

Swiss Inputs on the Rapporteur's Note for the CFS Policy Convergence Process on Agroecological and other innovative approaches

General Comments:

We welcome that the structure of the *Rapporteur's Note* is in line with the five recommendations introduced by the HLPE report and its 13 Agroecological Principles.

We welcome that the listed policy-relevant areas are very much in line with the recommendations listed in the HLPE-Report.

We suggest to keep the CFS Policy Recommendations as close as possible to the recommendations of the HLPE-Report. The report is very well balanced, pragmatic, dynamic (with different steps, incremental and transformational) and multiscale (including the diversity of agriculture and food systems). The report is an excellent basis for the development of the CFS policy recommendations on agroecology and other innovations.

Transformation: Agroecology is one major pathway towards sustainable food systems. The policy recommendations The CFS Policy Recommendations should present approaches to drive the transitions needed for the major transformation of the current food and agriculture in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Figure 3 (Page 51) of the HLPE Report is central in this regard. It shows the incremental and transformational levels of transition towards sustainable food systems. Some elements/principles can be (and are already) implemented easily without any major policy changes in conventional production agroecosystems, other do request more drastic changes. The CFS Policy recommendations are to promote in an integrated way approaches (including agroecological) to foster transformation of food systems.

Stakeholders addressed: All recommendations should clearly mention to whom they are addressed, in accordance to the different roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders.

Right based approach: A rights based approach is key for the recommendations.

Specific Comments to “Introduction” (Paragraph 4 to 10):

Paragraph 6:

In addition to biodiversity and ecosystem services, *land (or sustainable land management)* should also be addressed. In that context, the IPBES and the IPCC reports should be mentioned:

*6. Food systems and their diversification are essential for achieving sustainable production and nutrition security. Biodiversity, **sustainable land and water management** and ecosystem services are essential for sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as highlighted by ~~two~~ recent landmark global assessments: **The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Land Degradation and Restoration Assessment and its Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems***

Paragraph 7:

Farmers have a key role to play in achieving the transformation towards sustainable food systems and need be named among the involved stakeholder.

Agroecological approaches are named for the first time under Paragraph 9 in connection with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food in the context of National Food Security. We believe it is important to name agroecological and other innovative approaches already under Paragraph 7. We suggest to keep the text to the wording in the HLPE Report and make a reference to agroecological and other innovative approaches in this paragraph.

*7. In addition to states, all stakeholders involved in food systems, including **farmers**, private sector, civil society, academia, financing institutions, foundations and funds, local authorities and intergovernmental organizations, **should learn from agroecological and other innovative approaches concrete ways to foster** ~~have a key role to play in achieving~~ the transformation towards sustainable food systems.*

Paragraph 8 and 10: We welcome Paragraph 8 and 10 and its wording that has been taken from the HLPE Report.

Specific Comments to CFS Policy Recommendations (1 to 5) and the policy relevant areas:

We suggest keeping the CFS Policy Recommendations as close as possible to the recommendations of the HLPE-Report. The report is very well balanced, pragmatic, dynamic (with different steps, incremental and transformational) and multiscale (including the diversity of agriculture and food systems). The report is an excellent basis for the development of the CFS policy recommendations on agroecology and other innovations.

We have screened the Rapporteur's Note in this regard. We have added **in red** text from the HLPE Report in order to complement the Rapporteur's Note with the HLPE Recommendations.

1. FOSTER THE TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD SYSTEMS THROUGH INTEGRATION OF AGROECOLOGICAL AND OTHER INNOVATIVE APPROACHES **in an integrated way by improving resource efficiency, strengthening resilience and securing social equity/responsibility**

a) Alignment to context specific priorities

- *Take into account and value the diversity of food systems and their contexts*
- *Consider local food security and nutrition situation, traditions, scale of the agricultural systems, available technology, skills, resourcing, environmental, social and regulatory systems.*
- *Address **sustainability, acceptance, accessibility and affordability** of agroecological and other innovative approaches **and their potential trade-offs** for all **people**, including agricultural smallholder producers **and the planet**.*

b) Ecological footprint as an operational principle for transitioning to sustainable food systems

- *Use relevant performance metrics for sustainable food systems that consider **environmental, social and economic impacts of food production and consumption, such as** environmental and social (including public health) externalities, both positive and negative, of agriculture and food systems based on available scientific evidence, **and thereby encourage appropriate consumption practices that maintain or enhance, rather than deplete, natural capital for improving the ecological footprint of food systems***
- *Strengthen research which takes into account nutritional quality and nutrient content of different food products and whether food is produced, processed, transported, sold and consumed sustainably.*

c) Integration of transdisciplinary science and local knowledge

- *Strengthen co-creation and sharing of **local (including indigenous)** knowledge, including scientific innovation **in participatory innovation processes** to develop and implement agroecological and other sustainable and innovative practices to address challenges **across and contribute to the transformation of** food systems.*
- *- Protect agricultural heritage as an important source in the reconfiguration of knowledge generation and research.*
- *- Contribution of social movements and problem-focused transdisciplinary science in the identification of priority issues.*

2. SUPPORT TRANSITIONS TO DIVERSIFIED AND RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS -

We suggest to add a chapeau sentence:

Support diversified and resilient production systems, including mixed livestock, fish, cropping and agroforestry, that preserve and enhance biodiversity, as well as the natural resource base, including land and water:

a) Agricultural subsidies and incentives

- *In line with multilateral rules, explore the role of subsidies and incentives in fostering the transition towards sustainable food systems.*
- *Consider the **environmental, social and economic** impacts of agricultural subsidies and incentives – both positive and negative – on ~~the economic viability~~ of food systems and **redirect subsidies and incentives that at present benefit unsustainable practices***
- *Develop and use performance metrics to assess whether subsidies and incentives foster sustainability of food systems and improved food security and nutrition.*

b) Trade

- *Consider the role of trade agreements and rules in relation to the goals of agroecological and other innovative approaches.*

c) Biodiversity and natural resources

- *Focus on conservation and sustainable use of **biodiversity and** natural resources.*
- *Consider the contribution of biodiversity to a wide range of benefits (production, socio-economic, nutritional and environmental).*
- *Consider the contribution of biodiversity to all the elements of agroecosystems, including soil health, animal welfare and water quality that are fundamental to achieve sustainable agriculture and food systems*
- *Based on scientific evidence, consider agroecological and other innovative practices as tools to **mitigate and** adapt to climate change, **combat desertification, land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought***

d) Territorial approaches (merged with g) Territorial landscape scale)

- *~~Promote the~~ **Support the** use of integrated, **participatory and inclusive territorial management planning** approaches **at landscape or watershed level**, to **identify and** foster sustainable and more diversified agricultural and food systems **and to conserve and sustainably use common natural resources***
- *Build social capital and inclusive public bodies at territorial landscape scale, bearing in mind that scale may differ according to national realities*

e) Genetic resources used for food and agriculture and intellectual property

- *Build on existing international agreements and national regulations*
- *Incorporate intellectual property rights, including the protection of patents in trade agreements*
- *Respect the interests of farmers, including the adequate protection of farmer-saved seeds*
- ***Improve smallholders access to diverse, traditional and locally adapted genetic resources, as well as farmer-to-farmer seed exchange.***

f) Regulations on the use of agrochemicals

- *Consider the use of organic fertilizers, supplemented with an appropriate dose of mineral fertilizer, based on scientific analysis of soils, as part of an integrated component and strategy that can lead to agroecological transitions towards sustainable food systems.*
- *Strengthen neutral scientific research to assess the impact of the use of agrochemicals on human, animal and environmental health in order to inform policies and programmes with a view to reduce their use.*
- ***Strengthen the regulations on the use of agrochemicals harmful to human health and the environment in agriculture and food systems, promote alternatives to their use and reward practices that produce without them***

h) Healthy and sustainable diversified diets

We suggest to extend the title to healthy ~~[and sustainable]~~ in order to include the sustainability dimension in diets, as well as to be consistent with the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems & Nutrition and to take into account the “Sustainable healthy diets – Guiding Principles jointly published by FAO and WHO. We suggest to add a chapeau sentence:

Promote sustainable and healthy diets to support transitions towards more sustainable, diversified and resilient food systems through:

- Promote food and nutrition education, bearing in mind the contextual nature of eating habits.
- Promote the use of agroecological and other innovative approaches to improve **sustainable and healthy** diets by enhancing diversification **and sustainability** of production and in diets.
- Enhance production of ~~nutrient-dense~~ **nutritious and sustainably produced** foods.
- Promote appropriate food labelling **and certification** to enable conscious and informed choices leading to sustainable, diversified and healthy diets.
- Support low-income consumers and **smallholders, including** family farmers, by increasing **sustainable** public procurement policies including home grown school feeding programmes.

i) Food value chain

Support food value chain innovation platforms, incubators and aggregation mechanisms in which private sector actors, as well as public bodies, invest in and reward agroecological food producers and processors by:

- Support the development of local and regional markets, **processing hubs and transportation infrastructures**
- **Improve agroecological food producers access to markets, especially local markets**
- ~~Strengthen~~ **Increase responsible** investment and provide incentives for young entrepreneurs, women and community-led enterprises.
- Promote short food supply chains in order to make them a viable, accessible, and affordable alternative to mass retail outlets in favour of farmers’ markets.
- Harnessing the use of digital technologies to strengthen links between food producers and consumers.
- Encourage recycling systems by supporting the recycling of animal manure, crop residues, and by-products from food processing.
- Consider the reduction of food losses and waste (FLW) as an important component of the transition to sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.

3. STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH AND RECONFIGURE KNOWLEDGE GENERATION AND SHARING TO FOSTER CO-LEARNING

a) Investment in research

- **Redirect current investments in research and development towards agroecological approaches and the sustainable transformation of food systems**
- ~~Encourage an increase in~~ **responsible** public and private investment in research **and development** at all levels, including investment in strengthening capacity for data collection from best practices among producers, and traditional communities and researchers.

~~Strengthen research in order to:~~

- ~~○ Encourage explicit coverage of “transitions to sustainable food Systems” in primary, secondary and tertiary education curricula.~~
- ~~○ Identify gaps in agroecological and biotechnological knowledge, including gaps in knowledge sharing, while ensuring that context-specific needs and capacities are taken~~

~~into consideration as well as needs of agricultural producers, including women and youth.~~

- ~~○ Consider economic, social and environmental impacts, including assessment of practices and methods against sustainability criteria.~~
- ~~○ Study how agroecology can mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.~~

b) Transdisciplinary research

- *Develop and support transdisciplinary research that foster co-learning between practitioners and researchers and horizontal dissemination of experience among practitioners, such as farmer-to-farmer networks, communities of practice and agroecological lighthouses*
- *Combine global scientific knowledge with local, traditional and indigenous' knowledge, including producers' and traders' knowledge.*
- *Strengthen co-creation and sharing of knowledge in the process of developing and implementing agroecological and other innovative practices.*

c) Capacity development

- *Promote learning processes on the adequate use of agroecological practices and technologies addressing social, economic, and environmental aspects.*
- *Encourage explicit coverage of "transitions to sustainable food systems" in school and university curricula*
- *Ensure that training programmes for agricultural extension and public health workers include the understanding and the promotion of agroecological approaches and the transition to sustainable food systems*
- *Strengthen food producers' and consumers' associations, organizations and cooperatives that build capacities, create and exchange knowledge to facilitate the adoption of agroecological approaches to foster transition towards sustainable food systems.*

d) Co-learning for innovation

- *Establish and develop effective ~~horizontal~~ technology transfer mechanisms to enhance the adoption of locally-adapted technologies in agroecological and other innovative approaches by all stakeholders in the various stages of value chains of food products.*

4. STRENGTHEN AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, EMPOWER VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS AND ADDRESS POWER INEQUALITIES IN FOOD SYSTEMS

a) Inclusiveness

- *Support inclusive and democratic decision-making mechanisms at all levels in food systems.*
- *Take specific measures to ensure the participation of marginalized and vulnerable groups most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition.*
- *Develop policies that ensure maximum access, equality and inclusion for all people.*
- *Consider the role of smallholders, peasant, indigenous, ~~and~~ family farmers **and consumers** along with their allied movements, as central agents in the transformation of food systems.*
- *Recognize that medium and big size farms and industry should also be involved in the transition towards more sustainable food systems.*

b) Access to land and other natural resources

- *Ensure legal protection of customary access and tenure rights for small-scale food producers, including women and youth, and food insecure people, in line with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT).*

c) Gender equality

- *Recognize the centrality of women's rights and gender equality as a key driver of agroecology and other innovative approaches.*
- *Recognize the role of women in knowledge accumulation.*

- Support gender transformative policies, programmes and actions *that challenge the underlying causes of gender inequality within food systems with respect to norms, relationships and institutional structures, in particular by ensuring that laws and policies improve gender equality and address gender-based violence.*

d) Youth engagement

- Promote farming and other agricultural activities, including various forms of urban farming, as a desirable business opportunity for the next generation of farmers.
- Invest in rural infrastructure and services to reduce gaps between rural and urban areas and to make rural life attractive for youth.
- Acknowledge that agroecological and other innovative approaches, including digital technology, are knowledge intensive and will require new talents.

e) Rural-urban linkages

- Strengthen linkages between urban communities and food producers by including consumer cooperatives and multi-stakeholder platforms.

f) Agency

- Consider the emerging importance of *the concept of 'agency' and the opportunity to add it as a fifth pillar of FSN.*
- ~~— Consider the role of smallholders, peasant, indigenous, and family farmers and consumers along with their allied movements, as central agents in the transformation of food systems.~~
- *Recognize that medium and big size farms and industry should also be involved in the transition towards more sustainable food systems.*
- Highlight the need to connect agroecological and other innovative approaches with the right to food.

g) “Net-working” among farmers in digital technology at all levels

- Improve networking among farmers at local, national, regional and global level on digital technology to foster transformation of food systems.

h) Power imbalances and conflicts of interest

- Address power imbalances and conflicts of interest in relation to the generation, validation and communication of knowledge about food production, processing and marketing

i) Trade

- *Explore ways for trade agreements and rules to better support transitions towards more sustainable agriculture and food systems*

j) Strategies

- *develop strategies to promote the transition towards sustainable food systems, including long-term goals at national and regional levels, ensuring policy coherence across sectors at different levels, bringing together public administrations responsible for, and all other relevant stakeholders involved in, agriculture, forestry, health, gender, education, finance, trade, energy and environment.*

5. ESTABLISH AND USE COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING FRAMEWORKS FOR FOOD SYSTEMS

a) Performance evaluation as a basis for **assessment, investment decisions and policy implementation**

- Consult agricultural producers, particularly small-scale food producers and those most affected by current production models to ensure that metrics are relevant to regional conditions and specific food products.

- Develop a *practical, scientifically grounded, and comprehensive* performance metrics and indicators of agriculture and food systems as a basis for assessment, policy implementation and investment decisions, *including total factor productivity of livelihood, land equivalent ratio, multifunctionality and ecological footprint of food systems, as well as impacts on beneficial organisms, dietary diversity and nutritional outcomes, women's empowerment, income stability and employment conditions, as appropriate.*

b) True cost accounting

- *Recognize the importance of true cost accounting for negative as well as positive (environmental and social, including public health) externalities in food systems and take steps to effectively implement it where appropriate.*

c) Food product certification

- *Recognize the importance of participatory guarantee systems in compliance with public policy and safety standards to certify organic and ecological products.*

d) Assessment of biotechnology

- *Promote the assessment of biotechnology in accordance with sustainability criteria.*

e) Employment and labour conditions

- *Consider the promising solution of agroecology and other innovations, based on knowledge intensive, environmental friendly, socially responsible and innovative, to preserve existing and promote decent job creation.*