

CSM intervention at OEWG meeting April 14, 2020

Written Inputs

Overarching comments regarding the process - Strong appeal to re-schedule the negotiations:

We would like to convey our appreciation to the work done by the Rapporteur in advancing the preparations of the Policy Recommendations on “Agroecological and other innovative approaches” and for sharing your first analysis of the positions regarding the Zero Draft.

The world is confronted with a human crisis of horrific proportions, which once again will impose its heaviest tolls on the marginalized and most vulnerable. Our constituencies, particularly small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples and agricultural workers, are completely overtaken by the urgent need to provide immediate responses to the crisis within their localities and communities. In this sense, if negotiations are advanced as initially planned, it would mean excluding them and the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples’ Mechanism (CSM) from participation. This would openly violate the CFS’ inclusive character established during its reform in 2009.

Moreover, the COVID19 crisis is exposing the depth of inequalities and vulnerabilities as well as many critical shortcomings of the current food systems. It is essential that this policy convergence process builds on these lessons and ensures adequate medium-to-longer term responses that increase the resilience, people-centredness and sustainability of food systems. Advancing the negotiations as initially planned, meaning in midst of the current dramatic situation, would dismiss this critical learning and prevent it from happening, and decrease the relevance of the policy recommendations in the post-crisis phase.

We also believe it is urgent for the CFS to play a critical role in the short-term responses to the emergent, if not on-going, food crisis and this requires the re-direction of all its normative and coordination functions to this crucial and immediate task.

Finally, we remain extremely doubtful that virtual means, with the reduction of an adequate negotiation space and the inequities that are inherently part of these new technologies, can be helpful in bridging the depth of the differences exposed by the current negotiations, which rather require more extensive dialogues to find politically significant outcomes. The Rapporteur has expressed his willingness to have intersessional online discussions to bridge these differences. As CSM, we would like to express our agreement with these procedures, but also our interest to fully engage with these smaller groups of discussions, as well as to join the group of ‘Friends of the Rapporteur’. The small groups dynamics should, however, respect the need for translation/interpretation that we, as CSM, have.

Our concrete proposals for rescheduling the negotiations on both the Food Systems and Nutrition and Agroecological and Other Innovative approaches will be shared at the upcoming CFS Bureau and Advisory Group Meeting on 17 April.

Comments on structure and content of the Zero Draft

1. **We would like to re-state our deep concern about the shift in the subject focus of proposed recommendations and centrality of Agroecology in the next draft.** While they are expected to be policy recommendations on “agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition”, they seem instead to be recommendations on innovations first and foremost, with the inclusion of agroecological approaches only in an undifferentiated amalgamation of approaches that disregards the extensive evidence-based analysis presented in the report.

The recommendations should reflect the **HLPE Report’s conclusions that agroecology is a truly transformational pathway** to address all the structural changes needed in our food system in a systemic and integrated way requiring significant policy change to level the playing field in terms of institutional support. In this respect, we reiterate the need to refocus the policy recommendation on the potential of agroecology to transform the food systems, and build on and anchor this policy convergence process in the work already done by FAO on agroecology, in particular the 10 Elements of Agroecology previously agreed and adopted by the FAO Council. **It is also essential to locate the recommendations within the framework of CFS’s mandate on the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, the UN Decade of Family Farming, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) adopted by the UN General Assembly.**
2. **The Zero Draft lacks clear policy emphasis on transforming food systems and the role that innovation plays in such process:** we expect these recommendations to provide a coherent unifying framework for decisive policy action by **endorsing a holistic approach to food systems**, one that clearly sets out the multiplicity of public objectives that food systems serve and how they can help advance multiple SDGs within the 2030 Agenda. The recommendations should **guide policy choices between different pathways by using the HLPE analysis that has clearly differentiated agroecology from other innovative approaches** with respect to its benefits and contributions to SFSs for FSN. In this regard the **next draft must put forward a strong assessment framework that can help evaluate different innovations.**
3. The COVID19 pandemic has made clear how the current intensive and industrial agricultural model has devastated ecosystems and created the enabling conditions for this kind of outbreak. The crisis has shown the extreme importance of the public sector and the need to strengthen the role of Governments in providing efficient public services and developing public policies in support of people’s health and food security. **Enhancing local food systems is key from a sustainability perspective. The recommendations can guide Governments in moving to sustainable food systems that preserve the environment through agroecological approaches, support the daily work of millions of agricultural and food workers and small-scale food producers pursuing also the custody of our ecosystems. It should include specific language for improving access to markets for products derived from agroecology and more strongly encourage support the development of short circuits that especially in this moment would support the livelihoods of small scale food producers and workers while also ensuring people can continue to access healthy and safe food.**