



**Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM)**  
**Youth Submissions on elements to be included in the Zero Draft**  
 (November 22, 2021)

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**Executive Summary:** A paradigm shift is urgently needed to address the compounding social, political, economic, health, and ecological crises of today. These crises are rooted in grave inequalities and historical injustices that have constituted structural features of the capitalist economy over its development for more than five hundred years. Thus, systemic changes in food systems require a significant redistribution of power and resources as part of broader processes of transformation toward economies of well-being. To achieve these necessary changes, the CFS youth policy should be firmly **grounded in the HLPE's youth report, as well as the following five interconnected core elements:**

1. Radical transformation is imperative

2. Building economies of well-being
3. Food sovereignty and youth agency
4. Agroecology and climate justice
5. Human rights and responsible governance

Building on these core elements, food sovereignty should be adopted as a structural solution for transforming existing social, economic, and political relationships and conditions within and across countries. The diversity and agency of youth must be recognized to ensure equity within redistributive policies and programs, particularly for genuine agrarian reform. In addition to UNDROP, UNDRIP, and ILO conventions, the human rights and responsible governance principles included in the VGGTs are indispensable for policies that would enable the dignified and meaningful engagement of youth in food systems transformation, especially through agroecological transitions at the local and territorial levels.

## **1. Which priority issues and policy-relevant areas should be addressed through this CFS policy convergence process and included in the policy recommendations?**

The HLPE's report, *Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems*, should form the basis of the Zero-draft of the policy recommendations and the work of the OEWG going forward. The HLPE is an integral component of the CFS and its "independent, scientific knowledge-based analysis and advice" are essential to CFS policy processes. Unfortunately, this view is not shared by all member states, but regardless it is the responsibility of the OEWG to respect the integral role of the HLPE. Further, still not only is it [stated practice](#) that the HLPE's "findings and recommendations serve as a basis for CFS policy discussions" but the HLPE's reports allow us to work from a place of shared knowledge and understanding.

The HLPE's report offers important insights and a solid theoretical floor from which to build the policy convergence. In particular, the HLPE's conceptual framework, based on the four pillars of recognition, rights, equity and agency, offers a clear basis for our collective work. These pillars are fundamental to fully engaging youth in food systems and constructing economies of well-being, which are defined by food sovereignty, dignified livelihoods, and healthy environments. In all our comments below, we rely on these pillars and intend to make them the basis of our interventions throughout the policy convergence process.

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes the urgent need for bold and transformative steps to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. Rather than address priority areas, in these submissions we identify **five interconnected core elements** that are each essential to realizing the right to food and transition to sustainable food systems as well as to ensuring youth engagement in agriculture and food systems. Again, these elements should not be understood simply as priority issues for the CSM. Instead, the OEWG must recognize them as **necessary, core elements of a focused, action-oriented document** that will encourage public policies to protect human rights and foster enabling environments for youth to meaningfully engage and lead in the transformation of unsustainable, unjust food systems.

We begin by addressing our core elements, before then addressing specific policy recommendations.

### **A. Core Elements to be Addressed**

#### **a. Core element # 1: Radical transformation is imperative**

The HLPE report on youth underscores that a major shift away from "business as usual" is needed to realize the right to food and support youth as frontline agents of social change. These policy recommendations should

identify **what needs to change and how radical transformations should occur**. This policy convergence process therefore requires respect for the CFS mandate as well as a high level of ambition that extends far beyond the SDGs and other forms of “agreed language” for the CFS. The OEWG should take into account the oppressive ideologies and unjust material conditions that form the basis of socially inequitable and environmentally unsustainable institutions and practices. The recommendations must highlight the urgent need for **equitable redistributive actions** in order to address present-day inequalities and aim to ensure healthy environments and good living for future generations. The recommendations must be based on a shift away from the flawed concept and erroneous ethical claim that economic growth should be the fundamental aim of life. Instead, the recommendations should integrate agroecological and social justice principles, such as the full realization and protection of human rights, a just transition away from fossil fuels, and the restoration of ecosystems for enhancing resilience to climate change.

#### **b. Core element # 2: Building economies of well-being**

These policy recommendations must signal holistic pathways for poverty eradication and urgent food systems transformation centered on human rights and ecological harmony. Alarmed that rates of hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition were rising even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, the OEWG should generate clear guidance with concrete steps for **transitioning toward economies of well-being** based on **solidarity, cooperation, care, participatory democracy, and ecological restoration** – principles that are fundamentally opposed to the logic of domination, exploitation, competition, militarism, and concentration of wealth and power which characterize the capitalist food system and the extractive economy more broadly. The transformation of unsustainable, undemocratic food systems necessarily depends on the strengthening and protection of peasants’ and workers’ rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, LGBTQ+ rights, and the rights of women and youth. The policy recommendations must underscore the need for building economies of well-being in order to address the problem of youth migration (including: rural-to-urban and international migration for employment; displacement due to land grabs, armed conflict, occupation, and public insecurity; and migration prompted by climate change and extreme weather events), which is a serious threat to the future of smallholder food production and food security in the future. Gender equity, women’s autonomy, and equal rights to productive resources must be central to these policy recommendations, which should also include the concepts of intersectionality and social marginalization in order to visibilize the diversity of identities, systemic barriers, lived experiences, and livelihood strategies of youth around the world. Redistributive policies are needed at all levels, concerning everything from equitable redistribution of resource access and control (such as land, seeds, fisheries, and forests) to reconfiguring power relations within institutions and decision-making spaces. Finally, extensive investments in public infrastructure and social services are necessary to realize the right to food, build food sovereignty, and transition toward economies of well-being.

#### **c. Core element # 3: Food sovereignty and youth agency**

This policy convergence process must focus on the HLPE’s conclusions about significantly redistributing power in order to enable and reinforce youth agency in the democratization of agriculture and food systems, particularly at the local and territorial levels where peasants, family farmers, artisanal fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, landless peoples, rural workers, migrants, pastoralists, forest communities, hunter-gatherers, consumers, environmental and urban movements, LGBTQ+ communities, women, and youth engage in a range of agri-food production, processing, and distribution practices as part of formal and informal economies. Recalling why the HLPE frames agency in structural terms with a focus on unequal power relations and systemic oppression that imposes barriers to achieving food systems sustainability, these policy recommendations must provide guidance on implementing **food sovereignty as a structural solution** for radically transforming existing social, economic, and political relationships and conditions within and across countries. A precondition of food security, food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally

appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, as well as the right of peoples to define and control their own food and agricultural systems. It is a political proposal that confronts industrial agribusiness, the neoliberal policies of globalized trade, and food security as defined by the corporate food regime. **Food sovereignty** puts the needs and aspirations of those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the core of food systems and policies. These policy recommendations must spotlight **agrarian reform** as a necessary condition of food sovereignty, along with agroecology, social peace, the restoration of biological and cultural diversity, sustainable care and use of natural resources, regulation of transnational corporations, and reorganization of trade toward the localization of food systems and creation of solidarity economies.

**d. Core element # 4: Agroecology and climate justice**

This policy convergence process should highlight the connections between **peasant agroecology, climate justice, and the right to food**. The recommendations must integrate the FAO's 10 elements of agroecology and the HLPE's 13 principles of agroecology in order to outline major attributes of holistic transition pathways toward economies of well-being, identifying agroecology as a science, practice, and social movement in opposition to industrial agribusiness. Agroecology is fundamentally incompatible with the extractive, unjust model of industrial agriculture, and the promotion of false solutions to hunger and climate change – such as agrotoxins, genetically modified and patented seeds, sustainable intensification, and climate-smart agriculture – has no place in these recommendations. False solutions further concentrate wealth and power, disrupt and destroy biodiversity, poison and displace communities living and working in sacrifice zones, and reduce climate crises to a carbon crisis that can purportedly be fixed through technological innovation and market schemes. These policy recommendations must acknowledge the global climate crisis as one of the most disruptive factors influencing the dynamics of ecosystems. The recommendations should call attention to climate change as a severe threat to present-day and future food security. Due to social marginalization and their special interdependencies with land, fisheries, and forests, climate change and weather-related natural disasters will continue to disproportionately impact indigenous peoples, peasants, and other people working in rural areas. The youth and children of today, who are already facing the impacts of climate change, will face even more severe impacts of climate chaos as we grow older due to the inequities between nations and the inaction by powerful government that refuse to actually change course and transition away from the fossil fuel economy now. youth-specific targets or measures aimed at providing employment in agriculture and food systems will be successful if such initiatives are not part of a radical transformation away from extractive economic systems that drive ecological destruction and fuel climate change. These policy recommendations should promote true-cost accounting and utilization of ecological footprint as a key concept for assessing food systems sustainability. The recommendations should urge States to fulfill their pledges to cut GHG emissions, as well as to urge the reversal of biodiversity loss through agroecology. This policy process should also offer guidance for accompanying social movements with capacity-building support and benefits to youth engaged in food systems transformation, most importantly for participants of urban and rural agroecology schools and peasant-to-peasant training processes which are context-specific and have proven effective for enhancing resilience to climate change and for improving food security and nutrition, especially for women, youth, and children.

**e. Core element #5: Human rights and responsible governance**

Recognition of, respect for and commitments to realizing human rights must be at the very heart and center of this policy process, guiding both how the negotiation is carried out as well as the content of any recommendations made. We address the question of a rights-based negotiation process in response to question two below, and here focus on the necessity of a human rights foundation to the recommendations themselves. The policy recommendations must assert youth as rights holders and Member States as duty bearers, setting out all recommendations from this starting point. The OEWG should frame all human rights as interconnected, rather than positing the realization of the right to food as an isolated objective. Human rights are contained in numerous instruments which should

be prominently featured in these recommendations, particularly the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR), the [International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) (ICESCR), the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR), [Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#) (CEDAW), the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP), and the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas](#) (UNDROP). The recommendations must set out robust protections for **workers’ rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, and peasants’ rights**, including rights to land, seeds, clean, water, education, training, decent work, housing, healthcare, freedom of association and expression, healthy environments, and traditional knowledge. It will not be enough to simply recognize these rights, however, because concrete steps must be identified to realize them. Systemic change requires the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence and depends on recognition and remuneration for unpaid care and domestic work. The recommendations must promote **redistributive mechanisms, primarily agrarian reform**, and clearly address the topic of collective rights, such as in the context of tenure rights and the responsible governance of land, fisheries, and forests as laid out in the VGGTs. Human rights and governance principles – such as [the PANTHER framework](#)– should inform all the recommendations made. The policy recommendations should denounce the weaponization of food which occurs through sanctions and other unilateral coercive measures that prevent countries from implementing the guidelines and policy recommendations endorsed by the CFS. The recommendations should clarify the CFS’s role in seeking accountability for violations of international law, lack of adherence to the UN Charter, and non-cooperation toward the CFS vision.

## **B. Responses to the HLPE Policy Recommendations**

The policy recommendations in the HLPE report provide a strong basis for OEWG discussion and negotiation. The CSM generally supports and looks forward to building upon most of the HLPE’s recommendations as this policy process advances. Below, we underscore the recommendations that we do not support, and we request that they are not included in the Zero Draft.

The following recommendations which address digitalization, schemes for promoting start-up businesses, and false solutions to hunger and climate change **should not** be included in the Zero Draft: recommendation 3e; recommendations 4a and 4f; and recommendations 5a, 5b, 5c, and 5d. While many recommendations need strengthening, these recommendations are particularly concerning because they do not clearly problematize or sufficiently address: the problems of colonial and neocolonial domination; the structural contradictions of the extractive economy; the failures of the Green Revolution, and industrial agriculture’s contributions to climate change, environmental destruction, biodiversity loss, and human suffering in a holistic sense; the negative impacts of structural adjustment policies and other neoliberal reforms; and the need to reject false solutions, such as climate-smart agriculture and digital technologies, and focus instead on the root causes of social, political, and economic inequalities and injustices.

All CFS policy recommendations must be firmly grounded in human rights, responsible governance. These recommendations could be revised and significantly rewritten only if the four pillars of recognition, rights, equity, and agency are prominently featured. To do this, any recommendation regarding digitalization must involve measures to bridge digital divides, and references to “sustainable innovation” must acknowledge that equitable retributive measures are necessary because wealthier, more powerful, and privileged individuals and social groups tend to benefit the most from market-oriented policies that do not genuinely prioritize the engagement of historically and currently marginalized, vulnerable, and oppressed social groups. Further, the recommendations direct states to ensure that the free, prior, and

informed consent of indigenous peoples is required for all law, policies or projects that impact their lives and territories.

### C. CSM Policy Recommendations

In this section, we share a set of policy recommendations with original language that expands from the HLPE report. Our text proposals relate to the five core elements described in the sections above. The proposed recommendations underscore what needs to change and how food systems transformation should occur.

#### a. CSM proposals re core element #1: Transformation is imperative

- With respect to *economies and development*:
  - States and international institutions must **STOP** prioritizing economic growth as the basis for policy and law, and **STOP** implementing extractive development models that destroy the environment, violate human rights, and exploit natural resources and people.
  - States must **END** the illegal occupation of territories, and international institutions must take actions to address ongoing occupations.
  - States must **STOP** land grabs and other forms of resource control by agro-industrial companies.
  - **INSTEAD**, States and international institutions must
    - adopt policies and laws that prioritize ecological harmony, human health, and principles such as *buen vivir*, *sumak kawsay* and other regionally and culturally embedded conceptions of the good life. support initiatives aimed at the elaboration and adoption of binding legal rules in international law that improve access to justice for victims of violations of the right to food (and related rights) caused by corporate activities.
- With respect to *food systems*:
  - States and international institutions must **STOP** adopting policies, economic decisions and investments that support the current neoliberal capitalist approach to food system governance, with its focus on ‘cheap food’ and ‘cheap labour’ to ‘increase productive capacity’.
  - States and international institutions must **STOP** enabling corporate control of food systems.
  - **INSTEAD**, States and international institutions must build food systems grounded in democratic control, food sovereignty and accountability, by supporting policies and economies based on care, equity and the protection of our ecosystems, putting public goods over private profits, including through:
    - respecting, protecting and fulfilling all human rights (economic, social, cultural and political), both individual and collective, while respecting the right to self-determination and autonomy; and
    - following agroecological principles as a guidance for sustainable development and holistic food system transformation, to support contextualised solutions through bottom-up and territorial processes, combining science with the traditional, practical knowledge of food producers, and enhancing their capacity as key agents of change.
- With respect to *trade*:
  - States and international institutions must **STOP** the prioritization of liberalized trade regimes and export-oriented industrial agriculture, including by **INSTEAD**:
    - Removing agriculture from the jurisdiction of the World Trade Organization and finding new means for establishing a trade system centered on human rights and ecological harmony, which promotes and protects young small-scale producers, fair trade, and solidarity economies.

- Sharing best practices and adopting true-cost accounting measures that assess the ecological footprints and social justice dimensions of food systems.
- With respect to *youth engagement and leadership*:
  - States must (on an ongoing basis) assess (identify, monitor, update, evaluate) structural barriers to youth employment in food systems, such as climate change, environmental disruption, lack of access to productive resources (land, water, seeds, financial resources, information and knowledge), lack of access to social security, systemic racism, gender discrimination and social exclusion. Any assessment conduct must ensure the inclusion and participation of the most vulnerable territories and youth groups.
  - States must adopt policies that respond to and seek to address identified barriers. These policy processes must be participatory.
- With respect to *Covid 19*
  - States and international institutions must **STOP** ignoring the impacts of Covid 19, particularly on the most marginalized and **INSTEAD** take immediate actions to produce and enact a globally coordinated response to COVID that addresses in a holistic manner the ways in which the multiple crises triggered by COVID have exacerbated existing inequalities.

## **b. CSM proposals re core element #2: Building economies of well-being**

- States and international institutions **MUST** facilitate transitions towards economies of well-being, based on sustainable food systems that enable dignified livelihoods, promote a healthy environment, and uphold the right to food and food sovereignty, including by:
  - *Promoting, strengthening and protecting* longstanding and new diversified localized food systems, such as Indigenous food systems, territorial food systems including local and territorial markets that have been providing and could provide healthy, fresh and regional food to communities around the world.
    - by implementing the CFS Policy Recommendations on Connecting Smallholders to Markets.
    - and by creating an enabling policy environment to support consumers' involvement in co-production, local direct food webs, and smallholder access to territorial markets.
  - *Promoting* redistributive and mediated market policies such as agrarian reform, prioritizing marginalised groups.
  - *Focusing* on the provision of public services and infrastructure by realizing human rights to education, public health, transportation, internet, particularly in marginalized and rural areas.
  - *Reinvesting* in public education, and alternative educational models that recognize and promote the value of care work.
  - *Promoting* and developing economies of wellbeing for all age groups and genders, amongst others by recognizing the currently undervalued and unpaid care work, provided predominantly by women.
  - *Investing* in agroecology and other true solutions to the climate crisis.
  - *Reinvesting* in public infrastructure, in particular in rural areas.
  - *Ending* subsidies and other public supports for extractive and industrial forms of agriculture.
  - *Utilizing* tools such as participatory budgeting and true cost accounting to reform the management of economies, societies and food systems.
  - *Recognizing* Indigenous rights and the rights of local communities and addressing ongoing impacts of colonialism around the world.
  - *Funding* a variety of social programs and public goods including, but not limited to:
    - Public infrastructure for small-scale producers;
    - Comprehensive agrarian reform, including redistribution of land and productive resources to youth;

- Education in schools on food systems, healthy diets, food preparation and health and nutrition;
  - Universal child care, including after school care;
  - Universal school feeding programs;
  - Universal health care;
  - Rights-based social protection schemes; and
  - Seed banks and systems for seed exchanges, including supports for Indigenous seed saving and crop production.
- *Supporting* the many existing initiatives (such as community supported agriculture, food baskets, local and territorial markets) that have been reducing the distance between consumers and producers and *creating* enabling conditions for more of such initiatives, including facilitating access to land and other productive resources for young smallholders and food system actors in the process of setting up short-distance supply chain initiatives.
- *Procuring* food for public institutions, including schools and universities, from the communities and small-scale food producers and family farms within the respective territories.
- *Promoting* the development and availability of inclusive, publicly funded, and affordable financial services and advisory services (extension, training) tailored to the needs of young agroecological and smallholder farmers, pastoralists and fisherfolks, especially considering the needs of young women and LGBTQ+, by prioritising financial services aimed at young people’s resilience and autonomy, and by protecting them from high interest rates and falling into debt.
- States and international institutions must **STOP** employing the narrative that youth are only interested in entrepreneurship and the newest technologies. States and international institutions must **STOP** reducing youth employment and entrepreneurship in food systems to a mere matter of adequate market incentives. **INSTEAD** states and international should:
  - *Recognize* the diverse set of youth interests in and relationships with food systems.
  - *Adopt* public policies and initiatives that recognize Youth's plural identities, including as small-scale producers, and that support youth-led, agroecological initiatives as well as programmes that enable youth empowerment and do not silence youth.
  - *Promote* youth and food system entrepreneurship first and foremost through solidarity economies and redistributive policies such as comprehensive agrarian reform, policies aimed at the realization of the right to productive resources, land and a healthy environment, and, overall, policies aimed at the realization of all human rights.
  - *Support* alternative visions and understandings on technology and innovation, including peasant-to-peasant methodologies, agroecological experimentation coordinated by grassroots social movements, open access technologies, community seed reserves, and recognition of and respect for traditional and local ecological knowledge systems.
  - *Critically assess* new technologies and their distributive impacts in society, including who will have access and who will not, who will benefit and/or profit from their introduction and who will not, and the costs (social and ecological).
- States and international institutions must **STOP** unilateral coercive measures (sanctions) and **INSTEAD** respect the UN Charter and international law (including all human rights instruments as well as Geneva Conventions) as well as adopted UN declarations, treaties, and resolutions.

**c. CSM proposals re core element #3: Food sovereignty and youth agency**

- States and international institutions must **STOP** relying solely on the concept food security as a basis for law and policy, and **INSTEAD** seek to achieve food sovereignty and the realization of the right to food for all, including by ensuring rights to healthy and culturally appropriate food, supporting solidarity economies and mutual aid, investing in public food systems infrastructure, legislating living wages, and ensuring robust rights-based social protection schemes.

- States and international institutions **MUST** recognize the right to food sovereignty, including recognizing and ensuring collective and individual agency to determine the structure of food systems, as well as what to eat and how to produce, as defined in the HLPE Report *Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030*. This will require transforming governance structures and the values that underlie them.
- States must **STOP** the criminalization of social movements and human rights defenders, and **INSTEAD** work with movements and defenders to adopt policies that support their struggles.
- States and international institutions must **STOP** enabling corporate control of food systems and **INSTEAD** build food systems grounded in democratic control, food sovereignty and accountability.
- States and international institutions must **STOP** ignoring or coopting youth voices in law and policy-making, and **INSTEAD** ensure not only a place and space for youth participation but also for youth leadership, including by:
  - *Funding* space for autonomous engagement of social movements and civil society in policy processes, including where necessary covering travel costs, internet access and child/elder care.
  - *Ensuring* rights-based process, and *addressing* conflicts of interest and unequal bargaining power.
  - *Adopting* participatory budgeting.
  - *Recognizing* traditional knowledge and livelihoods, in order to protect and respect families, future generations and ourselves.

#### **d. CSM proposals re core element #5: Agroecology and climate justice**

- States and international institutions must immediately **STOP** supporting industrial food production, including by ending subsidies, research funding and other state supports for industrial food production.
- States must **STOP** relying on fossil fuels (including subsidies for fuel).
- States must **STOP** relying on and promoting false solutions that continue corporate-domination and displace marginalised people, such as climate smart agriculture, carbon markets (e.g. REDD+), payment for ecosystem services, and climate engineering.
- States and international institutions must **INSTEAD** redirect and increase public resources towards supporting agroecological practices and research, including by:
  - *Relying on* the Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology, the FAO's 10 elements of agroecology and the HLPE's 13 principles of agroecology as well as engagement with local populations and rights holders to define agroecology and a path towards an agroecological transition.
  - *Supporting* farmers engaged in agroecological production already and those wishing to transition with extension services as well as access to productive resources.
  - *Supporting* sustainable local food systems, including by creating an enabling policy environment to support consumers' involvement in co-production, local direct food chains, and farmers' connection to territorial markets.
  - *Supporting* agroecology training schools organized by grassroots social movements, in order to equip youth with the skills, knowledge, and social relationships needed to scale regenerative food production within our territories.
  - *Supporting* youth, small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples, landless people, pastoralists, fisherfolks, and agricultural workers, as stewards of our ecosystems.
  - *Accompanying and supporting* social movements with capacity-building support and benefits for youth to engage in agroecology, including by supporting participants of urban and rural agroecology schools and peasant-to-peasant training processes.
- States and international institutions must recognize that Youth, through our local knowledge and capacity, are already able to produce food that respects planetary boundaries, protecting soil, water and biodiversity.
- States and international institutions must **STOP** promoting technology and entrepreneurship as the only means of engaging youth in food systems and **INSTEAD** promote and adopt an agroecological approach to digitalization and technological innovation by,

- *Promoting* context-specific and low-barrier-to-entry ICT applications *instead of* one-size-fits-all digital tools.
- *Prioritising* the co-creation and sharing of knowledge in the development of technological platforms including prioritising the participation of the most marginalised actors within the food system (smallholder farmers and pastoralists, landless, Indigenous peoples, non-male farmers, young food system participants) *instead of* opting for top-down, “expert-led” solutions which build on the abusive extraction of knowledge from farmers.
- *Promoting* the farmer co-created development of robust and adaptable ICT tools and platforms guaranteeing the resilience, self-determination and independence of farmers and their businesses, instead of creating vulnerability and corporate dependence of farmers.
- *Guaranteeing* farmers’ full ownership of tools, methodologies and data.
- *Developing* ICT tools and platforms based on the principles of circular and solidarity economies, thus prioritising reciprocal, non-competitive and socially beneficial principles.
- States and international institutions **MUST** introduce policies and legal frameworks that require industrial food producers to pay for the externalities of their production methods, like the environmental costs, while rewarding agroecological production for its social, environmental and economic benefits.
- States and international institutions **MUST** commit to and *actually* work towards implementing the Paris Agreement and the pledges made.

**e. CSM proposals re core element #5: Human rights and responsible governance**

- States and international institutions must **STOP** denying the applicability of internationally recognized and adopted human rights instruments as well as the rights contained in them, including UNDRIP, UNDROP and CEDAW.
- States and international institutions must **INSTEAD** respect, protect and fulfill all human rights, both individual and collective, while acknowledging youth and collective self-determination and autonomy. This would include, but not be limited to the following:
  - *Adopting* international human rights frameworks, like UNDROP, UNDRIP and the ILO conventions, into national law.
  - *Guaranteeing and protecting* human rights to land, water, seeds, biodiversity and knowledge as human rights consistent with UNDROP and other human rights instruments.
  - *Adopting* comprehensive agrarian reform that respects and protects our rights to our territories and provides youth vital access to land.
  - *Supporting* agroecology as a practice, knowledge and movement, through the protection of customary tenure systems and through land restitution and redistribution.
  - *Guaranteeing* tenures rights consistent with human rights principles in UNDROP and the provisions in the CFS’s Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security.
  - *Recognizing* gender diversity and respecting and protecting the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.
  - *Realizing* the rights of all workers, including migrant workers.
  - *Ensuring* the rights of human rights defenders and social movements.
  - *Ending* land grabs, otherwise referred to as large-scale land acquisitions.
  - *Ensuring* dignity, living wages, and access to benefits for all workers, including legal status for migrant workers and rights-based social protection programs that eradicate poverty, social exclusion and structural violence.
  - *Ensuring* a right to health care, including universal health care consistent with the ICESCR.
  - *Ensuring* unemployment benefits and universal basic incomes to workers in all sectors, including informal sectors and agricultural sectors.
  - *Addressing* public health concerns in employment, including those related to the pandemic.

- *Ensuring* that migrant workers are granted all rights contained in domestic law and international human rights instruments, including status on arrival and non-discrimination on the basis of national origin and immigration status.
- *Including* young people and young food producers in shaping the future of food systems across rural and urban areas by facilitating their engagement and empowering their decision-making and leadership in law and policy making.
- States and international institutions must **STOP** structural discrimination against Indigenous peoples, black people, people of colour, women, migrants, rural people, LGBTQI+ and Disabled People, and **INSTEAD** ensure the full realization of all rights, including by remedying inequalities and introducing redistributive policies by respecting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of women, LGBTQI+, Indigenous Peoples, Black people and People of Colour, and disabled people, including sexual and reproductive rights to end structural and intersectional discrimination.
- States and international institutions **MUST** recognize that human rights trump all other legal and private rights recognized in domestic law or international law. Where laws and policies conflict with these human rights, they must be altered and made into compliance with human rights standards. This includes:
  - *Ensuring* that rights-based mechanisms are put into place to address conflict of interest which arise from the influence of powerful private sector interests and the capture of public policy agendas by private sector actors.
- States and international institutions must **STOP** engaging in policies and activities that are oppressive to and marginalize certain classes, castes, and racialized groups.
- States must address women's and girls' rights in a holistic and systemic way, including by:
  - *Redistributing* and *revaluating* the social reproductive and care work carried out predominantly by women due to the gender assigned roles in our patriarchal society
  - *Adopting* robust parental leave policies that ensure parents – regardless of whether they are employed and are in the formal or informal sector – are supported and that women are not penalized in the workforce for having children.
  - *Adopting* universal child care policies, that provide access to quality child care before they enter primary school, and in the mornings and afternoons before classes, to ensure caregivers in the workforce are not negatively impacted by having children.
  - *Adopting* school curriculum for teaching children about gender, equality, and equity.
  - *Adopting* robust care policies, to assist family members in the care they provide to their family members and communities.
  - *Engaging* in labour and employment law reform to better account for care giving responsibilities, and to encourage equal distribution of those duties.
  - *Adopting and enforcing* pay equity legislation to end the pay gap between men and women.
  - *Adopting* school feeding and nutrition programs that ensure students have access to proper nutrition to meet their nutritional and learning needs.
- States and international institutions must recognize and address current power imbalances, increasing inequalities and patriarchal norms as systemic drivers of the failing of our food systems. The strengthening of the rule of law and accountability for human rights violations is, therefore, fundamental.

## 2. Do you have any suggestions for CFS meaningfully engaging youth constituencies in the policy convergence process?

The modalities of this policy process must respect the principle of inclusion as defined by the CFS mandate as well as the requirements of a rights-based approach. **Language justice** is central to ensuring inclusion and the meaningful participation from the diverse constituencies of the CSM.

In the past, CFS negotiations have only provided interpretation during the official sessions of the working group. This has meant that when negotiations extend beyond the scheduled hours (which they often do) and during the Friends of the Rapporteur sessions, those who are not fluent in English are effectively barred from participation in the policy process. In the first OEWG meeting on November 19th 2021, the CFS did not provide any interpretation. This resulted in the CSM having to draw on its limited resources to provide interpretation so that non-English-speaking CSM participants could follow the meeting, which also benefited Member States. However, it is not the responsibility of the CSM, as an autonomous platform supporting the most marginalised small-scale food producers to provide interpretation to a UN body; nor does the CSM have the capacity to do so. Interpretation in all CFS languages will be absolutely necessary for each session of the Open-Ended Working Group and any Friends of the Rapporteur meetings that occur.

Previous CFS working groups have only or mostly communicated in English. In order to guarantee the right of CSM Youth to fully participate in this process, all written communications, especially email updates and each version of the zero and first drafts as they are negotiated, must be in all six languages of the CFS. Previous CFS negotiations have only prepared English versions of the text being negotiated. Similarly, the text used for the negotiation (the text for which we propose inputs and seek consensus) is always only in English, effectively precluding non-English speakers from really engaging in the negotiations. It will be important to develop a new modality for the upcoming process, one that does not arbitrarily exclude so many.

We are living in a challenging time – multiple crises are affecting our constituencies and communities around the globe. These crises pose challenges for us in coordinating an inclusive and fair policy negotiation process, but they are not insurmountable. The chosen **modality of the negotiations** can either result in the inclusion or exclusion of youth. Here are recommendations for ensuring the inclusion of youth:

At this time, it is unclear whether the work plan for this policy process will occur mostly through virtual or in-person meetings. If the negotiations are virtual, it will be important to support state delegates as well as youth who have connectivity challenges. Access to highspeed internet is a necessity for participation, but it is not available to all. How can the CFS support the engagement of those without reliable access to high-speed internet? Further, if the negotiations are online, we must address the issue of multiple time zones. In order to ensure participation from all regions, it will be necessary to have a varied schedule that allows opportunity for anyone regardless of time zone to participate.

If the negotiations proceed in person, we are very concerned that the vaccine apartheid will effectively preclude many of our constituency members from participating. If the negotiations proceed in a hybrid format, we are very concerned that those attending in person (which for the reasons stated above will not be everyone) will be advantaged in the negotiation process.

Currently the negotiations are only scheduled for six days. This is simply not sufficient given the content to be covered and the importance of the policy process. More days must be booked and announced well in advance, providing youth ample time to coordinate our participation.

We are greatly disappointed that the final work plan for this process only includes one thematic discussion in December rather than three written into the draft plan. The CSM Youth have already stated our interest, such as during the CFS Plenary, in playing a leadership role in determining the structure and content of the thematic discussion, as we believe that the event should focus heavily on the conceptual framework and conclusions of the HLPE report on youth. Meaningfully engaging youth in this process depends on whether the OEWG devotes enough time to debating policy themes in depth and, more importantly, whether Member States actually support CSM proposals for the policy recommendations.

We also must note how CSM Youth are engaging in this policy process. The CSM is an open space in which leaders from social movements and Indigenous Peoples organisations play active coordination roles across the entire Mechanism. Their participation within CSM depends on facilitated processes of debate, collaborative work, consultation, and consensus building, in three languages. These consultative processes take time and care and are at the heart of the legitimacy of the CSM as a people's Mechanism. We hope that the OEWG's modalities will give proper consideration to and strive to support the CSM's distinctive and democratic ways of working. This will ensure the voices of those who are the most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, and the primary contributors to feeding the world's population are prioritised as key protagonists in this process. This will be essential to the successful implementation of these policy recommendations on the ground, after their adoption by Member States.

In conclusion, we look forward to working in collaboration to ensure this policy process follows from the HLPE's recommendations on significantly redistributing power within food systems and governance institutions. This focus will ensure support for youth agency and respect the right of young people to fully participate in all CFS policy processes and particularly this one, which should offer guidance on country-level implementation of policies that situate food sovereignty, dignified livelihoods, and healthy environments as top priorities.