

16 October PM

VIII. AGROECOLOGICAL and OTHER INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The meeting was called to order at 16.02 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON

We are starting at four o'clock on the dot. Thank you for allowing us to do so. I have a very important announcement to make: when we closed yesterday's session, I mentioned the various possibilities that we have to conclude item two, the statements on State of Food Insecurity and Nutrition in 2019. The first option is still valid, and I very warmly call upon all delegations to send us your written interventions to the email of the Secretariat, cfs@fao.org.

The second option is still open to all delegations who wish to make a video-recorded statement. Please also contact the Secretariat so that we can coordinate with your photographer or recorder so that you can make an audio-visual statement. As third option, there was option 3A and 3B: one was to continue the plenary session as of seven p.m. today in the official language of each delegation without interpretation. Now, obviously, that is complicated on various levels. We have discussed it with the legal office and with various other Member States and we have ruled out that option.

So, the other option was to hire interpreters. That also entailed some difficulties because we were told that due to regulations and rules, we could only have interpreting for six hours. We have been talking to the Secretariat, members of the team and others who are involved and we have managed, and this is an excellent news that I am giving you, to secure the flexibility to have one additional hour of interpreting today. So, instead of working from four until seven this afternoon, we will work for four hours, from four o'clock until eight o'clock.

During the first three hours we are going to discuss item VIII on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches and at seven o'clock on the dot I am going to drop my gavel at whatever point we are at of our discussions and we will conclude item VIII. At that moment, from seven until eight p.m., we will close item II on SOFI.

At eight p.m. we cannot go on, as we no longer have interpreters or the room. We need also to leave the room so that the technicians can come and rearrange the room so that we can continue to work later. So, I am now going to introduce item VIII, Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.

With this we are embarking on an important policy convergence process within the Committee on World Food Security. The fact that the 2030 goal of zero hunger also includes sustainable agriculture has drawn attention to the importance of Agroecology and Other Innovative Approaches. This is why we requested our High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) to provide us with a basis for discussion. That starting point is the report we have on the table. From my remarks at the launch of the report on third July, I quote "the recommendations and the analysis provided are timely and relevant to the process towards Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, showcasing in thought and action the complementarity and

interconnectedness of HLPE reports, of CFS policy outcomes and, indeed, of the Sustainable Development Goals as we make use of all the tools in the toolbox to defeat hunger and malnutrition”.

Today delegates are expected to start a conversation and give guidance on the most significant elements of steps required to get us to CFS 47 next October, where the Committee is expected to endorse a package of policy recommendations. The Bureau appointed the Ambassador Mohammad Emadi of Iran as rapporteur for the policy convergence process. He, as we all know, is the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, which I had the honour of chairing in 2012/2014.

Joining me at the podium are Patrick Caron, Chair of the HLPE Steering Committee, and also the HLPE Project Team Leader, Fergus Sinclair. Professor Caron is Vice President of the University of Montpellier and also is a leading expert at CIRAD, the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development.

Professor Sinclair is leader of Resilient Livelihood Systems at ICRAF, also known as the world agroforestry centre and teaches at the CATIE, the Tropical Agricultural Research and Higher Education Centre in San Jose, Costa Rica and at Bangor University in the United Kingdom.

Also, with us is Musonda Mumba, Head of Terrestrial Ecosystems at the United Nations Environment Programme and serves as climate change expert for the governments of Kenya and Zambia and at the World Wildlife Fund.

And also my old friend, Kwesi Atta-Krah, Director at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in Nigeria, previously a research director at CGIAR and also deputy director-general of Biodiversity International here in Rome.

The floor goes to Professor Caron. Please, Patrick.

Mr Patrick Caron, Chair of the HLPE Steering Committee

Chair, your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to be able to present to you today the 14th report of the HLPE on the Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.

So, this report would not have seen the light of day without generous voluntary financial contributions and I am very grateful for them and, as you have said at the 44th Plenary Session of the CFS in October 2017, the summary and recommendations on 3 July, the HLPE published a report online on 17 July in English and the translations are now available in all the official languages of the United Nations.

Since the beginning of this week I have been listening to you and there is one point on which you all agree. We need to change. In any case, that is what you say. However, it does not seem to me that you agree on which road should be followed, so I hope that this report will contribute to our collective intelligence. It will enable us to reformulate the blockages in agreeing to disagree to fuel the process of discussions and in final instance to act together.

All recent publications on food security and nutrition, in particular in the United Nations and the HLPE, describe the very alarming situation that was recalled throughout Monday. Food has become the number one problem of public health throughout the world. Agriculture and global food systems do not meet the food demand at a global level. Urbanisation, conflict, migration, exhaustion of renewable resources, erosion of consistent functions, climate change, loss of biodiversity, these evolutions are already underway and are very much feared for their potentially dramatic effects which could come already tomorrow.

The HLPE urges in this report for an in-depth transformation of agriculture and food systems. We have to recognize that the need for change is not enough in itself. We have to understand what is blocking the

system and to promote the necessary changes to take place at a scale that enable us to respond to the global challenges.

At our first origin, the HLPE has tried to identify the reasons for disagreements and to explore ways and means to overcome them, thanks to an inclusive and rigorous process based on mobilisation of knowledge, in particular scientific knowledge. The guiding idea is that understanding among stakeholders and the disagreements as a result of different interests, perspectives and convictions should enable us to overcome our positions, to come up with a constructive debate and have the necessary mediation.

The HLPE report does not pretend to respond to all these questions. We are trying to set up an overall expression and language to fuel discussion and action and I hope that our report will contribute to a structured discussion and go beyond a diverging point of view. It is under this angle that I invite you to examine this report and I know to what extent this report has been expected and it is in the light of this contribution of our collective challenges that we have to appreciate it. In actual fact, agroecology has very much gained in interest and in importance over the last few years, as it has been demonstrated by the symposia organised by the FAO in 2014 and 2018. Therefore, it was not surprising to us that among 310 contributions to consultations and 255 nominations to participate in the team project, this report has beaten all records over the last ten years.

On the basis of an analysis of literature, the two consultations and reading by peers, this report confirms that there's no single consensus in definitions about agroecology. It compares and evaluates different innovative approaches. It shares examples of approaches and experiences to adapt and complement with others and available online.

Yes, we do have a tremendous capacity for innovation throughout all the regions of the world and this, no doubt, is one very important input made by this report. Recognition of the many ways it can be seen as the implementation is fundamental and an essential point. These various paths have in mind that in each territory, in each place there's renewable of the manner in which we evaluate performances and their impact. It also presupposes an effort of articulation between the innovations carried out territorially and structural modifications that need to be established more vastly.

Institutional environments are essential in order to stimulate and facilitate changes in the food systems locally as well as to guarantee their impact at a significant level and this has to be reflected in the recommendations. This 14th report strengthens the messages transmitted year by year by the HLPE. It takes into account the major evaluations and the global policy priorities.

To focus solely on production at the present time would not meet the challenges of food security and nutrition. We are in the 21st Century, no longer in the 20th. We have to consider the whole of food systems, in particular the links between what we produce, what we consume, what we trade, what we waste and what we lose. Some of these same food systems represent a major lever in order to implement the whole of the programme of sustainable development by 2030, as it has been demonstrated this morning.

This takes into account food, human system, ecosystems, climate change, economic health, social justice and peace. All these are linked. If we do not manage to transform the food system in depth, we will end in a disaster. If we manage to do it, we will have made a great step forward. I hope that this report, therefore, will contribute to the global vision as required by the CFS in its 15th report in 2020, basing itself on the 14 previous reports.

Now, before concluding, I would like to share with you some brief reflections on the role of science in developing policies and on which this report is based over the last four years. Science does shed light to the major complex policy discussions, giving us a new vocabulary which enables us to express very clearly terms to highlight the present state of our knowledge. Uncertainties, the possible research for the future to cast a critical look on facts, on technological progress, on scientific proof and to take into account the world beyond the simple rhetoric, not a process.

The lack of knowledge should not be used as a pretext so as not to act and, as I have said on Monday, on the contrary, we have to differentiate what is a lack of knowledge, conflict of interest, asymmetrical forms of policies and the role to be played by science and knowledge.

And this is all the more essential as our era, unfortunately, is marked by two tendencies: the revitalisation of the notion of knowledge to be put to the prophet of simple affirmation of opinions and beliefs. More than ever, science is supposed to contribute to the production of public wellbeing and that is very important. Polarization of debates where all, too often, seem to try to delegitimize the others rather than to come up with constructive agreements.

It is not a question, of course, that we substitute science by policies but of course there has to be a context where it has to shed light or it has to contribute to the process underway to discussions and decisions. Knowledge and techniques are strategic resources. We have to strengthen more and more our capacity to mobilise them.

I am very happy to give the floor to Fergus Lloyd Sinclair who is in charge of the team that was specifically set up to work on this report for an in-depth presentation of its content. I would like to thank very warmly the whole of that team. I am happy to anticipate the discussions which will take place, and the policies to come, under the enlightened aegis of the rapporteur nominated by your Bureau whose personal competencies will be essential. Thank you very much for your attention.

Applause

Mr Fergus Sinclair, Project Team Leader HLPE

This was a very difficult report to write. It had a group of authors who were chosen for their diversity of discipline and geography and we had to agree with a committee of 15 other people, and the Steering Committee, in order to come up with the result. We had 310 inputs from the consultation on the first draft of the report, the V0. So, it is a huge amount of collation and weighing up of a lot of information that has been involved and we are already lucky that we had such huge commitment from so many people and such rich material to deal with.

Patrick has already framed the reason for the report very strongly, so, I will not repeat that. There is a clear sense that a major transformation in what we eat, how it is produced, processed, stored, transported and sold needs to happen. That has brought agroecological approaches and other innovative approaches much more into the limelight as potential ways of addressing these issues, which are becoming more and more acute day by day with reports on climate, on biodiversity, with really alarming statistics that suggest that it is a crisis, not just business as usual.

The CFS starts from a basis of human rights and the human right to food. Therefore, the principles of participation, accountability, transparency, human dignity and these other principles are fundamental in terms of focusing the whole of the report.

Now, Patrick mentioned that agroecology is a dynamic concept and it has evolved over the last half a century, from a focus on practices at field and farm level to embrace whole food systems and how they are organized, everything from production to consumption and all that goes on between those.

It also comprises three aspects: there is the science of agroecology. The key thing about this is that it is transdisciplinary. It is problem-focused, it crosses disciplines, it involves all stakeholders in the scientific process. It is reflective in terms of the methods used because it is addressing real world problems. But agroecology is also a set of practices, what people are actually doing, and that harnesses ecological processes and is represented by generic principles that get applied locally rather than a prescribed set of practices, and we will come back to that in a moment.

Finally, it is also a series of social movements that are political, that assert collective rights, advocate diversity in agriculture and food systems. And all these three elements are important, although they are not always in step with each other and these are some of the tensions that we need to work through.

Now, we are talking about two key words here – transformation of the whole food system but also transitions to get there and transition pathways. Within agroecological thinking, Stephen Gliessman came up with these five levels of transformation or transition, which starts at the agroecosystem level, the production element, and are incremental, and they involve what you see on the screen there, 13 principles.

Now, these principles are slightly different from the FAO element of agroecology but do not get worried about that because the elements are not principles. The principles are derived from the literature following a very tight definition of what a principle actually is. The underlying analysis of the report that compares approaches is based on explicit principles that are normative and causative. And so there is a table in the report that shows the relationship between these 13 principles of agroecology and the ten elements from FAO. The principles do specifically mention animal health and soil health and they do distinguish biodiversity from economic diversification and there are good reasons for that. But all of the elements are included.

Of course these principles interact and they are intensified where you have a greater level of functional diversity in the system. But the report is about innovation. It's about how do you change things to address these critical issues and the critical thing is that we need to move from the status quo. That means changes in rules, in institutions as well as in practices and I think it is important that we understand the process of change and innovation as being as important as specific changes, the technologies and new market interventions, new institutional arrangements that represent specific innovations.

So, there is an increasing emphasis on democratizing and responsible innovation and the co-creation of knowledge together with stakeholders you are expecting to take up the innovation process. So, you are bringing innovation closer to where it is actually happening and that has a lot of issues in relation to how our science is done and the relationship between science and practice.

In agriculture innovation is inherently localized. That is because the context varies very much in terms of soils, in terms of culture, just about everything that determines how agriculture is going to happen is locally configured. So, you need to adapt things to local circumstances.

The approaches that you take, which could be agroecological, they could be sustainable intensification, they could be climate-smart agriculture. These all have sets of principles and that are put together within a philosophy and a mind-set in relation to how you go about your transformation. They have a strategic vision for the future.

And it is on the basis of these principles. So, those are statements which form a basis for a system of belief or reasoning that can very importantly guide decisions and behaviour and you can read more about principles in Michael Quinn Patton and others who have put a lot of effort into defining how principles are useful.

The critical thing for us is two things. They can be normative, that is that they state how things should be, food systems should be equitable, it is a starting point, it is an assertion, but also there are causative principles, like, for example, more diverse systems and more resilient, and those in a sense are hypotheses until you have got enough evidence to back them up. And, obviously, if they are going to be useful, then principles do need to be fully explicit.

In terms of the innovation approaches that we looked at on the basis of these principles, we can see that you get rather different outcomes as a result of starting from different principles and that means that all of these approaches are not the same. There is quite a considerable overlap. There are convergences and there are divergences. Let me give you an example to characterize sustainable intensification and agroecology.

So, something like conservation agriculture may be mentioned in a paper on sustainable intensification or on agroecology. Now, if you have conservation agriculture, minimum tillage and so on, and you use herbicide in order to control the weeds that fits in sustainable intensification but not in agroecology because of the use of the chemical. So, we can see, on the basis of these principles, how we can separate the approaches and in the report that is done in detail.

The key thing is it results in lots of different transitions and you need lots of transitions, one, because you are starting from different places and, secondly, because you are intensifying in relation to different factors of production, depending upon the objectives of people, the circumstances that they are in, the way that they food system is configured. So, we might expect very different transition pathways from one place to another. So, there are multiple transition pathways that need to suit the context that occurs locally.

What you see in the graph there is various intensification pathways relating to agroecology approaches in relation to how natural ecosystems are, how labour is intensified, capital is intensified and so on. But that's entirely looking at the production system. Of course, once you bring in the people who are consuming things, then you have got another set of issues associated with what people are consuming, the extent to which people are participating in deciding about how food is produced and how it is prepared, how it is stored, transported and processed.

So, participation in the food system becomes critical. This analysis of principles leads to two key recommendations coming from the report:

One is to consider adding agency as a fifth pillar of food security and nutrition. So, that is being explicitly aware of the extent to which people can participate in food systems as a key element of them: how democratic they are, the extent to which people can make informed choices about the food that they are eating and that they can, through their purchasing decisions and other mechanisms, affect the way in which agricultural systems and food systems are set up.

The second is around a really important concept in relation to metrics and that is looking holistically at how we measure agriculture, taking into account climate effects, taking into account effects on biodiversity, all things which are often externalities at the moment in terms of production.

Now, ecological footprint is a potential starting point for that. It comes with a big warning attached to it. The method of accounting is not taking into account the degradative or regenerative nature of the production system that is involved. So, it does manage to connect consumption and production but it is not yet detailed enough in terms of dealing with degradation. And given land degradation as a huge global issue, that is very significant and important.

Patrick mentioned diverging perspectives. These are important and we took, in relation to key factors that drive innovation and relate to livelihoods, human health, ecological footprints, governance and knowledge and cultural diversity, a set of issues around things like biofortification in relation to diversified diets, scale of production, use of synthetic fertilisers, genetic engineering and modification and approaches to big data within agriculture and digital agriculture. These are all areas that have a range of views associated with them and in the report you can look in detail at the analysis.

But, please, when you look at it, we were not attempting to adjudicate amongst these points of view. Our purpose was to understand the basis for disagreement so that you can then begin to look at whether you can go forward from there. The critical lessons are that divergence was more around how technology is accessed, used and controlled rather than the fundamental nature of technologies themselves.

Second thing is that there is a real moralization of food that is happening, which increases the motivation of policymakers to act on the one hand but it makes it much more difficult for them to do this on the basis of evidence as opposed to weighing up competing convictions rather than evidence. Thirdly, that there is a need for clarity on asserting normative starting points that we agree on for transforming food systems

but then the causative mechanisms to achieve transitions in different contexts and getting clarity rather than mixing the normative and causative really helps to get beyond divisions.

Finally, understanding the basis and the nature of controversies does start you potentially going beyond them. Now, it is quite clear that it is not just at the whole food system level that metrics are important. They are important right the way from the field through the integration in farms and livelihood systems through to landscapes and we need appropriate metrics at each of those scales in order to work appropriately.

We have this tension that sometimes develops between social movements on the one hand, that are spreading agroecological practice very widely, often very fast, and science, which often does not feel as strong scientific underpinning. If you start bringing these together, this is from India with a zero budget, natural farming, getting practitioners and scientists together in a room, coming up with all of their ideas with nobody preventing anybody from stating what they thought, you end up with quite a complex set of processes that people believe in which can then be examined, explored and taken on. We can take a rigorous approach to try to understand behaviour change and social movements that is leading to the spread.

So, there are five key areas of recommendation, taking into account the value and diversity of food systems and their context across scales when developing transition pathways, broadening performance metrics for food systems, recognizing improvement of ecological footprint as in the operational principle to transitioning to more sustainable food systems, encouraging integration of trans-disciplinary science and indigenous knowledge and support for local innovation and considering the emerging importance of agency as a possible fifth pillar of FSN. Those detailed recommendations are then set out under those headings, and you can read them in the document in more detail. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Fergus, Professor Sinclair, for your detailed explanation. I have heard you giving this explanation a couple of times already and every new time I learn something more. I am halfway through reading the document. I have to confess I have not read it in full but I am halfway through and I thank you very much for providing the basis for the discussion to start today. And thank you, Patrick, Professor Caron, for your general explanation about how HLPE is this extraordinary pillar for CFS, providing, again, a basis for our political discussions. I will give the floor now to Ms Mumba. I believe you wish to speak from the podium. You can speak from wherever you feel more comfortable. Please.

Ms. M. Mumba, Discussant, Chief, UNEP

If I may be allowed, as the only woman on the panel, I will speak from the podium.

CHAIRPERSON

You are allowed. I am gender-blind, so I did not notice until you said it. But that is all fine, please.

Ms. M. Mumba, Discussant, Chief, UNEP

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I am so excited to be here. My name is Musonda Mumba and I work with the United Nations Environment based in Nairobi as Head of the Terrestrial Ecosystems. I think I am going to speak from a point of experience because I am Zambian by nationality but I have dual heritage. My mother was from the Eastern Cape, Xhosa, and my father is Bemba, partly from Congo/DRC, former Zaire, and Zambia. Now, I grew up in a rural town. Happy International Rural Women's Day yesterday and happy World Foods Day today.

It is really exciting to be here but I want to also speak from a point where, as a woman who has not lived in Zambia since 1997, I had the gift of giving birth to a daughter seven years ago. Now, as a Bemba woman, when you give birth to a child, your noko senge is sent over and somebody was sent to Kenya, to Nairobi where I live, and in arriving, my aunties bring with them foods and they bring with them certain herbs that they need to take care of my body as the life-giver.

Now, these herbs grew up in the forest next to my village and when I go back to Zambia today, and to my hometown, these herbs are not there anymore. So, it is very telling of how our ecosystems have shifted and have changed, and at the centre of these agroecological systems, there are women. Because when the change happens, they know first that something has changed. Now, in listening to Dr Sinclair, I am really glad that you contextualized and put this into perspective in terms of the real issues and the cracks and really the power of agency. I think that is quite important. I just want to pull out a little bit on the principles and on those 13 agroecological principles that you outlined there and maybe just pull out three of those.

The issue of co-creation of knowledge and also local knowledge and the global science. I think it is important that when we are bridging these two, it is iterative and it is cyclic because a lot of times we find that information does not go back to the users of the land.

Social values and diets. As I remember, as a child there are certain fruits we ate, and mushrooms that came only at the rainy season, and they had a value and we would be told, they are good for your bones. I had no idea whether they were good for bones or the termites were good for bones. We ate them anyway. But today, with recent science, it is beginning to show that the protein content of termites, caterpillars, etc., is much higher than that of beef.

So, we begin to see that when science converges with these different food systems, there is a marriage there that is happening and why it is important to have this dialogue and back and forth. But at the centre of all of this is land and natural resources which is the basis of agroecological systems. And I think, listening to Dr Sinclair, we also realize the complexity of the landscape but also the importance of the integrated nature of a landscape.

And so central to the discussion, really, is the relevance not only of the sustainable development goals, which are important, but also of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. These post-2030 agendas bring to the core the relevance and importance of how these systems are interacting. How do we then manage land in a 1.5 to 2 degree world? What does that even mean for people at the community? We will no longer be able to grow the foods, nor will our specific food systems thrive within this change and these agroecological systems.

Innovation is exciting and I think it is so important and I do not know how many of you have watched on Netflix. There is a film from Malawi, "*the boy who harnessed the wind*". It is a very fascinating film but not only is it fascinating. It really speaks to the complexity of the factors that you just articulated. Just looking at the barriers of innovation, the young man in that film builds a windmill using pieces from a bicycle, from God knows where, whatever he could get from the garbage pit.

But then we also realize the challenges of governance, you could see the political constellation and the complexities of that issues of economic, knowledge... He sneaks into his school, reads the book about

how to put a windmill together to really help his family and, mind you, at this point in Malawi they have had consecutive droughts. Now, this boy managed to do a windmill so that the water from the river could be pumped up to the land for them to grow the food. And it is fascinating, when you watch the film, to see, and when you dig deeper into the depths of that understanding.

So, what is needed to really go through some of these barriers? I think, in listening to you, Dr Sinclair, I realize that there is need for strengthening capacity, for sure, and also looking at supporting local innovation. But not only that, because we do not live in a flat, uncomplicated world, we live in a global village. Not so long ago, some time last year, I happened to be in New York and I walked into the world food store market and found that there is baobab on the aisle and baobab powder.

I mean, as a kid we just used to look at the baobab tree. Yes, it is a big tree, it is massive, it is gorgeous but if the baobab powder has six times the vitamin C of oranges, it is telling us something. And it is labelled superfood. Wow. And it was US\$25 for a small jar. But the fruit falls off the tree naturally, so how do we then begin to transpose this information also back to the communities that are dependent on these systems.

In conclusion, I just want to say, as someone who is working within the United Nations Environment, and I am sure you are all very familiar, and the Member States in here, that this year has been a special year. We have had several reports, actually, come out within the environmental sphere. We have had the best report, the Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the very ecosystem services that support our agroecological systems. We have had the Global Environment Outlook 6 which has also touched a lot on the land issue and I think in that report, there was recognition that land and soil are really important and food production accounts for more than 50% of use of the actual land system. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Report on Climate Change and Land came out this August and it was also evidenced by the interactions and how we need to really have sustainable food systems and it is really important.

But, lastly but not the least, I want to say whether we like it or not, people, you and I, are central to this conversation. People at the community level are really central to the agroecological and sustainable food systems. This year in March, on 1 March, the United Nations General Assembly came up with a resolution that we helped through the Government of El Salvador. It was tabled and the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration was passed as a General Assembly Resolution.

What is that saying? That is saying, really, our planet is degraded. How do we restore it? thank you to the leadership of El Salvador, the ecosystem restoration has been put on the table and this decade is from 2021 through to 2030. I think that it is central to the conversation that we are going to be having and I think that Member States would be having is really looking at how do we restore our landscapes and our food systems so that they are sustainable in providing not only sustainable production mechanisms but also nutritious foods that are important.

So, I will end here and thank you so much, and I am really looking forward to the discussions in the coming two hours. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you very much, Ms Mumba. I will now ask Mr Atta-Krah to moderate the discussion that starts right now. The floor is yours. And let me also say that we will have two minutes for interventions, three minutes if you are speaking on behalf of groups, that is regional groups, and there are two mechanisms that we have: these are the civil society and the private sector. Mr Atta-Krah has been given the magic bell that you all know. Kwesi, please.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Mario, my friend. Ladies and gentlemen, our job in the next few minutes, probably up to an hour, is basically to create a platform where we can share ideas. This is a platform where we can all see how we can aggregate in such a way that we can support the policy convergence process that this process actually requires. Agroecology is a very important element that we all have to be familiar with and, as I have spent the last three days listening and being in different side groups, I see that this is definitely an area of transformation that is very much desired and very much talked about.

I would also want to say that there are different levels at which transformation is taking place. Sometimes you get into certain fora and people are talking on transformation but looking at it from a technological point of view. Sometimes you get into other fora, people are talking about transformation but if you get deeply into it, they are basically talking about a particular commodity and the value chain that relates to that commodity and that is also called transformation.

What we are talking about within the agroecological approaches, it is much deeper than that. This is something that place people at the centre and place issues of health. It places issues of communal rights, societal rights at the same time as looking at the environmental dimensions. So, I am hoping that in the discussions that we are going to have, we will be able to have advice from various groups. I will open the floor to participants, bearing in mind the following guiding questions as the basis of our discussion, and I would like us to keep this in mind as we make our contributions.

First of all, what are the priority policy issues to be addressed during the CFS policy convergence process? At the end of whatever we do here, we must be aware that what we are hoping to generate, in the first phase after this whole thing, the policy recommendations and that will have to be influenced by agreeing on that policy convergence process. So, it is important that we can address that.

Secondly, this policy issue is fully addressed in the recommendations provided by the High-Level Panel of Experts report. There, again, if you have specific views you want to express, that would be very helpful. But there is also the possibility that there may be some important policy issues that you consider missing. You do not see it in the report or you do not hear it and you feel you want to table it.

We will listen to a first set of interventions and we will then see how we move along. I will, at the appropriate time, bring in other people, including Musonda on my left here, to contribute in the process. So, I think we are at a point where we are going to open it up, open the floor to participants and I think we will begin with Brazil, representing the Friends of Agroecology group. So, Brazil, you have the floor. Let me also add that it is three minutes, please.

Brazil

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the members of the group of Friends of Agroecology. As members of the groups of Friends of Agroecology, we recognize the need to develop and promote sustainable approaches for transformation towards more sustainable agriculture and food systems. We are convinced of the place of agroecology among those approaches and its potential to offer a holistic solution to overcome the challenges ahead of us in an integrated manner.

We, therefore, welcome the HLPE report on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems. We also appreciate the work done so far within the FAO and underline the recent adoption of the resolution on further integration of sustainable agricultural approach, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of the FAO.

It is most welcome that the CFS is fully addressing the issue as an inclusive body gathering all stakeholders. We look forward to the CFS policy convergence process, aiming at adopting recommendations at the next CFS session in October 2020 as well as to an inclusive multi-stakeholder

process that leads to a strong set of action-oriented policy recommendations for the transformation of agriculture and food systems. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Brazil, and particularly for speaking within the three minutes. Thank you so much. We will now want to hear from Finland on behalf of the European Union.

Finland

Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I am honoured to speak on behalf of European Union and its 28 Member States. First, we want to express our appreciation for the report produced by the High-Level Panel of Experts. The report provides rich and documented evidence and useful insights in this rather broad but crucial issue.

The report demonstrates, based on evidence, that agroecological approaches can be promising in responding simultaneously in an inclusive and integrated manner to ecological, social and economic elements of sustainable development. It also studies other innovative sustainable approaches and provides valuable information on knowledge gaps and diverging perspectives.

We welcome the fact that the report starts from the recognition of human rights as the basis of ensuring sustainable food systems. Furthermore, we share the view of the HLPE regarding the urgent need to design transition pathways towards creating the sustainability of food systems if we want to achieve the 2030 agenda and, in particular, the food security and nutrition targets.

The principles for defining agroecological approaches in the report offer a useful basis for future discussions. It would be important to ensure, however, the necessary synergy and consistency between the CFS process and the discussions on the Ten elements of agroecology which are currently ongoing in the framework of FAO.

We consider the HLPE report to be a robust basis for the forthcoming discussions with the view of adapting recommendations on this important issue. We believe that the discussions should use the HLPE recommendations as a first draft. We agree with the proposed process, including the nomination of the rapporteur to guide the work.

Regarding the suggestions made by the HLPE that CFS consider adding the new concept of agency as a fifth pillar of food security and nutrition, we believe that this new concept would need to be further defined and discussed, potentially under a different process before considering any amendments to the internationally agreed definition of food security and nutrition.

While we appreciate that the aim is to emphasise the importance of people's participation in decision-making on food systems, at this stage the concept is new and rather imprecise.

Finally, we reaffirm the commitment of the European Union and its member states to achieving an ambitious outcome for this workstream next year. Thank you very much, Mr Chair.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, also for keeping on time. I appreciate the point you made about the need to see how these 13 principles align with the Ten elements that are defined in the FAO document. I think that is a very important process that needs to be followed through. You also made a very important point with regard to agency and the fact that we may not be able to make a decision, which way that should go, but

that it is important that probably another process needs to be defined to look at that. Thank you very much. I now want to call on Switzerland and that is two minutes, please, Switzerland.

Switzerland

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Switzerland welcomes the HLPE report on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition and congratulate the HLPE team for their excellent work. We are particularly pleased by the scientific quality and rigour of this report.

To overcome the complex challenges the world faces today, transformation of global culture and food systems is needed. Switzerland considers agroecology as one major pathway towards sustainable food systems. In this sense, we align ourselves to the statement of the Friends of Agroecology.

The HLPE report presents in detail the basic principles that can transition the characteristics for comparative analysis of production systems. It identifies the most controversial issues, the five levels of transition and the huge potential for incremental change. Some principles of transition can be followed easily, others will be more challenging.

We call for a pragmatic implementation of agroecology. We consider agroecology as one of the most comprehensive and systemic approaches to accelerate transition towards more sustainable agriculture and food systems. We see the 13 agroecological principles of the HLPE report and the Ten elements of agroecology developed by FAO as complementary.

Both should be seen as a guiding tool for stakeholders for the transition of agriculture and food systems at a large scale and to achieve the SDGs. The principles and elements respectively are living documents to be continuously amended and reviewed based on the emergency of new evidence.

Switzerland would like to highlight four points that are of special relevance for the transition of food systems. First, the need for assessing and redirecting incentives; second, the need for a stronger focus on research and development of nature-based solutions such as agroecology.

This requires increasing public and private investments for trans-disciplinary research, co-learning and integrated innovation; the need for a strengthened agency addressing inequalities in food systems; and a need for establishing performance metrics that consider environmental, social, economic impacts, compare the relevance of different approaches that address the site-specific conditions.

Switzerland looks forward to an inclusive multi-stakeholder process that leads to a strong set of action-oriented policy recommendations on the transition towards sustainable food systems. The policy recommendations are to be endorsed at CFS 47, including a follow-up on progress of their implementation. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much. Your point about the need for an inclusive multi-stakeholder process to drive forward the issues that will come out from this discussion is very pertinent. Let me now call on the Private Sector Mechanism and you have three minutes, PSM.

PSM

Thank you, Mr Chair. The Private Sector Mechanism welcomes the HLPE report on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches. Agriculture must continue to improve to ensure the viability of our food supply and the wellbeing of our planet. As we review the HLPE report, we also endorse the decisions of

the July FAO conference to recognize both the five principles of the common vision on sustainable food and agriculture as well as the recognition of the coexistence of a broad range of sustainable agricultural approaches that can contribute to meeting the challenges facing farmers and food systems. The understanding that there are a range of sustainable agricultural approaches is a priority policy issue that needs fuller clarity in the recommendations.

As the HLPE report highlights, food systems are complex and they require a holistic and a coordinated approach from all stakeholders. They require interactions, dialogues and actions from all actors involved in increasingly globalised food systems, with clear data metrics to measure impact and effect. This will be increasingly important in light of the HLPE's recommendation to redirect subsidies and incentives so that we can ensure that food quality and environmental quality standards continue to be met and, we would add, to also facilitate effective trade.

We also would highlight that the innovation agenda must be strengthened in the forthcoming CFS policy workstream to catalyse scientific evidence and co-create knowledge. Innovative approaches are needed to address the climate crisis, land restoration and ecosystem services.

This includes innovations in precision agriculture, improved technology and streamlined food systems. For example, no-till agriculture is five to ten times better than conventional practices in preventing soil erosion and nutrient loss. As a farmer, we practised this on our own fields and have seen the benefits in soil health.

In this regard, it is important to recognize the need for strengthening science and evidence-based normative work on all sustainable agricultural approaches. That includes creating metrics for sustainable agriculture that measures outcomes.

Chair, raised as I was on a family farm, producing both crops and livestock and now CEO with the Global Farmers' Network, I look forward to working with all CFS members on these important tasks. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, PSM. I reemphasize your point about the recognition of a broad range of sustainable agricultural approaches, and there are several of these approaches. You just gave the example of the no-till but there are so many others and I think it is important for us to appreciate the fact that all these are part of the agroecological approaches. I now want to call on China.

China

Thank you, Chair. China wishes to thank the CFS HLPE for preparing a report with rich contents and detailed information. As a member of the HLPE, I have also participated in the various stages of the report preparation. When the international community is facing environmental issues, food security and other problems, the CFS proposal to apply agroecological and other innovative approaches to address food security and nutrition is an important and an innovative path.

China has a long history of agriculture civilization. Many traditional agriculture methods have gone through thousands of years and these methods emphasize the relationship between people and knowledge and agriculture and these methods are still exerting productive functions and they are very typical agroecological models.

At present, China is advocating a green economy and promoting the protection of important agriculture heritage in the world and we have done a lot of practical work in agroecological and related innovative approaches. For example, in Southwest China have been developed agroecological compounds for raising fish and ducks in paddy fields and Longshin [?] in Kwangchow [?] has carried out multi-functional agricultural development.

All of these have achieved remarkable results in economic development in mountainous areas, raising income for farmers, achieving ecosystem protection and protecting farmland environments. We believe these practices are of great reference for international practices. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, China, for giving us some examples from the rich history that Chinese agriculture has gone through and I believe all those examples and all those practices will support the agroecological approaches spectrum that we are trying to develop in the context of CFS. Thank you very much. I now want to call on Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso, you have two minutes, please.

Burkina Faso

Thank you, Chair. Since I am taking the floor on behalf of a regional group. I think we have actually three minutes. Chair, Mali and Burkina Faso are taking the floor on behalf of the regional group of Africa and we would like the CFS for having set up a high-level and providing very high-level work.

This is an inter-disciplinary group which brings together agriculture, scientific ecology, economy and social sciences. Agroecology brings together biological agriculture, regenerative agriculture, conservation and some aspects of permaculture in a perspective of sustainable development. So, there are a few states who do not intervene directly in order to guide transformation to agriculture in the country since agriculture plays a very important role, too important to be left simply to market laws.

Agroecology represents an area of techniques to practice agriculture which is more respectful of the environment and ecosystem which contributes to the survival of humanity on our planet. The data provided by SOFI 2019 highlights the growing concern of the number of hungry people in this world and this for three consecutive years.

In spite of the efforts deployed by the international community and our states in order to attain the objective of zero hunger by 2030, the problem of food insecurity and nutrition remains of great concern and is exacerbated by the damaging effects of climate change.

It is absolutely vital, we feel, to scale up the agroecological and other innovative approaches in order to transform agricultural systems with the aim of leaving no one behind. The African group supports the recommendations made by the HLPE in helping decision-makers, administrations and international organizations, research institutions, private sector and the civil society organizations to conceiving to implement specific ways for a transition towards more sustainable food systems at various levels. However, Africa would like to be informed on strategies invested by the CFS in order to implement their recommendations which we feel are not clearly delineated in this document.

We share the concept of recognition of human rights as the basis for sustainability of food systems and the aspects highlighted in the report conform to the vision of the African Union. Chair, we have just adopted the programme for the Decade of Family Agriculture and we feel that there has to be a link established between the recommendations of the group of experts and the Decade programme in order to benefit small-scale producers, in particular women and the youth.

The many conflicts and terrorism that takes place in certain regions, in particular in the Sahel and Saharan strip, is a threat to our vision of agroecology. We have to note that not all models can be operational. Only if the populations feel secure in the territory. In order to do this, the African regional group encourages the CFS to service a participatory model, take into account civil society and the private sector for the implementation of the recommendations of the HLPE within a context of security. Thank you very much.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Burkina Faso. I just want to highlight this point about scaling up the agroecological processes. That has always been mentioned as one very important element that requires further study because it is not only about being successful in small localised areas. The question, really, is how do we learn from the successful cases and begin to talk/ scaling up?

So, I think that is a key thing. And then you also made the point that Africa will need to be kept informed of the processes that will lead to actually coming up to the recommendations, the policy recommendations.

That is a very important thing. I hope by the end of this process there would be some indication of what that process is going to take but for now we do not want to put too much emphasis on the process issues. We want to focus our thinking on looking at some of the content issues which we have been hearing about. Thank you very much.

So, at this point I would like to invite Spain for two minutes. Spain, please.

Spain

Thank you, Chair. We endorse the position of the representative of the European Union expressed by Finland and we would like to thank you for the detailed report on Agroecological and Other Innovative approaches. We share the idea that we need greater sustainability. Without these systems we would not be able to achieve SDG2 and other targets for 2030.

We also believe that this report can contribute to greater debate between countries, international organizations, academia and civil society, which will allow us to take the right measures going forward and to achieve sustainable agriculture for the future.

Obviously, beneath the principles that have been mentioned, we firmly believe that we need greater investment in research for agroecology approaches as this has been less invested in than others and, as the report says, there are great knowledge gaps, among other things, on yields and reactions of agroecology compared to other alternatives.

We fully agree that we need agroecology approaches that defend women's rights and ensure access to land, particularly focusing on gender inequality. We need to move towards institutional plans that favour sustainable agroecology systems.

And I would also like to say that Spanish cooperation has been fostering agroecology since 2007 when it published a strategy to combat hunger. The Spanish International Cooperation Agency, which I represent, has included this in its action plan since 2011 on rural development and fighting hunger. This Committee can depend on us as allies to work on this. Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Spain. As someone who comes from the research side, I would agree with you that we definitely need a lot more targeted investment in research, especially in the area of agroecological approaches. I think a lot of the work that is being done in research institutions sometimes focusses too much on specific commodities and not looking at broader environmental impacts and I think what we are talking about here is that we are not talking simply about making things better, the way we have been doing things.

We are talking about looking for completely transformative ways of really avoiding the sort of crisis that we all see ahead of us and that calls for research, research that we will plough into the agroecological approaches and make sure that we are coming up with how to actually get where we want to get. Thank

you very much. And I would like to at this point call on the Russian Federation. Russian Federation, two minutes, please.

Russian Federation

Distinguished Chair, I will now point out the importance of the launch in 2020 of the process for preparing for CFS recommendations on the topic of the agroecology. We think that it is a very important support for countries in need in setting up their own national projects and programmes for sustainable agriculture. These recommendations need to be precise, implementable and must correspond to the mandate of the CFS. We welcome the leadership role of the FAO in providing a theoretical basis and practical implementation of agroecological concepts.

Intensive use of fertilisers and pesticides, resource-intensive agriculture leads to deforestation, water deficit, loss of biodiversity, soil exhaustion and a high level of greenhouse gas emissions, which is why agroecological approaches can be an effective instrument to counter these threats. It is also very important to take into account the national context of states and to take into account other innovative approaches for the sustainable development of the agricultural sector.

At the present time the Member States of the FAO are coming to an agreement on the Ten elements of agroecology and we hope that this document will become an important instrument in the recommendations for the future for the CFS. We are ready to participate actively in this work and we hope that we have a constructive dialogue.

We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the report of the HLPE on agroecological and other innovative approaches at the present time is not made available in all the FAO languages on the CFS site. We think that this problem should be removed to ensure equal access of all CFS members in preparing recommendations.

Distinguished Chair, food products that are marked eco, bio, organic are becoming more and more popular. This trend of modern society necessarily leads to the need for having ecological standards governing these labels and marks which ensures the purity of the product and corresponds to the standards at every stage, from perform to point of sale. Russia is not immune from these trends and this is the topic that we chose for the agriculture exhibition, the Golden Autumn, which opened last week in Moscow.

In our country we are preparing a bill on organics. We are developing protective brands of national green products. We are ready to cooperate with all interested countries and to exchange experiences on this very important topic. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Russian Federation and for highlighting also the intensive use of fertilisers. And I like the word “intensive” and sometimes excessive use of fertilisers and other pesticides, which basically draws me to the point that we really need to talk about targeted and efficient use and be able to know where there is a need and what quantities. Because when we talk about agroecology, as much as possible we want to avoid environmental damage.

So, we need to look at how best to do that in that broader context. Your point about the report is taken by the Secretariat and definitely I believe that, in spite of the process, that will be looked at furthermore.

At this point I would like to invite France. France, you have two minutes, please.

France

Thank you, Chair. France, of course, endorses the declaration of Finland on behalf of the EU and its Member States. We also support the statement made by Brazil on behalf of the group of Friends of Agroecology. We would like to thank the CFS for its very important and detailed report and, as it highlights, we cannot remain inactive in the light of this collective challenge.

There are many challenges. We are talking about a fight against climate change, the problem of biodiversity, preserving natural resources and the need to provide irreplaceable quality products as society expects, and to create decent work and to enable men and women who work in the agriculture and livestock sector, fisheries and forestry to be able to live in dignity from their work.

I also would like to talk about the need to strengthen the role of women here. We need to take up these challenges and the report does show the innovative and integrated approach. This is something that France supports fully and that is why we feel that agroecology is a very promising way to ensure that farming and food systems operate even better economically, socially and from the point of view of health and this is why in 2012 France started an agroecological project in France.

We set up a number of plans to support, for instance, bioecological products and to ensure carbon fixing in soil, to look at genetic production and to become more efficient. We feel that we can draw economic and ecological benefit from this as well as from quality of life. The number of research that is involved in this is increasing and this is vital in order to look at the ecological and economic impact of agroecology.

Therefore we are very happy to see the dialogue that has been launched here. We support what has been said here in order to ensure that in 2020 we can adopt recommendations on the basis of the report and the recommendation to the HLPE which is led by Mr Mohammad Emadi, which is also supported by the Secretariat. France will actively participate in this very important collective step. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, France. Let me say I am very happy with the process thus far. I mean, there is a saying which says do not count your chickens before they hatch. Because yesterday evening one of the delegates asked me: are you engaged in this agroecology session? and I said: yes, I am! and his next question was: which side of the fence are you? And I said: I am not on any side of the fence. So, I said, well, I am helping to moderate, and he said: good luck!

Now, that gave me sleepless nights but coming in here, I see that there is a lot of consensus already emerging and that for me is very pleasing, that we are all saying we cannot continue doing the same things we are doing and tweaking around the edges. Somebody told me yesterday that electricity did not materialise just by making better candles.

So, I think we are at a point where we are saying tweaking around with what we are doing is just making better candles, so we are thinking of the transformative change that has to happen to make food systems really sustainable, and I am really very pleased with where we are heading.

I will very shortly be asking my colleague to give her intermediary comments on some of the things we have heard so far but before then, I would like to call on Thailand and then after that Argentina and then I will go to Musonda. Thailand, please, two minutes.

Thailand

Thank you. Thailand welcome the HLPE report and we agree that the agroecological approach is one of the approaches to enhance sustainable food security and nutrition. We observe principles of agroecological, such as recycling, reducing the use of inputs, soil health and biodiversity and are fully in

line with Thai agriculture policy, especially the sufficiency economies philosophy of SAP which promotes sustainable management of soil and water resources and climate resilience, including SEG.

We would like to share some of the successfully implemented project on soil health. Thailand, as the first chairperson of Global Soil Partnership, has promoted sustainable soil and water management for food security at the regional and global level.

Thailand recently established the centre of excellence on soil research in Asia which will provide guidance for policy and decision-making and serve as regional hub for capacity-building in soil management. In addition, the promotion on organic agriculture in our priorities, Thailand plans to increase the organic planting area in 208,000 hectares in the year 2022.

Mr Chair, innovative approaches contribute to sustainable food systems but which approaches should be promoted is still being debated. Especially modern technologies and digital technologies. These approaches should be scrutinised and implemented under international agreement and national regulation.

In conclusion, Thailand believes that agroecological and innovative approaches can achieve sustainable agriculture and food systems and we need strong cooperation. Thailand is willing to transfer their knowledge and experience in agriculture to Member States through the social and triangular cooperation on the partnership programme between FAO and Thailand. Thank you very much.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Thailand. Emphasising this issue of soils, you cannot have sustainable agriculture without a very healthy soil, so it is a very important dimension to mention. But another important thing you have talked about in terms of sharing knowledge, knowledge is based on data. Data at all kinds of different levels, including data from indigenous systems and data from other levels.

And I think that is one area where we need to put emphasis. How can we generate the kind of data that is necessary to provide the evidence that supports the potential that agroecological principles carry.

So, that is something that moving forward we will need to invest some more time to really look at that. I will, at this point, call Argentina and then after that I will ask Musonda to share a couple of comments. Argentina, please, two minutes.

Argentina

Thank you very much and good afternoon. Argentina thanks you for the work done on the report and agrees that we are facing changes that are increasingly rapid and major which gives us huge challenges, particularly for SDG2. So, the challenge today is to produce more sustainably and reduce loss and waste in food. This scenario means that innovation is key in the quest for solutions and alternatives, Chair.

We welcome the report highlighting the importance of innovative approaches in achieving food security and nutrition because this would allow us to have fruitful debates on these practical approaches and technologies and the role they can play. Agroecology is a valuable instrument but it is just one among many other options that countries can adopt to achieve sustainable food systems.

Applying agroecology principles for agriculture is not exclusive to agroecology but rather is part of agronomy in all productive systems. With regard to the reports mentioned of connectivity as one of the agroecology principles, Argentina stresses the importance of guaranteeing trust between producers and consumers. This goal doesn't necessarily exclude links to producers that are far from where food is consumed but means that food must be consumed sustainably and preferably locally.

Last but not least, Chair, with regard to the reports mentioned on the various scales of agriculture, I would like to say that degradation of agroecosystems and biodiversity is not linked to the size of farm but rather

how resources are handled. Chair, we have more comments on the various recommendations and we would like to share those with you in writing as we do not have enough time to do so now. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Argentina, especially on your last point. At the end of the session we will talk about how you can continue to contribute in this process. So, it is a very good point that you have made. At this point I would like to ask Musonda to give a brief remark on what she is hearing.

Ms. M. Mumba, Discussant, Chief, UNEP

Thank you very much, Kwesi. I mean, just listening in to the conversations, I realize I think there is some level of coherence around the issue of inclusivity and also making sure that there are synergies and sharing across the different sectors and I think the last intervention from Argentina on the need for trust. I think is a fundamental one between, obviously, the consumers and the producers.

I just want to reflect a little bit on the presentation from the lady from the Private Sector Mechanism. I think indeed land restoration is a very critical element and something that we need to take into account and the issue of science and evidence, the matrices I think are really critical to making sure that we are looking at these sustainable food systems.

I also want to recognize the fact that China was actually taking the leadership during the United Nations Secretary-General's climate summit on focussing on nature-based solutions and I think it is great to see these examples and the smooth advocacy towards this green economy and sharing experiences.

I think 2020 is going to be a very interesting year because the Convention on Biological Diversity is happening in China and I think provides, really, a basis on how people can learn from the country. The lady from Burkina Faso I think really does flag the challenge of our African continent but I also want to say that even as we look at issues of trying to restore land, we have to recognize that there is instability and there are challenges of conflict where people are trying to face. We move two steps forward and go ten steps back. How do we find this...

And as such, the African Union to really reflect on making sure that if we are going to be looking at issues of sustainability, just when the women make some gains on their food systems, then something comes in. I think this is important, that we need to recognize the need for stable countries.

I want to welcome the point from Russia as well. I think the issue of language is a complex one because as these documents get translated, it is important that people are all on the same page and contributions are made.

Lastly but not the least, I want to thank Thailand for your intervention on the issue of soil health. During the United Nations Environment Assembly, the third session, there was a resolution that was tabled by member states that was looking at soil pollution. So, right now UNEP, together with FAO, are working together on this and we are really calling upon you because FAO is going to do a global assessment in different regions, looking at the issues of soil pollution and I think this kind of information, this data, as you rightly point out, is relevant in infusing or just informing some of the conversations that we are now having within the agroecological conversation.

Lastly, Argentina, you raise a very valid point on the issue of reducing loss and food waste. I think, let us face it, we have been terrible at really this element and this sector. This issue of food loss and food waste is a big one for the Continent. When we are talking about hunger and then there is an extreme end where the wastage is just really beyond, I think it is totally, for lack of a better word, inhumane and I will end there.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much, Musonda, for a very mid-stage analytical commentary, which I find very interesting and useful. Let us now invite USA, the United States of America. You have two minutes, please.

United States of America

Thank you, Chair. The United States acknowledges the work of the panel in producing this report and its recommendations on such a complex issue. We recognize that agroecology is one of many possible innovative approaches for transitioning to a more sustainable agricultural and food systems.

We appreciate the report's acknowledgement of the knowledge gaps related to the performance of agroecology systems and a need for practical scientifically-grounded and comprehensive performance metrics and indicators of agriculture and food systems as a basis for assessment, policy implementation and investment decisions.

The United States takes note, however, the report does not provide a balanced assessment of agroecology and other innovative approaches. Instead, the report describes aspirational agroecology systems that by definition achieves all its objectives. Until agroecology is held to the same empirical outcomes, base metrics as other systems, it is difficult to truly judge its relative merits.

Also, the summary does not address how critical it is for approaches to be productive and economically viable in order to characterize as sustainable. The reports on area evaluation of agroecology does not adequately recognize the value of economic wellbeing and opportunity, including the opportunity for smallholder farmers to transition out of this cycle of poverty.

In the report we strongly disagree with the criticisms of biotechnology and regret that the report fails to take into account the history of the safe use of biotechnology innovations. Such innovations have been in the international markets for over 25 years and with none of the adverse consequences as claimed in the report. Farmers need access to modern and innovative agriculture tools and technologies in order to produce food with fewer inputs, reduce crop losses, reduce impact on climate change and ensure safer, more nutritious and higher quality food for consumers.

Adoption of these technologies is growing. 26 countries, including 21 developed countries, allowing for their farmers' access to these tools to support their livelihoods while 70 countries allow their consumers access to these crops through approved cultivation or importation.

Biotechnology crops, the most widely adopted crop technology, are here today. And as a side note, farmers using biotech seeds are doing more to protect the climate and sequester carbon than those using conventional seeds. Adoption of other innovative approaches should happen and will need to be included if we are truly going to address global hunger, improve access to nutritional foods and minimise the impact on our climate and the environment in which we live. Thank you, Chair.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you, the United States of America. I like the point you made, that agroecology is one of several other systems for achieving sustainable feed systems. The emphasis here is on sustainable food systems and you have also questioned whether the report does a thorough enough assessment on the economic aspects/outcomes of agroecology and also on the productivity that comes out of the agroecological approaches.

I believe some of these elements are in the report but obviously there is room to look at it and see how we move forward on that. The third point you have made, which I believe we will receive at that discussion, is the whole area of biotechnology and that is also very well noted at this point.

Thank you very much. The next presentation will be from the Civil Society Mechanism, CSM for three minutes please.

CSM

Thank you, Chair. Esteemed delegates, we would like to convey our deep appreciation for this discussion taking place at the CFS.

Small-scale food producers have been practicing agroecology for centuries. It is our life. We welcome the fact that finally it is to be discussed at the CFS, the famous space to address food security and nutrition in the UN. We welcome the HLPE report on agroecology and other innovations as a good first step for the discussion. The HLPE report presents us the evidence of the impact of different models of production and gives us a basis to assess what steps are needed towards the real transformation of food systems we desperately need.

We also welcome the HLPE report reflects the conceptual framework on agroecology that social movements of small-scale farmers, pastoralists, fisher folk, indigenous people, consumers, agricultural workers, women and youth develop in the linearly process. We are not here to debate the framework of agroecology but rather to define the policies that will help us move towards an agroecological transformation.

Agroecology is the only solution we have to address the multiple crises we are facing. Agroecology presents us with a holistic vision that embeds agronomic practices, ecological principles, social economic culture and human rights dimensions. Agroecology allows small-scale producers to define life, produce affordable healthy food in healthy conditions. It eliminates dependence on costly input and adopt practices which regenerates seeds and soils while mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change.

Agroecology has the capacity to overcome the traditional gender division of labour as it recognises the strategic role of women in the daily creation agroecology. This promotes women and it calls of debt in decision making processes at all levels.

Industrial agriculture is one of the biggest contributors to the ecological crises which is now the fight for survival for many. It is also a major cause of poverty, hunger and malnutrition including through grabbing of resources, concentration of power, homogenisation of diet and exposure of young people from rural areas.

The last decade has seen a plethora of UN studies confirming this. The HLPE report demonstrates that agroecology is the only transformational option to address all the structural changes needed in our food system in a systematic and integrated way and shows that sustainable intensification and climate smart agriculture can only provide one dimensional solution via incremental changes.

Agricultural innovation is essential as long as it does not lead to further concentration of knowledge and power. Agroecology needs to be supported by public policies. Currently the vast majority of funding and public support still go to industrial production or incremental approaches to change. We need the CFS process to redress that balance in order to bring about a radical transformation to end hunger and poverty while preserving the ecosystem and the natural resources base for the next generation. Thank you Chairperson.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much to the Civil Society Mechanism. I apologise for ringing the bell before your three minutes was due. But I liked the point where you remind us we are not here to define the technicalities only of but try to guide our discussions to the policies that will support and promote agroecological approaches in our respective countries. Here I want to emphasise that what we are talking about is, if you look at The High Level Panel of Experts study it is on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches.

So, I have heard a number of delegates saying agroecology is one of several. Well if that several fits in the 'other innovative approaches' on the business of sustainability and the key elements, then it definitely is part of that process. So, it is all about inclusivity and how we actually develop all these into policies.

Let me at this point now, invite Australia. Australia please.

Australia

Thank you Chairperson. Australia appreciates the work that has been undertaken by the HLPE and we welcome the opportunity to provide comments on the zero draft of the report in November 2019. We note with thanks that many of our original concerns were addressed.

However, we remain concerned that the report appears too strongly favour agroecology over other innovative approaches to sustainable agriculture and that there are a number of instances where it is implied that agroecology is the sole innovation capable of addressing sustainability, food security and nutrition.

We consider this as not in alignment with the proposed report's scope which should answer the following question: to what extent can agroecological and other innovative approaches, practices and technologies improve resource efficiency, minimise ecological footprint, strengthen resilience, secure social equality and responsibility, and create decent jobs in particular for youth, in agriculture and food systems?

While we have a number of comments which we look forward to providing in due course today Australia would like to make three points.

Firstly, we consider that policy recommendations going forward need to present a more balanced overview of other innovations for sustainable agriculture and be clearer that agroecology is one potential innovation amongst others. For example, through recognition of conservation agriculture, climate smart agriculture and sustainable intensification.

Secondly, we encourage that policy recommendations moving forward seek not to bias social and political elements of the agriculture and food system over other more technical or outcome driven approaches such as sustainable intensification.

And finally, we respectfully call for policy recommendations moving forward to reflect the voluntary nature of the report's findings and recommendations by refraining from the use of language such as 'States should'. And we also ask that policy recommendations acknowledge the reality that a number of the report's recommendations may not be applicable or appropriate for all contexts. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much. Thank you very much Australia. I am going to do something which I have not done. Can you go back to the three points? What was the second point? I am interested in knowing about that.

Australia

Certainly. So, the second point. We encourage that policy recommendations moving forward seek not to bias social and political elements of the agriculture and food system over more technical or outcome driven approaches such as sustainable intensification. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much. Alright, so at this point we would like to call on Hungary. Hungary you have two minutes please.

Hungary

Thank you very much. We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of EU and its Member States. Furthermore, as one of the friends of agroecology, I subscribe to the statement made by Brazil on behalf of this Group.

We welcome HLPE report and appreciate the excellent presentation made by Dr Sinclair, in particular his clear explanation about the five levels and the 13 principles of agroecology. We fully support the concept he outlined about the transformation and the transition.

We look forward to further discussing the fourth operational principle of sustainable food systems about the ecological footprint that considers all environmental and social externalities. In fact as we could hear, there are sufficient scientific evidence in this regard. Therefore we propose to give due consideration to the true cost accounting during our policy convergence process. This would clearly demonstrate the economic viability of agroecology and other sustainable approaches.

We agree with Burkina Faso regarding the interlinkages of agroecology with the UN Decade of Family Farming. Similarly, the policy convergence on agroecology should have a mutually supportive role with the workstream on nutrition and food systems. We also support the proposal by China regarding the need for including GS in our deliberations.

Finally, we consider that the recommendations of the HLPE report are excellent basis for the policy convergence process in which we confirm our constructive engagement. This process should start immediately at conclude at the CFS 47 in 2020. The outcomes will not be imposed on any countries or farmers, rather they will provide opportunity, in particular for developing countries to follow a sustainable pathway and not to commit the errors of destroying their soils and ecosystems. Thank you very much.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you. Thank you very much Hungary. We are making progress, I think, on the list now. We have just New Zealand and I am assuming that will at least draw us to the conclusion. But first of all let me ask New Zealand to take the floor for two minutes please. New Zealand.

New Zealand

New Zealand thanks the HLPE for producing this report and welcomes the Chairperson's acknowledgement that this report is an opportunity to present the divergence of perspectives on this issue rather than attempting to define what agroecology is.

It is important to acknowledge that the science of agroecology is still in its infancy. The science suggests that there are many different pathways for governments and farmers to follow towards achieving sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food and nutrition security.

This is a complex issue and while New Zealand is of the opinion that further research is needed, we want to ensure that this report is converted into a practical guide that countries can refer. However, we believe

that given the variety of food systems across and within countries, and the diversity of the challenges and constraints that countries face, it is important to acknowledge that a one size fits all approach to achieving sustainable food systems will not work.

We agree that transformation in the agricultural sector is inherently local and this is why in our opinion, the policy output should contain a range of sustainable agricultural options, approaches and tools that governments can adopt based on their specific regional, national and local context.

In New Zealand for example, we have experience in a range of sustainable agricultural approaches including farm systems that are based on the application of indigenous practices, adopting traditional knowledge using traditional seeds and conservation agricultural practices. These exist side by side with highly efficient farms that use the most precise agricultural approaches to minimise resource use and protect our ecosystems and freshwater. Thank you Chairperson.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you. Thank you very much. I would like to call on the Special Rapporteur on Right to Food. The Special Rapporteur on Right to Food for two minutes please.

Special Rapporteur on Right to Food

Thank you. Thank you to offering me an opportunity to make a short comment.

The transformation of food system poses many challenges and I welcome the effort made by the HLPE report to addressing in a comprehensive manner the important issue of the agroecology. I especially welcome the proposing to include agencies as a critical dimension of any food security and nutrition assessment.

Poverty and lack of access to natural resources severely constrains agency or food producers reducing their ability to claim their human rights. Ensuring agencies offers them an opportunity to exercise their rights over natural and productive resources, the very same resources that they do so desperately need to achieve their human rights to food.

Inclusivity is key to this process. We need to promote agroecological approach in ensuring the small-scale food producers who are those most affected by intensive agriculture are empowered across all domains.

Working on agroecology should also be done by keeping in mind the strong link between the positive impact of agroecology on climate change. By reducing the effects of climate change we offer small-scale farmers a true possibility to be food secure and self-sufficient for the achievement of their right to food.

Agroecology calls for human rights principles such as participation of farmers to be at the centre of policies. I hope that the foreseen policy convergence process and the policy recommendations that will emerge from it will take into account the strong connection existing between agroecology and the principles of the human rights based approach to food security and nutrition. Thank you.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much. Thank you very much the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. We are at the point where I am going to ask Fergus Sinclair, who did such an excellent presentation of the report of their study. For his commentary, not to attempt to respond to the depth of what has been read, but for his overview commentary on what he has heard.

Now whilst he is running through his papers, let me tell you that when I was growing up Saturdays were farm days. You have to go to the farm. We did not like it very much because to go to farmland walking

sometimes five kilometres/ten kilometres to get into the farm. But once you are on the farm, it was so peaceful. We had a little stream flowing and we used to collect certain shellfish out of that stream. There was nothing like pesticide or fertilizer. You know, you just go and harvest. You eat paw-paw, you do everything. It looked really ideal.

Recently I went back to that area and I saw that all that land has been demarcated into buildings. So, people have been pushed to some very narrow space of land. And within that narrow space they still have to produce what will support them. And they have been forced into fertilization and other things which obviously have not been very, very helpful.

So, I think the kind of issues we are talking about is basically to say, let us act now, because before the situation gets to the point where we can't redeem it we are already very deeply in the red. But it is good that we are having this discussion today so that we can put in place the appropriate policy guidelines that will support countries to take the steps that are needed to drive us towards a more secure future based on sustainable food systems.

Let me Fergus Sinclair to share his thoughts.

Mr Fergus Sinclair, Project Team Leader HLPE

Thank you very much Moderator and for that very rich set of comments. This engagement process in developing the report and seeing the reactions to it has been an extremely and exciting one. And partly, because there are a number of key differences of opinion and tensions that I think emerge. Even in the very diplomatic language that people are using in the forum like this. But I think it is important that we try to pinpoint some of those areas and to address them.

I want to say a couple of things that are quite important about what is and what is not in the report. So, we do not make recommendations about whether biotechnology should or should not be adopted or should not be part of transition pathways.

As I explained in the introduction, we took six areas where there are disagreements and biotechnology was one of them. And we looked at what is the basis for different people's views. So, it is not the case. So, those views are in the report. They are there. They are cited in relation to where they are held, but it is not that we are saying that they, that any one set of those opinions is more or less important than another.

What we are trying to do is to understand why people have a disagreement. And as I explained, it is not with nearly all those issues, it does not come down to the technologies themselves. It comes down quite often to power asymmetries in the food system and therefore, what powerful technologies may do in terms of affecting access and control of resources for different groups of people. And that is something which is as scientific and subject to rigorous analysis as anything else. And what is needed is to look at these things objectively for what they are rather than coming at them from predetermined positions.

And this is the difference between an evidenced based approach and what we need to be clear about is we are asserting values and being normative, or where we are thinking about being causative. Obviously, you need to agree on the normative basis, otherwise you can't get anywhere. But the causative elements are subject to evidence. So, I think it is really important that we approach that in a sensible way.

The issue of economic viability is a really important question. And it is tied in with a lot of the problems in any sort of analysis of these different innovative approaches. And that is that there is not a level playing field. We know much less about some interventions. And I am talking here about the economic trade-offs between adopting one approach over another approach, one practice over another practice.

Now, less than 2 percent of the budget of research for the UK, for example, it was DFID who spent on agroecology less than 5 percent of FAO in the figures that we have got in the report for the recent years that the data were available. And that means it is quite difficult to make definitive points.

Our assessment is that there is enough evidence to suggest that it is really worth investing more in trying to clarify the key economic trade-offs, but to do that in a way that takes a holistic view of the economics. Because one of the real difficulties is another aspect of there not being a level playing field is that there are quite a lot of policies, incentives, subsidies, which make agroecological approaches more difficult for people to adopt.

If you subsidise nitrogen fertiliser, obviously it is going to disincentivise biological nitrogen fixation. Quite often forest legislation makes it quite difficult for farmers to have control and access of trees on their farmland. So, there are lots of ways in which our current set of policies can make it difficult for people to adopt.

So, there are basically three areas that seem to come out from various comments where you need to make changes if things are going to be evaluated properly. In relation to a level playing field there are market failures on where some things are not costed, where consumers can't necessarily make choices because they do not necessarily have the information that they need to do so.

The second thing is embracing complexity. There is a real tendency to want to simplify things, to go for that one size fits all silver bullet type of approach. It is very appealing. But because of the inherent localisation of agriculture, that really does not work. But we then need methods to cope with understanding option by context interactions. And those are being developed in the scientific sphere and we need to operationalise them.

And that brings very much to the fore the concept of co-learning and co-creation of knowledge which helps then to put that global knowledge into local perspectives. But of course, you have to have the right power relationships between the global and the local if that relationship is going to result in co-learning.

The third element of the complexity I think is this tension between social movements and science. And the key point is we really need to try to find ways of getting beyond that as though they are different and opposing aspects as opposed to trying to understand one in the light of the other and to be able to bring more science to underpin what happens in some developments brought by social movements. And to get scientists to look at what is happening in social movements with an open mind. So, it goes I think both ways.

And finally, there is a need for integration. And this integration needs to be both vertically in terms of different scales and that is quite clear that the field, the farm, the landscape, the food system, we have got different emergent properties. And they are all complex systems that involve people and the environment. It is a social/ecological mix.

We need to really develop our skills in being able to understand the emergent properties of these systems at these different scales. And ensuring that you have got the instruments, the policy instruments, the social capital at the scales which you need them if you are going to manage the environment and the agriculture. And on the whole, local landscape scales were missing that sort of social capital and policy structures.

And then finally, there is the horizontal integration across sectors. And it is really difficult to take a holistic view to food systems if you have got water in one ministry, energy in another one, agriculture in another one, forestry in a different, environment somewhere else. And really getting joined up policy and thinking is really important otherwise you have got one set of policies pushing in one direction at the same time as another is pulling somewhere else.

So, that systems view is really going to be an important element of policy recommendations. Yes, they need to be precise. But if they are going to take option by context interactions into account then they also have to be nuanced to allow for that. And that is perhaps a key challenge. How do you be precise in your recommendations while allowing for the fact that different countries, different places are starting off from different positions and will have different transition pathways.

And that brings me to the final two quick points that I want to make. In relation to agency, what the report identifies is that the current focus on access does look at what we would term 'asset based agency', so the agency determined by the resources that you have. It does not look at the institutional opportunity structures that exist. The way in which things are organised and the extent to which people can assert their wishes in relation to the food system.

So, it is not saying that again, it is suggesting that considering that explicitly in the way that we look at food security and nutrition is a necessary part rather than being more proscriptive than that.

And finally, okay I will stop at that point because the Moderator is ringing his bell.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

I think Fergus Sinclair strategically chose to sit the furthest distance from me so I can't control him in terms of the time allocation.

Ladies and gentlemen for all of you who are here, I want to really say you have won a medal. A medal of sustainability in this very important subject matter of agroecology and other innovative approaches that we are discussing. It is a very historical process we are going through, so I really appreciate the fact that you have continued to be patient and to sit through all this development.

I just realized, we skipped one country when we were going through the listing. So, please forgive me I will ask Canada. To give Canada two minutes if Canada is still in the room.

Canada

Yes, Canada is still in the room. Thank you Chairperson for your commitment to inclusive dialogue however belated even to those of us in the very margins physically of those discussions. I will, however, be brief, but this is an important topic, so we did wish to take the floor.

Canada is supportive of agroecology and sees it as a promising and important approach, one of many approaches that can be used to achieve sustainable agriculture.

We noted in particular the report's identification of the important contribution that could be made by trees, forest and agroforestry in achieving sustainable agriculture and sustainable food systems.

We also note that the HLPE report identifies that there is no single consensual definition of agroecology. While this presents certain challenges it also provides flexibility that allows for agroecological approaches to develop in locally adapted ways and to be combined with other approaches and initiatives to achieve and ensure food and nutrition security.

Discussions on agroecology have been constructive, but they should not be overly proscriptive or distract from pursuing a full range of approaches in order to face the challenges that we have before us.

Canada is of the view that options to promote a transition towards sustainable food systems should combine complimentary approaches including agroecology, climate smart agriculture and biotechnology. The combination of innovative approaches that identify opportunities for synergies and integrated actions could address social inequity concerns and enable a transition towards sustainable and circulate food systems. Thank you Chairperson.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much Canada. I would wish to, as we draw to a close, I would wish to invite Dr Caron to make his any closing overview comments and then after that we will ask Ms Mumba if she still has some closing comments to make and that would be the beginning of wrapping up. So, Mr Caron please.

Mr Patrick Caron, Chair, HLPE

Yes, thank you very much Moderator. And before the bell rings, I would like to thank all those who took part in the discussion for the possibility to make the whole discussion alive and for all those who have taken the floor. I have a few points, but do not worry I am not going to be very long.

The first one: first of all, I am very happy about three things. First of all, is that everyone agreed. Nobody countered this. That there is a need for an in depth transformation of agriculture and the food system in order to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Secondly: the very positive assessment that you have made one and all, especially on the third point and that is the way that a report is prepared as prepared today is in a position to stimulate dialogue and for people to take positions on that.

Another point and this has partly been covered by Fergus Sinclair, is the need to have a new framework for dealing with questions that we encounter now and that are to come. I am not going to paraphrase Einstein when it comes to the problems from the past, but we do need to look at agriculture and the challenges of food and nutrition in a new way. Every one of you has agreed that this is a very complex matter. Sometimes this is overlooked. And this on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach.

And many of you have stressed this. We probably need, and I am saying this explicitly, so as to maybe to strengthen this point, we need to distinguish between the approach that enables us to understand the world and to see what is happening before us. What is happening today, the way we can react and to separate that from the standard setting vision that we have of the world and the policy that this implies. So, the approach and the vision of the world have to be distinguished. And we need both of them.

Thirdly, I noted a number of paths outlined of guidelines outlined by the report, and I am very happy to have heard those. In particular, the relationship between the ten elements of the report, that is the conclusion of the FAO and the 13 principles in the report. And that is a proposal that has been made on the urgency. And I am happy to see that the discussion has led to a greater in depth approach.

Fourthly, when it comes to the metrics, many of you have outlined the fact that we do not have enough data, we do not have enough figures of available data. And I would go even further. We also lack the way of measuring them. Not just the data but the way that they can be looked at, understood, encompassed, take into account this complexity that we have had to deal with.

So, of course it has been said, and to certain extent, we are at a very early stage that is to take this complexity on board and also to take on board matters that did not occur yesterday or did not come in the same terms yesterday. So, we need to look at greater depth, greater understanding, but nevertheless this is a not pretext not to act. This should not be excused an excuse.

So, another point that many of you stressed and that is the need to document practice that we already have, that are already in place and this not only in order to say that we have to keep what is good and to continue it in the future. But rather, as Hungary for instance said, that we need to base ourselves on this knowledge and to imagine new paths for transformation.

The sixth point many of stressed diversity and specificity and the role that is played. In particular, at the national level. And this is a point that we have indeed stressed in the report and has Fergus has said, there is no miracle solution which would work for everything even if the technologies and innovations and the

technologies remained very important. But nevertheless, it is important to affirm the specificity, the need to translate into recommendations adapted to each country, to each territory, to each locality.

But there is another challenge as well. Transformations were not simply the result from this process of adaptation. They will result from an intelligent articulation between what can be done locally and the policies that are at the national level and the way that we are thinking about international agenda.

And the seventh point that I noted, in particular, this was stressed by the Russian Federation. And it is a very interesting convergence between what we are discussing today and the voluntary guidelines on the food system and this is something that we need to keep in mind.

So, in conclusion this discussion has fuelled our dialogue, and this is a very good idea, and I am glad to hear that is going to continue throughout this year. Thank you very much.

Mr Kwesi Atta -Krah, Moderator, IITA

Thank you very much Patrick Caron. So, ladies and gentlemen we are now approaching the very end. I would like to say that there is very great consensus on the value of what the study team has produced. There was overall praise for the scientific quality and the rigor that is provided in the report. So we really thank the team lead by Fergus Sinclair and the other members of the team for doing such great work. I always want to thank all of us here for the contributions that have been made.

I understand that the CFS Secretariat will be writing to all stakeholders to actually ask for further contributions where you have some very specific elements that you would wish to see built into the process of preparing for the policy convergence and you have not been able to state it during today's session. There is an opportunity for that to be done.

I want to highlight just a few key elements that came across. First, I was struck by the overall consensus of the importance of agroecology and the fact that it is needed in terms of the food systems, sustainable food systems, as we move towards the future.

We also talked about the fact that we are talking about agroecology and other innovative approaches and a point was made that the report was a bit biased in not giving adequate visibility towards some of these other innovative approaches. But the report is a report. I think the key thing is as we get down to preparing the kind of policy issues which is part of the policy conventions some of these issues will be taken into account.

A suggestion was also made that the 14 recommendations that have been made by the High Level Panel of Experts study is a very solid base, however, we should see how that links with the ten elements. We need to find a way to see how these stick, so it does not create confusion. Because if you look at the ten elements and you look at the recommendations there would have to be some mechanism that enables us to see how they come together.

A very specific comment I will also raise relates to this issue of agency. And we have heard quite a lot about what it is supposed to imply. And I like the point that was made, I think it was by Finland, that we may need to think through that in a new, another process as we move along to see whether that should be added as a fifth point or not. So, that is something that the Secretariat will think further about.

A lot of emphasis has been placed on the fact that agroecological approaches, we need to make sure they are inclusive. It is a multi-stakeholder process and therefore we have to give space to recognise all the players who are involved in making sure that these elements are there. And for that to happen dialogue mechanisms are critical. We really need to ask, how are we going to build those dialogue mechanisms both horizontally and vertically. How are we going to create the platforms that brings stakeholders together to discuss and deliberate. We are talking about co-learning. Co-learning happens when we are all together and learning together. And that also promotes co-ownership of the process.

Another very important point that has been made is that we are not here making specific policies that must be taken up by countries. We are essentially putting together thoughts and ideas that countries will consider in terms of how they are going to move to support agroecological approaches in their line of work. So, I think that is something that we need to be very clear about.

Also, in talking about agroecological approaches we should be careful not to just focus on thinking only on crops. There is crops, there is fish, there is trees, there is all these other dimensions that are involved in those approaches. So we need to make sure there is clear and adequate visibility.

For me, one point that we should not miss, and I heard that word only once, but it is very significant and that is the mechanisms for scaling up and scaling out the agroecological approaches. We all say they are very context specific but there are ways in which they can be given some scale. We have to bring scale into it at the end of the day. So, I think that bit is important. And to do that we have to give some sense to the issue of data. How are we going to get the data that we need, who is engaged in that data etc. So, all that is key.

And then we recognised the fact that we have not had a very level playing field when it comes to research into agroecology issues. And so, there has been a call that we need to get more research which is targeted in supporting agroecological approaches and other innovative approaches. So, that is an important element that I would like to see expanded.

There were so many other important elements and I think I am particularly struck by the commonality of purpose across the room. Of course there were some issues of concern that were raised including a feeling that the issue of biotechnology has not been fairly addressed. Those sort of issues will be looked at.

There is also the point that was made, I think it was by Australia, that there was a bit of a bias in describing agroecology and inadequate treatment of other innovative processes. Like climate smart agriculture and all those other elements. Now the degree to which these have to impact on the policy convergence process will definitely need to be looked at moving forward.

So, ladies and gentlemen I do not think I want to go on too much detail. I just want to end by saying, I have really appreciated the sense of commonality of purpose. We all recognise the fact that our present systems there are challenges and in moving forward. We really have to be bold, we have to be innovative, we have to respect various perspectives from different groups. And we have to work together to make this terminology of agroecology a terminology that does not bring about immediate which side of the fence do you fall.

But that is something that basically points us to the fact that we need to do things better taking environmental concerns into account and recognising the role of the social systems. And the groups that have been practising these things for several years so we can build together a future that ensures that we have sustainable food systems and nutrition moving forward without damaging effects that come through these processes.

So, with that I would say thank you and I am going to pass the floor on to the Chairperson who would then take us up and close the meeting when he is ready. Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen.

CHAIRPERSON

Thank you. Thank you Moderator for you being a moderator here.

Thank you very much to Patrick Caron, the Chairperson of the HLPE Steering Committee, Professor Fergus Sinclair, Miss Musonda Mumba.

This has really been a very informative, very interesting experience and I am not going to repeat what has already been said, but I would like to highlight the very positive comments that we have heard from all of those who have taken the floor this afternoon.

And I would also like to pull out another point which is a political obligation for the Chairperson of the Committee. We are here working on policy recommendations not on drafting laws or binding regulations.

We are here basing work on solid scientific foundations which give us information on when we are starting a process of convergence and coherence of policies to be able to recommend to our member States, to local and national governments, to other UN agencies to recommend to civil society organizations, the private sector, to integrate be it in their national laws or in international dialogues or be it in meetings that they held at all levels, a model that bears the stamp of the legitimacy of a committee like this one which engages all stakeholders to achieve that convergence.

Now we are seeing the faces of those of us who have made presentations and addressed us. But it is also important to say that Professor Sinclair is the coordinator of a technical team. There are another four people in that team. And Professor Caron is the Chairperson of a committee which has another four members and hundreds of experts and lecturers and researchers. People who are very committed to our Committee and they are part of this Committee.

They are working all over the world, working like they are pro bono. It is voluntary work. They are not getting paid. They are not getting a commission. They are there in their universities, teaching, they are studying, they are also writing and researching. And at the same time as all of their work, they are working with us with our Committee to take part in this process giving their time and their energy and the quality of their work.

We also have the Secretariat [[unclear name 02:29:47](#)] and we also have the Secretariat to the CFS who provides their support also. And this is a new step forward for all of our work. So I would like to ask you to give us a round of applause for our speakers here and for ourselves. We are really starting this off with the best foot forward for this process of policy convergence and coherence in Agroecology and Other Innovative Approaches for food security and nutrition.

So, we have closed Item VIII. We have all agreed that for the Chairperson's summary, we have agreed that for all items there will be the text that we are already familiar with. The names of those who have addressed the Committee, their post, the fact that we have had a conversation. A very rich debate, a very informative and valuable debate. There will be the link to the Committee's website with the transcription. That is what we have agreed.