

CFS SECOND INFORMAL VIRTUAL DISCUSSION: Identifying context-specific strategies for sustainable food system challenges (assessment, diagnosis, and recommendations)

CSM Written Inputs

Due to connectivity issues, the co-coordinator of the CSM Working Group on Agroecology, Ali-Aii Shatou (Cameroun), could not join the platform in time to make the first intervention. The morning timeframe also diffculted the participation of our co-coordinators from Latin America.

1. Do you agree that a comprehensive assessment and monitoring framework is needed for sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition (with related metrics and indicators)? Do the recommendations of the HLPE provide a pathway forward in this regard?

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the dysfunctionalities and inequalities within our food systems.

Food workers, today, as key actors to continue providing for the food on our tables are now suffering from not only unfair pay rates and inadequate work conditions, but also from health unsafety exposure.

Small-scale food producers have been more marginalized than before from commercializing their products.

Migrants, many of them stranded, are also subjects of the crisis as their status is in most of the cases not recognized as “regular”.

Women, being at the frontline of the response, are however facing unequal burdens (such as increase in domestic violence when under lockdown) while ensuring that their families are still able to eat.

Thus, COVID shows the extreme need to assess the way our food systems function. We, as CSM, completely agree that a comprehensive assessment framework is needed for sustainable food systems that are able to contribute to the realization of the Right to Food for all.

Any approach should be assessed against its contribution or not to sustainable food systems under the agreed framework. In this sense, the HLPE provides a very useful pathway to establish such a framework.

Furthermore, any comprehensive assessment should adopt a holistic approach, combining production, livelihoods, gender, socio-cultural, ecological and political perspectives. Its related metrics and indicators must be multidimensional, not evaluating food systems for their mere productivity, but also against their impact on small-scale food producers and on public health, ability to ensure decent conditions for farm and other food system workers, capacity to benefit the most marginalized populations, especially women, and to ensure that human rights in their interrelatedness are fulfilled.

Once again, we agree with the importance of such framework for assessment. We agree with France speaking on behalf of the EU that the operational principles of the HLPE and the 10 elements of Agroecology, already agreed by the last FAO Council, have already provided a good basis for establishing it. Therefore, we strongly believe that this process should agree on the main principles at the basis of any assessment without the need to start from scratch rather building on the pathway coming from previous CFS and FAO work.

2. Is it too ambitious to agree on indicators within the policy convergence process and should the aim instead be for the policy document to agree on principles/elements to be the basis of a framework, which would be developed after this policy process is completed?
3. Should such a framework be elaborated based on the findings of the HLPE report, relevant existing frameworks (e.g. [FAO Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation](#) and the TEEB AgriFood framework), and/or the goals, targets and indicators contained in the SDGs?
4. Which institution(s) could be tasked with developing such a framework? Which actors should be involved? What role do you see for the CFS, its Working Group or Technical Task Team in this regard?

We would like to reaffirm the need to agree on a framework for assessment. The purpose of it should also be to understand which approach contributes to sustainable food systems in all dimensions, as the different approaches can't be applied blindly without considering their impact on the economic, social, environmental, public health dimensions of food systems.

We believe that the assessment framework requires a clear affirmation of the multiple public objectives supported by food systems, and it needs to be separated from the discussion on indicators, which is a technical issue and would significantly narrow the scope of the process with eventually no agreement reached.

In this sense, the pathway stated by the HLPE report is a good point of departure.

When it comes to existing frameworks, the SDGs should not be the main reference as they are not grounded in human rights. More in particular, we should go beyond those concerning the Right to Food. In this sense, when we talk about references for existing frameworks, the work done on the Right to Food Monitoring/ Indicators by FAO¹ is also worth mentioning. In addition, the principles for the assessment framework towards sustainable food systems should be linked to the principles defined in the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) for monitoring and accountability systems. These have already been agreed by Member States and indicate that they should:

- *Be human rights based, with particular reference to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food;*
- *Make it possible for decision-makers to be accountable;*
- *Be participatory and include assessments that involve all stakeholders and beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable;*
- *Be simple, yet comprehensive, accurate, timely and understandable to all, with indicators disaggregated by sex, age, region, etc., that capture impact, process and expected outcomes*
- *Not duplicate existing systems, but rather build upon and strengthen national statistical and analytical capacities.*

We think that these two additional references should be considered when agreeing about principles for an assessment framework.

¹ FAO (2009): [Methods to Monitor the Human Right to Adequate Food Volume I](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i0349e.pdf) <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i0349e.pdf>
FAO (2009) [Methods to Monitor the Human Right to Adequate Food Volume II](http://www.fao.org/3/a-i0351e.pdf) <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i0351e.pdf>