

Tuesday, 13 October 18:00– 19:30

Philippines Room

Cultivating Agroecology for food and agriculture. A priority for CFS

#15

ORGANIZERS

Civil Society Mechanism

USC Canada

ETC Group

MAELA

La Via Campesina

IPC Working Group on Agroecology

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Abstract: Agroecology is a way of life as well as a way of knowing. It is not a mere set of technologies or production practices.

Agroecological practices are based on ecological principles like building life in the soil, recycling nutrients, the dynamic management of biodiversity and energy conservation at all scales. Collective rights and access to the natural resources are fundamental pillars. Small scale food producers have developed their ways of knowing through peer to peer learning processes, or diálogo de sabers, that also include an exchange of knowledge between youth and elders. Agroecology is developed through innovation, research, and crop and livestock selection and breeding, ensuring the collective rights of peasants' to use, exchange, breed, select and sell their own seeds as the most viable way of sustaining food systems over the long term. This side event focuses on agroecology supported by agricultural biodiversity, and aims to illustrate the viability of this model of agriculture to sustainably deliver wholesome, nutritious foods to rural and urban areas while nourishing communities, livelihoods and ecosystems. The event will propose that agroecology should be placed high on the CFS agenda. The Panel will include: Small-scale Food Producers (Peasants, Fisherfolks Pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples) and researchers from NGOs.

KEYWORDS: Agroecology, Agricultural Biodiversity / Seeds, Genetic Resources for Food and Nutrition, Civil Society

Languages: EN, FR, SP

Refreshments

Summary: This side event featured the voices and perspectives of a broad range of civil society actors, including farmer and fisher organizations, social movements, indigenous peoples, NGOs and the research community. They described agroecology's many dimensions -- a way of life, a practise, a body of knowledge, a science, a philosophy and a movement. While its definitions may be numerous, those who practice agroecology are unified by its principles, including collective rights to territory, natural and genetic resources; the primacy of farmers' and food producers' knowledge and practices; and a systems approach.

Speakers elaborated on the wide range of practises encompassed by agroecology, whether based on building life in the soil, recycling nutrients, collective stewardship of common territories, or the sustainable management of biodiversity, energy and marine resources. Each speaker through their own perspectives underscored the great capacity of agroecology and peasant agriculture to sustain communities, livelihoods, ecosystems and territories, and to nourish people through wholesome, nutritious foods. Peasant agriculture and agroecology demonstrate far greater dynamism, resilience, productivity and innovation that industrial agriculture and therefore must be supported and strengthened.

To the speakers, the most important question was not the 'What' or 'Why', but the 'How' of agroecology, whose time has come and whose rationale and viability are no longer in question. Speakers made a strong case for taking agroecology forward, from their work and their practices on the ground, to the work of the CFS and its member states (in the MYPoW, GSF, and other CFS processes). Agroecology was also seen as central to the realization of other global imperatives such as responding to climate change, and realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

This event was also the launch of the report from International Forum on Agroecology held in Mali in February 2015. The conversation was live tweeted at #agroecology, #cfs42 and #agbiomatters.