

# Covid-19 and Sustainable Food Systems

*Transforming food systems in times of crises*



As we approach the Food Systems Summit 2021, the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development (IFIAD) is delighted to present its Annual Conference, which this year will focus on the theme of *Covid-19 and Sustainable Food Systems - Transforming food systems in times of crises*. As defined by the FAO, food systems, encompass the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing,

distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic over the past year, and its social and economic impact, has highlighted the fragility of food systems as a source of food security, nutrition and livelihoods, and has threatened to compromise existing development gains.

For many countries, Covid-19 has emerged as a 'perfect storm', compounding pre-existing crises and inequalities, as well as vulnerabilities around climate change. At the same time, the pandemic has come to represent a critical juncture where we now have a window of opportunity to rethink how we can transform our food systems to be more resilient and equitable. This imperative to 'build back better' is particularly important as we commence the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, and we strive to meet the climate change commitments of the Paris Agreement.

It is against this backdrop that we are excited to bring together leading experts and organisations' representing a broad spectrum of experience and perspectives, to share their learning and opportunities for both protecting

and transforming food systems against current and future shocks. In particular, this year's IFIAD Conference will consider:

- How are agri-food development actors adapting and responding to the Covid-19 pandemic?
- What strategies have been most effective in strengthening resilience and ensuring our food systems can reach the furthest behind first? What social and technical innovations and opportunities are emerging?
- What examples do we have of successful multi-sectoral approaches and private sector partnerships for transforming food systems to become more resilient and equitable?

## SESSION 1



### COVID-19: Learning from a Crisis: Transitioning to Resilient Food Systems

As we start reflecting on our preliminary learnings from the crisis, its effects on food systems and different sectors' response options, how can we unlock the potential of agriculture and food systems to deliver more sustainable solutions as a contribution to the global development agenda?

Taking a global focus, this session will discuss proposed changes to food systems required to move towards resilience and 'building back better'. In particular, we will take a close look at the areas of nutrition and health, climate, justice and equality, and land rights. What are the challenges faced and opportunities provided by these sectors in relation to transforming food systems in a sustainable and equitable manner? Our speakers' perspectives will feed into a multisector dialogue aimed at leveraging synergies to reach the goals of the Food System Summit 2021 – a collective action of all citizens to radically change the way we produce, process, and consume food.

## SESSION 2



### EU-Africa Partnership: Looking to the Future

As the EU paves the way for a stronger and more ambitious partnership with Africa for prosperous, peaceful and sustainable futures for all, what role will the agri-food and rural agenda play within this new Africa-Europe Alliance? How can agri-food stakeholders leverage this renewed partnership in order to deliver better outcomes for rural households, and respond to the jobs, incomes and sustainability challenges ahead?

In this session we will take the timely opportunity to consider this regional partnership response, including the EU Commission's Task Force on Rural Africa (TFRA), and Ireland's domestic response, the National Task Team on Rural Africa (NTTRA). We will also hear from the farmers, civil society, and the private sector who are directly engaged with achieving this transformative food systems agenda on the prospect of strengthened regional alliances.