

U.S. FOOD POLICY PARTNERSHIP

2nd Partners' Meeting

February 23, 2021

2-4PM ET / 1-3 PM CT / 11-1 PM PT

Convened by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) and facilitated in partnership with NOOR Consulting

OBJECTIVES & INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting aimed to allow us to:

- Reconnect as a group of potential partners and collaborators;
- Brainstorm the overall trajectory and next steps to move towards developing an equitable and comprehensive U.S. Food Policy, and;
- Gather input on the structure for engagement moving forward.

IPES-Food kicked-off the meeting by recapping the shared values and goals developed among partners at the [first meeting](#) meant to underpin the US Food Policy Partnership (USFPP). It was clarified that the collaboration aims to strengthen and broaden out the existing food and farming movement to push for a **comprehensive food policy centered on justice, equity, and resilience**. As our current systems are based on the structural exploitation of workers, communities, and nature, a coherent food policy would aim to fundamentally shift the foundations on which policy decisions are made.

As dominant powers continue to develop concise, effective, and simple messaging to maintain the *status quo*, it will be crucial for our movement to show the maturity and skill to work together, embrace complexity, and deliver equally effective and actionable proposals to change the course of food and farming systems.

IPES-Food reiterated its aim to act as a convener, seeking to hold space for a collaboration to unfold. In any discussions to fund the work of the collaboration, funding will be sought for the collaboration as a whole and for partners to have the resources and means necessary to take part in any partnership work.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

A number of partners raised outstanding questions on the USFPP that still require clarification before being able to move forward as a partnership. Some of these questions have been clarified in a [Q&A](#), which defines the purpose of the collaboration, the reasoning for a U.S. Food Policy, and IPES-Food's role in the partnership. Questions included:

- What is this group trying to accomplish? What is our clear objective (i.e., can we name exactly what we want, why we want it, what it costs, and how to get there)?
- What are the policies that can be adopted or reformed *only* through this kind of collaboration?
- What can IPES-Food's role be in this collaboration?
- What is the Farm Bill's role in the process? How can we also consider other policies, omnibus legislation, and proposals for distribution and allocation of federal budgets?
- How do we ensure we are accountable to communities and ensure community buy-in as we move forward?
- How do we create a truly intersectional movement?

Partners also stressed that more participation is needed when developing documents intended to be shared publicly or within the group to ensure that all views are accounted for in shaping positions held by the Partnership.

While it was clear that some partners already work together regularly, others were less familiar with one another. As a result, most groups acknowledged that the USFPP will need to take time to trust-build among the partners, and to manage the tension between the need for rapid action and convergence on an action plan and taking the time to build a shared long-term vision for transformation.

In small group discussions, partners considered i) how to structure the collaboration (i.e., what the internal governance and working methods for this partnership could look like), and ii) what activities and initiatives could be taken on, including the timeframe needed for effective action.

i) Governance: Structuring the Collaboration

Partners stressed the need to determine clear organizing principles and a governance structure before setting an activity plan. Key points shared across the discussion groups included the need to:

- Identify partners to take part in an internal governance working group.
- Decide on how to break down the work (e.g., by topic clusters, by regions, by activity type) and decide on how working groups report back to the larger partner group for discussion and feedback.
 - Working groups should allow people to specialize based on their skills for efficient use of time and resources, while allowing for intersectoral discussions.
 - A point person who spearheads the overall initiative could be identified to liaise across the working groups and share information for feedback with the wider group.
 - Mechanisms would have to be identified for how to make decisions (e.g. 75% majority voting, decisions within WGs based on mutual trust that others are taking appropriate action, etc.)
- Create a 1- or 2-page internal document that acknowledges potential constraints of this process as the basis for moving forward in a meaningful way.
- Collaboratively develop and agree on a 1- or 2-pager that outlines the clear purpose of the collaboration.

ii) Action: Determining possible activities

While agreeing on the group's working methods was seen as a first priority, partners also discussed potential activities that the Collaboration could take on to set up the partnership. These included:

- **SWOT analysis.** Completing a SWOT analysis of USFPP organizations to see how we fit together and how to bridge gaps between existing networks to build collective power.
- **Assessing resources.** Assessing existing and potential resources to determine how to most appropriately strategize and communicate.
- **Broadening the group.** Determine which groups are still missing from the partnership, and bring them into the collaboration to meaningfully address intersectionality.
- **Information sharing.** Allowing partners to share what they are working on and seeing how the collective can help.
- **Cataloguing existing policies.** Looking at all the different laws that could affect food at the federal level, and determining which programs can be reformed and which need to be fundamentally reconsidered.

- **Building out a proposal for reform based on existing materials.** Drawing from partners' existing policy reform proposals, and mapping out what is possible to achieve in the next 6 months, year, 3 years.
- **Communicating effectively.** Communicating clearly on why the current system and proposals from dominant voices are harmful, and what could instead be done with public spending to support our vision for food systems.

NEXT STEPS

While it may be ambitious to come up with a single shared agenda for food systems transformation, a strong and forward-thinking sustainable food and farming movement is needed to counteract the messaging currently being put out by dominant voices from Big Ag to maintain the status quo.

Following this meeting, IPES-Food commits to moving forward on building a strong internal governance framework to support our partnership, including:

- Reaching out to partners to determine who has interest in joining a internal governance committee;
- Reaching out to individual partner organizations to determine what they might need to continue in this collaborative work;
- Coming back to partners to discuss the way forward following the above steps in the next two months.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

Organization

Coalition of Immokalee Workers
Common Market
EarthJustice
EarthJustice
Environmental Working Group
Fair Food Network
Fair Food Network
First Nations Development Institute
Food Chain Workers Alliance
FoodCorps
Good Food Purchasing Program
Harvard Law Clinic
HEAL Alliance
Health Care without Harm
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
IPES-Food (Panel) & Michigan State U.
IPES-Food (Panel) & Middlebury College
IPES-Food (Panel) & U. Texas
IPES-Food (Panel) & UCSC
IPES-Food (Panel) & Union of Concerned Scientists
IPES-Food (Staff)
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
National Family Farm Coalition
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
National Young Farmers Coalition
New England Food Solutions
Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
Organic Consumers Association
Rural Coalition
SAAFON
UCSM
United Food and Commercial Workers

Participant

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Haile Johnston
Carrie Apfel
Peter Lehner
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Mark Nicholson
Oran Hesterman
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Suzanne Adely
Jillian Dy
Alexa Delwiche
Emily Broad Leib
Navina Khanna
Emma Sirois
Sophia Murphy
Phil Howard
Molly Anderson
Raj Patel
Steve Gliessman
Ricardo Salvador
Chantal Clément
Anne Palmer
Jordan Treakle
Sarah Hackney
Martin Lemos
Adam Kotin
Rosanna Marie Neil
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Lorette Picciano
Jahi Chappell
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Dennis Olson

USCM Food Policy WG / MUFPP Steering Committee
Vermont Law
Wallace Center
Why Hunger
Yale University

Latha Swamy
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Susan Lightfoot Schempf
Lorrie Clevenger
Samara Brock