

PERMANENT DELEGATION OF BRAZIL
TO THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION
OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND RELATED
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY (CFS)

CFS WORKSTREAM ON AGROECOLOGICAL
AND OTHER INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

Contributions of Brazil
following the First CFS open meeting on
Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches

Rome, February 2020

INTRODUCTION

Brazil welcomes the Rapporteur's Note, which takes centrally into account the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic - the consensual path within the United Nations framework to achieve true sustainability. We welcome the view that there is no approach 'one size fits all', as national realities differ greatly.

2. In this sense, we propose the following additions to paragraph 4 of the Introduction:

"The world's food and agriculture systems are at a crossroads. Globally, 820 million people remain undernourished and two billion people are overweight. In addition, an estimated 1/3 of all food produced globally is lost or goes to waste. This is in a context where natural resources and biodiversity are under increasing pressure at the same time that the rhythm in the reduction of poverty and inequality has decreased worldwide. Sustainable agricultural production is constrained by many factors, including the unsatisfactory labour conditions in the agricultural sector, the impoverishment of farmers, increasing scarcity and diminishing quality of soil and water resources, the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services and increasingly impacts of global warming and increased occurrence of extreme weather events, within a scenario of global economic downturn."

3. We see with satisfaction that the right to food is a central axis of the policy recommendations we develop here, in the line of CFS's Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security Voluntary Guidelines.

4. In addition, we understand that this negotiation process should be increasingly based on the previous negotiations of the 10 Elements of Agroecology, approved by FAO's Council last December, which brings us consensual definitions fit to be applied here, with focus on food security and nutrition.

5. Brazil sees with satisfaction that successful national policies applied in the country have been taken into account in the development of the present policy recommendations process, such as public procurement policies to support low-income family farmers, especially school feeding programs.

1.B. ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT / 5.B TRUE COST ACCOUNTING

6. In the Rapporteur's Note, we observe the inclusion of concepts such as "ecological footprint" and "true cost accounting", together with other references to the use and development of performance metrics in agriculture according to sustainability criteria.

7. We would like to caution against the duplication of efforts, while recalling the recent approval of indicator 2.4.1 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As it is widely known, this indicator seeks to capture the proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture, with due consideration to social, economic and environmental dimensions.

8. In this sense, we understand that the multiplication of metrics and methods on sustainable agricultural performance could undermine the evaluation developed under the 2030 Agenda and unduly increase the reporting burden for developing countries. In this sense, items 1.B and 5.B should be removed from the draft.

9. In addition to the importance of the ecological footprint, whenever seeking to measure the sustainability of agriculture, the social footprint and the economic footprint should not be kept aside. Only encompassing all dimensions beyond the ecological angle alone, true sustainability can be achieved, based on its consensual three pillars.

10. Furthermore, we would like to recall that the 10 Elements of Agroecology make reference to the development of a multi-dimensional assessment tool by FAO, with the aim of generating further evidence on agroecology's performance across the three dimensions of sustainability.

2.A. AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES AND INCENTIVES

11. We see with some concern proposals to address subjects which belong neither to the mandate of the FAO nor of the CFS, but rather to other international fora, also belonging to the UN System, such as the WTO, which is undergoing reform, that we expect to tackle the subject of agricultural subsidies.

12. In this sense, we understand that subsidies, a long-standing issue in other instances, as well as trade issues, are not to be imported to the FAO or the Committee on Food Security, which aim and mandate are to guarantee food security and nutrition and combatting all the forms of malnutrition.

13. Brazil understands that policies which include economic subsidies to food production disguise economic externalities and may be misleading or cause agriculture market distortion. The application and use of subsidies are distorting measures to trade, notably agricultural trade, depreciating international food prices and harming poor farmers, especially small-scale farmers in developing countries. The application of subsidies, notably in the field of agriculture, and the use of other trade distortive measures, in the end increase food insecurity, as they are not effective instruments to achieve better food systems and nutrition and more sustainable agricultural models. To be truly sustainable, agricultural systems, including agroecological systems, cannot rely on agricultural subsidies.

2.E. GENETIC RESOURCES USED FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

14. As acknowledged in the texts of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the policy recommendations we develop must take into account the need for adequate sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources, safeguarding the interests of farmers over genetic resources for food and agriculture.