

## Swiss Inputs on the HLPE Report on «Agroecology and other innovative approaches»

### 1. Do you think that the recommendations in the HLPE report accurately reflect the findings of the report?

Yes, we do think that the recommendations in the HLPE report accurately reflect the findings in the report. The report is very well balanced, pragmatic, dynamic (with different steps, incremental and transformational) and multiscale (including the diversity of agriculture and food systems). The report is an excellent basis for the development of the CFS policy recommendations on agroecology and other innovations.

Agroecology is one major pathway towards sustainable food systems. The CFS recommendations are needed to foster transformation of food systems.

### 2. Do you think that major problems are missing from the HLPE recommendations?

We do not think that any major problem is missing from the HLPE recommendation. Some aspects could be strengthened in the policy recommendations:

- Systematic naming of all sustainability dimensions (e.g. HLPE Recommendation 1c) focuses on ecological footprint of food system, but there are also negative / positive social and economic impacts).
- When talking about investments, the policy recommendations should focus on “responsible” investments (e.g. HLPE Recommendation 3).
- When talking about “all stakeholders” the policy recommendations should take into account the financing institutions, foundations and funds in addition to states, local authorities and intergovernmental organizations (HLPE Recommendation 1 does not make mention to these types of financing institutions).
- When talking about biodiversity and natural resources, the policy recommendations should focus on “conserve and sustainable use” of biodiversity and natural resources and not simply, as highlighted in the HLPE report of “protect biodiversity and natural resources” (see HLPE Recommendation 2a.). Furthermore the revision of land degradation and water related issues should specifically be addressed.
- The aspect of “co-creation of knowledge” should be strengthened in the policy recommendations. There is little mention in the HLPE Report (e.g. Introductory paragraph of HLPE Recommendation 1 does not mention co-creation of knowledge)

Central to this report is the concept of transition and transformation. The policy recommendations should present approaches to drive the transitions needed for the major transformation of the current Food and Agriculture in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Figure 3 (Page 51) of the report is central in this regard. It shows the incremental and transformational levels of transition towards sustainable food systems. Some elements/principles can be (and are already) implemented easily without any major policy changes in conventional production agroecosystem.

### **3. Can you give examples of policies related to agro-ecological systems and other innovation systems for sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition? How were these policies formulated and what was their impact?**

The transition towards transformation is a dynamic process already started in most of the countries. Some measures might address the incremental level, whilst others focus on the transformational level or address both together. HLPE/FAO proposals in term of steps and elements/principles are a good basis for governments and other stakeholders to assess where they are in the transition (baseline) and where they want to focus in terms of policies and programmes.

In Switzerland, the terminology agroecology is not used in national policies. However current and future agricultural policies are already addressing the 5 levels of transition and the 13 suggested principles of Agroecology.

Implementation of 13 agroecological principals of HLPE in Switzerland. Some examples:

- Input reduction:
  - In September 2017, the Federal Council adopted an action plan for risk reduction and the sustainable use of crop protection products. The action plan enables Swiss agriculture to position itself in the sustainable production of foodstuffs. It was developed in collaboration with the industry. The plan defines 20 objectives.
  - The future agricultural policy (2022+) sets the maximum amount of farmyard manure to be spread to be reduced from 3 to 2.5 Livestock Units per hectare (= less nutrient leaching into surface water).
- Animal health: In Switzerland, sustainable livestock systems and production is fostered at different levels and with different instruments and initiatives, e.g. : a) Animal welfare: Government incentives to promote animal welfare on Swiss farms through ROEL (Regular Outdoor Exercise for Livestock) and PAS (Particularly Animal-Friendly Stabling); and b) Sustainability label: Promotion of sustainability through the market through e.g. NaturaBeef<sup>1</sup>
- Economic diversification: Regional development projects (RDP): RDP aim to create sustainable added value in the agricultural sector and to strengthen collaboration between agriculture and related sectors, including crafts, tourism, timber and forestry. In addition to economic goals, RDPs can pursue objectives related to ecology, society and culture.
- Recycling (e.g. Biogas plants): In Switzerland, exist about 100 agricultural biogas plants. They receive support from the government to foster locally and sustainably produced energy.

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<sup>1</sup> Natura-Beef refers to the meat of 10-month-old calves raised in suckler cow husbandry. Beef cattle breeds guarantee excellent quality beef. The label programme is characterized by comprehensive regulations governing the keeping and feeding of cattle in order to produce meat in an animal-friendly fashion, close to nature.

- Federal popular initiative: This is a way for Swiss citizens to request an amendment to the Federal Constitution. For a popular initiative to succeed, those launching the initiative need to collect 100,000 signatures from people entitled to vote within 18 months. If the initiative is valid, the initiative is put to the vote of the People and the cantons. In the context of agriculture there are currently 3 initiatives pending: “Switzerland without synthetic pesticides”, “Clean drinking water and healthy food - no subsidies for pesticide and prophylactic use of antibiotics” and “No factory farming in Switzerland”.

The Swiss Government is about to plan a study to further analyze agricultural policy measures and instruments and their contribution to agroecology. The aim is to have a detailed overview (matrix) on how agroecology is promoted in the Swiss agricultural policy.

With regard to existing examples of policies related to agro-ecological systems and other innovation systems for sustainable food systems, we would like to remind that FAO has conducted a global survey for a global analytical framework to better assess agroecology and validate / test it in countries and projects (survey sent out in August 2018). The survey also aimed to gather existing examples of policies related to agroecology. The results of the survey were discussed during a FAO expert workshop on multi-dimensional assessment of agroecology held in Rome on 8-9 October 2018 and incorporated in the document attached.

#### **4. Are there any other thoughts that you think should be taken into account by the CFS as part of this policy convergence process?**

We would like to reiterate the critical importance of establishing performance measurements tools and frameworks. FAO has a key role to place in the development and harmonization of such tools and frameworks. The FAO Conference Resolution (C 2019/LIM/13) on “Further integration of sustainable agriculture approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO confirms this key role.

We suggest to take into consideration the discussion paper of the Swiss National FAO Committee (CNS-FAO) on “[Agroecology as a means to achieve the SDGs](#)” of the [Swiss National FAO Committee](#)” (February 2019). The discussion paper by the CNS-FAO serves to orient the Swiss Government and interested stakeholders on agroecology as a means to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The discussion paper builds on the understanding that there is no single approach or technological solution to make global agriculture and food systems (AFS) more sustainable. Instead, a combination of diverse activities is required, which are aligned with the overall objective of sustainable AFS (see CNS-FAO 2016 «[Working towards Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems](#)»).

This paper explores the specific role that agroecology can play in this process and outlines ways forward to make use of this potential. It highlights how agroecology contributes to sustainable food systems and the SDGs, names challenges related to agroecology and gives clear recommendations on how to move forward in four different categories (a. Strengthening knowledge on agroecology, b) working with markets, c) enhancing collaboration, d) ensuring policy coherence to create a conducive policy context for agroecology). The fact that a multi-stakeholder committee with a broad spectrum of opinions and perspectives was able to adopt such a discussion paper was cited during several events, where the paper was presented, as best practice.