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JUST RURAL TRANSITION

Newsletter | July 2020

It has been a busy few months for the Just Rural Transition (JRT) initiative since the establishment of the JRT Secretariat in May. In this July 2020 Just Rural Transition newsletter we share updates from around the network, information about our new JRT website, Twitter account and introduce key people who will drive forward the work of the Policy Action Coalition and Investment Partnership Network. We are also seeking Expressions of Interest from JRT endorsers to be part of the JRT Advisory Group, as part of our evolving governance.

Thank you to all those who have reached out to contribute ideas and participated in one of our virtual dialogues. We will continue to consult with the JRT community in the coming months as we develop our strategies and workplans.

Secretariat



JRT's Evolving Governance and Expressions of Interest to be part of a JRT Advisory Group

The JRT's governance framework should reflect and support our 2030 vision—to bring diverse stakeholders together to transform the way in which we produce and consume food, and use our land and natural resources to provide nutritious food for a growing global population while protecting the vital natural systems which sustain life. The JRT aims to mobilise powerful coalitions of actors and support collective action that ensures people—particularly small-holder farmers, indigenous and local rural communities—are at the heart of efforts to address climate change and the degradation of nature, promoting sustainable and equitable development.

The JRT's "community of purpose" comprises governments (Global North and South), farmer and producer organisations, food companies, international knowledge and financial institutions, non-governmental organisations, foundations, associations, coalitions and other actors who commit to contribute to achieving the JRT's vision.

The Advisory Group will be comprised of entities representing the diverse stakeholder groups listed above. The Advisory Group will provide high-level strategic guidance and input to the JRT Initiative, identify opportunities to scale impact and embed JRT principles and objectives in relevant global and national processes and initiatives. We propose a senior level meeting (Ministerial/Head of Organisation) twice per year, with working-level meetings held on a monthly basis. If your entity has endorsed the JRT Vision Statement and you would like to be part of this group, please contact us with an Expression of Interest at jrt@merid.org.

JRT Dialogue on Land Rights and Land Tenure

There is a history of unjustness in rural areas....how do we heal broken relationships? Land rights are the cornerstone of all rural life—production,

restorative.

--Andy White, Coordinator, Rights and Resources Initiative

How do we define Just in the Just Rural Transition? Indigenous and local communities customarily own and manage 50% of the world's land but only hold legal titles to 10%. Securing land tenure and community land rights could help unlock racial justice, gender equity, and food sovereignty.

On 9 and 11 June, the JRT Secretariat held two dialogue sessions in partnership with the [Rights and Resources Initiative](#) to engage the broad and diverse JRT network and scope potential priority areas for collaboration on this critical and timely topic.

Participants explored how the JRT can promote policy reform and investment partnerships to unlock opportunities to advance justice in all dimensions of our work, including secure land tenure for marginalised and vulnerable communities. It is vital that those whose land rights and livelihoods are impacted by agri-food policy reform—indigenous peoples, afro-descendant communities, farmers, women and marginalized groups—are part of any dialogue process at the local and national levels. The JRT can also promote awareness and understanding on this topic at the global level.

We look forward to integrating these take-aways within future JRT activities. Any JRT member who would like to be involved in a follow-up deep dive this autumn can contact us on jrt@merid.org.

Policy Action Coalition (PAC)

Repurposing and Reinvesting Government Support for Food and Agriculture

Policy Action Coalition New Deputy Coordinator



Just Rural Transition secretariat from the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., where he was a research fellow in the Global Food Security Program. Christian has worked on agri-food systems issues for ten years both domestically and internationally and received a Ph.D. in rural sociology and international agricultural development from Penn State. Christian will manage day-to-day operations for the PAC and lead the development of its knowledge products. Welcome, Christian!

The PAC's COVID Dialogue Series

The COVID crisis has shocked the entire system. We can see just how fragile just-in-time production processes are...like a house of cards: beautiful when there's no wind, but when there's a gust of wind, you're not left with much.

--Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

The JRT's Policy Action Coalition (PAC) was created prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ensuing health and economic crisis resulted in new realizations, new challenges and new priorities for all stakeholders involved in food system transformation. To help make sense of what this means for how the JRT can support policy reform in this challenging and evolving context, the PAC convened three virtual dialogues.

The dialogues explored the emerging impacts of COVID-19 on livelihoods and value chains, climate change and the environment, and nutrition, focusing on medium to long term needs and responses. Themes included the fragile, risk-prone nature of value chains, the critical interdependencies of human, environmental, and animal health (i.e., One Health), and the opportunity for country governments to 'build back better' with policies that address both medium term concerns (food insecurity, jobs, and value chains), and longer-term ones (environmental degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss and nutrition). The PAC has distilled these learnings within its report, [COVID-19: Re-emphasizing and Reshaping Priorities for the Policy Action Coalition](#). It looks forward to further integrating these take-aways into future engagements with country partners.

Investment Partnerships Network (IPN)
Scaling Finance for the Just Rural Transition



Victoria Crawford joins the Just Rural Transition team as the Manager of the Investment Partnership Network (IPN) within the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Victoria has worked at the World Economic Forum for the past six years, most recently leading WEF's work on finance for environmental resilience, and previously managing WEF's partnerships with multilateral organisations. She brings twelve years experience of sustainable development, climate change, and food and agriculture issues, at organisations including the UK Parliament and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and has an MSc in Dryland Science and Management from Oxford University. Welcome, Victoria!

IPN Workstream Updates

The IPN team is in the midst of a learning and vision setting phase. The team is currently conducting stakeholder interviews with key investors, agri-businesses, and civil society organizations in order to shape the vision and focus of the program, which will be followed later in August by several consultation sessions to further refine our theory of change, hone our value statement, and continue building support for the initiative. Using the findings from the interviews and consultations, the team is building out a launch event to be held this fall. If you would like to get involved in shaping this initiative, please contact ipn@merid.org for more information.

New JRT Endorser Highlights



The African Climate Foundation

We are delighted to welcome the African Climate Foundation (ACF) to the JRT network. The ACF was established in April 2020 as a strategic grant-making foundation focused on issues of climate policy and sustainable development on the African continent. It recognizes land reform, restoring natural ecosystems, promoting regenerative agriculture

practitioners, and scientists in order to foster thought leadership, policy dialogue and active mobilization around the issues the ACF wants to champion.



ClimateWorks Foundation

ClimateWorks Foundation works globally to end the climate crisis by developing and accelerating scalable solutions through a combination of strategic grantmaking, collaborative partnerships, and global intelligence. Programmatic activities at ClimateWorks of relevance to the JRT Coalition include work on agricultural super pollutants, healthy diets, productive and regenerative agriculture, carbon dioxide removal, efficient food cold chains, sustainable finance, economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the protection of tropical forests. As part of the Coalition, ClimateWorks will work to align philanthropic and governmental support for just rural transitions.

On 23 July, The African Climate Foundation, ClimateWorks Foundation and a number of other philanthropic foundations and bilateral donors joined us for a Funders Dialogue to explore opportunities to scale finance and support activities in line with JRT's objectives. We look forward to building on this collaboration in the coming months.

The JRT Website and Communications



Knowledge Partners Hub

We are delighted to announce the launch of the new [JRT website](#). This includes information about the JRT, statements of support from JRT Vision Statement endorsers, and a growing [Knowledge Hub](#) which highlights the wide range of publications, reports, research and analysis published by our diverse network. The Knowledge Hub will serve the JRT's goal of mobilizing scientific evidence and policy research to promote innovative solutions in the climate, land use, and nutrition spheres.

Please contact us on jrt@merid.org if you would like to make any suggestions for building out our web-based content, including the Knowledge Hub.

Twitter

Be sure to follow JRT's new twitter account, [@JRTransition](#). We are excited to continue to share resources and amplify updates from our network through this platform.

Contributions to Upcoming Newsletter

Please contact the JRT Secretariat at jrt@merid.org if you have feedback or ideas for content that can feature in the next JRT newsletter. This could include upcoming webinars and events, new initiatives and work, relevant blogposts and research or other important information of interest to the growing JRT community.

Community News



25+ Leaders from the Global Commission on Adaptation call on decision-makers to incorporate climate resilience into COVID19 recovery packages in 7 key areas, in its recent [statement](#).

The World Economic Forum released the second report of its New Nature Economic Reports series: [The Future of Nature and Business](#). The report sets out a blueprint for business to achieve 15 transitions and transform the world's three most nature-destructive socio-economic systems —generating up to US\$10.1 trillion in annual business value by 2030, creating 395 million jobs.

According to its most recent [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World \(SOFI\)](#) report, the FAO suggests we are not on track for zero hunger in 2030. The report addresses food affordability, unhealthy diets, and the toll of the pandemic.

The Food and Land Use Coalition's latest [discussion paper](#) presents a framework for understanding food systems resilience and policy responses in the face of COVID-19, featured on its new [COVID-19 corner](#).



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