

HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems

e-consultation on an Issues Note proposed by the HLPE Steering Committee

From 9 December 2015 to 15 February 2016

Short Summary by the HLPE Secretariat¹

There have been 122 contributions to this consultation on the Issues Note proposed by the HLPE Steering Committee on Nutrition and Food Systems (NFS), totalling 218 pages and more than 92 000 words. Contributions originate from about 50 countries. There are 8 contributions coming from national governments. 41 of the contributions spring from the civil society, NGO, private sector or research institutes. 51 of the contributions come from 27 different developing countries. This reflects the interest found in the topic by a wide variety of stakeholder all over the world.

This note proposes a summary of the main comments, raised during this consultation.

This relevant initiative comes at a critical time, following the ICN2 Rome declaration, in the perspective of the implementation of SDGs, and in the perspective of the progressive realization of the Right to food and other rights for the most vulnerable.

This report will be the cornerstone of CFS's further involvement in nutrition: it should propose a solid conceptual framework and a common language for CFS. The conceptual framework shall insert the focus on food systems in the broader context of political, social and economic determinants of malnutrition and shall propose a typology of food systems.

This report should analyze the current global nutrition governance and the role of the different actors in the food system. The report would need to address how to establish a process throughout which over the next 5 to 10 years, or even longer, we will be able to truly progress and track progress on the reshaping of our food systems, with milestones and predictable long-term targets.

The HLPE report should address very specifically the nine recommended actions for sustainable food systems enabling healthy diets that are outlined in the ICN2 Framework for action (FFA). It should also build: on FAO "*Key recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems*"; on IFPRI's Global Nutrition Report 2015 which highlights ten actions to put an end to malnutrition by 2030; on WHO global work on Nutrition

¹ A more detailed analysis of the eConsultation from the Secretariat can be accessed here: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/PT_Nutrition/Docs/HLPE-Nutrition-and-Food-Systems_Summary-of-the-Issues_Note-consultation_Long.pdf

and non-communicable diseases; and on WHA Nutrition targets framework. The report should make best use of synergies with the work of the 10YFP Sustainable Food systems programme.

The HLPE must ensure the consistency of this report's findings and recommendations with the CFS's past policy products and recommendations, including the Global Strategic Framework, and with the previous HLPE reports.

Many contributions consider that the proposed approach is appropriate and welcome the scope of the report on "Nutrition and food systems", and all aspects of sustainability. Others think that the scope is too ambitious given the variety of food systems on the planet and that the report should be even more focussed.

The first step is to reconnect food and nutrition. It's essential not to look nutrition only from a diet perspective but to understand the complex interlinkages with food systems, from farm level to territorial, national, regional and global level.

The report should address malnutrition in all its forms across the human life cycle, paying a specific attention to vulnerable groups (women, children, elder, indigenous...). Food availability is not the sole cause of hunger. Access and inequalities in access to food, natural resource, service, credit and markets, will be critical questions to be addressed in this report along with poverty, gender inequality, power dynamics.

An holistic approach is needed to overcome the fragmentation of nutrition policies and governance and to address the nexus between agriculture, environment, food systems, nutrition and health, considering the huge diversity of food systems. In fact, the overarching issue in this report shall be to assess the influence of various types of food systems on environment, diets, nutrition and health.

Some contributions explicitly reaffirm that the HLPE report should be based on a human rights approach and should embrace the social, political, and economic dimensions of food sovereignty, in relation to food security. The act of feeding oneself and others embodies our cultural identity, our sovereignty, ownership, empowerment and our human dignity.

The report should describe the main drivers of the transition in food consumption and nutrition among which: population and income growth, urbanization (and difference between urban and rural diets and food systems), globalization in trade and "nutrition transition" towards "western" diet. The report should emphasize the role of public policy in promoting diversified, balanced, sustainable and healthy diets.

This report should build on the considerable available knowledge to provide guidance for "feasible development pathways" towards sustainable food systems and propose actionable solutions for both developed and developing countries

The report should address the focus through a review of both academic and experiential traditional knowledge. It should identify data and knowledge gaps for further research. The report should describe the available tools, models, metrics and indicators to assess the

diversity, quality and sustainability of diets and their impact on human health, at individual and household level.

The report should integrate some case studies and concrete examples of success and failures. The “Mediterranean diet” and the “organic food systems” are frequently quoted as valuable cases studies to be addressed in the report.

Hereunder a list of other issues / key words / areas of work to be addressed in the report and most frequently raised in the contributions.

Nutrition and demand side

Nutrition:

- Vicious circle between malnutrition, poverty, poor health status,
- Nutrient rich foods: animal source food (including fish, insects), pulses and other neglected and underutilized crop species, wild food, (dried or fresh) fruits and vegetable, algae...
- Undernutrition.
- Overnutrition, obesity and non communicable diseases
- “Hidden hunger” (nutrient deficiency)
- Food quality: quality regulation and control
- Food safety and nutritional value preserved along the food supply chain
- Institutional procurement of nutritious products
- Health and health systems: nutrition for physical and mental health. Preventive rather than curative system/actions.

Diets:

- Guidelines for healthy diets
- Promote culturally and locally adapted diets
- Diversity of diets: a key for a good nutrition: simplification of diets and food systems is responsible for the twin problems of obesity and hunger
- Impact on health of processed food and meat consumption

Drivers of evolution of diets and consumption patterns / behaviours

- Determinants of changes in diets/food habit: biological, economical, physical, social, psychological, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and awareness...
- Marketing and advertising – specially to children
- Cultural aspects of food choices
- Gender issues: women and girl rights and empowerment
- Information, education to nutrition and healthy diets

Food systems and supply side

Environment, natural resources and climate change

- Natural resources and ecosystem services: ecological footprint
- Soil: soil pollution, decline in soil fertility status, soil nutrient availability
- Water: pollution and appropriate use and conservation
- Air
- Climate change and extreme climate events
- Natural disasters: improve resilience of food systems.
- Biodiversity and agricultural biodiversity to improve resilience of agro-ecosystems

Agricultural practises and food systems:

- Existing or improved technologies
- Encourage labour intensive agriculture to limit unemployment and food insecurity.
- Promote “Green / Sustainable” practices : organic farming, agroecology, agroforestry and permaculture,
- Lower dependance on external inputs (including high-tech or fossil fuel based inputs) to strengthen the resilience of farms and communities.
- Improve resource efficiency to improve food security and nutrition: recycling of organic waste. Use nutrient and natural cycles
- Traceability of process and products: geographical origin, labelling and certification schemes, voluntary or regulatory standards.
- Animal health and welfare for sustainable food systems
- Increased investment in research, food systems and infrastructures
- Extension services

Land and land use changes:

- Land degradation
- Land use, access to land and land property right, land grabbing
- Competing use of crops/land for non food purpose

6-4. Distribution, markets and value chains:

- Role of markets / value chains as a challenge and opportunity in promoting diverse food systems
- Regional food sytems an supply chains: relevance of short supply chains
- Storage and transportation issues
- Monitor, prevent and reduce food losses and waste through the food value chain
- Impact of speculation, price volatility and price level on investment, production and consumers purchase power. Food prices should internalize the externalities
- Concentrated corporate market power and vertical integration
- Organisation of producers (in particular smallholders) and rural communities

Governance

- Regulations
- Nutrition sensitive integrated public policies: need of strong partnerships among all actors and sectors: health, education, food security, cultural aspects, environment, trade...
- Nutrition sensitive taxes and subsidies
- Multi-stakeholders forums / partnerships to collaborate and share responsibilities
- Create an enabling environment for effective policy action to improve nutrition and health, acting on: natural resources, health, sanitation, knowledge, norms, policy and governance. South-South, but also South-North collaboration
- Role of private sector in improving nutrition / shaping food systems
- Impact of policy support and international trade agreements