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Dear JRT Community,

In May, the JRT Secretariat celebrated the one-year anniversary of our establishment. What a year it has been! When I joined the Meridian Institute as a Project Associate and [Ruckelshaus](#) Fellow, I was excited to join the JRT team because their mission reflects my belief that it is impossible to create a healthy, thriving planet without caring for the communities within it – especially those on the frontlines of climate change. I was struck by the JRT’s integrated and inclusive approach to promoting solutions at the intersection of climate, biodiversity, health, nutrition, and social equity and inclusion goals.

One year in, and some of my personal reflections of the journey are that while the fear and anxiety around the urgency of these challenges are real, sustainable commitment to change must come from a place of hope, and a belief in one another. Witnessing the passion, commitment, and progress of our growing JRT community gives me this hope. We have an enormous opportunity to create food systems that nourish a growing global population, protect and restore our natural world, and provide fair and equitable livelihoods for food producers. With your support and collaboration, we are showing that this vision can become a reality if

we enact solutions elevating the needs and voices of the people – especially the most vulnerable – who form the backbone of rural communities.

This quarterly newsletter provides updates on our work to advance policy action, investment partnerships, and land tenure, social equity and inclusion to achieve a just rural transition. It spotlights two members of our community, Ishmael Sunga and Nono Sekhoto, who are working to deliver on our shared [JRT vision](#).

Through our policy action consultations, we are listening directly to food producers on the ground as they share with us their experience, insights, and innovative ideas for repurposing agricultural policy and support to the sector. Through our Investment Partnerships work, we are raising the level of ambition for food and finance on the global policy stage and translating this into action on the ground through our regional projects.

Lastly, our work on land tenure, social equity, and inclusion is making the case for why secure land and resource rights are foundational to a just transition in food and land use systems. Over the past few months, it has been my distinct pleasure to lead the development of our newest policy brief, *Land Tenure in a Just Rural Transition: Restoring Our Relationships to Land and Natural Resources*. Please join us for our launch event on 24 June by registering [here](#).

The brief, written in collaboration with our expert Working Group, amplifies the incredible research, case studies, and initiatives already being enacted within our JRT community. While I am very proud of the final product, I am even prouder of how its creation has reflected the JRT's spirit of collaboration and the belief that our efforts are stronger when we work together.



Warmly,
Hanna Khalil

JRT Project Associate and Meridian Ruckelshaus
Fellow

Land Tenure, Social Equity, and Inclusion: You Are Invited to the JRT Launch Event

We are excited to be launching our latest JRT brief, *Land Tenure in a Just Rural Transition: Restoring Our Relationships to Land and Natural Resources*.

Secure land and natural resource tenure are essential for restoring healthy, prosperous, and sustainable relationships between people and their neighbours, people and their governments, and people and their environments. Our brief explores five key themes central to re-imagining the rural landscape, offers actionable policy recommendations for national policymakers, and highlights case studies of governments and communities already putting them into practice.

Register and learn more about the launch event [here!](#)
24 June at 9:00 EST / 14:00 BST / 15:00 CET.

The launch event will bring together a panel of experts in sustainable development, tenure security and indigenous peoples' rights to share their unique perspectives on how the recommendations within the brief can form the pillars of a just rural transition. It will include an introduction from the brief's author, Alexandre Corriveau-Bourque, and a panel discussion moderated by the JRT's Executive Director Melissa Pinfield, with the opportunity to take questions from the audience. We hope to see you there!

[Learn more about the event and register here](#)

Policy Action

JRT Policy Action is consulting virtually with a range of food producer

organizations across the globe to learn their perspectives on repurposing agricultural support. A dozen such consultations have been held to date. Preliminary input has underscored the need for repurposing public support to the agri-food sector, for example by supporting a more diverse and nutrient-rich array of crops and more sustainable production practices (e.g. extension services that help farmers apply fertilizer in appropriate doses, rotate crops through fields, etc.). Insights from the Food Producer Consultations will be published later in 2021.

JRT Policy Action also recently published its first policy brief, [*The Case for Repurposing Public Support to Agriculture*](#). The brief provides a short overview of public support to agriculture; examines its potential to have a greater positive impact on social and environmental outcomes (e.g., nutrition and biodiversity); highlights case studies of countries engaged in repurposing public support; and recommends a suite of good practices for other countries who are beginning such efforts.



“How is it possible that those who are responsible for the food that feeds the rest of the world are themselves hungry?”

**JRT SPOTLIGHT: ISHMAEL SUNGA,
Chief Executive Officer (CEO), The Southern African Confederation of
Agricultural Unions (SACAU)**

As part of our consultations, we had the distinct pleasure of sitting down with Ishmael Sunga, CEO of the Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions. Ishmael is establishing SACAU as a farmers’ organization, development and policy think tank, and innovation centre aimed at addressing systemic agricultural development matters with the farmers’ lens. This

includes issues around fundamental values and principles relating to equity, fairness, transparency, inclusion and voice. In our conversation, he shared his thoughts on how a just transition can effectively address the major challenges facing food producers by putting them at the forefront of policy change.

See the full interview here, in our latest [JRT Insight Post](#).

To learn more about our policy action work, please contact pac@merid.org.

Investment Partnerships

The second quarter of 2021 saw JRT Investment Partnerships continue to engage investors and business leaders on financing equitable agriculture. In April, we worked with WBCSD, CCAFS and Wageningen University to bring farmers and business leaders together during a Producers' Dialogue session at WBCSD's Liaison Delegate Meeting, the annual meeting of senior sustainability leads from WBCSD's member companies. In May, JRT IP worked with other WBCSD teams to deliver a Food Systems Dialogue for Investors on food security in Southeast Asia, attended by over 40 participants including C-suite executives, regional food experts, and Asia Pacific fund managers. These wide-ranging discussions addressed youth inclusion in agriculture financing, the role of social impact metrics in securing equitable outcomes in agriculture, and opportunities for scaling sustainable rice supply chains.

JRT Investment Partnerships is supporting two projects focusing on strategic opportunities to drive finance towards investments aligned with a just rural transition. The Soils Investment Hub will create a coalition of food value chain companies and key stakeholders to drive alignment on investment decisions towards supporting healthy soil practices. The Banking for Impact pathfinder will create a framework and tool for financial institutions to assess and disclose GHGs across their food and agriculture portfolios. The projects, run by WBCSD's [Scaling](#)

[Positive Agriculture](#) team, are in early-stage development and are strengthening our ongoing support for regenerative, low-carbon agriculture.

We want to connect with investors and finance leaders interested in joining our mission to scale investment for a just rural transition. For further details, please contact Victoria Crawford, the Investment Partnerships Manager, at crawford@wbcsd.org.



“As someone who has broken down barriers and bridged the worlds of international finance and local family farming, I know first-hand that connections make us stronger.”

JRT SPOTLIGHT: NONO SEKHOTO

In 2011, South African young professional Nono Sekhoto did something her peers considered unusual. Excited to try something new, she gave up a successful career in finance to join her father in starting a family farm. Ten years later, Nono runs a successful agribusiness and has become a champion for youth engagement in the farming sector. For Nono, the future of the agriculture depends on the sector being accessible to young, inexperienced food producers. She works tirelessly to help potential youth farmers access land and leverage their technological know-how to gain just, equitable entry to the sector.

In this [JRT Insights Post](#), Nono reflects on how youth inclusion and mentorship can build a more just food system. Read more about Nono’s

thoughts from her decade of farming experience [here](#). Developed in partnership with CCAFS, Wageningen University & Research, and WBCSD.

Food Systems Summit Updates

Many members of the JRT community are engaging in the processes and preparations for the UN Food Systems Summit. The JRT is delighted to be supporting two particular areas, and welcomes your involvement in these.

JRT Investment Partnerships is helping to convene a [Finance Network for Food Systems](#), to be co-hosted by WBCSD and UNEP and launched as part of the Food System Summit's Finance Lever. Addressing the \$300bn annual shortfall preventing equitable food systems transformation, the network will raise ambition on food issues amongst public and private finance leaders, CEOs, and Ministers. We will also be releasing an open letter during the FSS, to be signed by finance leaders, calling for food to sit further up the green finance agenda.

[Sign up for key announcements on the Finance Network for Food Systems](#)

In addition, JRT Executive Director, Melissa Pinfield, and Shenggen Fan – Dean, Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, and Chair Professor, China Agricultural University – are co-leading a Solution Cluster under Action Track 3, which is focussed on Boosting Nature-Positive Production. This Solution Cluster—Repurposing Public Support to Food and Agriculture—is aligned with the COP26 Campaign on Sustainable Agriculture and JRT's Policy Action workstream.

The campaign kicked off with a Ministerial Dialogue in April, followed by a series of Policy Dialogues co-convened by the COP26 Presidency and the World Bank. These are enabling countries to share experience and build political momentum for repurposing policies and public support to food and agriculture to achieve better environmental, social and nutrition outcomes. The solution cluster aims to support

these countries to learn from one another and access support to undertake the technical analysis and inclusive consultations necessary for moving forward with repurposing public support. The JRT's regional and multi-stakeholder consultations will ensure that diverse perspectives are incorporated into the overall messaging for this campaign.

Stay tuned for further information about how to get involved.

Our community of purpose continues to grow! We would like to welcome the **newest members** of the JRT community: **Hayden Green Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Nottingham University Business School** and **Environment and Development Association JASIL**.

The JRT Vision Statement remains open for endorsement by governments and other key stakeholders. Endorsers will join the growing JRT community of purpose to promote learning, build momentum, and forge new partnerships to accelerate just rural transitions around the world.

To get involved, please submit an application **here** or contact the JRT Secretariat for more information at **jrt@merid.org**.



: <https://justruraltransition.org/>

Email: jrt@merid.org