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**Summary and Recommendations of the High Level Panel of Experts on
Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) Report on Multistakeholder
Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the
Framework of the 2030 Agenda**

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High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition

Extract from the Report¹

Multi-stakeholder partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda

Summary and Recommendations

SUMMARY

There is a growing recognition that complex and multi-dimensional issues such as food security and nutrition (FSN) require cross-sectoral and holistic approaches, pooling together the resources, knowledge and expertise of different stakeholders.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development not only comprises the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but also includes the means to achieve them. SDG17, in particular, encourages “the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by the use of multi-stakeholder partnerships” (MSPs) as a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also invites states and other stakeholders to “encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships” that “mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries”.

In this context, in October 2016, the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested its High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) to produce a report on “*Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda*” to inform its debates at the 45th CFS Plenary Session of October 2018.

¹ HLPE. 2018. Multistakeholder Partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome 2018. Full report forthcoming at www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe.

The growing importance of MSPs in the landscape of food governance at different scales does not take place without controversy. Besides a conceptual debate on the exact definition of concepts such as stakeholders and partnerships, scientists and other actors question the potential benefits and limitations, the performance and even the relevance of MSPs as a suitable institutional mechanism to finance and improve FSN. They also question the conditions for MSPs to contribute effectively to the realization of the right to adequate food. Thus, as illustrated in this report, MSPs should be considered as a means rather than a goal. They do not provide a “silver-bullet” solution to any problem, in any context. This is why the last chapter of this report focuses on the internal conditions and external environment that could help to improve MSPs’ contribution to FSN in a sustainable way.

Most previous HLPE reports covered issues on which there were already data and significant scientific literature. On the contrary, as illustrated in this report, MSPs have emerged quite recently as a topic mobilizing scientific communities beyond social sciences. Such communities are still small. Evidence and data are limited in time and scope and quickly evolving. It is difficult to find detailed and publicly available information on existing MSPs, particularly when it comes to budget, finance and impact. A great part of the available data is self-reported by the MSPs with no guarantee of independent verification. Further research and efforts are needed to generate more comprehensive information on MSPs and their outcomes.

Therefore, this report cannot provide a complete analysis of all the issues at stake, but rather clarifies the concepts and identifies the main challenges based on the best available evidence, data and observation. For the same reasons, this report cannot provide a detailed and comprehensive assessment of all existing MSPs, but rather suggests relevant criteria to enable governments and non-state actors to perform their own assessments following a common methodology and to identify pathways for improvement.

This report and its recommendations aim to help states and non-state actors to improve MSPs’ contribution to the realization of the right to adequate food, in particular by strengthening transparency and accountability, and by improving the learning process through knowledge generation and sharing.

MSPs: CONTEXT AND DEFINITIONS

1. Malnutrition in all its forms (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity) now affects all countries, whether low-, middle- or high- income. As illustrated in previous HLPE reports, transformative actions are needed across food systems to enhance the four pillars of FSN (availability, access, utilization and stability) and realize the right to adequate food for all.
2. Many decision-makers and donors point at the disengagement of states at national level and at the lack of public funding for development at the international level. In this context, they call for an increasing role of the private sector in financing FSN and the whole 2030 Agenda. They consider MSPs as a possible way to leverage additional funds, in particular private or philanthropic funds, to complement governments’ efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Nevertheless, states remain ultimately responsible for adopting effective strategies to eradicate hunger and all forms of malnutrition, and to ensure that the efforts of all stakeholders concur to public interest and to the realization of the right to adequate food. This calls for a renewed commitment of states and a strengthened public investment for FSN and sustainable development. The challenge is then to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders, whether states or non-states, through appropriate governance mechanisms to better deliver a public good such as FSN.
3. Financing needs for sustainable development can be grouped into three categories, namely investments: (i) to address *basic needs* (eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health and education, providing access to affordable energy and promoting gender equality) and (ii) to address *national sustainable development needs* (including infrastructure and rural development), as well as (iii) to address *global challenges* (including climate change and the protection of the global environment) and deliver global public goods.
4. In its World Investment Report, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2014) estimates the annual investment gap for achieving the SDGs in developing countries at around USD2.5 trillion. Compared with the current level of investment (around USD1.4 trillion), this gap seems huge. However, it should be noted that: (i) all the SDGs are deeply interconnected and

integrated approaches can foster synergies across sectors and reduce the financing needs; (ii) the cost of inaction is likely to be much higher than the cost of corrective measures; (iii) even a small change in the allocation of existing resources² could have a considerable impact for FSN and sustainable development. In other words, the challenge is not only to mobilize additional resources but also to improve the coordination and targeting of existing resources to finance and improve FSN, and to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

5. Filling this investment gap is likely to require the involvement and coordination of all stakeholders and the appropriate use of all available sources of funds, whether domestic or international, public or private, concessional or commercial. In this context, MSPs have rapidly emerged, over the past two decades, as a part of a new approach to governance for sustainable development at different scales, even though the idea of multi-stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes is older than the term of MSP itself and refers to a wide variety of situations.
6. The term “stakeholder” is generally used to designate any person or group who has a “stake”, i.e. an interest, whether financial or not, in an issue. It refers to any person or group who is affected by or can affect the situation or issue at stake, as well as the achievement of an organization’s objectives. However, considering that this concept of “stakeholder” hides important differences existing in terms of rights, roles, responsibilities, interests, motivations, power and legitimacy, some authors call for using instead the term “actors”. They argue that, from a human-rights perspective, a fundamental distinction is to be made between citizens as “right-holders” and “duty-bearers” (mainly states and intergovernmental organizations – IGOs) that have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right to adequate food.
7. The scientific literature commonly defines three broad spheres of stakeholders according to their legal status, namely: the *public sector*, the *private sector* and *civil society*. This categorization may seem overly simplified, considering the wide variety of stakeholders grouped within each category, and the diverse way stakeholders could be analytically classified, but it offers a broad picture, useful for political discussions.
8. MSPs can create a working and sometimes long-term relationship, initiate a dialogue and build trust among different stakeholders that, by sharing resources, responsibilities, risks and benefits, become partners for the realization of common objectives. For this reason, MSPs should clearly be distinguished from one-time transaction arrangements and classical contracts, where the collaboration ends with the realization of the transaction, which brings economic benefits for the different parties. MSPs should also be clearly distinguished from broader multi-actor policy processes and platforms: (i) where participation is open or defined by the law, meaning that partners are not co-opted as can be the case in some MSPs; (ii) where decision-making rests unequivocally and entirely in the hand of governments. These characteristics have important implications in terms of legitimacy and accountability.
9. Considering all these elements, MSPs are defined here as “any collaborative arrangement between stakeholders from two or more different spheres of society (public sector, private sector and/or civil society), pooling their resources together, sharing risks and responsibilities in order to solve a common issue, to handle a conflict, to elaborate a shared vision, to realize a common objective, to manage a common resource and/or to ensure the protection, production or delivery of an outcome of collective, and/or, public interest”.³ This report focuses on the contributions that MSPs acting around food systems can make, directly or indirectly, to finance and improve FSN.
10. Considering that MSPs have been privileged as a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, some actors focus their attention on how to improve their performance in financing and improving FSN. On the contrary, other actors still question MSPs’ relevance and desirability and rather highlight the need to reconsider the allocation of public funds.

² According to the UN Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (ICESDF), the existing stock of global financial assets amounts to USD225 trillion, and global savings reach USD22 trillion per year (UN, 2014).

³ In this definition, a “collective” interest shall be understood as the common interest of the stakeholders involved or represented in the MSP, while a “public” interest designates the general interest of the whole society, in all its spheres, whether represented or not in the MSP. The tension between these two sets of interests – i.e. “collective” vs “public” interest – may represent a major challenge for MSPs and question their legitimacy.

11. Stakeholders have different perceptions on the potential benefits and limitation of MSPs. Facing financial constraints, some states might consider them as a useful tool to mobilize additional funding, including private funding, to achieve public priorities. Some private actors might consider them as a way to influence public decision-making and policy or to improve their own reputation. Some civil society organizations might acknowledge the role of inclusive partnerships in empowering marginalized and vulnerable groups, while raising concerns about the power given, in some MSPs, to the private sector in decision-making processes. In this context, this report reviews the potential benefits, limitations and contributions of MSPs, as part of a new approach to governance for FSN and sustainable development.

MAPPING MSPS AND THEIR DIVERSITY

12. MSPs emerged quite recently as a focus of interest in the FSN-oriented scientific literature. Evidence and data on MSPs are still limited, especially on finance, budgets and impact, and significantly relying on self-assessments and self-reported data that have not been verified independently. In this situation, and in order to progress towards a categorization of MSPs, the HLPE has suggested, during the open consultation organized on the V0 draft of the report, a questionnaire that could help different stakeholders to conduct their own assessment of MSPs following a common methodology.
13. This questionnaire uses a set of criteria to describe a given MSP, including its: (i) *thematic domain of action*; (ii) *scale* (from local, national, regional to global) and *geographical scope* (i.e. the country or region covered where appropriate); (iii) *structure and organization* (more precisely: composition, legal status, governance structure, representativeness); (iv) *financing structure*; and (v) *main domains of intervention*.
14. The HLPE identified five main domains of intervention for MSPs: (i) *knowledge co-generation and capacity building*; (ii) *advocacy*; (iii) *standard setting*; (iv) *action*; and (v) *fundraising and resource mobilization*. These domains are not mutually exclusive and can be further developed: MSPs might intervene in several domains and have multiple outcomes. These domains can help practitioners and decision-makers define broad categories of MSPs that might face similar challenges or opportunities for enhancing FSN. Each domain is illustrated in the report by concrete examples of existing MSPs.
15. MSPs can play a key role in *knowledge co-generation and capacity building* for enhanced FSN, in particular through the collection and sharing of information and experiences. Such MSPs have long existed, involving different stakeholders, beyond the academic community, in participative research and development (R&D) efforts. These MSPs can involve public and private R&D institutions, as well as organizations of farmers, food producers or consumers. By confronting diverse perspectives as well as different forms of knowledge, expertise, skills and experience, MSPs can be instrumental in the co-production of new forms of knowledge, including through transdisciplinary and participatory R&D methods.
16. MSPs can be involved in *advocacy* at the global, regional or national levels, raising awareness on major issues related to FSN and suggesting possible pathways towards more sustainable food systems, building on the complementary resources and expertise of the partners involved. There are examples of such MSPs initiated and led by governments or by the private sector.
17. *Standard setting* is a distinct area in which MSPs have been active for several decades. New initiatives emerged where private or civil society stakeholders, sometimes in collaboration with governments and intergovernmental bodies, established voluntary and market-based approaches to the sustainability of practices across agriculture and food systems.
18. *Action-oriented* MSPs are involved in activities ranging from natural resource management (including water management or community management of forest resources or protected areas) and agricultural development, to food processing and distribution. Certainly, many of their activities could also be linked to advocacy or standard setting, knowledge co-generation and capacity building, but they primarily focus on the implementation of policies, programmes and projects at different scales, from global to local. These MSPs can contribute to FSN and sustainable development in emergency situations or with a longer-term perspective.

19. Fundraising and resource mobilization for FSN and sustainable development is another domain of intervention, where MSPs can play an important role. They can foster synergies and avoid fragmentation of efforts, contributing to better mobilization, coordination and targeting of public and private funds for FSN. This may be performed through innovative mechanisms such as blended finance facilities, provided that their efforts are aligned with national priorities and the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda.

MSPs: POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS

20. The report discusses potential benefits and limitations of MSPs, as well as a set of criteria for assessing the performance of existing MSPs for FSN, examining the trade-offs between these criteria, with the view to better understand and improve the contribution of MSPs to financing and improving FSN. It proposes common tools and a common methodology for different stakeholders to perform and share their own assessments of existing MSPs.
21. The primary benefit of MSPs is the mobilization and coordinated use of complementary resources (including human, material and financial resources) from different stakeholders to solve a common issue that no stakeholder would have been able to tackle alone. Pooling together complementary resources in a MSP can foster synergies and help the partners to better share risks and responsibilities, to attract new resources or to use existing resources more effectively to achieve the MSP's FSN goals and targets.
22. By providing a space for policy dialogue to different stakeholders, with diverse views and diverging interests, MSPs can improve mutual understanding among partners, facilitate policy convergence and consensus building. If the rights, interests and needs of different stakeholders are appropriately considered, the strategies, decisions and action plans elaborated by a MSP might be more widely accepted and more easily implemented by all, and may lead to better outcomes in terms of FSN and sustainable development.
23. MSPs also face major challenges and limitations in the realization of their potential. Tensions can appear among partners in a MSP because of mistrust or diverging views on: the shared values; the diagnosis of the situation; the short- and long-term common objectives; the priorities for action; and the resources needed to implement the plan of actions. These divergences are grounded on the different interests and motivations, roles and responsibilities of partners in a MSP. Tensions can also be generated by conflicts of interest in the MSP.
24. There is a risk for MSPs to reproduce existing power asymmetries and to strengthen the position of more powerful actors. One of the challenges for MSPs in the field of FSN is to acknowledge and address these power asymmetries. Inclusiveness, transparency and accountability are keys to address this challenge. Full and effective participation of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, directly affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, will be ensured if weaker partners have the right and capacity to speak, to be heard and influence the decisions. This requires time and resources to participate in discussion, including in physical meetings, as well as information, expertise and communication skills.
25. Decision-making in MSPs can be more time, energy and resource consuming than processes where stakeholders act separately, entailing inherent direct and indirect transaction costs. To be operational and successful, MSPs demand time and commitment from partners.
26. The process of bringing stakeholders together determines the performance and the results of the MSPs and is often a result in itself. As such, any assessment of a given MSP must not only cover its tangible results, but also the decision-making process itself. In that perspective, the HLPE suggests eight qualities, whether result- or process-related, that shape MSPs' performance.
27. The HLPE considers three result-related qualities: effectiveness, impact and capacity to mobilize resources. While effectiveness denotes the extent to which a MSP delivers its expected outputs and immediate outcomes, impact refers to longer-term and broader outcomes, and to the ultimate goals of the MSP, including enhanced livelihood and FSN. Although capacity to mobilize resources could be considered as part of the effectiveness of a MSP, it deserves specific attention when assessing the contribution of MSPs to financing FSN.

28. The HLPE identifies five process-related qualities: inclusiveness, accountability, transparency, reflexivity and efficiency. These process-related qualities reflect the extent to which MSPs efficiently facilitate the discussions between stakeholders, enabling them to work together for a shared objective. They strongly affect the legitimacy of a given MSP, of its processes, actions and decisions. Inclusiveness is ensured when “the voices of all relevant stakeholders – particularly those most affected by food insecurity – are heard” (CFS, 2009). Accountability, whether internal or external, is usually understood as the responsibility that a representative or a group acquires with the action of speaking or deciding on behalf of someone else. Transparency implies that all relevant stakeholders have open or easy access to the best available information on MSPs’ governance, rules, processes, costs, activities and decisions. Reflexivity denotes the capacity to learn from mistakes, to assess long-term trends and to react accordingly. Efficiency is generally understood as the relationship between the benefits (output) produced by, and the resources (input) engaged in, a given MSP.
29. The logical links, synergies and trade-offs between these eight qualities have to be carefully considered when assessing MSPs’ performance. For instance, although greater inclusiveness, transparency and accountability might increase immediate transaction costs in MSPs, they are instrumental in ensuring the full and effective participation of the more marginalized and vulnerable partners, with the view to contribute more effectively, in the long run, to the progressive realization of their right to adequate food.

PATHWAYS TO IMPROVE MSPS’ CONTRIBUTION TO FSN

30. Although MSPs, as one of the possible institutional mechanisms in the landscape of food governance, might not be the most appropriate approach in any situation, it is important to explore the internal conditions and the external environment that could help optimize MSPs’ contributions to FSN and sustainable development.
31. Internal conditions refer to what can be done or changed within the MSP, by the partners themselves, or by the MSP as a group, to improve its performance for FSN. The HLPE identified six important steps to follow for establishing a MSP: (i) identify the relevant stakeholders to be involved and agree on the problem statement; (ii) elaborate a shared vision; (iii) clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the different partners; (iv) create the governance structure; (v) design and implement a common strategy; and (vi) regularly monitor and evaluate the results and the process. This six-step method can contribute concretely to address the limitations and challenges identified above by building trust and fostering synergies among partners, addressing power asymmetries and reducing long-term transaction costs.
32. At the initial stages of the MSP, enhanced trust and synergies among partners will depend on the strength of the agreement on the problem statement and on the composition of the partnership, as well as on the capacity of the partners to clarify their common values and elaborate a shared vision. Before the establishment of any partnership, the diverse expectations, interests and motivations of the different partners must be clearly spelled out.
33. This trust can be preserved through continuous stakeholder engagement, and only if MSPs are able to acknowledge and address power asymmetries, through: (i) a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of each partner and the identification of potential conflicts of interest; (ii) inclusive governance structures for MSPs that ensure the full and effective participation of the weaker partners and give priority to those actors most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition; and (iii) strong and transparent conflict resolution mechanisms.
34. As highlighted above, multi-stakeholder processes entail inherent transaction costs. However, these transaction costs could be considered as long-term investments to strengthen inclusiveness, transparency and accountability. When they build trust and reduce tensions between partners, address power asymmetries, manage conflicts and ensure full and effective participation of the weaker partners, MSPs are likely to contribute more effectively in the long run to FSN and sustainable development than isolated actions undertaken separately by stakeholders.
35. The external environment refers to the environment in which MSPs operate, framed by states and IGOs, but also shaped by non-state actors. The report reviews possible options to

strengthen transparency and accountability, repeatedly pointed out in the 2030 Agenda and in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as key factors for a successful contribution of MSPs to FSN and sustainable development. Among these options, it highlights in particular the importance of strong reporting and monitoring mechanisms that facilitate data collection, lesson sharing, learning processes and capacity building within and between MSPs.

36. Knowledge sharing can be promoted internally and supported by external organizations working with MSPs. For example, MSPs can promote internal knowledge sharing by widely communicating experiences in the partnership to their own organizations, thus creating an internal learning culture that is informed by benefits and limitations of MSPs. Several tools can be applied in knowledge sharing. Capacity building can be promoted by engaging different staff from their organizations in partnership meetings. Learning events, evaluations and initiatives specially dedicated to knowledge sharing can also be used.
37. States and IGOs have the primary responsibility, highlighted in the 2030 Agenda (SDG16), to promote the rule of law at national and international levels, and to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. Through international guidelines, and national regulations, states and IGOs can support policy convergence and provide the institutional framework needed for MSPs to effectively strive for enhanced FSN and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.
38. The report explores the potential of innovative mechanisms, such as corporate social responsibility or blended finance facilities, to attract additional resources or to better align existing resources with global and national priorities for FSN and sustainable development, as well as the conditions under which such mechanisms can effectively contribute to public priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) should be an integral part of strategies, plans and programmes across sectors to achieve food security and nutrition (FSN) goals and targets. They offer innovative mechanisms that can contribute to finance and improve FSN. However, MSPs do not replace the need for continued public investment in FSN. There are a number of constraints or limitations that need to be addressed to ensure that MSPs are transparent and accountable and that their efforts are aligned with global, regional and national priorities and contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. In this context, the HLPE suggests the following recommendations to enhance the contribution of MSPs to financing and improving FSN.

1. ESTABLISH A POLICY FRAMEWORK TO ENSURE THAT MSPS EFFECTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

States should:

- a) consider the role of MSPs when developing strategies, plans and programmes for achieving national FSN goals and targets;
- b) ensure that legal and regulatory frameworks promote transparency and accountability and facilitate the management of conflicts of interest in MSPs;
- c) ensure that MSP efforts are contributing to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (VGRtF), and are guided by CFS major products;⁴
- d) encourage the development of charters for MSPs to better contribute to finance and improve FSN, based on the principles developed in this report.

2. IMPROVE MOBILIZATION, COORDINATION AND TARGETING OF FINANCING FOR FSN THROUGH MSPS

States, in collaboration with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) including multilateral development institutions, should:

- a) promote innovative ways to mobilize domestic and international public financing of MSPs through the use of various mechanisms, such as progressive taxation policies and corporate social responsibility spending;
- b) create public-supported special funds for grants and loans to marginalized and vulnerable actors, including small food producers' groups, small and medium enterprises, and associations of indigenous peoples;
- c) encourage increased and coordinated public and private funding of MSPs for FSN, including through the development of blended finance facilities;
- d) establish and enforce corporate social responsibility legislation to allocate corporate funds for FSN in line with social responsibility and sustainable development goals;
- e) encourage MSPs to facilitate mobilization and targeting of financing for FSN by strengthening the links between community-based initiatives, including women's self-help groups and formal financial institutions.

⁴ Including: CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition; CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT); CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, and CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), especially in the context of large-scale agricultural investments.

3. STRENGTHEN TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN MSPs THROUGH EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Partners in MSPs should:

- a) identify and acknowledge, at early stages of MSPs, possible tensions among partners, power asymmetries and conflicts of interest;
- b) develop appropriate codes of conduct in line with national legislation, rules and charters, as well as with CFS major products;
- c) define clear roles and responsibilities for the different partners, in terms of representation, participation, decision-making and financial contribution within MSPs operations;
- d) encourage inclusive decision-making processes, ensuring an effective and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, particularly women, youth, indigenous peoples, small food producers and other marginalized or vulnerable actors;
- e) develop transparent and appropriate conflict resolution mechanisms;
- f) establish mechanisms to strengthen capacity building of the more vulnerable partners, guaranteeing them appropriate financial and technical assistance.

4. INCREASE THE IMPACT OF MSPs THROUGH EFFECTIVE MONITORING, EVALUATION AND EXPERIENCE SHARING

Partners in MSPs should:

- a) define appropriate indicators and metrics as well as data collection and management plans related to the achievement of their FSN goals and targets;
- b) establish appropriate and transparent MSP monitoring and evaluation systems, based on the criteria developed in this report: effectiveness, impact, capacity to mobilize resources, inclusiveness, accountability, transparency, reflexivity, efficiency;
- c) share monitoring and evaluation feedback with policy-makers and society for achieving impact at scale.

States and IGOs, in collaboration with other stakeholders should:

- d) establish mechanisms to improve data collection and information sharing on MSPs at global, regional and national levels.

5. INTEGRATE DIFFERENT FORMS OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPLORE FURTHER AREAS OF RESEARCH ON MSPs TO FINANCE AND IMPROVE FSN

States and the academic community, in collaboration with civil society organizations and other knowledge-holders should:

- a) promote participative research programmes and projects, taking into consideration local and traditional knowledge;
- b) encourage, as appropriate, MSPs as a tool to acknowledge and integrate different forms of knowledge and to share experiences;
- c) support the development of effective extension systems, including through MSPs;
- d) finance and conduct further research on MSPs, exploring:
 - (i) innovative short- and long-term impact assessment methodologies, based on the criteria suggested in this report;
 - (ii) MSPs governance, including decision-making rules and processes, considering the complementary roles and responsibilities of the public sector, the private sector and civil society;
 - (iii) adequate ways to address power asymmetries and conflicts of interest in MSPs;
 - (iv) the immediate and long-term implications of the transaction costs associated with MSPs setting-up and operations;

- (v) successes and failures in existing MSPs in financing and improving FSN, paying specific attention to the rights and needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups;
- (vi) innovative financing arrangements for MSPs to enhance FSN.