



YEAR IN REVIEW

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

CATALYSING PATHWAYS
TOWARDS FOOD SYSTEMS
TRANSFORMATION



Global Donor Platform
for Rural Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGA	Annual General Assembly
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSS	United Nations Food Systems Summit
GDWGL	Global Donor Working Group on Land
GDPRD	Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GLGR	Global Land Governance Report
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal



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ABOUT US

INTRODUCTION TO THE GLOBAL DONOR PLATFORM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD or “the Platform”) is a network of 40 bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, foundations and development agencies. The GDPRD was established in 2003 following the First High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2002, and brings together donors that share a common vision on the role of agriculture, food systems and rural development in tackling global poverty and hunger. In addition to its Board and other members, the Platform is supported through the contributions of several institutions that participate in Annual General Assemblies (AGAs), meetings and thematic working groups. These institutions are committed to achieving increased and more effective aid and donor investment for agriculture and rural development through strategic influencing, knowledge-sharing and networking, to achieve better synergy and donor alignment on critical issues.

The work of the GDPRD sits at the intersection of a set of critical global issues that have a profound impact on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and longer-term human prosperity and security. Delivering sufficient nutritionally diverse, safe and sustainably produced food to consumers in urban and rural areas is one of the most critically important challenges the world faces. At the same time, globally, vast numbers of people in rural areas continue to face poverty, inequality and vulnerability, and there is potential for widespread humanitarian crises, social and political instability, and migration pressures. These challenges have been exacerbated by climate change and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

The GDPRD has a key role in assisting donors in synergizing and aligning their thinking and investment strategies by helping to ensure that food and rural development issues are appropriately prioritized in overall development financing; by identifying proactive and timely responses to emerging issues and crises; and by enabling donors to learn from each other’s policy and programming experiences. The Platform strives towards this by convening donor organizations making substantive investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems to exchange information, discuss emerging priorities and determine effective strategies to address them.

A NEW STRATEGIC APPROACH

Since its inception, the Platform has convened donors, shared knowledge and advocated the role of agriculture and rural development in promoting sustainable rural communities, which remain central to achieving global food and nutrition security. Every five years, Platform members agree on a new strategic plan, which guides the work of the GDPRD. In February 2020, the Board mandated the Secretariat to develop

a new [Strategic Plan \(2021–2025\)](#) for the Platform. Informed by the recommendations arising from a comprehensive [stocktaking analysis](#), the Platform's new Strategic Plan 2021–2025 articulates a revamped vision, mission and objective for the Platform. It sets in motion a strategic reorientation, with the thematic focus broadening from agriculture and rural development to food systems and rural development. This strategic shift reflects and responds to the changing global environment and emerging food systems priorities, and echoes the strategic influencing role that the Platform can play in supporting more effective donor engagement, cooperation and coordination on agriculture, rural development and food systems.



The Strategic Plan 2021–2025 positions the work of the Platform across the domains of food systems, food and nutrition security, agriculture

and rural livelihoods. It has a particular focus on SDG 2, with clear interconnections with the other SDGs.

VISION

Donors effectively catalyse change: *Donor investments enable transformation of food systems for better access to safe and nutritious food, improved environmental sustainability and more prosperous rural communities.* The Platform's members share a common commitment to and vision for the realization of SDG 2 ("zero hunger"), and recognize the constructive and effective role that donors can play in supporting and enabling food systems transformation – one that secures better access to safe and nutritious food, while ensuring environmental sustainability to ensure the food security, health, well-being and livelihoods of rural communities.

MISSION

Brokering donor collaboration for impact: *The Platform brokers donor collaboration to enhance the impact of donors' policies, investments and programmes on food systems and rural development.* The Platform's mission statement reflects the key role of the Platform in brokering and catalysing donor collaboration and investments in food

systems and rural development, as well as the critical role of the Platform and its members in ensuring that food systems and rural development issues remain a high priority for donors, governments and other key actors.

OBJECTIVES

The Platform has three distinct yet complementary objectives that recognize the catalytic role of the Platform in informing donor policy, programming and investment in food systems and rural development. The Platform seeks to achieve its vision and mission through:

- **Strategic influencing:** to help shape the thinking, policies and programming of the global donor community and other actors on food systems and rural development, to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and longer-term prosperity and sustainability.
- **Knowledge-sharing:** to broker the sharing of evidence, lessons, insights and technical expertise necessary for donors to align efforts, learn from each other and improve the impact of their policies and programmes related to food systems and rural development.
- **Networking and convening:** to strengthen networking, relationships and communication between donors and other actors as a foundation for collaboration and innovation.

GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRMANSHIP

The Platform has co-chairs who are elected *ad personam* by Board members and serve for two years. The co-chairs also chair the Platform's Board. In 2020, the co-chairs were **David Hegwood**, Senior Advisor, Global Engagement, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, United States Agency for International Development; **Conrad Rein**, Policy Officer, European Commission; and **Paul van de Logt**, Head of Food Security and Nutrition, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands.

GDPRD MEMBERS 2020

- African Development Bank Group
- Asian Development Bank
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Austrian Development Agency
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency
- European Commission
- Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs, Austria
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom
- French Development Agency
- German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
- German Agency for International Cooperation
- Global Affairs Canada
- Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- Inter-American Development Bank
- International Development Research Centre
- International Fund for Agricultural Development
- International Trade Centre
- Irish Aid – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
- KfW Development Bank
- Korea International Cooperation Agency
- Luxembourg Agency for Development Cooperation
- Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Spain
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Centre
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- United States Agency for International Development
- UN Women
- World Bank
- World Food Programme
- World Trade Organization

BOARD

The Board is the Platform's main decision-making body and comprises the contact points of all Platform members who pay an agreed annual membership contribution. Physical Board meetings are convened at least once a year, with one virtual Board meeting typically held in June and additional informal sessions held as deemed appropriate by the Board members. In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Platform's Board held one physical meeting and four virtual meetings.

SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat is the management unit of the Platform that supports the implementation of the annual work programme, for which it has executive authority. The Platform Secretariat is empowered to act within the framework of the agreed annual work plan, with executive authority according to the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The Secretariat works very closely with the co-chairs on the strategic directions of the Platform, and supports the thematic working groups of the Platform on specific themes of common interest and engagement in international events.

From 2003 to 2019, the Platform Secretariat was hosted by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung] (BMZ) of Germany and administered by the German Agency for International Cooperation [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit] (GIZ) in Bonn, Germany. In January 2020, the Secretariat functions of the Platform transitioned from GIZ to IFAD in Rome, Italy.

MEMBERSHIP

The Platform currently features international bilateral and multilateral organizations, which promote strategic debates on ways and means to achieve the common goal to increase investments into agriculture and rural development for economic growth, sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction in developing countries. Membership of the Platform is informal, creating a space for knowledge exchange, strategic outreach and networking. In 2020, membership of the Platform remained steady at 40 members.

FOCAL POINTS

Each member appoints a contact point to represent their organization at Platform meetings and keep colleagues in their organizations and their constituencies in non-governmental organizations and the private sector informed about new developments in the international community and about the Platforms' outcomes. Contact points actively participate in the formulation of joint Platform policies and work programmes. They may speak on behalf of the Platform at international events. The work streams of the Platform involve a great number of representatives of member organizations who are not contact points.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Platform enters into partnerships with research institutions, farmers' organizations, civil society organizations, global and regional networks, and global initiatives and private sector networks that share a common interest in agriculture and rural development. Each partner organization nominates a contact person to serve as the official link to the Platform. Representatives from partner organizations are invited to engage in the work streams of the Platform and to attend Platform meetings.



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MESSAGES FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

The year 2020 was important and crucial for the Platform in more ways than one. The COVID-19 crisis has touched every continent, and, as successive waves of the virus undermine recovery efforts, millions around the world have been pushed into deeper poverty, food insecurity and hunger. These impacts are likely to persist through 2021 to 2022 and potentially for many years to come. The crisis speaks to the urgent need for governments, donors, the private sector, civil society and other actors to work more effectively towards achieving the SDGs.

The year also marked the commencement of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Global efforts have had a setback because of the pandemic, and it is imperative that efforts and commitments are made to ensure that progress made is not lost. Although we look to respond to the immediate crisis, equally we need to consider its longer-term impacts. Around the globe, the pandemic has precipitated a food, hunger and agrarian crisis as supply chains, labour and market systems have been disrupted. As donors continue to fund and support COVID-19 crisis response efforts, there is an urgent need to keep agriculture, rural development and food security issues at the centre of donors' efforts. In these uncertain times, we look to the contribution and impact that the Platform can have – as a collective of donor members that share a common vision and commitment to addressing poverty and food insecurity through investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems.

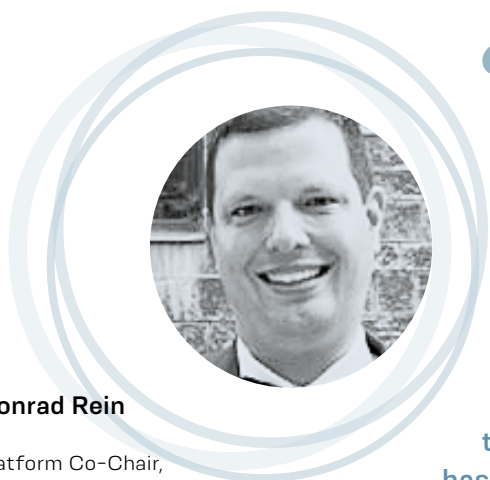


David Hegwood

Platform Co-Chair,
Senior Advisor, Global
Engagement,
Bureau for Resilience
and Food Security,
United States Agency
for International
Development

“ The GDPRD is an important forum for donors. It enables us to communicate, coordinate and synergize our approaches and ultimately enables us to be more effective in achieving our objectives. The past year has been a good example of this, as Platform members came together to share information on their responses to the COVID-19 crisis. The Platform’s first virtual Annual General Assembly demonstrated the Platform’s tremendous convening ability within the donor and broader development community. The Platform’s convening and inputs towards the 2021 United Nations Food Systems

Summit have helped catalyse a donor voice for the summit and highlighted the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition and underscored the importance of focusing on agriculture, rural development and food systems as part of the recovery. Going forward, the Platform’s new Strategic Plan provides an opportunity to be more strategic in how the Platform engages with members and with the broader donor community. As donors convene for the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, the GDPRD will play a role in advancing donor thinking on how the food systems transformation agenda can be taken forward and supported more effectively.”



Conrad Rein

Platform Co-Chair,
Policy Officer,
European Commission

“ COVID-19 and its impact on food security have been a major concern for donors over the past year, as have discussions on how as donors we can more effectively support pathways to achieving SDG 2. In this context, the Platform’s main contribution and added value is the space it provides us to share and exchange information about our approaches, our priorities as well as key events and initiatives. The Platform provides donors with an opportunity to align our efforts more effectively or work jointly to achieve our objectives. In the past year, the Platform

has been active on several fronts. The Platform convened members on their responses to COVID-19, organized a highly successful and high-level Annual General Assembly and increased its visibility and outreach through its engagement and contributions towards the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit. At the operational level, the successful transfer of the Secretariat functions to IFAD and development of a new Strategic Plan have positioned the Platform to be more strategic and targeted in its engagements. The Platform’s thematic working groups on land governance, SDG 2 and rural youth employment were active, and organized a number of events. Going forward, the United Nations Food Systems Summit is a key priority for the Platform and provides an opportunity to raise the profile and visibility of the Platform and its work.”



Paul van de Logt

Platform Co-Chair,
Head of Food Security
and Nutrition, Ministry
of Foreign Affairs, the
Netherlands

“ 2020 has been defined by the COVID-19 crisis and its impacts. These impacts are likely to persist through the coming year. As donors, we need to consider how we will keep our programmes on track and how we will more effectively coordinate our efforts to look beyond the immediate crisis to the challenges being faced today in terms of markets, supply chains, infrastructure, and long-term development. Donor coordination on global efforts towards SDG 2 remains critical but continues to be a challenge. The 2021 United Nations

Food Systems Summit presents a key opportunity for the Platform to demonstrate its potential and value added to the donor community as a forum that can provide insights and access to a diversity of views and perspectives to different donors. Over the past year, the Platform's Secretariat has put in a lot of effort in animating the Platform and its discussions. As a Platform we must continue to build on this momentum. Going forward, the Platform must be more agile in how it operates, engages and communicates, both internally with its members and externally with the development community. The Platform needs to strengthen its engagement, not necessarily broadening its network, but deepening its engagement with each of its donor members.”



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YEAR IN REVIEW – 2020

SUMMARY

The past year has been important and significant for the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD or “the Platform”), beginning with the Secretariat’s transition from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development [Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung] (BMZ) to IFAD. Transitions are never easy; however, the German Agency for International Cooperation [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit] (GIZ) and IFAD have worked closely to ensure the smooth movement of Secretariat functions and responsibilities. A new Secretariat staff structure that consists of three full-time positions is now in place at IFAD; this brings both opportunities and challenges for the Secretariat. To provide leadership, guidance and support during the transition period, in 2020 the Platform had three co-chairs, by decision of the Platform’s Board. The arrangement has been well received by members and is working well. Membership of the Platform remained steady at 40 members, with 12 Board members.

The year 2020 marked the completion of the Platform’s 2016–2020 Strategic Plan. In February 2020, the Secretariat was mandated to develop a new Strategic Plan (2021–2025), and as part of that process commissioned a [stocktaking analysis](#)¹ of the Platform’s activities, performance and achievements over a five-year period (2015–2020).

The stocktaking analysis reaffirms the unique role and function of the Platform as one of the only donor platforms that convene donors working and in making investments on agriculture and rural development. Responses from member interviews and a comprehensive survey affirm that the Platform is seen as an important, valuable and unique mechanism to support donors to better align and optimize the impact of their investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems. The Platform remains highly relevant and has a key role to play in the context of the emerging food systems agenda and the need to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To remain relevant, and given global concerns on food systems, rural poverty and hunger, the Platform must play a more effective and recognized strategic influencing role. Building on the findings and recommendations arising from the stocktaking analysis, the Platform’s [Strategic Plan 2021–2025](#) articulates a new strategic direction for the Platform with a revamped vision, mission and strategic objectives to enable the Platform to achieve greater impact.

Through the transition period of 2020, the Platform and its members remained active on several fronts. To promote better and more effective coordination between donors on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Platform constituted a [COVID-19 Task Force](#) to identify, share and foster dialogue between and among donors and members about strategies and approaches to combating the pandemic. The Platform hosted two COVID-19 Task Force dialogues and set up a stand-alone

¹ The stocktaking analysis was conducted between July and November 2020. It involved a detailed literature review, key informant interviews with the Platform members and an online survey.

webpage to share information and resources on donor responses to the crisis. The task force is a strong expression of the convening and knowledge-sharing ability of the Platform and its membership, and its strong potential to support more informed and strategic policymaking by donors.

The Platform's thematic working groups galvanized members and fostered dialogue and discussions among Platform members and the broader donor community on a range of critical topics. They also organized virtual events that engaged with new audiences. Adapting to new virtual ways of working, 11 thematic working group meetings were held during the year.

CERES2030 INITIATIVE

The [Ceres2030 initiative](#) is a partnership between Cornell University, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development. It is supported by BMZ and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Ceres2030 initiative is working towards developing a cost estimate for achieving SDGs 2.3 and 2.4 by 2030, alongside a synthesis of published research on eight research questions focused on agricultural interventions.

In 2020, in preparation for the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (FSS), and in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the [SDG 2 Road Map Group](#) members organized a series of donor dialogues and coordination meetings. On 13 October 2020, the Ceres2030 report [Sustainable Solutions to End Hunger](#) was formally launched at a high-level virtual event hosted by BMZ. The report represents the culmination of three years of intensive work by 80 researchers spanning 23 countries, who worked collaboratively to identify the most promising solutions to building sustainable food systems and to tell donors how much it would cost to end hunger by 2030.

The [Global Donor Working Group on Land](#) (GDWGL) continued to bring together key donors, partners and actors in the land community with a presence at the global, regional and national levels. Key highlights of the group's activities in 2020 included the production of a draft framework to support the development of the Global Land Governance Report (GLGR) and the setting up of an advisory group to steer the process. The members of the [Rural Youth Employment Thematic Working Group](#) finalized a new term of reference and work plan of activities that articulate a revitalized and strategic orientation for the group.

With only 10 years to go until 2030 and with the [2021 FSS](#) on the horizon, the Platform stepped up its engagement with members and the international donor community to determine how best to contribute to and galvanize support for increased donor investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems. In November 2020, the Platform held its first-ever virtual Annual General Assembly (AGA). Focused on the theme of [Pathways for Food Systems Transformation](#), over four days (4–7 November), the AGA brought together 25 high-level speakers and panellists, and saw the participation of around 120 delegates from across the world. The 2020 virtual AGA opened a discussion on what processes are needed at local, national, regional and global levels to underpin food systems transformation, and the role that donors can play in catalysing and supporting such processes. The outcomes from the AGA sessions are being used to develop the Platform's preparatory contribution for the FSS, which will assess the ways in which donors currently support and invest in food systems and will identify options for strengthening or changing these in the context of the wider agenda for food systems transformation.

Last but not least, the year saw the Platform adapt to new and innovative ways of working virtually and find ways to embrace new technology to stay engaged with its members and the broader donor community. The Platform moved into 2021 with renewed energy, drive and commitment to its members and the broader agriculture, food systems and rural development community to continue to strive towards fostering and supporting more effective donor coordination, collaboration and synergy to ensure greater impact.

KEY PLATFORM EVENTS

JANUARY

- **20 January 2020:**
SDG 2 Road Map Group informal meeting – Building a Common Narrative on SDG 2: The Road to the Food Systems Summit, 2020 International Green Week, Berlin, Germany
- **27-28 January 2020:**
Transition Task Force planning meeting

FEBRUARY

- **6-7 February 2020:**
Platform Board meeting, IFAD, Rome, Italy
- **26 February 2020:**
Ceres2030: What Works to End Hunger? Bonn, Germany

APRIL

- **7 April 2020:**
COVID-19 and Global Food Security Implications virtual event
- **29 April 2020:**
Informal Donor Conversation on COVID-19

MAY

- **19 May 2020:**
Virtual informal Board meeting

JUNE

- **15 June 2020:**
COVID-19 Task Force dialogue

JULY

- **15-16 July 2020:**
Platform virtual Board meeting

SEPTEMBER

- **23 September 2020:**
Platform informal Board meeting

OCTOBER

- **13 October 2020:**
Ceres2030 launch

NOVEMBER

- **2-5 November 2020:**
virtual AGA
- **30 November 2020:**
Platform virtual Board meeting

2020 IN NUMBERS

- **40 Members**
- **3 Co-Chairs**
- **12 Board Members**
- **5 Board Meetings**
- **11 Thematic Working Group Meetings**
- **4 High-Level Events**

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

SECRETARIAT TRANSITION

For the past 17 years, the Platform has been hosted by BMZ and implemented by GIZ. Following a decision by the Platform's Board in 2019, IFAD, a long-standing Platform member, formally assumed secretarial responsibilities from GIZ in July 2020.

Both IFAD and BMZ are founding members of the Platform and, together with the other Board members, drive the strategic development of the Platform. The Secretariat's transition coincides with the strategic repositioning of the Platform that was initiated at the 2019 AGA, in response to the shifting development agenda under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the related changing donor landscape.

Over a six-month transitional period from January to June 2020, GIZ and IFAD worked closely to ensure the smooth transfer of the Secretariat's core functions, responsibilities and services. This included core functions and services such as administrative, financial, communication and IT arrangements, as well as the Secretariat's support to the Platform's thematic working groups. The transition of the Secretariat to IFAD has also seen a restructuring of its staffing. The IFAD Secretariat now formally has three full-time staff positions: Secretariat Coordinator, Communication Analyst and Programme Assistant.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GLOBAL DONOR PLATFORM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

The [Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#) recognizes the Platform's particular focus and orientation towards SDG 2 ("zero hunger") and its intersection with the other SDGs.

Drawing on the recommendations arising from the 2020 stocktaking analysis, the Strategic Plan integrates the following new directions for the Platform and its activities:

- (i) A broadened thematic focus of the Platform, from agriculture and rural development to food systems and rural development;
- (ii) Maintaining the donor membership focus of the Platform while proactively engaging with other stakeholders;
- (iii) Revising the vision, mission and objectives of the Platform to align with the evolution of the Platform's focus, recent developments and views of the membership;
- (iv) Taking a more strategic and systemic approach to establishing areas of thematic focus, and broadening the operational modalities of the Platform to include a more diverse range of activities that are results-oriented and time-bound;
- (v) Streamlining and simplifying the membership, governance and funding structures to ensure that the Platform has an engaged membership, sufficient resources and a robust governance mechanism.

The Platform's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 was formally launched in 2021 and is now available on the Platform's [website](#).

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

The Platform's [AGA](#) is a yearly event that provides an open and inclusive space for debate and/or consensus by Platform members, partners and invited guests on emerging topics in agriculture and rural development. AGA participants benefit from the core services of the Platform: strategic influencing, knowledge-sharing and networking on key development issues and strategic directions that affect lives in the rural space.

In preparation for the 2021 FSS, the 2020 AGA of the GDPRD was held 2–5 November 2020, on the theme [Strengthening Coordination towards SDG 2: Pathways for Food Systems Transformation](#). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the AGA was held entirely virtually. The AGA was an opportunity to open a discussion on what processes are needed at local, national, regional and global levels to underpin food systems transformation, and the role that donors can play in catalysing and supporting such processes. It brought together 25 speakers and panellists and engaged with an audience of 120 delegates from all around the world. The AGA comprised four sessions, each of which involved high-level speakers and panellists.

- 2 November: [Transforming Food Systems: Implications for Coordination and Financing](#) (high-level event) – understanding the processes, coordination and financing needed for food systems transformation to be sustainable, equitable and resilient.
- 3 November: [Pathways for Food Systems Transformation](#) (interactive session) – shaping the GDPRD's contribution to the FSS.
- 4 November: [Food Systems: Data for Evidence-based Policymaking](#) (panel discussion) – raising awareness and building capacity for using data to support agricultural policymaking.
- 5 November: [Catalysing Responsible Private Sector Investments for Food Systems Transformation](#) (panel discussion) – exploring how donor support can mobilize private investment for food systems transformation.

The discussions during the AGA helped to identify seven priority issues that the donor community is called to engage around. The discussions around each of the issues during the AGA constitute critical inputs for the GDPRD to continue engaging the donor community and other stakeholders in preparation for the FSS. The priority areas include:

- Better coordination and alignment across actors (both globally and at the country level);
- Supporting policy innovation;
- Catalysing and de-risking financing;
- Brokering innovation along the value chain;
- Building the knowledge base and capacity;
- Using data for decision-making;
- Promoting responsible private sector investments in food systems.

The outcomes from the AGA sessions are now being taken forward to develop a GDPRD preparatory contribution for the FSS, which will assess the ways donors currently support and invest in food systems and identify options for strengthening or changing these, in the context of the wider agenda for food systems transformation.

Details of the 2020 AGA, individual sessions, AGA concept note and event report are available on a stand-alone page on the Platform's [website](#).

PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR THE UNITED NATIONS FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021

In 2021, as part of the Decade of Action, the United Nations Secretary-General will convene the FSS – a platform to launch new actions that will transform how we produce, consume and think about food, delivering progress on all 17 SDGs. The summit will be a people's summit, focused on concrete solutions that mobilize all players – from producers to consumers – to take action in transforming the world's food systems.

In the lead-up to the FSS, the convening power of the GDPRD can be crucial in fostering donor support for FSS processes, connecting donors with the emerging thinking and experiences of other actors, and enabling those in the donor community to harmonize their efforts. Following on from deliberations at the AGA, the Platform is working towards finalizing its contributions to the FSS. The Platform's contributions will take the shape of two knowledge products. The first is a stocktaking paper that will analyse donor trends in food and nutrition security, and identify areas of focus for donor engagement at the global and national levels; provide an analysis of aid flows; and highlight funding and coordination gaps. The second publication will be a white paper on donor coordination, developed on the basis of the outcomes of the pre-summit and the stocktaking paper. The white paper will provide the donor community with a framework for rethinking the food systems agenda, looking at the future and providing a clear set of responses, options and priorities. Through these contributions and its engagement and participation in the FSS, the Platform seeks to make a case for the catalytic role of the donor community in driving investments and decisions towards food systems transformation.



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PLATFORM THEMES AND TASK FORCES

AGENDA 2030 AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2 ROAD MAP WORKING GROUP

THEMATIC LEADS

**United States Agency for International Development and
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**

A thematic working group of the GDPRD since 2019, the [SDG 2 Road Map Group](#) is an informal group of senior officials from different donor agencies active in agriculture and food and nutrition security. The group shares a common vision for eliminating rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition through sustainable agriculture. It has come together to identify the obstacles to achieving SDG 2 and what needs to be done to address them through cooperative action. The group aims to develop a consensus among donors on a road map for achieving SDG 2 that will (i) develop an evidence base for improved decision-making, (ii) provide a framework for coordination on key action areas and (iii) generate political support and mobilize funding for agriculture as well as food and nutrition security.

The SDG 2 Road Map Group members are active in a number of initiatives that seek to support efforts to achieve SDG 2. These initiatives include the [50x2030 initiative](#) – a commitment to producing the largest-ever collection of data for agricultural development across 50 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America by 2030 – and the [Ceres2030 initiative](#) – developing a cost estimate for achieving SDGs 2.3 and 2.4 by 2030 alongside a synthesis of published research on eight research questions focused on agricultural interventions. SDG 2 Road Map Group members are also collaborating on an inventory and analysis of donor agencies' reporting on SDG 2 indicators and the results achieved by their funding.

In 2020, the SDG 2 Road Map Group convened a series of dialogues and donor coordination meetings in preparation for the FSS and in response to the COVID-19 crisis. On 20 January 2020, during [International Green Week](#) in Berlin, Germany, the SDG 2 Road Map Group initiated an informal meeting with a diverse group of stakeholders. Organized by the GDPRD and BMZ, the event was attended by high-level speakers, including Dr Agnes Kalibata, who was nominated as United Nations Secretary-General Special Envoy for the 2021 FSS. The meeting drew an audience of more than 60 high-level participants from key donor countries, agencies, United Nations organizations, civil society organizations and think tanks. Subsequently, the Ceres2030 team engaged in a dialogue with donor and implementing agencies in GIZ's offices in Bonn, Germany, on 26 February 2020 on the theme of [Ceres2030: What Works to End Hunger?](#) The meeting discussed the research methodology and results from the Ceres2030 initiative.

Key highlights from 2020 in the SDG 2 Working Group's initiatives are:

- **Ceres2030:** In 2020, the Ceres2030 initiative published new materials and hosted webinars focusing on SDG 2 and donor responses to the pandemic. On 7 April 2020, the Ceres2030 initiative held an online reflection to shed light on the [implications of COVID-19 on global food security](#). The virtual meeting was convened by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the IFPRI and Cornell University. The online reflection received an overwhelming response, with over 500 people registering for it.

On 13 October 2020, the Ceres2030 report [Sustainable Solutions to End Hunger](#) was launched at a high-level virtual event entitled [A World Without Hunger is Possible: What Must be Done](#), which was hosted by BMZ. The report launch represented the culmination of three years of intensive work by 80 researchers spanning 23 countries, who worked collaboratively to identify the most promising solutions to building sustainable food systems and to tell donors how much it would cost to end hunger by 2030. The event, which was broadcast live, focused on how much public spending is needed in low- and middle-income countries, including donor contributions through official development assistance, to achieve SDG 2. Panellists explored a diverse mix of agricultural interventions in three broad areas – farm-level interventions to directly improve farm productivity, drivers in market systems that can facilitate storage and services that farmers need, and social interventions to empower rural populations.

- **50x2030 initiative:** In mid-2020, the 50x2030 initiative completed one year of activities. Data collection activities were successfully completed in six countries and critical agricultural data were made publicly available in three. The initiative continued to diversify its networks and partnerships, including with the World Bank's International Development Association and technical partners, such as the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System, the IFPRI and Atlas AI. Financially, the initiative has secured support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, BMZ and Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The SDG 2 Road Map Group supported the [Duke World Food Policy Centre](#) to conduct an assessment of external financing flows to low- and middle-income countries and of the Global Aid Architecture. The [assessment report](#) published in 2020 takes stock of the donor investment landscape in agricultural development to inform discussions on ensuring adequate support for agriculture in low- and middle-income countries. It provides a financial landscaping assessment and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the global financing ecosystem for agriculture and four multilateral financing institutions: IFAD, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program, the African Development Fund and the International Development Association.

LAND GOVERNANCE THEMATIC WORKING GROUP

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP LEADS

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – Chair; and
United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – Co-Chair**

The Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL) aims to increase coordination and knowledge exchange on land governance programmes and to jointly advocate with Platform members the relevance of land issues in policy processes that affect international development. The group is a network of 29 bilateral and multilateral donors and international organizations that cooperate on land-related issues worldwide.

In 2020, the GDWGL continued to bring together key donors, partners and actors in the land community with a presence at the global, regional and national levels. At an organizational level, FAO assumed the responsibility of chairing the group from the Swiss Development Cooperation in June 2020. The GDWGL held a number of virtual conference meetings to exchange information, share news, and discuss joint initiatives and projects. The group was active in advocacy on land tenure and governance issues, and in particular on the need to secure customary land tenure rights for women.

Key highlights of the group's activities over the past year included its participation in the production of a draft framework to support the development of the GLGR. Although the concept of the GLGR emerged as a joint initiative by FAO, the Global Land Tool Network and the International Land Coalition, it was endorsed by the GDWGL at the meeting on the sidelines of the [2019 African land policy conference](#). The core objective of the report is to produce a single global-evidence-based report on the status of land tenure and governance issues as a reference point for policymakers, linking global and country commitments in the frameworks of the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](#) and SDGs, among others. The report will be used as a tool for advocacy and policy engagement that informs and documents the state of land governance and tenure in the world.

The GDWGL has endorsed the transfer of the land map (hosted by the GDWGL Secretariat) to the Land Portal and plans to make sure the transfer is moving forward. The land map will operate as a community of practice for members to share, exchange and analyse data and information related to land issues, including the impact of COVID-19 on land and natural resources rights and security, and to nutrition, and to aggregate data on the impact of land initiatives. The objective of the Land Portal is to provide up-to-date information to donors, build compelling stories of why land continues to matter and help to scale up the land agenda. In complementing the GLGR, the community of practice will help to build a case externally to ensure further funding for land initiatives. The Land Portal, in close collaboration with the GDWGL and other ongoing initiatives, will be the steering unit of this initiative (that is, the revamped and improved land map under the new host, the Land Portal).

Positioning the land issue on the policy agenda remains a key priority of the group. In 2020, through the GDWGL, members organized a partners event on the sidelines of the virtual High-level Special Event on Global Governance of Food Security and Nutrition, which was held on 13-15 October 2020.

In addition, the GDWGL is collaborating with FAO, the International Land Coalition and the Global Land Tool Network in the drawing up of a policy paper on land tenure and food systems, which aims to inform the FSS of the relevance of land tenure (particularly of equal and secure access to land) for the sustainability of food systems. In this regard, a set of policy recommendations will be put forward to improve the governance of tenure and promote equitable and secured access to land, in particular by women and the most vulnerable groups.

RURAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT THEMATIC WORKING GROUP

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP LEADS GIZ and FAO

The Platform's thematic working group on Rural Youth Employment was formed in 2018² to promote meaningful youth engagement in all stages of donor initiatives in agriculture and rural development. It is the Platform's youngest thematic working group and seeks to function as a donor-catalysed working group to advise donors, governments and civil society organizations on the most effective ways to create employment opportunities in rural areas, in particular in agrifood systems and emerging green sectors, and to support the empowerment of youth to productively contribute to and benefit from sustainable rural livelihoods.

In 2020, thematic working group members agreed to revitalize the group and sharpen its strategic orientation to focus on developing decent job opportunities for youth in rural areas, through their engagement in sustainable agrifood systems, green economies and other non-farm activities.

In line with the new strategic orientation and sharpened focus of the group, thematic working group members finalized new terms of reference and developed a new work plan. The group supports an inclusive rural transformation approach by designing youth-sensitive programmes and increasing youth mainstreaming in relevant donor activities. In line with this, the group will (i) evaluate and co-create innovative approaches through which donors can boost decent rural youth employment across their operations; (ii) increase (strategic) coherence and coordination among donors and development agencies, and national and local institutions; (iii) align with and link to international policy processes, initiatives and platforms such as the G7/G20, Committee on World Food Security and Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth; (iv) engage with and help to empower rural youth and youth organizations, which represent the heterogeneity of youth; and (v) engage and collaborate with other stakeholders, such as the private sector, service providers and agripreneur organizations, to leverage their knowledge, expertise and resources.

² The GDPRD thematic working group on Rural Youth Employment was formed following a GDPRD Board decision during the 2018 AGA that focused on rural youth.

The group members will work to achieve its objectives through (i) sharing evidence-based concepts and approaches to effectively promote youth-specific and inclusive programming to create decent, profitable, innovative and inclusive employment in agrifood systems along diverse value chains; (ii) using its convening power and potential for advocacy for engaging in international processes and promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships among donors, multilaterals, and regional and national institutions working with the diverse actors, including youth, donors, governments, universities and civil society organizations; (iii) mobilizing resources for catalytic and niche activities aimed at engaging and empowering rural youth and activities that enhance the coordination of donor youth programmes; (iv) developing knowledge-sharing products and sponsoring youth participation in relevant meetings; and (v) promoting learning and collaboration across a variety of means, including South–South and North–South youth cooperation, rural–urban linkages, intergenerational linkages and innovative partnerships.

Key highlights of the Rural Youth Employment thematic working group's activities during 2020 included linking to relevant international policy processes. At a high-level Brussels dialogue, group members – FAO, BMZ and the European Commission – contributed to discussions on the nexus between food systems and rural youth employment. The group is also working towards closer engagement with the African Union Commission. Members of the group participated in the drafting of a continental African Youth Agribusiness Strategy led by the African Union Commission, and an African Union Commission youth envoy is expected to take on the role of a group co-chair. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development is in the process of developing a study on the potential for decent jobs for youth in agrifood value chains. The results of the study will feed directly into the processes of the Committee on World Food Security and the FSS in 2021. The group is planning to host a dialogue on the sidelines of the FSS. In the context of the G20, the group is prepared to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the G20 commitment on rural youth employment from 2017.

Throughout the year, the group has actively engaged in regular meetings, sharing information for improving donor coordination. The group has also established a digital working platform to facilitate continuous discussion and the exchange of information between its members beyond the regular thematic working group meetings. Going forward, one of the main objectives of the group is to further increase coordination among its members, defining common objectives, and to work actively and collectively towards the expansion of its member base, including by expanding engagement of youth in its activities.

COVID-19 TASK FORCE

To promote better and more effective coordination between donors during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Platform constituted a [COVID-19 Task Force](#). Comprising 12 member organizations, the task force is aimed at identifying ongoing actions of members, coordinating their regional and thematic approaches, fostering dialogue between and among donors and members, and sharing information about strategies and approaches for combating the pandemic.

In 2020, the Platform hosted two COVID-19 Task Force dialogues. The first [informal donor conversation on COVID-19](#) was convened on 29 April 2020, and included the participation of 12 organizations, plus the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research. The dialogue focused on the need to promote dialogue and exchange on how to better coordinate and streamline information-gathering on the implications of COVID-19 for agriculture and food security. Participants noted that, although there is a lot of evidence from previous crises, what can be used remains unclear because of the level of comparability.

The second dialogue, held on 15 June 2020, focused on an informal exchange on the availability of country studies and their use in country networks that can help to keep track of developments and possibly facilitate greater coordination. Using various case studies, Maximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist/Assistant Director-General (FAO), Benoît Thierry, Head of West Africa Hub and Senegal Country Director (IFAD), and James Thurlow (IFPRI) – who were guest speakers – gave presentations on how their organizations have approached the crisis and how they are undertaking country-specific work. In addition, IFPRI shared its ongoing and planned COVID-19 country studies and policy engagement.

The participants from both sessions acknowledged the cooperation of multilateral agencies prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic, and stressed the need for effective coordination in the international system, to efficiently utilize scarce funds and limit the number of bilateral projects and duplicative processes. There was also consensus to keep the discussion ongoing and create connections between this crisis and any other crises that might emerge or are already happening, for example the climate crisis.

In addition to convening members through the task force dialogues, the Platform set up a stand-alone COVID-19 topic page on the Platform's website. The [webpage](#) seeks to keep members informed and up to date about each other's ongoing actions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, with the objective of better coordinating responses among the GDPRD membership. The new topic page provides an overview of publications and links to Platform member organizations. Platform members can share all relevant information, knowledge products and information about upcoming events on their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and strategies with the Secretariat.



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COMMUNICATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

The Platform has a vibrant community of 40 members, in addition to a broad network of partners, donors and other actors in the agriculture and rural development community. Effective communication and knowledge exchange, between and among members and a broader audience, is essential to the Platform's effectiveness and building its profile and strategic influence.

The Platform is currently operating under a communication strategy approved by the Board in January 2019. The strategy clarifies the Platform's communication audience and advocates the use a variety of communication tools and channels, including the website, newsletter/e-updates, activity briefs, publications, annual report, webinars, social media, blogs and video interviews, to reach out to and communicate more effectively with members, partners and the broader donor and rural development community. It also includes suggestions for further expanding outreach and visibility.

WORKING VIRTUALLY

In 2020, the Platform and its members embraced the opportunities and challenges of working virtually, necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the use of new information and communication tools and software to facilitate virtual Board and thematic working group meetings, discussions and member dialogues. A key highlight in this respect was the Platform's convening of the first-ever virtual AGA. The virtual AGA was held over four days, with over 25 prominent and high-level speakers, showcasing the convening power of the Platform and its ability to engage with a broad range of actors and stakeholders virtually.

PLATFORM WEBSITE

The Platform's website continues to serve as the main communication tool for the GDPRD and its members. Following the Secretariat's transition from GIZ to IFAD, the website has been updated to reflect the recent organizational and institutional changes. In addition, the website has been updated to reflect the Platform's new strategic vision, mission and thematic focus areas. A new webpage on COVID-19 was added in 2020 to share information about members' ongoing actions regarding COVID-19. The new topic page provides an overview of publications of and links to Platform member organizations.

TOWARDS MORE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

A key lesson learned from 2020 has been the need for the Platform to be more effective in how it communicates and engages with its members and with a broader audience. Going forward and in keeping with the ambitions of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, the Platform will strive to use its communication and outreach tools, including social media, more effectively. Further orientation and development of the Platform's communication tools can also reflect on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has opened up a whole new virtual world and has resulted in innovative ways and modalities to engage new audiences. These tools provide the Platform with an opportunity to engage with its members and with new audiences in new and innovative ways.





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LOOKING AHEAD

Since the Platform was formed in 2003 on the wave of the [Aid Effectiveness Agenda](#), the global discourse on agriculture, rural development and poverty alleviation has shifted significantly. Over the past two decades, despite significant economic growth and development, over 700 million people have continued to live in extreme poverty, and over 26 per cent of the world's population lives just above the extreme poverty line. Overwhelmingly, those living in extreme poverty live in rural areas and rely largely on land, agriculture and subsistence activities for their incomes and livelihoods. The climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic have brought into sharp focus the close interconnections between planetary, environmental and people's health, and the need for strategies to "build back better" to recognize these interconnections, and for governments and donors to reprioritize their investments.

At the same time, the global discourse on food security has shifted significantly towards one of food systems, reflecting growing evidence and understanding of the deep interconnectedness between natural systems and the production, distribution and consumption of food, and the links between these and social, economic and political contexts. In a nutshell, agriculture, rural development and food systems remain very much at the heart of efforts to achieve the SDGs.

What is the role of the GDPRD in this new landscape? As one of the only platforms to convene donors making substantive investments in agriculture, food systems and rural development, the Platform – 40 members strong – has the ability and the potential to convene, galvanize and synergize donor investments in this space. As we enter the second year of the Decade of Action, the Platform has a role to play in continuing to advocate and make the case for governments, donors and other actors to prioritize investments in agriculture, rural development and food systems. Accordingly, in 2021 the Platform will focus its efforts on the food and nutrition agenda, with a strong engagement by the Platform and its thematic working groups in the lead up to the FSS.

The organizational and strategic reorientation of the Platform actioned in 2020 means that the Platform and its members are better prepared and positioned to make a meaningful contribution to this global discussion. The Platform's Strategic Plan 2021–2025 proposes key results areas for the Platform's performance, including an emphasis on the Platform's strategic influencing capability; improving connection with member needs; diversifying operational modalities; ensuring the functioning of the Secretariat; extending the membership base; and improving communications and outreach.

In 2021, the Platform will embark on three new annual activities – designed to help the Platform achieve the enhanced strategic influencing it will pursue. These include a horizon-scanning exercise, to identify emerging issues and set a clear agenda for the future engagement of the Platform; a meeting of senior managers from member organizations, to ensure the Platform’s decisions and strategic orientations are approved at the highest level; and an AGA, to connect with the broader membership. In addition, the Platform will work towards broadening its membership base (working through the existing membership and the Board) and the development of a new fund-raising/resource mobilization strategy.

Today, the GDPRD is more relevant than ever as donors and governments look for collaborative solutions to the problems that we face as a global community. The past year has demonstrated the Platform’s tremendous convening power and ability to bring donors together around a common agenda, as seen during the sessions of the 2020 AGA and preparations for the FSS. As the Platform looks to 2021 with renewed vigour, commitment and ambition, we look forward to leveraging this strength and ability more effectively and finding ways as a network and platform of donors to engage more effectively with one another and with the global community.



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FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND COSTS

In 2020, the Platform received the following contributions from its Board members:

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS 2020

In 2020, the Platform received the following contributions from its Board members:

ID	DONOR	NET CONTRIBUTION RECEIVED	
1	Australia	€	46 000.00
2	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	€	45 354.87
3	Germany*	€	87 201.70
4	Finland	€	46 000.00
5	France	€	46 000.00
6	IFAD	€	41 232.63
7	Italy	€	49 875.00
8	Netherlands	€	46 000.00
9	Switzerland	€	46 000.00
10	United Kingdom	€	51 212.82
11	United States**	€	120 063.99
Total contributions		€	624 941.01

* The contribution disbursed by Germany in 2020 includes membership fees for 2020 and 2021

**The contribution from the United States includes membership fees, supplementary funds for the Land Governance Working Group, and the SDG 2 Road Map Working Group

The contribution from the European Commission was not received in 2020, but will be delivered in 2021

2020 EXPENDITURES

In 2020, the GDPRD committed the following funds:

A) EXPENDITURES BY GIZ, JANUARY-JUNE 2020

ID	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
NON-STAFF-RELATED COSTS		
Activity costs		
1	Website, special event website, web hosting, IT support	€ 252.00
2	Events	€ 98 801.00
3	Consultants	€ 995.00
4	Staff travels	€ 28 686.00
Earmarked resources for working groups		
5	Supplementary funding (flagged for SDG 2 Road Map Group)	€ 4 920.00
STAFF-RELATED COSTS		
Secretariat administration, staff and management		
6	Staff, consultants, interns	€ 430 652.88
Other administration expenses		
7	Office rent and communication, material, courier	€ 13 168.00
8	General admin and management	€ 1 965.00
9	Independent external audit	€ 16 110.00
Subtotal for January – June		€ 595 549.88

B) EXPENDITURES BY IFAD, JULY-DECEMBER 2020

ID	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
1	Communication	€ 18 578.00
2	Staff and internships	€ 8 006.20
3	Consultancies	€ 66 094.69
4	IT/administration	€ 510.00
Grand Total		€ 93 188.89



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