

CSM Plenary Statement on Agroecological and other innovative approaches

16 October 2019

Delivered on behalf of CSM by Ali Aii Shatou, IPACC (Cameroon) as co-coordinator of the CSM Working Group on Agroecology.

Esteemed delegates,

We would like to convey our deep appreciation for this discussion taking place at the CFS. Small Scale Food producers have been practicing agroecology for centuries. It is our life. We welcome the fact that finally it is to be discussed at the CFS, the foremost space to address food security and nutrition in the UN.

We welcome the HLPE report on Agroecology and other innovations as a good first step of this discussion. The HLPE report presents us with evidence of the impacts of different models of production and gives us a basis to assess what steps are needed towards the real transformation of food systems we so desperately need.

We also welcome that the HLPE report reflects the conceptual framework on AE that social movements of small-scale farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisher folk and indigenous peoples developed in the Nyeleni process. We are not here to debate this framework of agroecology but rather to define the policies that will help us move towards an agroecological transformation.

Agroecology is the only solution we have to address the multiple crisis we are facing. Agroecology presents us with a holistic vision that embeds agronomic practices, ecological principles, social, economic, cultural and human rights dimensions. Agroecology allows small scale producers a dignified life, producing affordable, healthy food in healthy conditions. It eliminates dependence on costly inputs and adopts practices which regenerate seeds and soils while mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change.

Agroecology has the capacity to overcome the traditional gender division of labor as it recognises the strategic role of women in the daily creation of agroecology. This promotes women as equal subjects in decision making process at all levels.

Industrial agriculture is one of the biggest contributors to the ecological crisis which is now the fight for survival for many. It is also a major cause of poverty, hunger and malnutrition including through grabbing of resources, concentration of power, homogenisation of diets and expulsion of young people from rural areas. The last decade has seen a plethora of UN studies confirming this. The HLPE report demonstrates that agroecology is the only transformational option to address all the structural changes needed in our food system in a systemic and integrated way and shows that Sustainable Intensification and Climate Smart Agriculture can only provide one dimensional solution via incremental change. Agricultural innovation is essential as long as it does not lead to further concentration of knowledge and power.

Agroecology needs to be supported by public policies. Currently the vast majority of funding and public support still go to Industrial production or incremental approaches to change. We need this CFS process to redress that balance in order to bring about a radical transformation to end hunger and poverty while preserving the ecosystem and the natural resources base for the next generations.

