

Agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable food systems that contribute to food security and nutrition

Rationale

1. The global food system is at a crossroads. In the face of a rapidly growing population, increased pressure and competition over natural resources, increasingly severe consequences of climate change and the loss of biodiversity, sustainable and innovative approaches need to be developed to successfully combat hunger and malnutrition. It is key to promote more sustainable food systems that produce more with more socio-economic benefits and with less environmental consequences.
2. Sustainable approaches and interventions have to address the challenges behind poverty and inequality, unsustainable diets and consumption patterns, soil degradation, land and water scarcity, climate change and loss of biodiversity. Given the challenges that food systems have to address in order to ensure food security and nutrition now and in the future, CFS seeks to build a better understanding of the roles that agroecological and other innovative approaches can play.

Proposed scope

3. The HLPE is requested to produce a report presenting evidence on the potential contribution of agroecology and other innovative approaches, practices, and technologies to creating sustainable food systems that contribute to food security and nutrition.
4. The HLPE is invited to analyze and provide evidence on the different approaches which could help CFS stakeholders develop a common understanding, and consider the trade-offs that will need to be made by policy-makers, farmers and other stakeholders when considering the adoption of different approaches.
5. Although particular attention to agroecological approaches is envisaged in the HLPE report, the Committee recognizes that there is no single practice for achieving food security and nutrition and sustainable and resilient food systems. The role of innovation in adapting existing knowledge and practices to specific conditions should be elaborated.
6. The Committee seeks to be informed through the report on possible synergies and integration between different approaches and on the common and distinguishing features of agroecology in the spectrum of innovative approaches to enhance the sustainability of agriculture.
7. The analysis of the contribution of agroecology and other innovative approaches to meet future food demand in a sustainable manner should pay attention to the following elements:

- a) Potential to deliver at scale and impact on global food security and nutrition, with particular attention to food availability, food price levels and fluctuations as well as socio-economic impacts, such as on employment;
- b) Contribution to improve resource efficiency, strengthen resilience and secure social equity and responsibility;
- c) Examples of context-specific solutions associated with different stages of agricultural development and diverse local situations;
- d) Types of markets and regulations that are required to create an enabling environment for the development of these approaches and for a positive impact in terms of food security and nutrition;
- e) Possible barriers to the adoption of certain practices and ways to address them;
- f) Controversies and uncertainties in the science and practices and risks and challenges associated to the development of these approaches.

Objectives and expected outcomes

8. The objective for the Committee is to build understanding on the type of interventions, enabling policies and tools, institutional arrangements and organizational changes that enable and incentivize positive changes in sustainable agriculture and food systems.

9. The report and policy outcomes determined by the Committee should help countries achieve progress on SDG 2 (in particular 2.4 on sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices and 2.A on increasing investment in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, extension services and technological development), on SDG 6 (in particular 6.3 on reduction of water pollution and 6.4 on promotion of water-use efficiency) and on a number of others such as SDG 8 on sustainable economic growth, SDG 9 on resilient infrastructure and innovation, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns and SDG 15 on sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.

Process

10. The HLPE is requested to launch the report not later than March 2019 in order to give enough time to CFS stakeholders to analyze and review the evidence presented to draw lessons from those innovative approaches that contribute to food security and nutrition and sustainable food systems.

11. A facilitator will be selected among CFS Members to lead the process of reaching agreement on the draft proposal identifying the areas of agreement and/or policy recommendations to be presented to the Committee for endorsement.