

## CFS CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY REPORT ON THE HIGH-LEVEL FORUM ON TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE, BIODIVERSITY LOSS AND LAND DEGRADATION THROUGH THE RIGHT TO FOOD

### I. Background

Climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation all pose significant threats to the realization of the right to adequate food, impacting its accessibility, adequacy, availability, and sustainability core elements. They form a feedback loop, where climate change drives biodiversity loss and both contribute to land degradation. In turn, land degradation weakens the land's ability to withstand climate impacts, making ecosystems less resilient to climate change while contributing to biodiversity loss. This cycle affects particularly persons and groups in vulnerable situations, especially those whose livelihood depends directly on agriculture and natural resources. As agrifood systems are weakened, communities experience greater food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty.

Addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation is hence crucial for realizing the right to adequate food for all. The right to food framework provides a comprehensive, human rights-based approach focused on the structural causes and systemic factors of those interconnected challenges.

According to its Multi-Year Programme of Work, "CFS has a key role to play in strengthening coordinated global policy responses between relevant stakeholders to the multiple dimensions of food crises". More specifically, the Multi-Year Programme of Work provides that in 2025 a High-Level Forum on Tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation through the Right to Food is organized.

### II. Outcomes of the High-Level Forum

On 12 May 2025, the CFS convened a High-Level Forum with representatives from stakeholders of CFS, the human rights community and the Rio Conventions which reflected on how climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation are deeply interlinked with the realization of the right to food. Participants discussed some of the ways in which these challenges could be jointly tackled.

Some of the essential takeaways of this Forum were:

- **There is an urgent need for action.** The challenges hindering the realization of the right to food caused by climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation including desertification, the destruction of aquatic food systems or the spread of invasive alien species are tremendous. This was underscored by representatives from the Maldives and Egypt, which shared the challenges their countries are facing – highlighting similar problems as well as country-specific challenges. All statements clearly reiterated the importance and urgency of acting in a collaborative and concerted manner.
- **The solutions must be as interconnected as the challenges.** Nexus approaches simultaneously addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation are key.

There is a range of approaches that already exist and have proven to be effective such as agroecology, innovation, tenure governance and the restoration of degraded agricultural lands. Some of the technical measures are more traditional, some very innovative.

- **What is needed now is concerted action to upscale these solutions.** For that barriers to implementation need to be removed and conducive enabling environment needs to be created, including through the right policy framework as well as accessible infrastructure, finance, and inclusive planning processes.
- **Solutions must center the needs and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, small-scale producers, and other vulnerable communities.** Those most affected by climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation, but also food insecurity, need to participate in the solutions to ensure an equitable and truly sustainable transformation.
- **CFS policy products, grounded in human rights, based on scientific advice by the High-Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) and developed in an inclusive process can significantly help in shaping the necessary policies;** increasing their uptake at country level is more urgent now than ever.
- **Policies aiming to address climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation, for instance COP decisions or Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), should formally incorporate the right to food.**
- To ensure equitable and inclusive participation in processes and policies, human rights-based approaches are needed; the right to food can serve as a through-line to enhance and operationalize synergies.
- **Without sufficient support, many countries will not be able to realize the transformations and the right to adequate food.** To cover financial needs, International Financial Institutions, countries and private donors need to work together, making their efforts as coherent and efficient as possible. Financial support instruments need to reflect the needs of actors on the ground such as smallholder farmers.

### III. Reflections on the Way Forward

This Chairperson's Summary Report on the High-Level Forum, in addition to informing CFS53, will feed into the Rio Conventions processes in 2025 and thereafter. The upcoming COP30 at Belém is an excellent opportunity to advance the work on the transformation of food systems through a right to food perspective. Similarly, the UNCBD and UNCCD COPs in 2026 provide opportunities for strengthening synergies and enhancing collaboration to advance some of the holistic solutions outlined in the High-Level Forum.

In the long run, further activities could foster the cooperation between CFS and the Rio Conventions, e.g. the organization of side events at Rio COPs and/or CFS Plenary Sessions respectively or a closer alignment of work programmes.

Furthermore, the perspective of looking at climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation from a right to food perspective should also be strengthened within other processes, e.g. the UNFSS process or the work of the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty.

The complexity and significance of the challenges as well as the outlined potential for CFS policy products to guide transformation underline the importance of a continued engagement of CFS and HLPE-FSN on these topics.