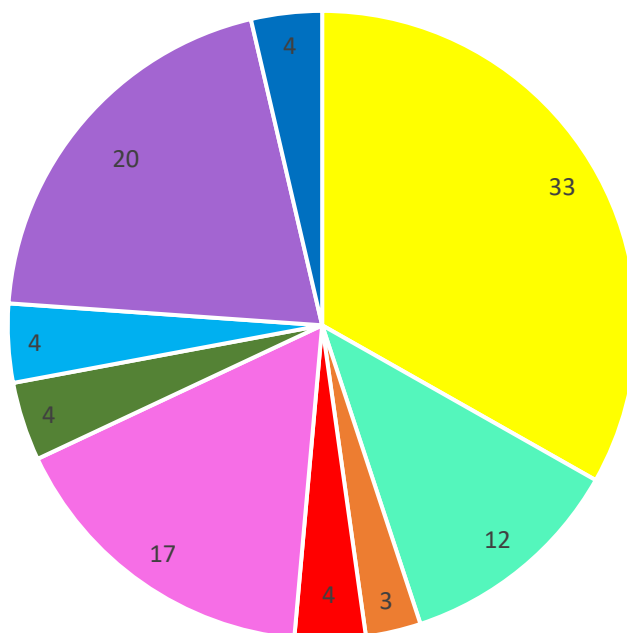
##### Male

- CSO and major groups
- EU and EUDs
- Intergovernmental Organization
- Private sectors and businesses

##### Female

- Academia
- Allies at the grassroots – NGOs
- Government Agency
- UN entities

### Registration by Stakeholders (%)



- Academia (33%)
- Allies at the grassroots - NGOs (12%)
- CSO and major groups (3%)
- EU and EUDs (4%)
- Government Agency (17%)
- Intergovernmental Organization (4%)
- International Organization (4%)
- Private sectors and businesses (20%)
- UN entities (4%)

## Summary of key messages:

The sub-regional dialogue brought together stakeholders from government, private sector, academia and civil society to share insights on food consumption patterns, policies and ways to achieve sustainable and healthy diets for all.

The expert panel discussed the challenges they face in incorporating sustainable food consumption into their policies. Lack of capacity, institutional support, technical knowledge, and personnel were the key challenges faced regarding mainstreaming sustainable food consumption. Priority areas highlighted in this dialogue were: sustainable agriculture, healthy and nutritious diets for all, empowerment of youth, women and vulnerable groups, reduction of meat consumption, food security, action throughout the value chain, resilient trade, access to technology and public awareness. Value addition, sustainable financing, technology, innovation, and policy were highlighted as important tools to achieve this.

## Welcome remarks

### **Dr. Mushtaq Memon**

Project Manager, EU SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component (RPAC)

Dr. Memon remarked that food is one of the key areas to address climate change mitigation and adaptation and to achieve the 2030 Agenda. UNEP is leading on SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production, where 12.3 indicator is on food loss and food waste. With the Secretary General's summit this month on the sustainable food systems, it is important to discuss how to make food systems more secure, climate friendly, and also environmentally, economically and socially friendly. He thanked the European Union for their generous support in the mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production, including in the food sector, in Asia Pacific through SWITCH-Asia programme. He noted that the aim of the discussion was to understand where the food consumption sits between the value chain and to find ways to address food loss, food waste, zero hunger in the broader context of human rights, gender, youth, and children.

## Opening remarks

### **Ms. Francesca Gilli**

Acting Team Leader, Cooperation Section, Delegation of European Union to Thailand

Ms. Francesca Gilli gave an overview of the European Green Deal. She noted that the Green Deal is an umbrella strategy that rests on eight interlinked pillars including sustainable foods, food systems, sustainable agriculture, energy, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation, zero pollution, sustainable industry, building and renovation, climate and circular economy, sustainable consumption and production. For circular economy and sustainable consumption and production, the SWITCH2GREEN programme is the parent of all the SWITCH programmes globally. She remarked that SWITCH-Asia is a very important programme for the EU because it is a way to implement in practice the policies and strategies of the EU. The EU is basing their work on the Agenda 2030 and also on the European Consensus on Development. The main goal for SWITCH-Asia is Goal 12, however for a sustainable food system there are many interconnected SDGs: Goal 2 is central, even Goals 8 and 11 that are linked to sustainable food systems, decent jobs and sustainable agriculture. She highlighted that the EU has several ongoing projects in Asia on sustainable agriculture and sustainable

food systems, climate smart agriculture and that there is a lot of intersection between the different strands of work that they do.

## Keynote Speech on Sustainable Food Consumption – Transforming Food Systems for Healthy and Sustainable Diets

### Dr. Fan Shenggen

Chair Professor, College of Economics Management & Dean of the Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, China Agricultural University

Dr. Fan Shenggen stated that today there exist multiple risks, and he emphasized the coincidence of all these risks happening together, then the impact on the world and on food systems would be multiplied. He noted that the Asian food system have been resilient to the shock and has not seen a major breakdown of food supply, trade has not been seriously affected. There are many reasons why the Asian food system have been relatively resilient: 1) Good road infrastructure; 2) access to internet and mobile phones and the food can be shipped from producers to consumers without stops. 3) relatively well developed the supply chains and 4) the policy interventions introduced by various countries from China, India, Japan, Vietnam to the Philippines to support this food suppliers, introduce tax rates, and provides subsidies, employment subsidies, production subsidies, and lockdown exemption for food system workers. It is necessary to transfer food and nutrition to the vulnerable population during crisis, and continue to invest in research and infrastructure to guarantee resilience in the food supply chain. Further, better regulation of wet markets, and wildlife is needed in Asia.

It is key to influence consumers behaviour towards more sustainable and healthy food. He noted that they developed a report on China and global food where they did several analyses and introduced Dietary Guidelines for residents to consume and EAT-Lancet which means that substantially reduce your meat consumption. He stated that if all Chinese consumers follow this path, millions of deaths can be avoided and carbon emissions from agri-food systems would be avoided by about 20% which is a win-win solution. Based on all this analysis, the report recommended seven strategic transitions for global system to transform. 1) technological innovations; 2) repurpose subsidies at a global level; 3) invest more in rural communication technology for smallholders, so that internet becomes a powerful tool and reduce the digital divide; 4) institutional innovation; 5) respect nature; 6) open and resilient trade, and 7) consumer behaviour.

## Summary of the Pre-summit of UN Food Systems Summit with a focus on sustainable food consumption

### Jian Yi

Leader for UNFSS Action Track 2 Workstream on Food Environment, President of Good Food Fund in China

Jian Yi mentioned that Action Track 2 (AT2) is about shifting to healthy and sustainable food consumption patterns. Several coalitions have already emerged at the Pre-Summit in Rome in July, including the coalition on reducing food loss and waste. Many Coalitions will be launched at the summit, including the coalition called healthy diets from sustainable food systems for children, families, and all and five UN agencies are actively involved, including UNEP. This coalition will have two main focuses: 1. To increase the diversity of people's diets to include a wider variety of safe and nutritious foods, produced sustainably and as appropriate for local cultures and contexts; 2. To reduce unhealthy foods and curb excessive consumption of mass produced meat. The coalition will align, mobilize and support coherent actions in three

main areas: 1. Reorienting food supply to focus on nutritional value; 2. Enhancing food environment to increase accessibility and affordability of healthy food through capacity strengthening for retailers of nutritious food, healthier food marketing and food sensitive urban planning; 3. Motivating individuals, and communities through multi-dimensional education, demand generation, behaviour change support, and enabling government actions. All this can only be achieved through financing and multistakeholder partnership.

The coalition will build a national dialogues and pathways towards sustainable food systems by 2030. He highlighted that their organization launched the good food pledge in 2019 which outlined the framework for consumers to support more healthy and sustainable food consumption patterns covering food literacy, mission driven organization, leadership and food governance. They also have a wet market reform project and this year, they launched the UN FSS AT2 China action hub, focusing on promoting healthier and sustainable food consumption patterns in China, especially mobilizing the youth. They also have the good food summit, where they awarded the best practices in China food systems.

## Panel Sessions:

### Session 1: Promoting sustainable food consumption through policies

#### **EU Farm to Fork strategy towards a sustainable food system**

**Laurent Lourdais,**

Counsellor, Agriculture, SPS, Environment, Delegation of EU to Thailand

Mr. Laurent Lourdais mentioned that the overall challenge of the EU Farm to Fork strategy is to create a sustainable food system in the three interlinked dimensions of economic, environmental and social sustainability. He elaborated that in the strategy there are four quantitative targets by 2030: 1) To reduce by 50% the overall use of chemical pesticides; 2) Reduction of nutrients losses by at least 50% while ensuring no deterioration in soil fertility. This will reduce use of fertilizers by at least 20% by 2030. 3) Reduction of the sales and use of antimicrobial for farmed animals and aquaculture by 50% in order to reduce antimicrobial resistance. 4) to achieve at least 25% of EU's agricultural land under organic farming. Beside quantified targets there are other objectives which also are very important such as the promotion of healthy and sustainable food consumption, nutrient pollution, sustainable and innovate feed additives, improvement of animal welfare and also the promotion of sustainable packaging solutions. For pesticides, the Commission will revise the sustainable use of pesticides directive and will also enhance provisions on integrated pest management (IPM). The EU will also strengthen the position of farmers in the supply chains and create possibilities for cooperation between operators.

The food service operators and retailers have a key role in the food system. The development of an EU Code of Conduct on responsible food, business and marketing practices in the food supply chain. There will be other initiatives on food packaging, marketing standards, sustainable food procurement, front and back nutrition labelling, pricing to encourage organic food consumption and sustainable diets. The Commission will review the EU school scheme to focus on healthy and sustainable foods focusing more on fruits and vegetable consumptions in this school program and will review the EU promotion program for agri products to enhance again its contribution to SCP and in line with evolving diets. To ensure the most value of all food produced, including by-products, the first EU wide monitoring food waste levels will allow the Commission to set baselines and proposed legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU which will be done by 2023. He concluded that they would count on the cooperation with Asian countries on these issues including the UN discussions.



## The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023, Cambodia

### HE. Dr. Sok Silo

Secretary General of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development, the Royal Government of Cambodia

HE. Dr. Sok Silo presented a case study on the experience of the transformation of food sustainable system in Cambodia. He remarked that the food consumption trend in Cambodia is changing as a result of social and economic progress which has transformed the food system. He highlighted the need to have a strategy for social and behavioural change and work with all stakeholders to transform the food system to change the way they produce, consume and conduct their business to strengthen the food system, enhance food safety and sustainability with a strong focus on promoting the Khmer culinary culture. He emphasized the need to have data and analysis on diets, a guideline and understanding of the consumption practices. And this is the strategic framework for Food Security and Nutrition in Cambodia based on the twin track approach to lead responsibility and the prioritise multi-sectoral coordination and support by the government to strengthen institutional and partnership at the international, national and sub-national level. The framework also focused on gender, youth and environment as well as equity. Food Security and Nutrition is a cross cutting issue, hence this require multi sectoral coordination that focuses on healthy diet, food value chain, food safety and food fortification, food security in disaster management and climate change and nutrition sensitive and communication led nutrition.

Regarding to the Cambodian food system roadmap, Cambodia has had a city dialogue, national dialogue on food system and have identified four teams for the national food system: 1. healthy diet for all; 2. Empowering youth, woman and vulnerable; 3. Resilient livelihoods and food system, and 4. Improve governance and inclusiveness. He remarked that to achieve the 2030 vision for food system, they need to adjust the food system including the production, processing, storage, distribution and food environment, food, consumer choice and food waste in production and consumption. He emphasized the need to engage the youth especially as Cambodia has nearly 60% population are youth. They have the potential the influence to the market, as they are the majority consumers in Cambodia. He highlighted the need to provide social assistance to support the equitable access to healthy diets and also to promote diversify agriculture system. Further, there is also a need to promote the green economy principle in building back better from COVID-19 across the food system.

### Session 2: Opportunities to enhance sustainable food consumption Practitioners as enablers to promote sustainable food consumption

#### Food security & nutrition programs in Mongolia

##### Assoc. Prof. Soninkhishig Tsolmon

Department of Nutrition School of Public Health, Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences (MNUMS)

Ms. Soninkhishig Tsolmon spoke about food security nutrition programs in Mongolia and the gaps that they faced during the implementation of those programs towards better nutrition and sustainable food production. First, she highlighted four pillars of food security as food availability, food accessibility, food utilization in terms of nutrition outcomes and sustainability. The production and consumption of meat and meat products is very high because it is traditionally an animal husbandry country and for fruits and vegetables it is very low as it is very import dependent. Since 2012 there exist the main nutrition and food security

programmes and policies and related policies like health policy on food and agriculture, and so on. The food system is coordinated with the four laws like Food Law, Law on ensuring safety of food products, law for food for infants, law on school feeding, law on fortified food and also the big sustainable development vision documentations for 2030 and even 2050.

She noted that in many programmes many indicators to promote nutrition were missing. In reality, there are a lot of losses on the field, post-harvest losses in transportation and other losses. Further, women empowerment is not included in these programmes. She summarised the policy gaps and main issues: the targets are not sufficiently ambitious, the multi-sectoral programmes are not costed in many cases, effective, feasible and evidence-based win-win interventions are not being prioritized, nutritious and sustainable food supply is not prioritised, lack of clarity and effectiveness of existing governance and coordination mechanisms, weak accountability and lack of capacity to enforce policies; interaction of sectors are not really effectively coordinated, and the indicators are not accurate and sometimes not suitable. Further, Mongolia has weak infrastructure in value chain network for food safety control in territorial imbalances. Agri-food systems do not generate fair economic returns to most informal players. She concluded that Mongolia is at the beginning of formulating effective policies to address the sustainable food consumption issues.

## **Women Empowerment for Sustainable Food Consumption: ALIET GREEN, Indonesia**

### **Ms. Lastiana Yuliandari**

Founder and Director, ALIET GREEN

Ms. Lastiana Yuliandari spoke from the perspective of small food business involving in the food system. She noted that in countries like Indonesia, where farmers are the majority, women provide their farming labour more than men and play a crucial role in many aspects of crop production and its success. The challenge for the future will be to pursue concrete attainment of equity in access to resources by women to purchase food, and purchasing power to buy food, where opportunities are there enhancing their potential to generate food security, and specific policy measures are required to address the constraints facing women farmers and special consideration given to the needs of female as the heads of the household.

The main focus of Aliet Green is empowering women at every level starting from farming, production and employment providing regular training regarding required minimum standards such as organic food, hygiene, and Fairtrade. Recently, they have provided financial literacy and income generation for female farmers. By selling organic and Fairtrade, farmers receive minimum 10% extra per kilo of the products when they sell to Aliet Green. Their project is based on organic farming, in addition to regenerative farming in a dynamic agroforestry. Regenerative agroforestry is being used as a strategy to counteract the impact of grazing, deforestation and climate change. Most importantly, this project will benefit the women farmers, because smart system planning will increase the reliability of yields and provide additional income streams. They provide equal employment opportunities to promote disadvantaged women's group and farmers with disability. The products are prepared mainly by female farmers and at the facility Aliet Green employs over 80% women from disadvantaged backgrounds that are trained and skilful to process high quality products meeting international standards. She concluded that empowering women through regenerative agroforestry is very effective.

## Conclusion and next steps

### **Ms. Tunnie Srisakulchairak**

Programme Management Officer, UNEP SWITCH-Asia RPAC

Ms. Tunnie Srisakulchairak concluded that enhancing innovation, more opportunities to work together with other sectors and to go forward the sustainability in the future are important. She expressed sincere thanks and appreciation to all speakers and thanked the participants for kind participation and encouraged them to make the right decision for food consumption to help build a more sustainable world before 2030.

## Snapshots of the event



## Annex:

### Annex 1: The Final agenda

<b>Time (ICT)</b>	<b>Theme</b>
<b>0930-0935</b>	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> Dr. Mushtaq Memon Project Manager, EU SWITCH-Asia RPAC
<b>0935-0945</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b> Ms. Francesca Gilli Acting Team Leader, Cooperation Section, Delegation of EU to Thailand
<b>0945-1000</b>	<b>Keynote Speech on Sustainable Food Consumption - Transforming Food Systems for Healthy and Sustainable Diets</b> Mr. Fan Shenggen Chair professor, College of Economics Management & Dean of the Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, China Agricultural University
<b>1000-1010</b>	<b>Summary of the Pre-summit of UN Food Systems Summit with a focus on sustainable food consumption</b> Mr. Jian Yi Leader for UNFSS Action Track 2 Workstream on Food Environment President of Good Food Fund in China
<b>1010-1030</b>	<b>Session 1 – Promoting sustainable food consumption through policies</b>  <b>EU farm to fork strategy towards a sustainable food system</b> Mr. Laurent Lourdais Counsellor, Agriculture, SPS, Environment, Delegation of European Union to Thailand  <b>The 2nd National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (NSFSN) 2019-2023, Cambodia</b> HE. Dr. Sok Silo Secretary General of the Council for Agricultural and Rural Development, the Royal Government of Cambodia
<b>1030-1050</b>	<b>Session 2 – Opportunities to enhance sustainable food consumption Practitioners as enablers to promote sustainable food consumption</b>  <b>Food security &amp; nutrition programs in Mongolia</b> Assoc. Prof. Soninkhishig Tsolmon Department of Nutrition School of Public health Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences (MNUMS)  <b>Women Empowerment for Sustainable Food Consumption: ALIET GREEN, Indonesia</b> Ms. Lastiana Yuliandari Founder and Director ALIET GREEN
<b>1050-1055</b>	<b>Open for Discussion</b>
<b>1055-1100</b>	<b>Q&amp;A</b> <b>Closing</b> Ms. Tunnie Srisakulchairak UNEP Programme Management Officer, EU SWITCH-Asia RPAC

## For more information

SWITCH-Asia event page:

<https://www.switch-asia.eu/event/promoting-sustainable-food-consumption-in-southeast-and-northeast-asia-through-farm-to-fork-concept/>

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