

Canada – Comments on Zero Draft of “Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Food Systems that Ensure Food Security and Nutrition.”

General Comments:

- A key concept for Canada is that the role of government is not to favour one production method over the other, and that all farmers should be free to use all available farm management strategies, subject to regulatory requirements including those aimed at ensuring food safety and environmental objectives. Further, Canada supports a broad array of innovative approaches in agriculture, as do many other countries. These guidelines need to take an expansive view of innovation and sustainable agriculture, and focus on outcomes and the evaluation of trade-offs in order to be useful to governments, farmers, and others engaged in food systems. In this vein, Canada considers that too much of the material in the zero draft is focussed on defining and describing agroecological approaches. Subsequent drafts should take a more inclusive approach.

Specific Comments:

Proposed text additions and deletions are bolded and enclosed in square brackets.

- Para 1)Unsustainable agricultural production practices and climate change are increasing the pressure on natural resources and biodiversity, while [add: in some regions] productive land continues to be lost to degradation.
- Para 2)[add: According to CFS,] Achieving this potential requires embarking on transition pathways that respond to their conditions. Three intertwined operational principles define transition pathways toward sustainable food systems for food security and nutrition: (i) improving resource efficiency; (ii) strengthening resilience; and (iii) securing social equity/responsibility.
- Para 3) Innovations include changes in practices, norms, markets and institutional arrangements, which may foster new networks of food production, processing, [add: science and technology], distribution and consumption that may challenge the status quo.
- Para 5) There is a spectrum of different pathways and approaches, which include agroecological approaches, [add: other innovative approaches,] and sustainable intensification approaches.
- Para 8) ...in accordance with national [add: frameworks] and international obligations [add: standards and guidelines].
- Para 9) The following recommendations have been elaborated building on the main findings of the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) report on “Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition”. The recommendations also build upon, and complement in a synergistic manner existing CFS policies and instruments, as well as relevant global instruments and processes, [add: as appropriate,] such as the UN Decade on Family Farming (UNDFF), the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), [delete: and the upcoming Global Plan of Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture])
- Policy Recommendations, subtitle 1: Lay policy foundations for transforming food systems to ensure sustainability and enhance food security and nutrition through [delete: agroecological and other] innovative approaches [add: including agroecological approaches]

Commented [FJ--1]: In some regions (including in Canada's Prairie region) land and soil health have been improving.

Commented [FJ--2]: To clarify that these are also included in the definition of innovation.

Commented [FJ--3]: For completeness

Commented [FJ--4]: In many areas related to innovation, internationals standards and guideline, while not obligations, play an important role.

Commented [FJ--5]: Some states may not have signed on to one or more of these instruments.

Commented [FJ--6]: A decision has not yet been made on establishing this Global Plan of Action.

Commented [FJ--7]: To position agroecology as one of many innovative approach, rather than suggesting and weighting of it

- Para 12) [add: Consider strengthening] [delete: Strengthen] the role of the public sector in monitoring and regulating [add: in a consistent manner] innovative approaches, including technologies, which impact sustainable food systems, food security and nutrition and the right to food.
- Para 13) Develop strategies to support transitions towards sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition through [delete: agroecological and other] innovative approaches, including through the definition of long-term goals at national and regional levels, ensuring policy coherence across sectors, with the participation of public administrations and relevant stakeholders involved in agriculture, forestry, health, gender, education, finance, trade, energy and environment.
- Para 17) Where rural employment opportunities are needed, consider the potential of [delete: agroecological] [add: innovative] approaches to preserve existing jobs and promote decent job creation.
- Para 19) [delete: Promote diverse and resilient agroecosystems that assemble soil, water, genetic resources (crops, livestock, trees and aquatic species), and other elements in spatially and temporally diversified schemes, favoring natural processes and biological interactions that optimize synergies so that diversified production units are able to sponsor their own soil fertility, soil water, crop protection, animal health and welfare, and productivity.]
- Para 20) "Strengthen [add: the capacity to assess the safety of] of agrochemicals [add: in accordance with international standards, guidelines and best practices], in order to protect and improve human and environmental health"
- Para 21) Support the enormous contribution that [delete: family] [add: all] farmers have made and continue to make for the conservation and development of genetic resources by promoting Farmers' Rights and benefit-sharing, as acknowledged in the texts of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Convention on Biological Diversity and by protecting Farmers' Rights to save, use and exchange their seeds
- Para 25) Support low-income consumers and [delete: family] farmers through public procurement policies (including for school feeding programmes, other safety nets, food assistance and public regulatory and preparedness mechanisms) [delete: based on locally and sustainably produced food], and integration of social protection programmes with capacity development for sustainable agricultural production, [add: consistent with international trade rules.]
- Para 28) Support [delete: small and medium sized] enterprises that provide goods and services for diversified and resilient food systems.
- Para 26) Promote [delete: appropriate] food labelling, in line with applicable national and international standards, to [delete: enable conscious and informed consumer choices leading to sustainable healthy diets] [add: allow informed food choices.]
- Para 29) Promote local, regional and global markets that contribute to sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition [add: , and comply with internationally-agreed rules].
- Para 40) [delete: Strengthen] [add: Consider strengthening] public research to assess the [add: efficacy and] impact of the use of agrochemicals on human, animal and environmental health.
- Paragraphs 42 and 43 : Canada does not have the jurisdiction to agree to statements or recommendations in this area.
- Paragraph 43: The intent and meaning of this statement is not clear.
- Para 46) Prioritize and strengthen public research to address the needs of [delete: family] farmers, including women and youth.

Commented [FJ-8]: Countries will need to make their own assessments on the need for strengthening government involvement, including based on the current levels of monitoring and regulation.

Commented [FJ-9]: To reflect the importance of consistent regulations between countries. Another option would be "regulating according to international guidelines".

Commented [FJ-10]: The guidelines address all innovative approaches and clearly establish that agroecology is one of these. This degree of repetition is unnecessary.

Commented [FJ-11]: AS above, the guidelines are intended to address all innovative approaches.

Commented [FJ-12]: This recommendation is too specific and limiting. Canada's view is that farmers should have the ability to assess and select the management approaches that best work for them in their specific contexts.

Commented [FJ-13]: •This statement should not be about the "use" of agrochemicals, it should be about increasing the capacity to assess safety of agrochemicals in accordance with international standards and best practices.

Commented [FJ-14]: It is unclear what sort of distinction is being made here. Regardless, all farmers have had and continue to play a role in this area, through a variety of mechanisms.

Commented [FJ-15]: The priority here is on food security and improved nutrition, which may or may not be best achieved through locally produced food, depending on specific contexts.

Commented [FJ-16]: Trade rules in these areas have been carefully crafted to allow the pursuit of legitimate policy objectives in the least-trade-distortionary way.

Commented [FJ-17]: This is a subjective and ill-defined term.

Commented [FJ-18]: Many countries already have strong public research in this area.

Commented [FJ-19]: This is another important element of assessments of agrochemicals.

Commented [FJ-20]: Is this statement relevant, given that the role of regulatory agencies is to proactively assess risk prior to authorizing the use of agrochemicals.

Commented [FJ-21]: This is a limiting term.

- Para 48) Support the role of ~~smallholder, peasant, indigenous, and family~~ farmers, including women and youth, as central agents in transitions to sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition, including through the progressive realization of the right to food.
- Para 50) Strengthen responsible investment and provide incentives for women and youth ~~in community led small and medium sized enterprises that support~~ towards sustainable food systems.
- Para 55) Strengthen food producers' and consumers' associations, organizations and cooperatives that build capacities, create and exchange knowledge to facilitate the adoption of ~~agroecological~~ ~~innovative~~ approaches to foster transitions toward sustainable food systems.
- Para 57) Note the OECD has already undertaken work in this area, including on the impact of concentration in the seed sector
- Para 63) Invite the World Trade Organization (WTO) to co-organize a dialogue during the CFS plenary in 2021 on how trade agreements can better support ~~access to innovative approaches to allow~~ transitions to ~~more~~ sustainable food systems that ~~better~~ ensure food security and nutrition.
- Para 68) Organize a special event to consider opportunities and challenges in ~~promoting~~ ~~presenting~~ ~~agroecological and other~~ innovative approaches for family farmers within the framework of the UN Decade on Family Farming.

Commented [FJ--22]: The contributions of all farmers are key to transitions in food systems.

Commented [FJ--23]: These guidelines should strive to cover as many situations as possible

Commented [FJ--24]: Inclusive terms are preferred.

Commented [FJ--25]: Acknowledges the positive contributions current food systems already make to sustainability and food security and nutrition.

Commented [FJ--26]: The FAO and IFAD should not be promoting approaches, but rather presenting information and evidence on them.

Commented [FJ--27]: Inclusive term preferred.