

Thematic Working Group on Agriculture, Food Security and Land Use

**Online Exchange Forum | Climate Resilience of Food Systems, putting  
Agroecology elements to action: Examples for national policy implementation  
and update on international developments**

09.12.2020

12:00 - 13:30 CET

This document summarizes the **key points and questions addressed** during the online session held on 9 December 2020. We invite you to access the recording and other resources available in the 'Additional resources' section below for more information.

**Biovision, summary on the potential of agroecology to build climate-resilient livelihoods and food systems**

Fabio Leippert

- Through analysis of scientific publications, practice and policy, three key **resilience building blocks of agroecology** were identified to build greater resilience of livelihoods and food systems: increasing **(bio)diversity**, improving **soil health**, and co-creation and sharing of **knowledge and traditions**.
- Most countries currently consider only the food production and only production-oriented agroecology elements in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- However only a **holistic approach** of addressing most/all of the agroecology elements and food systems can truly foster **transformative changes** towards greater resilience (and healthier ecosystems, social and economic development, better nutrition and food security).
- Working through food system approaches increases the potential to scale up agroecology (e.g. food loss and waste; diet shifts, etc.) and have significant mitigation benefits.
- 2min30 animated movie that summarizes the above quoted study findings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSk4Z8UODHw&t=53s>

**World Wide Fund for Nature, key takeaways from 3rd Global Conference of the Sustainable Food Systems Programme**

Martina Fleckenstein

- The 3rd Global Conference of the SFS Programme under the One Planet Network was held in November-December 2020, with the WWF and the Governments of Costa Rica and Switzerland as co-leads. The focus of the Conference was on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through food systems transformation – On the road to the Food Systems Summit.
- Recommendations and outcomes of the Conference include the **recognition that agroecology elements and approaches are important for transformation of food systems**, and that food systems approaches have to be embedded in all relevant **multilateral frameworks** such as the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Paris Agreement and its NDCs. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of considering not only synergies but also trade-offs in decision and policy making, the need to strengthen institutional arrangements and governance structures, especially in the Global South, and the necessity to adopt

policies that promote **sustainability along the entire value and supply chain** for food systems transformation that promotes the SDGs.

## **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), update from Climate negotiations and agriculture**

### Martial Bernoux

- There is a clear signal from different international processes that one common goal is to have **agroecology elements fully embedded into policies and actions** at all levels.
- The **Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture**, a decision adopted at the 23rd Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is a Party-driven, formal process allowing governments to express their views on issues related to agriculture. The 10 elements of agroecology can be used to influence this process and advocate for agroecology, as they are not contested and constitute sharp and short messages that can be easily communicated to, and conveyed by agriculture negotiators.
- The **Race to Zero** is a non-Party-driven campaign launched under the UNFCCC in 2020. It includes representatives from cities, countries, civil society, organisations and more, and represents an important advocacy arena where to discuss agroecology and influence society as a whole. It also provides a basis for further exchanges at national and global levels in the context of the Food Systems Summit 2021.
- **Key messages on the potential of agroecology to build climate resilient food systems should be conveyed through both processes. The FAO 10 elements of agroecology are an important way to do that. Also at the UN Food System Summit these elements should be promoted.**

## **Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement (JVE), Togo**

### Sena Alouka

- Civil society in Togo is playing a crucial role in **advocating for agroecology and influencing national policy processes**. Following a national ban on the pesticide glyphosate, the Togolese government initiated the development of a national strategy on organic farming. JVE advocated for the inclusion of agroecology in the strategy through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.
- First, JVE organized a national workshop to review and improve the document through the **inclusion of agroecology**.
- Second, JVE contributed to **breaking silos** within government by ensuring that the strategy, developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, also reaches ministries of environment (in charge of the NDC revision process), water and energy.
- Third, JVE **democratized knowledge** around agroecology by persuading the government to postpone the launch of the strategy so that regional consultations can be organized throughout the country with the participation of civil society.
- Lessons learned from this process are: the importance of **linking new strategies to existing policies**, such as national development plans, the Paris Agreement, human rights conventions, etc.; the need to create a **broad alliance of stakeholders** involving not only those working specifically on agriculture and maintaining an ongoing dialogue; and the necessity to **base advocacy on science and evidence**.

## **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Brazil**

### Fernanda Thomaz Da Rocha

- IFAD supports sustainable rural development in the semi-arid region of Bahia, in Northeast Brazil since 2014. This dryland zone is particularly vulnerable to climate change and experiences frequent

droughts, water scarcity and land degradation. The project aims to contribute to rural poverty reduction through increased agricultural production and development of human and social capital, focusing on indigenous peoples, women and youth.

- The project promotes the adoption of a **holistic agroecology approach that comprises the farm, landscape and food systems levels**, resulting in resource-use efficiency, conservation of biodiversity, improved livelihoods and food security and nutrition.
- Based on this project and beyond, IFAD identified the following **enablers in the transition to agroecology: territorial approaches; adequate technical assistance supported by national policies that promote agroecological principles; public food procurement supporting local value chains and markets; enabling public policies, including on agroecology; and strong institutions and farmers' organizations.**

## Q&A

*Question to IFAD: Can you give a bit more perspective on what IFAD thinks of using agroecology elements to guide its portfolio and increasingly use agroecology elements to transform food systems and make them more resilient?* In the last year, IFAD did a stock take of its work on agroecology across the organization's portfolio. IFAD is doing quite well with regards to investing in communities and practices at farm and landscape levels, but at market level, there is room for improvement in linking producers and consumers and generating value in terms of income, health, etc.

Another issue to improve is ensuring that agroecology is supporting sustainable food systems that tackle rural poverty and rural food insecurity, i.e. ensuring that food systems work for the rural poor, recognizing that currently 3 billion people cannot afford diversified healthy diets. **It is not about having enough calories for people, but rather having access to a greater diversity of food through the adoption of agroecological practices that can contribute both to increased resilience and the sustainability of food systems.**

The stock take also highlighted the necessity to better link private sector co-financing with small scale production and agroecological practices. **Having a solid evidence base is key to convince investors that they are investing in sustainable food systems. Key arguments in that regard are summarized by Biovision here: <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/business-case/>**

*Question to IFAD: Does agroecology provide more attractive future perspectives for the youth than agriculture as we know it?* Agroecology is intensive in knowledge, innovation and technology, not only at the production stage but also in terms of access to markets. In Brazil, IFAD supports a network of youth from rural schools and communities, allowing them to receive training as extension services providers, work in information and communications technology (ICT), direct sales consumers, farmers markets, etc. **Youth are very involved and motivated in these innovation activities and in the market component of the project.**

*Question to IFAD: Does agroecology support the work of women?* Agroecology puts women in the spotlight as they are usually the ones who manage the biodiversity, working in seed banks and preserving local cultural heritage for example, or managing backyard gardens, which constitute the first entry point for nutrition and health considerations and agroecological principles in smallholders.

*Question to FAO: Should a sharp and concise policy brief be addressed to the attention of the G20 on the subject of agroecological urban and peri-urban agriculture, as this could be a subject of the next G20 dialogue?* Absolutely, we need to grasp this great opportunity, also considering that Italy (G20 presidency for 2021) will host the PRECOP in 2021. **Feel welcome to share and provide ideas to [Nic.Pacini@governo.it](mailto:Nic.Pacini@governo.it)** who proposed that idea.

*Question to IFAD: Most farmers I have talked to mention that agroecology is labor intensive, especially to women. Which agroecological practices are easier to implement, requiring less time and energy? It is true, agroecology is more labor and knowledge intensive. One could argue that it is a positive aspect because it employs more people, but that means also higher costs to ensure decent work for all. In theory, we would substitute the chemical inputs with more labor, but it does not necessarily work like that in practice. Farmer field schools, for example, provide an opportunity for experiential learning of agroecological practices and finding out what works best in different contexts. There is definitely a need to understand these interactions better, as well as explore opportunities to optimize the way we use existing technologies for the application of agroecological practices.*

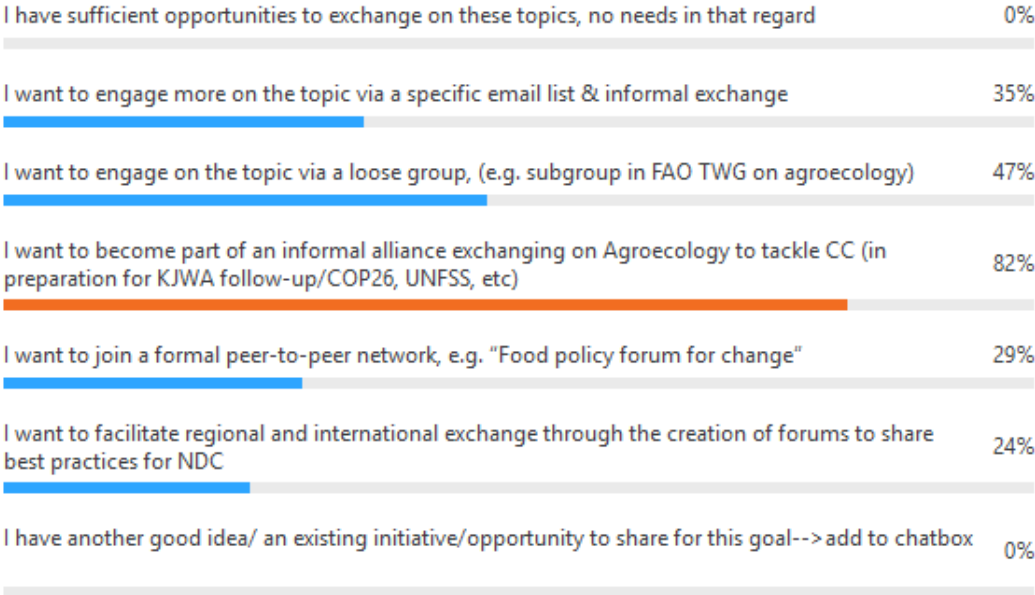
**Polls on way forward**

To have an educated guess on potential follow-ups and tangible action from this and the previous FAO-NDC webinars, the following questions have been discussed.

The main outcome of these polls and tangible follow up of these foras is:

**An informal online working group under the TWG will be set up by FAO/Biovision/WWF to provide a space to discuss integration of Agroecology in the NDCs and the most common tangible questions identified below. The working group will be open to all interested participants with a focus on policy makers, decision makers, climate negotiators, actors in multilateral organizations and other actors working directly on these topics and who are willing to engage and promote agroecology as a climate resilience building measure.**

**1. What would need to happen for this group of actors gathered here today to harness its full potential to accelerate an agroecological food systems transformation in the face of climate change? (Multiple choice)**



To the participants from previous NDC foras who could not participate in these polls: We will gather further needs and ideas in one of the first activities of the newly established working group, so you can bring your ideas in.

**1. What are the MOST URGENT next steps needed to support transformation to a more resilient food system following agroecological principles (as planned for in the NDCs)?**

Policy formulation support for coherent policies (i.e. NDC formulation)	50%
Support/tools in impact measuring (M&E) for (agroecological) interventions/need of a framework to measure agroecology	32%
Best practice guidance	8%
Provide actual access to financial resources	5%
Field level support, such as extension services, trainings, support for farmer groups	0%
Knowing more championing/inspiring examples and countries	0%
Policy briefs/main AE arguments/counterarguments	0%
None of the above, input provided in chatbox	5%

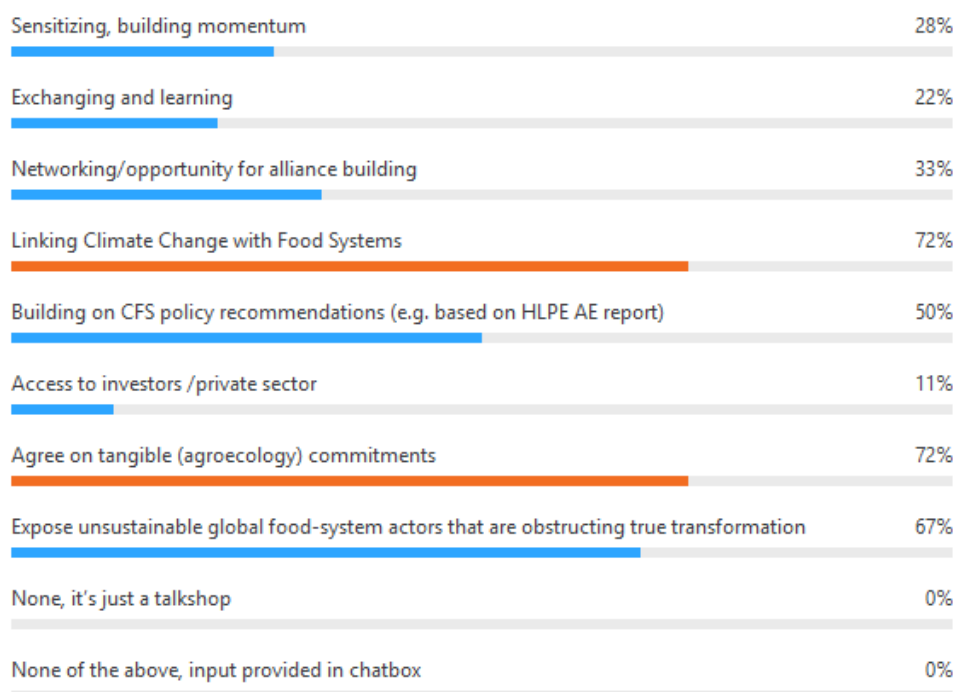
→ The two main needs identified will be integrated in the activity planning of the online working group.

**1. What outcome are you expecting from the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture (KJWA) and the UNFCCC negotiations more broadly, to support you in this endeavour (except for climate funding)? (Multiple choice)**

Clear signal that agriculture and food systems have to be part of the climate solution	63%
Guidance e.g. common guiding principles on agriculture from KJWA	32%
Agree and build on common denomination blocks; promotion of (bio)diversity, soil health, farmer inclusion	58%
Overview of potential financial resources and modalities to access them	32%
Clarification on how to access climate funds with agroecology approaches	68%
Learn about & connect with champion countries/NDCs as role models	21%
Peer support on these questions (peer-to-peer network)	5%
None of the above, input provided in chatbox	0%

→ The main need identified will be integrated in the activity planning of the online working group. Links to KJWA and UNFCCC negotiations and platform/groups where these issues are already discussed will also be made, although they won't constitute the focus of the group.

### 1. What role should the UN food systems summit 2021 play in that regard? (Multiple choice)



→ The organizers of the NDC foras work on these topics in the wake and at the UNFSS in particular, also under Action Track 3 and 5. However these issues are not the focus of the online working group on NDCs and agroecology. Please contact Biovision/WWF directly in case you would like to follow up on these points.

### Closing Remarks

#### FAO

##### Martial Bernoux

We all agree that in order to fully embed agroecology into policies and actions, we need access to finance, science and advocacy. But to do so, we need to identify a game changer: a strong signal at the highest level in the prescriptive arena that is the UNFCCC, indicating that **promotion and building on healthy soils, inclusive socio-economic approaches, etc. is the right way to move forward**. Such a strong signal can foster increased levels of finance and interest from the international community. Under the UNFCCC, the **Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture provides a unique opportunity to put this aspect and agroecology in general high on the agenda**. The CBD and UNCCD also constitute prescriptive arenas where these messages and approaches have to be promoted.

There are a lot of similarities between the climate change and COVID-19 crises:

- Both are universal, affecting all countries
- They hit everyone at the same time
- They exacerbate inequalities, and strongly affect poorer people

However, climate change will last much longer than the COVID-19 crisis. Just as we are doing for COVID-19, we need to work on the vaccine and the cure for climate change: the cure is adaptation and the vaccine is mitigation. Moving forward, we need to tackle all challenges in a comprehensive and

inclusive manner that supports farmers in facing their biggest challenge: production that can feed their families in the long run. To achieve this, the agroecological elements should guide the way.

## **Additional resources**

### ***Agroecology***

The 10 elements of Agroecology: enabling transitions towards sustainable agriculture and food systems through visual narratives

<https://doi.org/10.1080/26395916.2020.1808705>

The potential of agroecology to build climate-resilient livelihoods and food systems

<http://www.fao.org/climate-change/programmes-and-projects/detail/en/c/1199897/>

### ***Food Systems***

3rd Global Conference of the Sustainable Food Systems Programme

<https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sustainable-food-systems/3rd-global-conference-sfs-programme>

Food Systems Summit 2021

<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit>

Enhancing NDCs for food systems: recommendations for decision-makers

[https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf\\_ndc\\_food\\_final\\_low\\_res.pdf](https://wwfeu.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_ndc_food_final_low_res.pdf)

### ***Country example***

IFAD Brazil

<https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/story/asset/41930450>

### ***UNFCCC***

Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

<https://unfccc.int/topics/land-use/workstreams/agriculture>

FAO and the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

<http://www.fao.org/climate-change/our-work/what-we-do/koronivia/en/>

Race to Zero

<https://unfccc.int/climate-action/race-to-zero-campaign#eq-3>

### ***Recordings***

Climate Resilience of Food Systems, putting Agroecology elements to action: Examples for national policy implementation and update on international developments

<https://fao.zoom.us/rec/share/G6zb5U8tKwPdSg9igoVXTULgKq4a5sJwZbXqfTA6OirrU-126xk-EYku6SuV8lh0.gVAltzEiOCU-h2aS?startTime=1607511610000>