

Australia's comments on the CFS Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that Enhance Food Security and Nutrition- Draft One

- As highlighted in our comments on the Zero Draft, Australia appreciates the First Draft's acknowledgement that numerous innovative approaches to sustainable agriculture exist, and that the approach chosen must be contextually appropriate. We also appreciate the document's recognition of:
 - the role of digitalisation and agricultural innovation in the transition to sustainable agricultural systems
 - the resilience and strengths of agriculture and food systems revealed in the wake of Covid-19, not only their sites of vulnerability
 - the role of the private sector and civil society, alongside states, in driving more sustainable agriculture and food systems
 - the need to promote a One Health approach in order to enhance food systems resilience and prevent outbreaks of zoonotic diseases and pandemics
 - the importance of diverse market arrangements featuring strong domestic value chains and local food production alongside open, efficient and reliable international agricultural and food markets which can help to manage risks and allow food to move where it is needed in times of crises, thus mitigating against food price volatility and protecting livelihoods and food security.
- However, as emphasised in our comments on the Zero Draft, through the repeated use of the term 'agroecological and other innovative approaches', the First Draft is biased towards agroecology over other sustainable agriculture practices that are not repeatedly referenced, and is not always consistent with the spirit of the 41st FAO Conference Resolution on this subject.
 - For example, programs and evaluation tools targeted to agroecology (the Scaling up Agroecology Initiative and the Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation), are specifically mentioned, while those pertaining to other innovative approaches like climate smart agriculture for example, are absent.
 - The First Draft also recommends that the relative under-investment in agroecological approaches be addressed through increased investments in public and private research, although this may not be context-appropriate. Due to their diversity of circumstances, countries must be able to choose the right tools and practices for local environmental and soil conditions, and apply appropriate regulatory arrangements that recognise technology availability for farmers around the world. There is no one size fits all approach to sustainability.
- Australia notes the increased emphasis in the First Draft on holistic approaches to solving food systems challenges, which is pertinent in light of the forthcoming UN Food Systems Summit 2021. We are supportive of policymakers and international organisations using (where appropriate) an integrated, food systems policy approach that considers food security and nutrition, sustainable resource use and climate change mitigation, and the livelihoods of all food chain actors.
- Please see the attached document for Australia's suggested amendments to the First Draft.