

# From commitments to action: How UNFSS and CFS policy recommendations on agroecology can complement and reinforce each other

## Summary of outcomes

**Date:** 4 June 2021, 12.45am – 14.15pm CET

**Co-organizers:** WWF, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (CGIAR), FAO, IPES-Food, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica, Biovision.

### Summary of outcomes

WWF, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT (CGIAR), FAO, IPES-Food, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Costa Rica and Biovision hosted a side event, chaired by **Frank Eyhorn** (CEO, Biovision), to explore synergies between the CFS policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches and the UNFSS solutions cluster on agroecology, and to identify opportunities to move from commitments to measurable progress and action.

**Juan Lucas Restrepo** (Director General, Alliance of Biodiversity International and CIAT (CGIAR)), set the scene by highlighting the necessity of a food system transformation for our economies, our societies and our environment and introducing the HLPE 13 principles of agroecology and the associated CFS policy recommendations as a unique reference framework for countries and other stakeholders to shift towards sustainable food systems.

**Jingyuan Xia** (Director Plant Production and Protection Division, FAO) reminded us of the history and commitment to agroecology at FAO and at CFS, including through the FAO's 10 elements of agroecology and the Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation, and how agroecology can address the key challenges of our time.

As part of the panel discussion, **Joao Campari** (Global Leader Food Practice, WWF International) pointed out the need for a paradigm shift from maximizing production at the expense of nature to farming with biodiversity to achieve nature positive production at scale. He provided examples from the field showing that the adoption of agroecological approaches is a promising way to deliver this paradigm, and highlighted the key opportunity provided by the UNFSS to elevate the profile of agroecology and move from commitments to action on the ground.

**Marcela Quintera** (Research Director for Multifunctional Landscapes, Alliance of Biodiversity International and CIAT (CGIAR)) discussed the role of science to catalyze a transition to agroecology, by adopting a holistic approach to food systems research and progress assessments, identifying leverage points for agroecological transformations and building partnerships to put knowledge into practice.

**Faviana Scorza** (Senior Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Costa Rica) demonstrated what this could look like in practice with examples from the government of Costa Rica, including

programmes on reduction of agrochemicals, payments for ecosystems services, climate change mitigation and market linkages. But challenges remain, particularly with regards to traceability in food production and raising awareness among consumers about the relation between food production, diversified diets and health.

As the co-chair of the Agroecology Solutions Cluster at the UNFSS, **Emile Frison** (Panel member, IPES-Food), discussed the opportunities for the UNFSS to contribute to an agroecological transformation of our food system. The Agroecology Solutions Cluster takes a whole systems' approach, advocating for a paradigm shift guided by the HLPE 13 principles of agroecology, which should be the spirit of the summit. Many countries have already expressed a strong interest in joining a coalition of the willing to make commitments to support agroecology at scale. The summit should recognize the urgency, instill the need for real ambition, embrace the HLPE 13 principles of agroecology as the guide for food system transformation and have an inclusive follow up, both in the coalitions as well as the policy processes.

The ensuing Q&A confirmed the need to use the 13 principles of agroecology to set the direction without compromising, but incremental steps can be taken towards realizing the ambition of full implementation of the 13 principles at scale and with urgency. In this process we need to look for synergies, between nature and people such as is the case with agroecology, and in processes like the CFS and the UNFSS. Commitments should be translated into clear targets and result in action to deliver transformation on the ground. For this, we will need to work across countries, sectors and actors in a coalition of the willing.

Inspiring closing remarks were shared by **Thanawat Tiensin** (Chairperson, UN Committee on Food Security), who spoke from the heart by applying the Thai concept of 'sufficiency, economy and philosophy' to our food system: "If we produce enough, we have enough to eat and enough to spend. When we have enough for our livelihoods, we share and trade with others and save for emergencies. If we have a better network and work together, we can have a better food system."