

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. *Lay the policy foundations for agroecological and other innovative approaches to contribute to sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*

*States (and regional and local authorities, as appropriate) in consultation with inter-governmental organizations, producer organizations, the private sector (including small and medium sized enterprises) and civil society, are invited to:*

*Recognizing the need for context-appropriate pathways to move towards sustainable agriculture and food systems:*

- a. Undertake comprehensive assessments of the sustainability of their agriculture and food systems (see Recommendation 2), paying due attention to all positive and negative environmental and social externalities, as the first step to developing context-appropriate transition pathways;
- b. In cases where comprehensive assessments show that sustainability can be improved, develop context-appropriate plans to move towards sustainable agriculture and food systems through inclusive and participatory processes based on the results of such assessments; ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders (giving particular importance to the needs of the most vulnerable) and all relevant sectors, including agriculture, health, labour, gender, education, social protection, youth, finance, trade, energy and environment;
- c. Consider the role of agroecological and other innovative approaches in contributing to such plans, and promote approaches that simultaneously respond to multiple agriculture and food system challenges in the given context, are context-appropriate, affordable and accessible, respond to local employment needs, are co-created between producers and scientists, contribute to equity and respond to the needs of agriculture and food system actors, in particular the most vulnerable (including those in situations of protracted crisis);<sup>29</sup> and,
- d. Implement, monitor and continually improve the agriculture and food system transition plans with the meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders, giving particular attention to the needs of the most vulnerable.

*Recognizing the need to promote an enabling environment for agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition:*

- e. Establish public mechanisms to assess the impacts of agroecological and other innovative approaches and specific innovations on key aspects of sustainable agriculture and food systems, such as resilience, food security and nutrition, the right to food, producers' revenues, the environment and public health;

**Commented [1]:**  
highlight the importance of the participation of rights holders, in particular of Indigenous peoples, local communities, women, small scale food producers and farm workers.

**Commented [2]:**  
building on farmers', traditional and Indigenous knowledge in a respectful way

**Commented [3]:**  
and the right to food and nutrition

**Commented [4]:**  
and in particular the rightsholders

**Commented [5]:**  
there should be a reference to UNDROP in this section. We suggest to add this reference as a specific bullet or add to (j) (or both).

- f. Re-direct public policies, budgets and incentives from innovations and practices that lead to negative externalities to those that reduce externalities while contributing to multiple sustainability goals;
- g. Strengthen public policies to harness market mechanisms to enable sustainable agriculture and food systems by factoring environmental, social and public health externalities into prices;
- h. Encourage sustainable consumption patterns that maintain or enhance – rather than deplete – natural resources, and support circular economies in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders – in particular the private sector;
- i. Promote sustainably produced, affordable and healthy diets, considering local context and culture and indigenous and regional diets, through appropriate food labelling and certification in line with applicable national and international standards;
- j. Ensure that small-scale food producers have access to the natural resources (e.g. land) that are essential for sustainable agricultural production through adopting formal instruments at the national level that are consistent with international legal frameworks;
- k. Promote the right to adequate food and ensure that individual and collective actions that address the four dimensions of food security and nutrition at different scales adhere to the principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, accountability and rule of law;<sup>31</sup>
- l. Strengthen policies, programmes and actions that challenge the underlying causes of gender inequality, in particular by ensuring that laws and policies ensure *inter alia* equal access to natural resources and public services, respecting and protecting women’s knowledge, and ending gender violence and sexism, in line with the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and in particular its General Recommendation 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, which was underscored by CFS 44; and,
- m. Ensure policy coherence across sectors and strengthen inter-sectoral policy-making and planning, in particular between agricultural, environmental, trade, health and nutrition policies.

The RBAs are invited to:

- Commented [6]:**  
and farm workers
- Commented [7]:**  
and control over
- Commented [8]:**  
in particular, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas
- Commented [9]:**  
Replace with: Respect, protect and fulfill

- n. Ensure coordination and coherence with respect to their strategies, policies and programmes on agroecological and other innovative approaches, including through the *Scaling up Agroecology Initiative*, taking into account the present policy recommendations.

2. ***Establish and apply comprehensive performance measurement and monitoring frameworks to encourage the adoption of agroecological and other innovative approaches***

*Recognizing the urgent need for the development of comparable, comprehensive and globally accepted metrics and indicators covering social, environmental and economic dimensions of agriculture and food systems, the CFS, in collaboration with the HLPE should:*

- a. Guide an inclusive process to 1) develop a model framework, guided by the findings of the HLPE report, including the transition principles, including practical, scientifically grounded and comprehensive performance metrics and indicators of agriculture and food systems, as a basis for assessment, planning, deployment of context-appropriate agroecological and other innovative approaches, policy implementation and investment decisions; and 2) in the short-term, select a combination of existing internationally agreed indicators (in particular the SDGs), to be applied in tandem with one another, to track progress towards more sustainable agriculture and food systems.

**Commented [10]:**  
with

*Recognizing the importance of applying indicators and metrics that capture multiple dimensions of agriculture and food systems and collecting data, States, inter-governmental organizations (in particular RBAs), regional and local authorities, and research organizations are invited to:*

- b. Promote the use of existing comprehensive assessment frameworks, such as FAO's SHARP tool (Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of climate Resilience of farmers and Pastoralists)<sup>32</sup> and the TEEB-AgriFood framework,<sup>33</sup> and finalize those under development such as FAO's Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation;<sup>34</sup>
- c. Promote the use of ecological footprint in order to ensure that the ecological impacts of consumption, and the effect of current production on future capacity to produce, are adequately factored into assessments, continuing to refine calculation methods as appropriate;
- d. Undertake holistic assessments of positive and negative employment and labour characteristics in agriculture to underpin policies and regulations that favour transitions toward sustainable agriculture and food systems, while ensuring decent conditions for agricultural labour and strengthening the health of farm and other food system workers;

**Commented [11]:**  
and make publicly available

**Commented [12]:**  
This approach should also reflect equity including differentiating who is responsible for it. E.g. if X Country is exporting unsustainable commodities to Y Country, who does the footprint accrue to?

- e. Encourage data collection (differentiated by factors including gender and farm size) and analysis at national level, documentation of lessons learned and information sharing at all levels to support the adoption of agroecological and other innovative approaches; and,

*In view of the upcoming HLPE report on data collection and analysis tools, the HLPE Steering Committee is encouraged to:*

- f. Consider data needs that arise from these policy recommendations, including in relation to comprehensive metrics and indicators covering social, environmental and economic dimensions of agriculture and food systems.

**3. *Support transitions to resilient, diversified and integrated agriculture and food systems through agroecological and other innovative approaches***

*States, regional and local authorities, relevant inter-governmental organizations, research organizations, extension agencies, civil society (including producer and consumer organizations) and the private sector (including small and medium sized enterprises) are invited to:*

*Recognizing resilience, diversification, and integration as key foundations of sustainable agriculture and food systems:*

- a. Raise public awareness about the importance of diversified production systems that integrate livestock, aquaculture, cropping and agroforestry, as appropriate, for sustainable production, healthy diets and resilient livelihoods;
- b. Strengthen public policies, investment and research in support of holistic approaches that harness natural processes and create beneficial biological interactions and synergies among the different components of agroecosystems (crops, animals, trees, soil and water), such as agroecology;
- c. Provide producers with incentives for diversification and integration of agricultural production, including support during the process of transitioning to more sustainable systems;

- d. Strengthen policy instruments and coherence for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for food and agriculture and support the important past, present and future contributions of producers for the development, conservation and improvement of biodiversity, in accordance with the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Convention on Biological Diversity; and,
- e. Promote innovative and integrated approaches to human, animal, and environmental health, such as the One Health approach, to enhance resilience and prevent outbreaks of zoonotic diseases and pandemics.

*Recognizing the urgent necessity of the **responsible use** of agrochemicals for the protection and improvement of human, animal and environmental health:*

**Commented [13]:**  
reduction and eventual elimination of agrochemicals.

- f. Raise public awareness (in particular among producers and consumers) about the risks of pesticides and other agrochemicals to human, animal and environmental health;

**Commented [14]:**  
we suggest to add a point on the need to remove subsidies for synthetic agrochemicals and redirecting to agroecological approaches. Could be a separate point or perhaps combined with f or g.

- g. Promote the use of **ecological alternatives to pesticides** that **promote the greater integration of biodiversity to prevent pest outbreaks** in order to **optimize the use of pesticides in the short-term and phase them out to the extent possible in the long-term**;

**Commented [15]:**  
and broader agroecological approaches to pest, soil and crop management

**Commented [16]:**  
to protect biodiversity while preventing pest outbreaks

**Commented [17]:**  
change to: reduce dependence on the use of pesticides in the short term [...]

- h. Recognize the right of peasants and other people working in rural areas to avoid using or being exposed to hazardous agrochemicals;<sup>35</sup>

**Commented [18]:**  
delete

- i. Drawing on the International Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Use and Management of Fertilizers, and the Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management, **optimize the use** of synthetic fertilizers, aiming to reduce pollution from excess use, maximize the recycling of nutrients and minimize the use of external inputs by promoting and rewarding innovative ecological alternatives; and,

**Commented [19]:**  
add: with immediate attention to highly hazardous pesticides.

**Commented [20]:**  
reduce dependence on

- j. Strengthen and enforce stricter national and international regulations on the use of antimicrobials in agriculture and food systems, phase out their use as growth promoters, and implement the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, endorsed by the World Health Assembly.

*Recognizing that territorial planning is a key element of fostering diversity:*

- k. Govern territories and landscapes at appropriate levels and in an inclusive way so as to respond to local needs, including enhancing the provision of ecosystem services and managing trade-offs between them,

protecting biodiversity-rich habitats, and responding to the local impacts of global emergencies, in particular by supporting social innovation<sup>36</sup> and strengthening inclusive public bodies, such as local food policy councils and multi-stakeholder landscape and watershed management platforms;

l. Strengthen responsible investment and innovation in community-led small and medium sized enterprises that support sustainable agriculture and food systems and **retain** value locally; and,

**Commented [21]:**  
and add

m. Incentivize young people to remain in, or move to, rural areas by creating decent and dignified work opportunities, including through addressing specific challenges for young people, such as access to land, credit and information, and by investing in rural infrastructure and services to reduce gaps between rural and urban areas.

*Recognizing the multiple functions of markets and the need to promote innovative approaches to ensure that markets respond to the needs of resilient, diversified, and integrated production systems, and recalling the CFS Policy Recommendations on Connecting Smallholders to Markets (CFS 43, 2016):*

n. Work with the private sector to promote local, regional and global markets, as appropriate, that demonstrate concrete contributions to the social, environmental and economic sustainability of agriculture and food systems, enhance food security and nutrition and avoid negative impacts on human rights;

o. Increase the resilience of food systems to global shocks, such as pandemics, by promoting diverse market arrangements that have greater flexibility in the face of disruptions; this involves addressing connectivity challenges in long food supply chains and strengthening short food supply chains to support local autonomy and resilience;

p. Take appropriate measures to strengthen local, national and regional markets (such as processing hubs, transportation infrastructure and adapted food safety regulations) to support rural livelihoods through capturing a high proportion of the value of production locally;<sup>37</sup>

q. Support market innovations that strengthen linkages between urban communities and food producers, such as participatory guarantee systems (in compliance with public policy and safety standards), and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), for providing sustainably produced healthy food to all consumers while providing dignified livelihoods to producers; and,

- r. Support innovative public procurement policies (for example, school feeding programmes, other safety nets, food assistance and public regulatory and preparedness mechanisms) that give preference to locally and sustainably produced food while supporting rural development objectives.

*Aware of the importance of digitalization, and welcoming the establishment of the FAO Digital Platform:*

- s. Promote the potential of digitalization through capacity building and a transdisciplinary approach involving all actors (scientists, producers, industry, governments);
- t. Promote digital and other ICT as an entry point for the involvement of youth and women in agriculture and food systems;
- u. Strengthen innovation platforms through the appropriate use of digital technologies to facilitate wider networking; and,
- v. Harness digital technologies to strengthen links between producers and consumers, including through brokering sustainable finance initiatives and market incentives.

*Aware that the potential positive and negative impacts of digitalization on food security and nutrition require attention, the CFS should:*

- w. Request the HLPE to review evidence of benefits and challenges of digitalization for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition; assess the potential of digitalization for contributing to the full range of agroecological and other innovative approaches; review national and regional policies, including with respect to safeguards; consider challenges and implications for governance; and provide relevant policy advice.

**Commented [22]:**  
and impacts on human rights

#### **4. Strengthen research, training and education, and reconfigure knowledge generation and sharing to foster co-learning**

*Research organizations, academic institutions, educational, training and extension organizations, the private sector, producers organizations, civil society, inter-governmental organizations and States, regional and local authorities are encouraged to:*

*Recognizing the crucial role played by multi-disciplinary and participatory approaches to research, dissemination and education, such as transdisciplinary science, for understanding and shaping the complex social-ecological systems in agriculture and food systems:*

- a. Reform agricultural knowledge, information and innovation systems to support agroecological and other innovative approaches by ensuring that research, extension/dissemination and education/capacity building are integrated in an inclusive, participatory, and problem-oriented approach;
- b. Develop and support problem-oriented transdisciplinary research, and encourage its integration with local and indigenous knowledge in participatory innovation processes across the range of contexts experienced by producers and other stakeholders in agriculture and food systems;
- c. Re-design agricultural knowledge, information and innovation institutions to: enable transdisciplinary science, valuing the knowledge of all relevant stakeholders and involving them, including in the setting of research priorities; engage in research at the local, national, regional and international levels, ensuring communication and sharing of knowledge between them; consider and address power imbalances and conflicts of interest between stakeholders and researchers; and, reward researchers who engage in such research;
- d. Prioritize problem-oriented research that addresses the needs of vulnerable groups, and focuses on the local dimensions of global challenges, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, ecological footprint of different production systems and value chains, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, ecosystem service provision, positive and negative externalities of agriculture and food systems, global emergencies such as pandemics, and market concentration across supply chains;
- e. Invest in advisory services and strengthen training programmes for promoting ecological alternatives to agrochemical use through agricultural extension, veterinary services, wildlife and forestry services using methods such as farmer field schools (FFS) and producer-to-producer networks; promote women as extension agents and providers of advisory services for women;
- f. Take appropriate measures to promote the right of peasants and other people working in rural areas to maintain, express, control, protect and develop their knowledge,<sup>38</sup> taking into account the specificity of women's knowledge, and support agricultural heritage systems, including those recognized as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), as an important space for innovation through local and indigenous knowledge;

**Commented [23]:**  
the focus should be on the knowledge of Indigenous peoples, local communities and small scale producers.

- g. Support innovation platforms for transdisciplinary research that foster co-learning between practitioners (e.g. producer organizations) and researchers; these may include producer-to-producer networks, communities of practice, “transdisciplinary labs”, and decentralized centers of excellence (e.g. agroecological lighthouses);<sup>39</sup>
- h. Support the horizontal sharing of knowledge and experiences, building on existing farmers' organizations and networks, including schemes designed specifically for women;
- i. Encourage explicit coverage of achieving sustainable agriculture and food systems in curricula of educational institutions at all levels, and integrate hands-on, experiential learning;
- j. Support capacity development for producers, in particular small-scale producers, on agroecological and other innovative approaches to support innovation processes suited to their contexts and needs, and link these with social protection programmes where appropriate; and,
- k. Promote sharing of experiences and co-learning amongst countries on moving towards sustainable agriculture and food systems through agroecological and other innovative approaches.

*Recognizing the need to re-direct investments in research, dissemination/extension and education/capacity building towards the priorities and approaches mentioned above for agroecological and other innovative approaches:*

- l. Increase responsible investments in public and private research and development at national, regional and international levels and redress the relative under-investment in agroecological approaches; and,
- m. Prioritize and strengthen public research to address the needs of family farmers, in particular small-scale food producers, women and youth.

***5. Strengthen institutions for stakeholder engagement, create an enabling environment for empowering vulnerable and marginalized groups and address power inequalities in agriculture and food systems***

*States, regional and local authorities, producer organizations, indigenous peoples, women's organizations, community leaders, the private sector and civil society are invited to:*

*Considering that agroecological and other innovative approaches are more likely to contribute to sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition when all people have the possibility to participate actively and meaningfully in defining their desired approaches:*

- a. Support inclusive and democratic decision-making mechanisms at all levels in agriculture and food systems (for example, national inter-ministerial food security and nutrition committees and municipal food policy councils);
- b. Create and strengthen associations, organizations and cooperatives in all parts of food systems, including food producers and consumers, build capacities, create and exchange knowledge, and promote inclusive decision-making processes;
- c. Facilitate the use of social media and digital networking to promote producers' engagement in relevant processes;
- d. Give a central role to the marginalized and vulnerable groups most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, including women, youth and indigenous peoples in all decision-making that affects them; and,
- e. Reinforce the autonomy of women, particularly family farmers, their organizations, collective action, negotiation and leadership skills, to increase access to and control over *inter alia* education, appropriate extension services, gender-friendly technology, and full participation in related policy processes.<sup>40</sup>

*Promote the role of innovation in family farming by inviting the Steering Committee of the United Nations Decade on Family Farming, in collaboration with FAO and IFAD, to:*

- f. Integrate the findings of the HLPE report, and the present policy recommendations, into the implementation of the Global Action Plan of the United Nations Decade on Family Farming, which includes numerous actions for strengthening innovation in family farming.

\*\*\*

*In view of the relevance of agroecological and other innovative approaches for the UN Food Systems Summit, the CFS Chair should:*

- a. Transmit the HLPE report and the present policy recommendations for information to the UN Secretary General, the Special Envoy for the Food Systems Summit, the Advisory Committee and the Scientific Group.

**Commented [24]:**  
need to take into account the structural inequities that prevent effective engagement and participation.

