

Revitalizing ethnic cuisine for improved nutrition, nature positive food production, and equitable livelihoods

08 June 2021 | Microsoft Teams
9:30–12:00 (NPT)



Background

The upcoming UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021 aims to bring together key players from the world to discuss and raise a collective voice for positive change in global food systems. There are five action tracks that align with the Summit's objectives: 1) ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; 2) shift to sustainable consumption patterns; 3) boost nature-positive production; 4) advance equitable livelihoods; and 5) build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stressors to strengthen food systems. Each action track is designed to address possible trade-offs with other tracks, and to identify solutions that can deliver wide-reaching benefits.

The HKH Call to Action developed by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), in consultation with its eight member countries, outlines six urgent actions that emphasize mountain specific policies, and pro-poor gender and socially inclusive development pathways for achieving the SDGs. The Call also urges for a more robust regional cooperation, urgent climate action, and incentives and means for mountain communities to conserve and manage ecosystems. These urgent actions align well with the objectives of the Summit, particularly its focus on healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food systems.

Ethnic cuisines in the HKH reflect the region's diverse ethnicities, traditions, and food cultures. They also reflect its rich agrobiodiversity as cuisines are directly linked to diverse food production systems, and traditional ecological knowledge of their use for food and nutrition security. Hence, preservation and promotion of ethnic cuisines is one action that is well aligned with the objective of sustainable food systems. Ethnic and traditional cuisines, with their simple preparation and ingredients sourced straight from the farm and forest are a good source of nutritious food (Action track 1). Awareness of the ingredients and their health benefits triggers sustainable consumption of fresh and unadulterated food (Action track 2). The preparation of ethnic cuisines is also closely linked to sustainable production and management of agrobiodiversity and agroecosystems (Action track 3), and also to food-based value chains and ecotourism (Action track 4). Preservation of ethnic cuisine also helps reinforce cultural identities and hence, empowers these communities to create resilient food systems (Action track 5). Awareness of the value of ethnic cuisines can thus help transform the way the world produces, consumes, and thinks about food.



About the webinar

With the homogenization of food production systems and a growing preference for energy dense processed foods in the market, the intake of and interest towards ethnic foods is gradually diminishing. The loss of ethnic cuisines also means the collapse of healthy food and dietary systems, loss of knowledge on the use of local biodiversity and their health benefits, loss of agrobiodiversity, and the degradation of overall food production systems.

To revitalize ethnic cuisines in the HKH region, ICIMOD is joining hands with its partners to document cuisines from four transboundary landscapes in the HKH region – the Far Eastern Himalaya, Hindu Kush Karakoram Pamir Landscape, Kangchenjunga Landscape, and Kailash Sacred Landscape. These transboundary landscapes have rich biodiversity, cultures and traditions that are reflected in the diversity of their ethnic cuisines. The documentation of ethnic cuisines can help us understand how the cuisines are intrinsically linked to local production systems, dietary environments, culture and traditions, societal bonding, food and nutrition security, and rural livelihoods and economy.

This webinar is being organized as one of the independent dialogues of the Summit to bring voices of mountain communities from the HKH, and explore opportunities for future policy and programmatic engagement for promoting sustainable food systems in the region.

Objectives

The objective of this pre-summit dialogue is to bring together a range of stakeholders – academics, policy makers, practitioners, businesses, and communities – to discuss how the revitalisation and promotion of ethnic cuisines can contribute to healthier, more sustainable and equitable food systems. It will discuss key research and management issues, and the policy environment necessary to promote and sustain ethnic cuisines. The outputs of the HKH dialogue will be documented and shared with the global audience through UNFSS feedback form. Further, we will use this dialogue to explore partnerships and investments for the promotion of ethnic cuisine in the HKH region and beyond.

Agenda

Time (NPT)	Programme
9:15–9:30	Participants check-in on MS Teams
9:30–9:35	Briefing on the house rules by the host – Syed Muhammad Abubakar, ICIMOD
9:35–10:15	Opening session Facilitated by: Bandana Shakya, ICIMOD Welcome remarks – Pema Gyamtsho, Director General, ICIMOD Overview of the UN Food System Summit and the importance of GESI perspective – Jemimah Njuki, Director for Africa, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Keynote presentation – Jyoti P. Tamang, Professor, Sikkim University, India
10:15–10:50	Experts' insight: Panel discussion Moderated by: Abid Hussain, ICIMOD Reinforcing action track 1, 2, and 3 Key research agenda around ethnic cuisines to link it with agroecosystem management and nutrition security – Tushi Gurung, College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan, Bhutan Slow food and their management for food and nutrition – Pius Rane, North East Slow Food & Agrobiodiversity Society, (NESFAS), India Role of home gardens and women in promoting ethnic food and cuisine – (TBD), Pakistan Changing lifestyle, food culture and dietary diversity and impact on ethnic cuisines – Zhu Jie, Institute for Food Processing, Tibet Academy of Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Sciences (TAAAS), China
10:50–11:15	Experts' insight: Panel discussion (continued) Moderated by: Abid Hussain, ICIMOD Reinforcing action track 4, 5 Linking ethnic cuisine to economy for resilience – Robin Amatya, SAARC Business Association of Home Based Workers (SABAH-Nepal), Nepal Government's role in sustenance of ethnic cuisines – Khaing Khaing Htwe, Department of Agriculture Research, Myanmar Institutions and governance to promote ethnic cuisine to support resilient food system, agrobiodiversity and equitable livelihoods – Amba Jamir, Sustainable Development Forum of Nagaland (SDFN), India
11:15–11:20	Short video on key features of ethnic cuisines Facilitated by: Syed Muhammad Abubakar, ICIMOD
11:20–11:40	Q and A session: Participants' inputs Facilitated by: Bandana Shakya, ICIMOD
11:40–12:00	Closing session Summary of key insights and way forward – Dhruvad Choudhury, ICIMOD Closing remarks – Nakul Chettri, ICIMOD

If you are interested in joining this webinar, please submit your details [here](#).

Supported by:



ICIMOD gratefully acknowledges the support of its core donors: the Governments of Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Norway, Pakistan, Sweden, and Switzerland; and programmatic support from the Government of the United Kingdom.