Twenty-twenty brought many challenges to and opportunities for working in the Decade of Action towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Communities worldwide faced unprecedented barriers to meeting food security needs with at least 20 countries on the brink of famine, highlighting the importance of global collective action. As we continue to move forward in this decade of action towards the UN Food Systems Summit and other global convenings, we have the opportunity to gain momentum as never before. We recognize that we cannot ‘reboot’ the system, but must transform food systems to right inequitable structures.

This pivotal year offers milestones for international collaboration. The International Borlaug Dialogue follows the UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) and the 48th Committee on World Food Security while building forward for COP26 and the Nutrition for Growth Summit, to gain momentum in the Decade of Action. Country commitments and Coalitions of Action adopted during the UN FSS will be highlighted during the Borlaug Dialogue, reaching additional audiences and widening opportunities for partnership.

**FORMAT**

The 2021 International Borlaug Dialogue (October 20-22), will be offered in a hybrid format. Through a series of live and virtual components, registrants will hear from leaders and champions, dive into interdisciplinary subjects and interact with new and familiar partners and colleagues. Each day, we will offer various sessions - panel discussions, roundtable sessions, side events and workshops designed for deeper exploration.

Participants will connect through a dynamic, virtual platform. The Dialogue will also offer limited, in-person opportunities through an early registration process, in accordance with travel and public health provisions anticipated for later in 2021.
THEMES
Transforming food systems action will result in multifaceted achievements that address numerous vulnerabilities simultaneously, including building forward from a historical focus on increased agricultural productivity to achieving a sustainable, equitable and nourishing food system. The interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature of food systems calls for interventions that are collaborative, innovative and evidence-based. Centering human and planetary health, gender equity and youth participation at every stage is essential for comprehensive and impactful change.

Given the momentum being built in the Decade of Action, this year’s International Borlaug Dialogue will spotlight several focal areas critical in food systems transformation. These focal areas provide framing themes for the Borlaug Dialogue, but other topics and critical issues will be explored.

RESEARCH & INNOVATION
Transforming food systems requires a strong evidence base for policy action, alongside great strides in accessible innovations. Through Research and Innovation, we must prioritize the affordability of safe, nutritious diets, which remain out of reach for a huge swath of the global population. Research advancements must continue to improve agricultural production dramatically, while innovation expands the capacity to enhance all aspects of food systems.

Topics include:

- Evaluating the momentum of climate-smart and nature-positive food production innovations that sustain the planet.
- Addressing the need for adoption of practices, research and innovations to reduce costs significantly for safe, nutritious diets, particularly for women and children in the first 1,000 days of life.
- Exploring modern digital applications and artificial intelligence technologies which are increasing information accessibility for all farmers, especially smallholders.
- Featuring innovative gene-editing technologies such as CRISPR and others.
The commitment to build safe, affordable, nutrition-sensitive food systems remain central to global food security deliberations. The link between nutrition and health has been magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nutrition must be elevated within food production priorities to achieve multiple wins in food security, including gender equity, natural resource conservation, diverse cultural contexts and poverty alleviation.

Topics include:

• Considering adaptations needed to transition to food systems that include increased healthy dietary patterns.
• Examining how healthier diets can be improved and accessed through affordability and biofortification.
• Discussing responsibilities and opportunities of many stakeholders, especially in the public and private sectors, to increase the production, affordability and consumption of safe, nutritious foods.
• Analyzing the nutrition-environment nexus, particularly in the diversification of protein sources such as pulses, legumes, aquatic foods, insects, soy, and other plant-based proteins, in addition to conventional livestock.

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