

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



IRELAND AND THE UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT

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INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, 23 September 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will convene a Food Systems Summit at the UN General Assembly. The Summit will promote food systems thinking, which represents a paradigm shift for food as it encompasses all aspects of the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products.¹ With only nine harvests left until the target date of 2030, the Summit is expected to be a critical milestone in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs). The ambition of the Summit is to launch “bold new actions to deliver progress on all 17 SDGs”, each of which relies on healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems.² Bringing together key farming, science, business, healthcare, academic, indigenous, youth and consumer stakeholders, the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy to the Summit, Dr Agnes Kalibata, has branded it as a “people’s summit”. This shift toward more inclusive approaches to food systems decision-making has already been reflected in the over 1300 Member State, international and independently organised Summit dialogues.³ Summit stakeholders took stock of the consultation process to date at the Pre-Summit which took place in Rome from Monday, 26 July 2021 to Wednesday, 28 July 2021.⁴

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed outlined four key stages to the conferences which will build on the work of the Dialogues and Pre-Summit.

First, the Secretary-General will deliver a Statement of Action which will help place the Summit negotiations in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Countries will be given an opportunity to forward national and regional pathways for food systems transformation. The Summit will then identify common themes and seek agreement on dedicated follow-up mechanisms.

The Summit is of major importance to Ireland in terms of its agri-food policy and its broader international development and foreign policy agenda as Ireland seeks to become a world leader in sustainable foods systems. On Tuesday, 3 August 2021, Ireland published [Food Vision 2030](#), which champions food systems thinking through a ‘food systems approach’ to agri-food policy. A food systems approach is one which conceptualises the food system in its totality by taking into consideration “all the elements, their relationships and related effects”. In doing so Ireland’s new strategy has been designed in such a way that gives equal consideration to all three dimensions of a sustainable food system, namely: **environmental sustainability; economic sustainability; and social sustainability**. There is, however, no international framework for sustainable food systems. **Food Vision 2030** is one of the first strategies of its kind globally to adopt such an approach to agri-food policies.

This paper will identify the main issues that will be addressed at the upcoming Summit, as well as the main issues on

1 https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/food_systems_concept_paper_scientific_group_-_draft_oct_26.pdf

2 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/about>

3 <https://summitdialogues.org/>

4 <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/pre-summit-gathering-highlights-food-as-powerful-tool-for-sdgs/>

the Irish Government agenda. It will then assess avenues open to Ireland to pursue the leadership role at the Summit that it aspires to. It will do so by seeking to identify potential like-minded partners and possible domestic challenges to Ireland's credibility as a leader for sustainable food systems at the Summit. Finally, the paper will seek to estimate what the vision of Ireland for the UN Food Systems Summit would mean for reform of agri-food policy as well the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

ACTION TRACK 1: ENSURE ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD FOR ALL

Ending malnutrition of all forms and reducing the incidence of malnutrition are key elements of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). Moreover, both are key enablers to ensuring people are nourished and healthy. This means that everyone must have, at all times, access to sufficient quantities of affordable and safe food products.

FOOD SYSTEMS APPROACH

THE THREE S'S

Environmental Sustainability



Social Sustainability



Economic Sustainability



THE AGENDA FOR THE SUMMIT

The ambition of the United Nations is that the Summit will result in "measurable outcomes that enable achievement of the 2030 goals".⁵ To do so, the Summit is structured around a framework of five Action Tracks. The tracks are not mutually exclusive, rather they are designed to be considered holistically with a view to addressing trade-offs and identifying solutions with wide-ranging benefits. The five Action Tracks are as follows:

ACTION TRACK 2: SHIFT TO SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTIONS PATTERNS

At the heart of SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption) is the ambition to create sustainably produced food, strengthen local value chains, improve nutrition, and promote food recycling resources. This action track focuses on the elimination of wasteful food consumption patterns and reducing the number of resources needed in both the production and distribution of food.

5 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/vision-principles>

ACTION TRACK 3: BOOST NATURE POSITIVE PRODUCTION

This action track recognises the inherent interconnectedness between food systems and climate change. This occurs at all stages of the system: production, processing, and distribution. With strong links to SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 14 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life Below Water) and SDG 16 (Life on Land), this Action Track focuses on the impact of food systems on biodiversity loss, pollution, water use, soil degradation and greenhouse gas emissions. It also places a particular emphasis on the challenges and opportunities faced by small-scale farmers and enterprises in this respect.

ACTION TRACK 4: ADVANCE EQUITABLE LIVELIHOODS

The mantra of "leaving no one behind" was at the heart of SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Action Track 4 reflects this ambition through its overarching objectives of "promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all actors along the food value chain" and "reducing risks for the world's poorest, enabling entrepreneurship and addressing the inequitable access to resources and distribution of value".

ACTION TRACK 5: BUILD RESILIENCE TO VULNERABILITIES SHOCKS AND STRESS

This action track recognises the threats posed to food security, and in turn SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) by climate and natural disasters. This Action Track aims to "ensure that all people within a food system are empowered to prepare for, withstand, and recover from instability".

IRELAND'S AGENDA AND LEADERSHIP AMBITIONS FOR THE SUMMIT

The Summit comes at an important moment for the Irish agri-food sector and Irish development cooperation. In terms of both agri-food and development policies, Ireland's agenda aligns with the broad ambitions of the Summit. In a similar vein to **Food Vision 2030**, the UN Food Systems Summit intends to provide a basis for transformative change for the environmental, economic and social sustainability of food systems. **Food Vision 2030** spells out Ireland's leadership ambitions for the Summit and beyond in this respect. Ireland hopes that it can use its strategy to provide input into and influence food systems transformation at the Summit. Through a 'food systems approach', Ireland hopes to become "a leading supplier of policy advice and services to countries adopting their own sustainable food systems, particularly in Africa".⁶

Ireland's policy for international development has explicitly recognised the importance of food systems approaches to agriculture since 2019 when its [A Better World](#) strategy planned for systematic responses to the human, health and environmental challenges posed by food systems to sustainability.⁷ Food and agriculture make up one of the strategy's three clusters of interventions as well. Ireland has significant expertise to offer in this area as the eradication of hunger has long been one of the flagship policies of the State's foreign aid framework.⁸ Moreover, Ireland has a track record of inclusive engagement concerning sustainable food systems. Ireland has a close relationship with the Africa Agri-Food Development Programme which has helped connect the Irish agri-food sector with African counterparts to help support sustainable, pro-poor growth of the local food industries and markets. Furthermore, in March 2021, a

6 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c73a3-food-vision-2030-a-world-leader-in-sustainable-food-systems>

7 <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/aboutus/abetterworldirelandspolicyforinternationaldevelopment/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf>

8 <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/aboutus/abetterworldirelandspolicyforinternationaldevelopment/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf>

report on Ireland's relationship with the FAO acknowledged Ireland's leading role in the creation of "novel, sustainable and multi-partner solutions" and the transformative impact it has had on food systems over the past number of years.⁹ With a history of specialisation and recognition from the international community, it seems that Ireland is indeed well placed to take up the leadership role they aspire to have at the Summit.

Ireland's agri-food strategy has four high-level missions, each of which will most likely influence Ireland's input at the Summit. The mission-oriented approach reflects the Government's desire to move away from sector-specific policy recommendations and aligns with the holistic nature of the Summit's five action tracks. The strategy's four missions are as follows:

MISSION 1: A CLIMATE-SMART ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRIFOOD SECTOR

Protecting the environment and mitigating the effects climate change has been referenced in previous Irish agri-food strategies, however **Food Vision 2030** posits that environmental considerations will be central to the sustainable development of the Irish agri-food sector. It pledges carbon neutrality in Ireland by 2050, with verifiable progress of a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030. While its ambitious climate action goals are anchored to SDG 13 (Climate Action), the strategy implicitly recognises the importance of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). It does so by addressing each aspect of the environment, namely climate, ammonia, biodiversity, water, forests, seafood, the bioeconomy, food loss and waste, and packaging. Ireland sees a grass-based food system as a comparative advantage in terms of nutrition and sustainability but seeks

some diversification to further continue its efforts to reduce emissions.

MISSION 2: VIABLE AND RESILIENT PRIMARY PRODUCERS WITH ENHANCED WELL-BEING

This mission focuses on the targets of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), especially concerning the role of primary producers in sustainable food systems. In particular, the strategy's goal of increasing primary producer diversification through areas such as carbon sequestration and storage, microgeneration of energy, eco-tourism and aquaculture represents a positive step toward the achievement of higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, an important target of SDG 8.

MISSION 3: FOOD, WHICH IS SAFE, NUTRITIOUS AND APPEALING, TRUSTED AND VALUED AT HOME AND ABROAD

Ireland recognises the importance of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) to a sustainable system. More specifically, the strategy acknowledges the necessity of wellbeing and promises "coherent food and health policies that deliver improved health outcomes". One of Ireland's own major challenges in this respect is the fact that nutritious food is becoming increasingly unaffordable compared to less healthy choices.¹⁰ This contributes to both obesity and malnutrition and undermines efforts to reduce the incidence of non-communicable disease.

MISSION 4: AN INNOVATIVE, COMPETITIVE AND RESILIENT AGRIFOOD SECTOR, DRIVEN BY TECHNOLOGY AND TALENT

The fourth mission represents a paradigm shift in Ireland's approach to the SDGs as it is the first Irish agri-food strategy, and one of the first globally, to explicitly call for policy coherence and synergies between

⁹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/38d80-fao-ireland-partnering-for-a-peaceful-equal-and-sustainable-world/>
¹⁰ <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/9820/official-feedback-9820-en.pdf?t=1620205338>

Irish agri-food policy and Irish development cooperation and foreign policy. If successfully implemented, it would mark a major milestone for Ireland's progress on SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Ireland would position itself as a key voice in the strategic relationship between the EU and Africa. Furthermore, Ireland could establish itself as a key development actor for sustainable food systems through the development of partnerships between the Irish agri-food sector and African countries as well as the establishment of a network of international experts to develop a composite indicator or index of sustainable food systems.

Whilst the objectives of the four missions will inform Ireland's input into each of the five Action Tracks of the Summit, Ireland has stated that it believes it can make the most meaningful impact through leadership on Action Track 1 (Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all).¹¹ Ireland is one of the 11 Affiliated Member States of the Action Track 1 Leadership Team¹² which has served as a working group that has met monthly in the run-up to the Summit, and has worked to "identify, co-create, and iteratively tailor systemic and game-changing solutions" in advance of the Summit.¹³ Ireland hopes to draw on its development expertise in the area of ending hunger and malnutrition.¹⁴

It also intends to support work on access to nutritious food through support for the **One Health Approach**,¹⁵ which recognises the interconnected and interdependent relationship between human well-being and animal welfare in the food system.¹⁶

IRELAND'S AGENDA AND LEADERSHIP AMBITIONS FOR THE SUMMIT

THE PATH TO LEADERSHIP: LIKE-MINDED PARTNERS AND LEADERSHIP CREDIBILITY

Ireland's leadership ambitions for the Summit will be contingent on the State's ability to seek out like-minded partners and to build coalitions with stakeholders who share similar positions on the path to sustainable food systems. Given the diversity of opinions among member states and civil society and business stakeholders, forming coalitions based on expertise and concrete visions for transformative action will be vital to guiding Summit negotiations. Thus, Ireland's leadership capabilities will be determined in large part by its ability to forge such coalitions. At the same time, Ireland's leadership capabilities will be challenged by a relative lack of input in certain policy areas, in particular concerning climate action and gender equality. If Ireland cannot draw on experience and expertise for certain important negotiation issues, its credibility as a world leader for sustainable food systems will be diminished.

FOOD SYSTEMS REFORMERS

Whilst Ireland may be one of the first to explicitly adopt a food systems approach, there are several countries around the world who are arguably moving in a similar direction and could be potential allies to Ireland at the Summit:

11 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c73a3-food-vision-2030-a-world-leader-in-sustainable-food-systems/#food-vision-2030>

12 <https://www.gainhealth.org/sites/default/files/event/documents/action-track-1-leadership-team->

13 <https://foodsystems.community/members/anoukdevries/activity/5298/>

14 <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/aboutus/abetterworldirelandspolicyforinternationaldevelopment/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf>

15 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c73a3-food-vision-2030-a-world-leader-in-sustainable-food-systems/#food-vision-2030>

16 <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-policy/one-health>

CANADA

Canada is one such country. On foot of the [Food Policy for Canada](#) and using what they call 'integrated approaches' to food systems, the Canadian Government has also made its own leadership intentions clear. In June 2021, Canada dedicated one of its eight national Summit Dialogues to identifying game-changing solutions in which Canada can play a leading role.¹⁷ Canada's food policy specifically says that it will specialise in SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Given that Ireland has similar areas of specialisation, especially with respect to SDG 2, and the fact that both have detailed plans in this area, Ireland and Canada can be expected to have a considerable number of priorities in common at the Summit and together their voices can carry significant influence at negotiations.

FRANCE

In 2019, the French Government published [La stratégie internationale de la France pour la sécurité alimentaire, la nutrition et l'agriculture durable](#) which advocated for "developing a type of agriculture that is more productive from an economic, social, and environmental standpoint" as well as strengthening global governance on this issue.¹⁸ The desire of France to create a shared vision and international framework for sustainable food systems was also reflected in its national Summit Dialogue which concluded that France has the potential to become a leader in vegetable proteins. Given the shared history of livestock-based food systems of both France and Ireland and the fact that both are attempting to diversify their food systems, there is strong potential

for synergies in both countries' approaches to negotiations at the Summit.¹⁹

KENYA AND TANZANIA

There are other countries where reforms towards sustainable food systems are not as far-reaching but where the call for such reforms is growing and it has featured prominently in recent national debates. In **Kenya and Tanzania**, for instance, the Dutch think tank, ECDPM, developed the Sustainable Agri-food Systems Strategies in coordination with local stakeholders as a contribution to discussions on a sustainable food systems approach in both countries.²⁰

NEW ZEALAND

In New Zealand, a 2018 Nuffield Agriculture report called for a move towards what it calls a 'Whole Food System' approach by encompassing social, economic and environmental aims into agri-food policy. It described it as not only necessary given the pace of global change ahead, but also as the most viable way to "further sustain and grow future market opportunities".²¹ To fully capitalise on the inclusive nature of September's Summit, Ireland will need to not only find allies among the Member States but also with other stakeholders such as these.

THE EUROPEAN UNION

Ireland, as an EU Member State, can expect to find natural allies amongst fellow Europeans at the Summit. In May, the [Council Conclusions on the EU's priorities for the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit](#) were agreed upon. Member States agreed to work together at the Summit to promote the EU's vision of "a sustainable, climate-neutral

17 <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14355/official-feedback-14355-en.pdf?t=1628179286>

18 https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/frances_international_strategy_for_food_security_nutrition_and_sustainable_agriculture_cle4f3e1a.pdf

19 <https://ie.ambafrance.org/Ireland-and-France-continue-their-collaboration-in-agricultural-research>

20 <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Food-Systems-Approach-In-Practice-Guide-For-Sustainable-Transformation-ECDPM-Discussion-Paper-278-2020.pdf>

21 <https://ruralleaders.co.nz/broken-food-systems-developing-a-citizen-centric-new-zealand-food-strategy-na-dine-porter/>

and resource-efficient future" as outlined in the European Green Deal and its associated strategies and action plans, such as the 'Farm to Fork Strategy', the 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030', the EU's forest-related policies and the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies.²²

The Council Conclusions match many of Ireland's **Food Vision 2030** ambitions. When it comes to ending hunger and malnutrition in all forms, the EU, like Ireland, recognises the implications of food systems on the "coexistence of undernutrition with overweight, obesity and other diet-related non-communicable diseases" and supports international guidance on policy frameworks for health in a food systems context.²³ The EU, like Ireland, is seeking to promote the One Health Approach when it comes to access to nutritious food. The EU shares Ireland's desire to approach sustainable food systems from an **integrated humanitarian, development** and peace perspective. Should this come to pass it would help fulfil an important objective of **A Better World**: the reduction of humanitarian need. Both Irish national Summit Dialogues and the EU Citizens Dialogues reflected on the importance of youth in food production given the agency and power of young people in driving consumer-led change, as well as their potential as decision-makers for sustainable consumption policies.²⁴ Ireland's third national dialogue highlighted that young people are playing "a critical role in shaping sustainable production and consumption, and forging new connections between rural and urban society".²⁵

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Ireland has historically had strong connections to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the field of international development

and strengthening support to the SIDS is a key new initiative in **A Better World**.²⁶ The situation is no different in the context of this Summit as many SIDS are seeking to solve the problems that Ireland's food systems approach seeks to address. A Summit Dialogue organised by the Organisation of African and Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) described the situation in the SIDS concerning non-communicable diseases as a result of malnutrition as being "at a crisis point".²⁷ Another Summit Dialogue in Fiji described it as a major cause for concern for Pacific countries where such diseases are a leading cause of premature deaths.²⁸

LEADERSHIP CREDENTIAL SHORTCOMINGS

While Ireland may have a strategy and have the potential to seek out like-minded partners for the Summit, achievement of its leadership aspirations will not be without challenges. There are several areas where Ireland's vision arguably falls short when compared with visions for the Summit outlined by other stakeholders.

BIOGENIC METHANE EMISSIONS

While Ireland is making tangible and positive strides of climate progress in both policy and legislation, particularly through Food Vision 2030, **Ag Climatise**, and the **Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021**, concrete and actionable plans to manage the sustainable environmental footprint of the dairy and the beef sectors remains less clear. The lack of concrete action in this area was a cause of disagreement amongst Food Vision 2030's original strategy committee and was ultimately the reason for the withdrawal of the committee's Environmental Pillar (the coalition of environmental groups involved in

22 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8949-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

23 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8949-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

24 <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/29779/official-feedback-29779-en.pdf?t=1627662586>

25 <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/9826/official-feedback-9826-en.pdf?t=1621247950>

26 <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/aboutus/abetterworldirelandspolicyforinternationaldevelopment/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf>

27 <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/21375/official-feedback-21375-en.pdf?t=1627049307>

28 <https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/21375/official-feedback-21375-en.pdf?t=1627049307>

drafting Food Vision 2030).²⁹ **Food Vision 2030** promises a detailed plan on this in quarter 2 of 2022, but this is too late for the Summit and is a missed opportunity for Ireland to shape the future of sustainable food systems in this respect. Moreover, whilst total cattle livestock numbers have decreased for the past three consecutive years (2018-2020), the total size of the national dairy herd specifically has increased during each of those years.³⁰ The Irish Government has said in the past that biogenic methane emissions from increases in livestock sizes will jeopardise the State's ambition to be climate neutral by 2050.³¹ Thus, the absence of any detailed plan of action to mitigate against these emissions specifically diminishes the credibility of Ireland's leadership role.

GENDER EQUALITY IN IRISH FARMING

Gender is one of the four levers of change of the UN Food Systems Summit - that is "an area of work that has the potential to deliver wide-ranging positive change beyond its immediate focus".³² The Summit is expected to integrate prominent gender equality issues in the context of food systems into its negotiations including: **women's right to land; women's leadership in food systems; and changing norms and addressing institutional barriers**. Studies from 2010-2019 suggest that just 14% of Irish farmers are women. A 2016 Eurostat survey ranked Ireland as the fifth-lowest country for women's participation in farming, some 15 percentage points below the EU average.³³ Father-to-son inheritance and other cultural norms pose major barriers to Ireland's progress in this regard, and in turn, to Ireland's ability to make significant contributions on this subject at the Summit.

Nevertheless, **Food Vision 2030** has acknowledged this and supports an enhanced role for women in the sector. The strategy promises up-skilling opportunities, the organisation of a national dialogue

on women in agriculture and support to women in leadership roles in the agricultural sector. Whether or not this on its own is enough to tackle deeply entrenched cultural norms remains to be seen. The National Women's Council of Ireland has submitted recommendations to the European Commission that the next Common Agricultural Policy needs to better support the role of women on farms by offering tangible incentives such as additional top-up grants for young female farmers and joint farm partnerships. There is a clear recognition of the importance of gender as a lever of change for food systems amongst Irish stakeholders, but Ireland has more progress to make in this particular area before it can lead by virtue of its expertise.

CONCLUSIONS

The UN Food Systems Summit is set to become the first of many major steps towards transformative change for sustainable food systems during this Decade of Action to complete the SDGs. Ireland is seeking to assume a leadership position at this Summit through the promotion of a 'food systems approach' to agri-food policy. More specifically, it hopes to do so primarily in the context of Action Track 1 (Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all) by providing input based on its **Food Vision 2030** strategy, its international development expertise in eradicating hunger and through its promotion of the WHO's **One Health Approach**. Notwithstanding potential shortcomings surrounding methane emissions and gender equality in Irish farming, Ireland has the potential to assume a leadership role given the breath of coalition options open to it. Such coalitions include other progressive food systems reformers, other EU Member States and Small Island Developing States.

If Ireland successfully assumes such a

29 <https://environmentalpillar.ie/the-environmental-pillar-withdraws-from-the-problematic-2030-agri-food-strategy-committee/>

30 <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/lld/livestocksurveydecember2020/>

31 <https://assets.gov.ie/100931/7c8b812c-d857-4f39-96b9-1e7f134ba896.pdf>

32 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/levers-of-change>

33 https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/females-field-more-women-managing-farms-across-europe-2021-mar-08_en

leadership role, it will have significant implications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for which Ireland and Kenya were the co-facilitators in 2015. Even prior to the publication of **Food Vision 2030**, Ireland had prioritised sustainable food systems in its strategy, **A Better World**. If Ireland were now able to provide input into an international framework on how the path to sustainable food systems can be created, this would be another major achievement. While both the four high-level missions of **Food Vision 2030** and the five Action Tracks of the UNFSS Summit are holistic and cover almost all of the Sustainable Development Goals, Ireland's specialisation in Action Track 1 means that it has the potential to make particular strides on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being).

Leadership at the Summit in these areas will still be contingent on Ireland taking on board the perspectives of other stakeholders, especially when it comes to areas where Ireland might have less input, such as livestock methane emissions and gender equality in farming. It will also require that any trade-offs do not compromise or de-prioritise climate, gender and human rights issues in favour of business interests. Arguably, Ireland's position as chair of the Security Council for the month of September and its commitment to gender, human rights and the climate/security nexus on the Security Council agenda suggests that this could transfer over to the UNFSS negotiations, which seek to protect everyone's right to food, while sustaining the natural resources upon which agriculture relies. Furthermore, the combination of climate emergencies and conflict makes food systems transformation critical to prevent the exacerbation of the plight of communities which are already at-risk.

Finally, as the UN has stated from the outset, the Summit needs to be solutions-oriented and this means that results need to be monitorable and trackable.³⁴ Ireland's leadership will also rely on the outcomes being accompanied by sufficient accountability mechanisms as concrete commitments will

be required from Member States, action clusters and solutions clusters. To enable food systems transformation, an evidence-based approach to the negotiations will require clear reporting on progress. If the summit is to ultimately become a success, such transformational approaches will need to encompass all aspects of a sustainable food system: environmental, economic and social sustainability. Ireland's leadership will ultimately be determined by its ability to ensure all these aspects are accounted for.

34 <https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/about>

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