



Friday 22 May 2020, 10:30-12:30

Informal discussion #2 on “Identifying context-specific strategies for sustainable food system challenges (assessment, diagnosis, and recommendations)”

## Rapporteur’s Summary

### Item 1 - Introduction by the Rapporteur

Rapporteur, H.E. Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Iran) opened the meeting recognizing the International Day on Biodiversity. The Rapporteur noted that many stakeholders regarded the first informal discussion as useful. He then observed that various positions around the notion that all food systems can contribute to sustainability through context-appropriate pathways seem to be converging.

The Rapporteur introduced the rationale and objective of this informal discussion – i.e., to debate what are the most appropriate pathways for each context, starting with assessments – and presented the background document and four guiding questions.

### Item 2 - Exchange of feedback by CFS stakeholders on:

#### Discussion on questions (1, 2, 3 and 4)

- 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?*
- 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 Agri-food 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?*

The open floor discussion produced the following points. Each bullet point, below, represents the view of one stakeholder on one specific topic. No attempt is made to reconcile different views so that the full diversity of views expressed by CFS stakeholders during the informal discussion could be captured.

- The need for a comprehensive and holistic framework, such as that contained in the HLPE report's 5th recommendation, for adequate evaluation and to provide appropriate guidance for rational decision-making.
- Recognition of the useful basis provided by the HLPE report, which should however be further elaborated, and the importance of taking into account the SDGs in the development of the policy recommendations.
- Support for developing comparable and comprehensive indicators covering social, environmental, and economic indicators, in line with the SDGs – without attempting to duplicate or replace the SDGs.
- Support for agreeing on assessment, and indicators to ensure measurability. Impact assessments are crucial for understanding the impacts of innovative approaches on food system sustainability, resilience, food security and nutrition and the right to food. This process might draw from the principles and elements of the HLPE's 13 Principles and/or FAO's "Ten Elements of Agroecology" in developing relevant indicators.
- Concerns over the creation of useful monitoring frameworks, which require data accuracy, participation, burden and scope. The agreement on SDGs targets and indicators took years, and they are still being refined. Therefore, agreement on a new framework would be too ambitious and would likely delay the process.
- The need for appropriate metrics and indicators that are essential to assessing all impacts of agroecology and other innovations, based on sustainability criteria and the extent to which they contribute to achieving food security and nutrition for all. The HLPE report, which provides a strong and robust scientific framework, could be used as a basis.
- Suggestion to focus on SDG 2.4., which will be central in the upcoming Food System Summit, in relation to the metrics. Moreover, FAO is developing specific indicators for agroecology, (e.g. TAPE) which should be taken into account in order to avoid a multiplication of metrics that may jeopardize the capacity of countries to provide data. CFS could acknowledge relevant (existing) indicator frameworks in a footnote.
- The need for a framework to be developed at a later stage, with a broad inclusion of actors, public and private, who are already involved in the development of indicators and tools. In this context, FAO could play the role of facilitator: FAO Conference Resolution 7/2019 gives a mandate to FAO to work in this field, and should be included in FAO's future planning.
- Need to consider all relevant frameworks including FAO's "Ten Elements of Agroecology", the HLPE report's 13 principles, and the relevant SDG indicators. In addition to FAO's Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation and the TEEB



## CFS Policy convergence Process on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Food Systems that ensure Food Security and Nutrition

AgriFood framework, IPES-Food's various analyses were cited as another potential resource.

- Suggestion to include the principles of the CFS Global Strategic Framework (on the innovative monitoring mechanism of the CFS) when dealing with existing frameworks.
- Comprehensive assessments 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 productivity, but also against their impacts 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 inter-relatedness are fulfilled.
- The assessment framework must be incisive, specific and focused. Therefore, it was recommended to incorporate more concrete impact assessment policy recommendations, making some specific and explicit examples or describing more concrete assessment methods. For example, “ecological footprint” has been deleted in the Zero Draft and its re-inclusion would be appreciated. More research is needed on the concept, but including it is useful to enhance its understanding and utilization.
- Need to recognize the challenges involved in establishing a framework, which is beyond the mandate and scope of this process. It may be adequate for the Zero Draft and final recommendations to simply flag the importance of developing such a framework.
- Duplication should be avoided, and it would be helpful to recall what we already have, in particular SDGs 2.4.1., and recall what has already been agreed by international consensus, and what is under development.
- Need to take into consideration that SDGs are not the only reference framework: the policy recommendations need to be grounded in respect for human rights. Centrality of the right to food is paramount. Human rights should be at the centre of the framework.
- Support for a comprehensive framework to be consistent with the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. Need to also be consistent with the common topics discussed in the policy process on the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, such as text on ‘sustainable and healthy diets’.
- Support for including lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis, as appropriate. Need to link these discussions with the COVID-19 crisis, which shows the vulnerability of food systems on one hand, and the importance of building sustainable food systems that are able to contribute to the realization of the right to food on the other.
- Need to deepen and enhance the focus on agroecological and other innovative approaches with a more specific methodological approach. A general approach to food systems should not be used in this policy process.



## CFS Policy convergence Process on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Food Systems that ensure Food Security and Nutrition

- Support for integrating FAO's work on Biodiversity in the HLPE operational principles, highlighting the importance of sustainability and safe and nutritious foods as well as GHG emissions and ecological footprint.
- Support for focusing on reaching agreement on the principles/elements in the policy recommendations which could then be the basis of a framework to be developed later. Among the principles, it was recommended to include the right to food and the Preservation of Soil Fertility in the list containing sustainability, safe and nutritious food, reduced GHG emissions and biodiversity in Paragraph 9. a) of the background paper.
- Need for further research, including further investments in public and private research (as per HLPE recommendation 3a), in particular on indicators. TAPE is only related to agroecology; TEEB has useful elements, highlighting that private sector plays an important role in this context.
- Need for a scientifically rigorous framework, using also the SDGs, the HLPE set of transition principles as a good basis. However, it is too ambitious to agree on indicators, and data is still very limited. TAPE is newly launched, and is based on 10 other frameworks, including FAO's "Ten Elements of Agroecology", but clearly TAPE is work in progress. Further research is required to define the most relevant and measurable indicators.
- Need to consider that TAPE, developed at the request of COAG, is the most holistic framework that can be used for Agroecology and other innovative approaches. It is based on all existing frameworks, including FAO's "Ten Elements of Agroecology" and the SDGs indicators, particularly 2.4.1, and can be applied at farm, territorial, or country level.
- Suggestion for this policy process to define a way forward rather than craft 'new' indicators.
- Suggestion to involve members of the HLPE Steering Committee in these informal discussions.
- Suggestion to elaborate a framework based on the HLPE report, to facilitate assessments of agroecology on farm, project, landscape, and policy levels.
- Support for strengthening the inclusivity of the Food Systems Summit, which should be mutually supportive of the CFS policy convergence processes on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches and on the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.
- Suggestion to consider the development of the framework potentially guided by the independent experts of the HLPE. The Technical Focal Points could have a basic role of



## CFS Policy convergence Process on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Food Systems that ensure Food Security and Nutrition

coordination and providing additional expertise, if required. In the spirit of inclusivity, we need to consider that all CFS stakeholders are involved in the process.

- Relevance of CFS in guiding this process as the main global platform on food security and nutrition, and need to involve all relevant actors in a participatory manner.
- Support for the Technical Focal Points, which cover the RBAs and the CGIAR's Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT, to be involved in this process, and for the CFS overseeing the outputs of this work stream.
- Support for a new framework developed by CFS and RBAs and other relevant entities. CFS should play a leading role in this context. Relevant actors are also included in paragraph 30 of the draft Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.
- Support for including not only environmental and social assessment, but also economic ones to have all three pillars of sustainability addressed by the framework.

### Item 3) Wrap-up and closing remarks by the Rapporteur

The Rapporteur thanked all stakeholders for their continued engagement, participation, and for allowing a fruitful discussion.