



## Agroecological and other innovative approaches

27 January 2020 – 9:30 -12:30, and 14:30-17:30

Green Room, FAO

### Rapporteur's Summary

Rapporteur, H.E. Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Iran) expressed its appreciation to all CFS stakeholders for their active participation and reminded them that the main objective of the meeting was to provide a space for an open, transparent, meaningful, and inclusive discussion among CFS stakeholders on policy areas to be addressed in the policy convergence process.

The Rapporteur also highlighted the crucial role of agroecological and other innovative approaches in the achievement of SDG2 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the relevance of this CFS policy convergence work to the upcoming Food Systems Summit in 2021.

#### Item 1 – Update on the process

The CFS Secretariat presented a detailed timeline laying out tasks and milestones leading to the presentation of Draft Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and other Innovative Approaches at CFS 47.

The Rapporteur emphasized the need for active participation of countries from all regions in order to develop policy recommendations that are truly reflective of regional and national priorities.

Several constituencies requested the possibility to share written comments in addition to those provided during the meeting and to be allowed sufficient time in order to reach capitals and national experts. The Rapporteur and Secretariat extended the deadline to 3 February 2020.

#### Item 2 – Rapporteur's Note

The Rapporteur thanked the CFS Secretariat and Technical Focal Points for their support in the development of the Rapporteur's Note, prepared using the HLPE recommendations as a starting point and incorporating written feedback received through an open call for inputs launched in November 2019.

Participants expressed general appreciation for the Rapporteur's Note, as well as for the efforts to carry out an inclusive and transparent policy convergence process. They acknowledged that HLPE report on agroecological and other innovative approaches is a useful and comprehensive basis from which to develop CFS policy recommendations.

Attendees highlighted the importance of aligning this policy process with other processes and/or documents already approved in order to complement, rather than duplicate, work of other international bodies.

## **Key points arising from discussion include:**

### **Introduction**

- Suggestion to use FAO's Ten Elements of Agroecology approved by FAO Council in December 2019, as a reference document for definitions.
- Support for including references to the right to adequate food as a universal human right for ensuring sustainable food systems and achieving food security and nutrition.
- Support for referencing the three pillars of sustainability – social, economic and environmental – to make global agriculture more sustainable and to avoid a “no one size fits all” approach in the recommendations.
- Suggestion to ensure coherence between all CFS documents, including these recommendations and the (draft) Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition
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- Suggestion to include in paragraph 6 a reference to “the Global Action Plan” (the follow-up to the State of World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture” prepared by the Commission of Genetic resources for Food security and Nutrition.
- Reminder to maintain the balance between agroecology and other innovative approaches by citing/using strong and empirical scientific evidence.
- Suggestion to include in paragraph 7 farmers among the list of stakeholders.
- Requests to reference the following documents in the final recommendations: a) Framework of the UN Decade of Family Farming, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP); b) UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); c) UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas adopted by the UN General Assembly (UNDROP).

### **Recommendation 1**

- Suggestion to integrate parts of recommendation 1 in the introduction.
- Support reference to fairness, equality and justice together with the integration of rights, including peasant farmers' rights and the participation of all stakeholders.
- Suggestion to revise the concept of “transformation of food systems” taking into consideration SDG 2.4 (“ensuring sustainable food systems”).
- Support for promoting the notion of ecological footprint as key to transitioning towards more sustainable food systems, emphasizing all three pillars of sustainability; some concerns expressed on duplication of efforts with SDG 2.4.1.
- Need to include the concept of sustainable consumption.
- Need for clear data and performance measurements to assess the impact of transitioning to sustainable food systems.
- Need for assessments to identify relevant innovations in terms of ecological footprint, achievement of agency, and economic impact.

- Concern over concentration of power and lack of transparency in the food sector.
- Need to include respect for indigenous knowledge.
- Need to avoid the expansion of metrics and methodologies on sustainable agriculture performance as it may undermine the achievement the 2030 Agenda. Suggestion to align with indicator 2.4.1 of the 2030 Agenda.
- Importance of cross-sectoral involvement and multistakeholder approaches to transform food systems through integration of agroecological and other innovative approaches.
- Suggestion to align text on respect for cultural heritage, traditional and indigenous knowledge, with CFS-RAI principle 7.
- Support for the inclusion of social movements and problem-focused transdisciplinary science in the identification of priority issues.
- Suggestion to specify the right to “healthy” and adequate food.

## **Recommendation 2**

- Should address the interlinkages between food systems and trade, subsidies, use of genetic resources, and intellectual property, while respecting the mandate of the CFS.
- Need to cross-reference, not repeat, relevant international processes.
- Align food labelling recommendations to WHO standards.
- Make specific reference to conservation of biodiversity.
- Consider referring to incentives rather than subsidies
- Address the contribution of agroecological and other sustainable innovative approaches not only to adaptation but also to mitigation of climate change.
- Support inclusion of integrated territorial approaches, including landscape management, natural resources and territorial markets, taking into account regional dimensions.
- Address the need for adequate sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and affirm Farmer's Rights to save, exchange, and sell their seeds.
- Suggestion to address the use of agrochemicals on the basis of scientific evidence and from a perspective of optimizing rather than reducing.
- Suggestion to take into consideration the economic interests of farmers in relation to the use of fertilizers.
- Support for development of local and regional markets and address global markets, as well.
- Suggestion to address the need to transform governance systems.
- Importance of supporting local approaches and promoting family farming.

- Support for inclusion of text addressing food loss and waste (FLW) including mention of role of civil society, social movements and private sector in reducing FLW and the importance of innovation in reducing FLW.
- Suggestion to refer to strengthening “responsible” investment to encourage young entrepreneurs, and woman community-led enterprises.
- Align references to healthy and “sustainable” diets with those in draft VGFSyN.
- Suggestion to replace reference to “nutrient dense” foods with importance of dietary diversity.
- Suggestion to ensure that food labelling is in line with WTO standards.
- Need discussion on ways to address digital technologies, including their potential impact on the right to food.
- Suggestion to strengthen the link to governance in the context of transitioning to sustainable food systems.
- Need to include clear references to specific technologies referred to (e.g. no-till farming).

### **Recommendation 3**

- Need to strengthen investments in public research.
- Need to support local innovation systems, taking into account specific context and needs.
- Need to promote innovations that meet sustainability criteria on the basis of scientific evidence.
- Need to understand that innovation is a means and not an end in itself, the end being sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition.
- Need for further research on how innovation can improve soil health, water saving, water harvesting.
- Importance of co-creation of knowledge and horizontal dissemination of experiences among practitioners.
- Suggestion to include reference to the transition to sustainable food and agriculture systems in school and university curricula.
- Suggestion to highlight the role of women in preserving agricultural knowledge and traditions.

### **Recommendation 4**

- Suggestion to move access to land and other natural resources under recommendation 2.
- Suggestion to include indigenous and pastoralists people under point b).
- Recognition of the crucial role of women in producing, keeping and increasing knowledge about domestication of plants and animals and preserving of nature.
- Importance of the concept of “agency”, in particular concerning participation in decision-making processes, but no agreement on whether it should be included as a fifth pillar of FSN.

- Suggestion to include a chapeau describing how small-scale producers constitute agents rather than vulnerable people, and to distinguish between rights holders and other stakeholders.
- Need to assess the impact of digital technologies.
- Suggestion to include a reference to the UN Decade of Family Farmers, in particular emphasizing the need to strengthen the development of policies in favor of family farmers, including women and youth.

#### **Recommendation 5**

- Importance of clear, comprehensive and evidence-based performance measurements to guide farmers' choices towards sustainability.
- Need to go beyond assessments based only on yield productivity and strengthen multidimensionality of performance evaluation metrics and criteria.
- Need to strengthen assessment of biotechnology on the basis of scientific evidence.
- Suggestion to add reference to the evaluation of the impact of technologies.
- Support for the inclusion of "true cost accounting", taking into account economic viability.
- Suggestion to further develop food product certification, taking into account existing international standards.
- Suggestion to include a policy area on standards for food safety.
- Need for clear information on digitalization, as well as assessment and control of current data available (data ownership).
- Need to clarify/define concepts of "environmentally friendly" and "socially responsible".

#### **Item 4 - Closing remarks**

The Rapporteur thanked CFS stakeholders for their constructive participation and encouraged continued engagement in the next phases of the policy convergence process.