

Zero Draft Comments on CFS policy convergence process on Strengthening Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems

Inputs by the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSIPM) for relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

14 March 2025

General comments:

The CSIPM welcomes the Zero Draft and appreciates the recognition of the key role of local authorities in supporting sustainable food systems through policy measures, economic support, and urban planning. Local governments and municipalities should be included and inform each level of policy making. They should also be provided with sufficient and adequate resources to be able to support the strengthening of urban and peri-urban food systems, and to support the realization of the Right to Food.

We also appreciate the rights-based framework highlighted in the Zero Draft including the right to food. The CSIPM stresses that the right to food, as a binding obligation under international law, provides a powerful tool for accountability and transformation. When policies explicitly recognize and enforce these rights, they pave the way for equitable food systems and resilient urban communities, fostering a collective commitment to justice, human dignity and food security.

We welcome the mention of agroecology in this report. It should be highlighted as a key framework to build resilience, achieve sustainability targets and realize the right to food while urgently adapting and mitigating the effects of climate change. We would like to acknowledge that agroecology is more than just an agricultural practice; agroecology promotes equity and social inclusion in the food system.

The CSIPM would overall like to emphasize promoting agroecology, addressing inequalities, supporting urban agriculture, the crucial role of local authorities, and importance of fostering urban-rural linkages. We also question the policy (or lack of policy) and trade frame that often create the conditions for urbanization (and rural exodus) to continue as they deepen poverty, food insecurity and inequalities. We also highlight the role of local authorities in fostering urban resilience and addressing urban food systems challenges. Local authorities and food councils which count with effective participation of civil society and Indigenous Peoples should be properly funded.

Rationale:

(i) The CSIPM challenges the assumption that urbanization is inevitable and questions the policies that drive rural-to-urban migration, such as land dispossession and lack of investment in rural economies. We call for policies to keep rural food production viable to slow urban migration. When rural agriculture is

properly supported, it can reduce the influx of people to urban centers and reduce pressure on urban environments and services.

(ii) The CSIPM appreciates the lens taken of rural-urban linkages and the necessity to view the urban, peri-urban and rural as interconnected. This also implies that we must simultaneously consider rural transformation in the context of urban and peri-urban food systems, recognizing that urbanization is based on economic interests. Therefore, the CSIPM would like to recall that rural transformation requires access to land, water, and other resources, and the importance of redistributive reforms.

(iii) & (v) The CSIPM also recognizes the importance of a rights-based approach and appreciates the emphasis on UPU residents' right to food, right to water, right to adequate housing and right to decent work. The CSIPM recognizes that a human rights-based framework is essential and welcomes the emphasis on the adherence to human rights obligations and principles such as participation, accountability and non-discrimination. Making these rights explicit in the CFS policy recommendations is essential to combat marginalization and discrimination, ensuring dignified living conditions for all urban residents and urban and peri-urban food producers.

(iv) The CSIPM appreciates highlighting the key role of local governments and would like to further emphasize their important role. Local governments are essential for ensuring context-sensitive implementation of food systems policies. Local governments and municipalities should be included and inform each level of policy making. They should also be provided with sufficient and adequate resources to be able to support the strengthening of urban and peri-urban food systems, and to support communities' realization of the Right to Food.

Draft Recommendations

In the following section, the CSIPM provides overall comments for the different sections of the document, while also providing text proposals in red.

A. UPU-FS for Food Security and Nutrition (FSN)

Production

The CSIPM welcomes recommendations 1 and 2 to prioritize equitable access to resources and zoning policies that safeguard and support urban agriculture, livestock and fishing activities. We especially welcome the intersectionality in the definition of "poorest, most vulnerable and those most left behind." Recognizing this intersectionality is essential for creating inclusive policies that address the needs and priorities of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Recognizing that no single group is a homogenous entity is critical and thus, the intersectional dimension of poverty and inequality in urban and peri-urban food systems should be one of the focuses of the policy recommendations.

1. Prioritize equitable access to land, water, finance, innovation and technology, and other food production resources to address the needs of the poorest, most vulnerable and those most left behind;

recognizing the intersectionality of poverty and inequality is critical for creating inclusive policies. (access to resources)

Midstream (storage, processing, transportation, wholesale)

6. Encourage social innovations such as community supported agriculture¹, food cooperatives, food hubs and farmers' markets that enhance access to safe and nutritious food while contributing to equity, social inclusion and resilience across the rural and urban continuum; social innovation solutions exist in many territories and governments at all levels should support with global, regional and national policies so that those initiatives can be multiplied and scaled-out (social innovations)

Add paragraph: Informal markets and food systems have an integral role in the midstream. Data should be collected to better understand informal spaces and how they relate to the food system. Rights and protections should be extended to people operating in informal spaces. Additionally, standardizations and certifications should be simplified in order to reduce barriers for smallholders to markets.

Market and retail

8. Support territorial markets and shorter supply chains that integrate urban and rural functions into the national and subnational urban planning, thus promoting sustainable management and use of natural resources and land, as well as increased access to fresh produce for all residents across the rural-urban continuum; territorial markets are the markets in which the vast majority of smallholders are engaged (and through which most food consumed in the world is channeled) “territorial” because they are all situated in and identified with specific areas (from the village, district, national or even regional) Their organization and management may incorporate a weaker or a stronger dimension of formality but there is always some connection with the competent authorities. They meet food demand in rural, peri-urban and urban areas. They involve other small-scale actors in the territory: traders, transporters, processors, traders. Women are the key actors in territorial markets, and these markets provide them with an important source of authority and of revenue whose benefits are passed on to their families². (territorial markets)

Public procurement

14. Prioritize and invest in nutrition oriented public procurement programmes, such as school feeding programmes, incentivizing locally produced foods, prioritizing local smallholders who use agroecological

¹Community supported agriculture (CSA) is the social impetus for joint work between organic and agro-ecological food farmers and consumers: a fixed group of consumers commit themselves for a year (in general) to covering the annual budget of the agricultural organization (farm, farmhouse, farm, arable urban plot, etc). In return, the consumers receive the food grown by the farm at no extra cost. In this way, the farmer can dedicate himself freely to cultivation without the pressure of the market and prices. And consumers receive quality food, knowing who grows it and where it is grown. By taking on this role of co-responsibility, the so-called consumers become known in a CSA as co-farmers, and they become partners with the farmers in a relationship of appreciation.

² This definition of territorial markets has been adapted from <http://www.csm4cfs.org/working-groups/connecting-smallholders-to-markets/>

methods. Priority should be given to purchasing food that is native to the region and culturally adequate. Programs should and targeting the poorest and most vulnerable across the rural-urban continuum, especially school meals for children in the first seven years of life, to achieve multiple objectives related to nutrition, sustainability, biodiversity, social inclusion and resilience of livelihoods; furthermore, governments should ensure that a certain percent of public procurement to schools should be sourced from local food systems. For instance, in Colombia, the peasant farmers are calling on the government to ensure 10% of public procurement for school feeding programs are from local food systems. (food procurement programmes)

B. UPU interrelated systems that impact FSN

CSIPM welcomes the interconnected recommendations 22 and 23 to integrate spatial planning into UPU food security policies, and to integrate food security into housing and zoning policies.

24. Promote access to decent work and employment in food systems across the rural-urban continuum, with specific attention to young people and seasonal workers, informal workers and migrant laborers who are integral to food production by ensuring fair wages and safe working conditions and by strengthening and enforcing regulatory frameworks and laws to enable wages that provide an adequate standard of living; (decent work and employment)

29. Strive to align trade regulations and policies with national and subnational efforts towards improving equitable access to and affordability of healthy diets; communities and cities have an essential role to share feedback and information with various levels of government to ensure that urban food governance is protected in trade and investment agreements. Participatory mechanisms need to exist to facilitate this exchange³ (policy coherence)

C. UPU Governance for FSN

27. Include local and subnational governments in the development of national food security and nutrition policies and strategies; local authorities, city governments and multi-actor participatory governance bodies are key actors for strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems, through the development of inclusive territorial food and agriculture models (territorial markets, public procurements, urban agroecology, short-food chain etc.). These actors are in the position to include marginalized populations in local food systems, to reach the most affected and to effectively build solidarity and social protection nets at territorial level. Local authorities and food councils should be given annual funding in the government budget. With supportive global, regional and national policies, effective city-led initiatives can be multiplied and scaled-out. (inclusive governance)

³ In line with the HLPE report: HLPE. 2024. Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition, in the context of urbanization and rural transformation. Pp. 39-40. Rome, CFS HLPE-FSN.

Add paragraph: Food councils need to ensure adequate social inclusion, and their work needs to be recognized by governments. The work of food councils should be binding, and appropriate accountability needs to be ensured.

Add paragraph: Institutionalise public participation in local governments structures by establishing platforms, mechanisms and policies for public engagement in decision-making processes to make governance processes participatory, inclusive and accessible to the public. The public participation policies should outline the principles, processes and mechanisms of public participation to promote transparency and accountability. The mechanisms can include public hearings, neighborhood meetings, and online surveys. The governments should also create dedicated units within their governance structures for planning, coordinating and implementing public participation activities.

D. Strengthen data, research, knowledge systems to enable improved understanding and monitoring of FSN across rural-urban continuum

33. Prioritize capacity development on FSN data collection, analysis and use across the rural urban continuum, as well as on geographic information systems, remote sensing, digital tools and participatory mapping to target areas most vulnerable to food-system disrupt on and to inform long term planning and crisis response; recognize the importance of collecting comprehensive data from the informal sector and make this available to smallholder farmers⁴ (capacity development)

34. Ensure finer grain disaggregation of FSN data by geospatial location and socioeconomic status and incorporate qualitative data to capture multiple and compounding dimensions of vulnerability across the rural urban continuum; (data disaggregation)

37. Invest in and learn from local governments, city food networks, local universities, civil society organizations and local knowledge institutions, as a mechanism for leveraging diverse knowledge, including traditional knowledge, digital tools, participatory frameworks, and multi-stakeholder platforms. This approach ensures transparency, enables progress tracking, and facilitates the sharing of lessons, results, and challenges between cities and across sectors. Indigenous knowledge and traditional knowledge is often based on qualitative methodologies thus qualitative measures should be equally prioritized in decision-making. The urban and peri-urban context lends itself to the creation of various knowledge sharing platforms: simple, informal and collaborative for goods procurement, urban agriculture and rural linkages. (knowledge sharing)

⁴ Previously agreed upon in the Connecting Smallholders to Market CFS policy recommendations): Connecting Smallholders to Markets Policy Recommendations, UN Committee on World Food Security, Rome, Italy, 2016.
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/54ec3a0a-656f-4a71-b30b-b749cb925784/content>.

38. Prioritize funding for interdisciplinary research, including research innovation qualitative and participatory research that focuses on the complexities of food security and nutrition across the rural-urban continuum, encompassing agricultural practices, [agroecological approaches](#), urban planning, supply chain dynamics, public health, and social sciences. [Invest in the important role of citizen scientists to promote participation of civil society and transparency. Their contributions should be recognized as valid, and funding and support should be given by the state for citizen science training programs.](#) (interdisciplinary research)

[Add paragraph: Recall the previously agreed upon policy recommendation from the 2023 CFS on Data which recommends “governance frameworks for FSN data should strike the right balance between access and sharing and protection, privacy, and security, with the aim of creating trust and confidence. Developing and strengthening of national FSN data governance frameworks should take into account applicable broader global, multilateral discussions and efforts to improve data governance. It is important for FSN data to be widely accessible, broadly circulated and used in the public interest, while at the same time preserving the rights of data originators and data owners, taking into account national legislation and regulations, working to ensure data protection, and privacy, and taking steps to address imbalances in power among actors with respect to generating, accessing, collecting, storing, processing, sharing and using FSN data, which could worsen inequalities.”⁵ \(data governance\)](#)

Practical Examples

Local Markets in Peru, Ecuador and Colombia

Local markets in regions like Cusco, Peru, where self-organized producers sell their products directly to consumers without intermediaries, demonstrate successful models of direct producer-to-consumer sales. These initiatives, often rooted in agroecology, support local economies, reduce food miles, and ensure fair prices for producers and consumers. Similarly, the Urban Food Hive Initiative in Colombia has led to the establishment of peasant farmers markets in Bogota. In collaboration with the local government authorities and the CSOs, four farmers markets were established in Bogota thereby shortening the supply chain and enabling food producers to sell fresh local products directly to consumers for fair prices.

Peri-Urban Agriculture in Senegal

In West Africa, countries like Senegal face challenges with peri-urban agriculture. While it fulfills urban consumers’ needs, there are concerns about the intensive use of chemicals and pesticides. Improving peri-urban systems involves promoting sustainable practices, supporting farmers’ collectives, and ensuring that agricultural activities do not compromise environmental health.

Farmers’ Collectives and the Local Economy of Care

⁵ [CFS policy recommendations on strengthening collection and use of food security and nutrition \(FSN\) data and related analysis tools to improve decision making in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.](#)

https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2223/Data/Data_Guidelines_Final_Agreed_Version_July_2023/CFS_Policy_Recommendations_Data_Final_Draft_for_Plenary.pdf

Farmers' collectives that produce food from the field are essential but often face obstacles to connect with the local economy of care and territorial relationships. Removing these obstacles can strengthen these connections and enhance sustainability and social integration, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility for local resources.

Reconnecting with the Land Around Cities

Urban expansion often leads to a loss of connection with the land surrounding cities. Emphasizing the importance of territorial food systems can help restore this connection, highlighting the value of nearby resources and promoting sustainable land use practices that benefit both urban and rural communities.

An Example from Togo: Agroecological Markets in Urban Centers

An interesting example, linked to the fact that processed food imports are not necessary to feed cities, is the one presented by ROPPA in the recent webinar co-organized by HLPE and the FAO Right to Food unit. The Togolese National Peasant Platform is organizing farmer agroecological markets in all five of the major urban centers, in collaboration with the municipal authorities. These markets directly connect farmers with urban consumers, showcasing the viability of agroecological systems in feeding cities sustainably.

Agroecology and mental health: Biodynamic Medicinal Agroforestry Gardens in Brazil

In Brasilia, the federal capital of Brazil, a regional government programme has implemented 25 gardens in the public health system. The health units produce food and medicinal plants and promote solidarity networks and links between people who come together for food and nutrition education and health education activities, as well as teaching agroecological practices that encourage the cultivation of food in homes and community areas. The programme was a grassroots initiative with strong support from health professionals and authorities and resulted in intersectoral activities and action between health, education, agriculture and environmental services.

Social Transformation and Territorial Governance, an example from Brazil

In Brazil, FIOCRUZ, a foundation that promotes health and social development, generating and disseminating scientific and technological knowledge, and is linked to the Ministry of Health, carries out various professional courses for civil society, such as courses for popular agents and popular researchers. The Popular Agents act directly in the communities, mobilizing, organizing and facilitating processes of awareness and collective action. They are facilitators or mediators between the community and the knowledge or resources needed for social transformation. Popular researchers are people who, together with the community, conduct research and studies on issues relevant to the group and/or territory. They seek to produce knowledge based on local reality, valuing popular knowledge and collective participation in the research process. These concepts, although related, have different roles and functions. They are giving positive results for territorial governance and execution of actions for the implementation of public policies.

An example of agriculture to generate incentives and education in urban agriculture (Brasil)

The Biodynamic Medicinal Agroforestry Gardens (HAMB) are health facilities managed by the health secretariat of the DF em Brasil since 2018. Currently the REd of HAMB is formed by more than 30 gardens. Its cultivation is community, agroecological and biodynamic. Their contributions are production of medicinal plants, autonomy in care, teaching and outdoor learning, sustainable environmental development and development and inclusion of

children, youth and adults. In addition to providing training in urban agriculture to increase food sovereignty in the territories.

Ensuring food security and access and resilience in the context of conflicts in Gaza

In Gaza, urban farming has emerged as a linchpin advocating agroecological practices and principles among women-led and other food and farming enterprises that centre “baladi foodways” for the advancement of food sovereignty even in conflict situations. Foodways is a term that refers to the intersection of food culture, traditions and history while considering the cultural, social, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food.

During the challenging times, through the baladi food ways initiative, women demonstrated the power of social innovation through community solidarity to sustain and provide for their communities. About 300 members of Urban Women’s Agripreneur Forum (UWAF) who represent 10% of women with food enterprises in Gaza, captured before and during the current military demonstrated the important women play role in Gaza’s food system, as farmers, fishers, shepherds and processors, while often unrecognized. Women established community kitchens during the conflict providing essential meals for displaced families. The Community-led Solidarity Marketing Initiative has distributed over 18 tons of food to vulnerable households, fostering community bonds. Baladi food and cultivation remains pivotal providing diverse, nutrient-dense, culturally important and climate resilient foods capable of restoring a healthy Agroecosystem.

The Food Acquisition Program (PAA) is a Brazilian public policy that aims to support family farming and combat food insecurity. The PAA buys food from family farmers who have a Declaration of Aptitude to Pronaf (DAP) and donates it to people in a situation of food vulnerability. In addition, the program allows farmers, cooperatives and associations to sell their products to public agencies, promoting social and productive inclusion. To participate, farmers can submit proposals for specific modalities, such as Purchase with Simultaneous Donation.

The National School Feeding Program (PNAE) in Brazil consists of the transfer of federal financial resources to serve students enrolled in all stages and modalities of basic education in municipal, district, state and federal networks and in entities qualified as philanthropic or maintained by them, in denominational schools maintained by non-profit entities and in community schools in agreement with the states, the Federal District and Municipalities, with the objective of contributing to the growth and biopsychosocial development, learning, school performance and the formation of healthy eating habits of students, through food and nutrition education actions and the provision of meals that meet their nutritional needs during the school year.

Urban Food Hives to Nourishing Cities

The Urban Food Hives to Nourishing Cities around the world is a multi-country program that spans across three regions (Asia, Africa and Latin America) being implemented in six countries (Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Colombia and The Philippines). Urban Food Hives are models of how communities, civil society, entrepreneurs and governments come together to build regenerative, equitable, and nourishing local food systems of the future. Using the ecosystem development approach with a focus on three key pillars- food production and entrepreneurship, consumer behavior change and healthy diets and policy, the initiative has led to increased production and consumption of healthy foods (fresh vegetables, fruits) in urban areas using agroecological practices in community gardens and backyard gardens. Through strategic partnerships with the local governments and other relevant

actors in the urban food systems, the urban food hive model has been scaled up to other cities, for example in The Philippines and also, local governments are integrating urban food production into their national and county food systems plans and regulations/ordinances.

Urban Food Hives to Nourishing Cities in The Philippines: The Garden of Hope:

An example is an Initiative by Oxfam on Urban Food Hives (UFH) to Nourishing Cities in The Philippines in Quezon City. Through partnerships with the Local Government Unit, Farmer organizations, CSOs, and the Australian Embassy in the Philippines, the Urban Food Hives (UFH) to Nourishing Cities model has been scaled to at least 67 sites in 3 Provinces (Leyte, Eastern Samar, Bicol) and 2 Cities (Quezon and Pasig) in the Philippines. Engaging the local government has increased ownership and integration of the model in community development plans in urban and peri-urban areas. Furthermore, community-driven solutions for innovative food security and nutrition (FSN) programs developed have been institutionalized through local legislation. Five (5) local government units (LGUs) enacted/proposed ordinances on FSN, incorporating measures that bolster transparency, accountability, and participatory governance in the local government.

Urban Food Hives and agroecology in Colombia

Through the Urban Food Hive Initiative, the peasant farmers in Colombia in partnership with local authorities, Fundación San Isidro, Fundación Tierra Libre, and Asociación Nacional de Usuarios Campesinos de Colombia (ANUC) with the support of AGREA established four farmers market promoting local food systems through agroecological approaches.