

4 June 2021

United States statement at CFS 48 as delivered:

Let me start by acknowledging the tremendous work CFS has done culminating in the document we are discussing today, the Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that Enhance Food Security and Nutrition. A special thanks to Ambassador Yaya, for your insights, wisdom, and leadership...which contributed so much to today's outcome.

When we talk about this document, we often stop at the first part of the title that talks about agroecological and other innovative approaches. However, the second part of the title is the most important "for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition." This is the shared objective that we all care about and which unites us today at the Committee on World Food Security. The reason we are talking about innovative approaches is that we think that these approaches can deliver on this shared objective. Too often we get stuck into an abstract binary debate on different approaches that misses the fact that what really matters is the results on the ground. Our job is not to tell policymakers or farmers what to do; it is instead to give them tools that they can take and adapt to their local contexts.

As stated in the Policy Recommendations "there is no single approach for achieving food security and nutrition and all food systems have the potential to contribute further to sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition." This is why our efforts to improve the sustainability of agriculture must be evaluated against measurable outcomes at the appropriate level on food affordability and accessibility, farmer income and wellbeing, and environmental indicators. As the recommendations acknowledge, we must do the hard work of assessing real impacts and outcomes.

One concern that the United States has on the Policy Recommendations is the use of the term "peasant" and we would like to start a dialogue about the use of this term in CFS documents. While we understand and give credence to those who prefer using the term "peasant," we do not find the term relevant for U.S. farmers. Some of our stakeholders see the word as antiquated or even offensive, as it is often considered pejorative in the United States – even when used to as a reference for rural poor in other nations. In the United States, the term can also denote a "class" of persons relegated to an inherent state of poverty – rather than individuals who can be lifted into better economic circumstances through an opportunity agenda. We would like to work with others to find a more inclusive term while being sensitive and understanding of all cultures. Therefore, the United States intends to join in the adoption of these voluntary policy recommendations with strong reservations about the use of the term "peasant." We believe the recommendations will provide valuable guidance to countries looking to use innovative approaches to increase the sustainability of their food and agricultural systems.

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