



CSM Youth Response to the HLPE Zero Draft: Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems

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1. MÍSTICA

Our Foods, Our Future



Our foods are not a business.
In all of their beautiful varieties and colors they have given us life.
Our foods are our roots and the basis and source of our traditional knowledge,
ways of knowing and ceremonies.

Our foods speak to us about the spirit, generosity and richness of the land and elements. They have their own ancestral knowledge that have enabled them to adapt to many climates and ecosystems. This knowledge is key to our ability to adapt to and survive climate change as long as we remember how to listen and talk to them as our ancestors did.

We thank all of our foods that our ancestors used, that continue to sustain us on a daily basis, and will be the source of survival for our future generations. We also give thanks for our elders who have the living memory of planting and growing without chemicals and modified seeds and our women who have a vital role in the survival of our foods, our knowledge, therefore our future.

Our beloved seeds, foods and medicines bring us together today as we uphold our responsibility to care for them, to ensure their health and survival so that our future generations will also be strong and healthy. Our foods are not a business. Our foods are our medicine and our future.

Written by Nicole Yanes, Opata, International Indian Treaty Council, participant in the CSM Youth Working Group, with excerpts and inspiration from the Declaration of Tlaxcala (2019) and Declaration of Takahiwai (2019).

2. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Youth around the world are experiencing the effects of multiple, intersecting crisis generated by patriarchy, feudalism, capitalism, imperialism, and the current global trade regimes. These violent modes of oppression lead to daily violations of basic human rights, threaten our ability to live safely and with dignity, and restrict our capacity as young people to ensure the right to food is realized. The conditions that shape our present and collective futures are not inevitable: through grassroots organizing, radical food systems transitions, and the political will of UN Member States, food sovereignty and more just food futures are possible for all.

This radical transformation of food systems (and society) – from the local to global – is both our vision and demand. We will not wait for solutions to be handed down from above. We are fighting for a livable future for us and for generations to come, free from oppression, misery, and conflict.

Given the timing of the HLPE Zero Draft, in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we would be remiss to exclude our perspectives on youth demands related to this current crisis context. Youth are facing several unique challenges as the pandemic has lifted the veil to expose the depth and breadth of systemic inequalities. As markets fail, schools and borders close, jobs disappear, and food access and availability diminish, we see opportunities and our futures crumble away. In many contexts, we witness the weakening of our governments under the pressure of COVID-19 and far right politics. COVID-19 has exposed and worsened the socio-economic inequalities, structural racism and sexism deeply embedded in our societies. However, we are not standing idly by. We are active in developing solutions to the challenges facing our communities: we are organizing ourselves to continue providing food for our communities and caring for the elderly as well as our children; we are shortening the distance from producer to consumer; we are defending school feeding programs and local markets; we are rebuilding rural economies and territories, ensuring youth can stay and return in the countryside; we are caring for and healing the earth by growing nourishing food through agroecology; we are standing up to domestic violence against women and girls as well as racism, homophobia, xenophobia and the patriarchy; and, we are defending workers' and migrants' rights as well as the rights of rural people. We are also imagining new ways to organize the world: envisioning healthy, sustainable and dignified food systems, and taking steps towards achieving them. You can read more about our vision and demands for food system transformation [here](#) or hear us speak about them [here](#).

With extreme urgency, our social movements, Indigenous communities, and civil society organizations present holistic solutions grounded in human rights, the rights of Mother Earth, and the wisdom inherited over generations of resistance to injustices. At the grassroots level, through the pillars of food sovereignty and agroecology and a commitment to solidarity, we are already practicing the solutions needed to confront climate change and the globalization of food apartheid, perpetuated by the extractive, exploitative, and environmentally destructive corporate food regime known as industrial agribusiness. But we cannot ensure our collective futures alone.

The CSM Youth Working Group enthusiastically supports the CFS' commitment to negotiating a policy instrument dedicated to Youth and welcomes the recent Zero Draft of the HLPE report on Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems. The Youth Working

Group of the CSM is a diverse community of Youth from around the globe. We include smallholders and family farmers, indigenous peoples, fisherfolks, agricultural and food workers, women, landless, consumers, pastoralists and urban food insecure from across the world - as well as students, academics, NGO staff and others.¹ Youth have a plurality of understandings, experiences, knowledges and expectations about the future – but together we have common concerns and a common vision of the path towards solutions. Please accept this submission – prepared through a collective and consultative process – as our joint and shared contribution to the HLPE Project Team in response to the Zero Draft of the “Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems” Report.²

In this submission, we provide our reactions and comments on the HLPE’s Zero Draft. We begin with our overall comments on the framing of the zero draft (3.1), before addressing our reflections on the report’s highlights (3.2), what needs to be strengthened and elevated in the report (3.3) and what is missing or should be changed in the report (3.4). We then provide some comments on the process going forward (4). Section (5) indicates where in our submission we have responded to the specific questions posed by the HLPE Project Team in their cover letter to the Zero Draft. We have not addressed each question but have instead focused on those most crucial to our members.

3. RESPONSE

3.1 Response to Overall Framing

Overall, the CSM Youth Working Group welcomes the Zero Draft’s broad framing and feels the report is on the right trajectory. However, the framing concepts in the report need to be more fully elaborated and integrated into the body of the report as a whole. Other concepts are not yet addressed in the report, and as we detail below, should be included.

Beginning with the positive. First, we commend the Zero Draft’s overarching vision of *economies of well-being* based on dignified and rewarding livelihoods, food sovereignty and healthy environments, readjusted balances between human and living nature, and interactions of co-operation and solidarity. If embraced by CFS member states, these *economies of well-being* could support the critical policy shifts needed to promote “a radical transformation of food systems... and boldly reshape [their] underlying principles from production to consumption” as identified in the HLPE global narrative report (HLPE, 2020 p. 29).

Second, we appreciate the Report’s broad and flexible approach to defining youth. The CSM youth were pleased to see that the Report did not narrowly define youth along strict age demarcations. We are encouraged that the Report recognized the diversity of youth identities, experiences and desires - youth are described as a “diverse, dynamically changing and multi-dimensional group” (p. 9). We were also happy to see references to intersectionality in the definition of youth (e.g. p.

¹ For more information on the CSM Youth Working Group, please see our website [here](#).

² Our submissions also build from our contributions to the consultation on the scope of the HLPE report from January 2021. Our previous contribution can be found [here](#).

5). We note however, that while the Report speaks of diversity of youth in many dimensions, it lacks any mention of LGBTQI+ groups or the unique struggles faced by LGBTQI+ youth. We recommend inclusion of this issue, as well efforts to use inclusive language throughout the Report. We also recommend avoiding referring to “young women and men” (e.g. p. 5) and instead suggest speaking of “young women, men and non-binary youth” or use non-binary terms such as youth, youths, or young people.

Third, we agree with positioning of rights, agency, and equity as fundamental pillars for youth engagement and employment in agriculture. However, as we discuss below, we would like to suggest the inclusion of an additional pillar based on the concept of Buen Vivir. Recognition of **rights** and the inclusion of a rights-based approach is, of course, at the heart of all the CFS’ work, and should guide the entire policy process and ground the policy instrument. **Agency** – both collective and individual – as well as the recognition and support by member states of young people as political subjects and not merely instruments or objects of development, is crucial to the realisation of human rights and the right to food, as well as to food sovereignty. We are pleased to see our vision of agency in its multiple dimensions included in the HLPE Report’s framing of agency (p. 9). We also agree with the inclusion of agency as a new pillar of food security (along with sustainability). We are similarly pleased to see examples of youth agency given in the report, such as Young Maori resistance (p. 37) or the Javanese youth groups’ collective farming project (p. 41). Finally, the pillar of **equity** is fundamental to addressing the widespread inequalities within and between societies, and the ways in which our current food system has both marginalized and been built on the marginalization of certain bodies and people. We support the recognition of the diversity of youth, their contexts and experiences and the intersecting factors that shape their access to agriculture and food systems livelihoods.

Finally, we applaud the relational approach taken in the Zero Draft, and the life course perspective – including the intergenerational approach, which advocates for the concept of generational sustainability. The emphasis on diverse epistemologies is also welcomed, as is the Draft Report’s broad-based definition of innovation that encompasses traditional farming practices. We discuss the concept of innovation further in section 3.3.6.

Turning now to better integrating the pillars. With regard to the pillar of rights, we are concerned that the integration of rights is at a surface level and limited. Rights are mentioned early in the report, but they often do not form part of the analysis. For example, as we discuss further in section 3.3.1, rights to resources like land, seeds and water, as enshrined in United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP)³ and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) are not integrated into discussions on the material needs of food producers (this section of the report only concerns “access to resources”). Discrimination against women is discussed in the Report as well, but a deeper discussion of this discrimination as a violation of women’s rights would assist in strengthening the gender analysis. We recommend here that the drafting committee look at [CEDAW General Recommendation No. 34 on the rights of rural women](#). Similarly, Indigenous

³ The current Zero Draft cites UNDROP as having passed in 2017, however the Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in December 2018.

Peoples' rights are only narrowly referred to. There is an urgent need to recognize and affirm the UNDRIP as the lens through which the CFS develops and implements reports, recommendations and voluntary guidelines. We emphasize in particular the impacts of colonization, dispossession of lands, territories and resources, and the "urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources."⁴

Similarly, we worry that rights are viewed too narrowly. Collective rights are not highlighted in the same way as individual rights despite their equal importance, and despite their recognition in UNDROP (see arts. 8, 9, 15, 16, 17 and 26) and UNDRIP (see art. 1). We are conditioned to emphasize individual rights as a byproduct of capitalism, but we encourage this Report to extend the rights framework to encompass diverse youth cultures and needs. A young farmer in Canada may prioritize individual land ownership as a right that must be protected, whereas a young pastoralist in Zimbabwe may prioritize to the same extent the maintenance of collective land stewardship and the protection of usufruct rights.

In addition, we submit that definitions of human rights should not only draw from formal instruments of international law but also from peoples' definitions and interpretations. We draw the drafting committee's attention to the CSM's previous [*Report on the use and implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines*](#), which outlines a new normative framework for the right to food based on lived experiences of right to food violations and visions for alternative food systems. As will be discussed in section 3.3.2, we also draw the Drafting Committee's attention to definitions of food sovereignty as peoples' framing of rights. Food system transformation and the realization of food sovereignty hinges on the acknowledgement and enactment of the very human rights that are often cast aside in the interest of capitalist gains and neoliberal pursuits. Thus, the human rights frame should be intentional about inclusivity of all rights demands - specifically the rights of peoples who are the most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition - and should be clear that these human rights trump the rights of corporations that have failed to create just food systems.

Rights must also be connected to responsibilities. The Zero Draft lacks a discussion of responsibility, including who (or what entities are responsible) for the unjust and unsustainable food systems replete with daily human rights abuses that we have today, and who (or what entities are responsible) for engaging in remedying and monitoring them. It is the responsibility of states to protect, respect and fulfill human rights. At the same time, we, the rights holders, bear responsibilities: responsibilities to the Earth, to our communities, to other sentient beings, to ourselves and to those near and far. We have a duty to protect and defend our territories - and the human rights of all, including the rights of future generations.

With regard to the pillar of agency, the Report fails to address agency as itself a human rights issue. Human rights – and the capabilities approach that has come to define human rights – focuses on questions of agency and choice. Indeed, UNDROP recognizes agency over work as a human right: "Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to work, which includes the

⁴ Preamble, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

right to choose freely the way they earn their living” (UNDROP, at art. 13). The Draft Report also fails to discuss how youth move towards agency or could have more substantial inputs into policy processes. The idea that agency is vital is echoed throughout the report, but there is little discussion into youth perspectives of how to actually achieve this agency despite systemic barriers. We feel that youth activism is not given an adequately significant role in the report and should be given more attention (see the minor reference to major climate and food sovereignty movements on p. 20)

Further, the Draft Report pays little attention to calling out and changing the conditions under which youth exercise their agency, and the ways in which these conditions limit the options and real choices available to youth. We discuss this further in section 3.3.5. The Draft Report also lacks a comprehensive assessment of the constraints faced by youth in agriculture and food systems, and the systemic changes that must occur to support a transition away from neoliberal industrial agriculture and food systems. As we discuss in more detail in section 3.4.1, because the roots of inequality that disadvantage youth are not adequately addressed, the framing lacks depth. The report skims the surface of deeper issues without calling into question the structural, economic, and social systems that have marginalized many to the benefit of few. The Report’s overall framing fails to embed the current challenges youth are facing in a critical analysis of the deeply destructive structures of neoliberal capitalism, racism and patriarchy and the centuries of Western imperialism and colonialism that have created unequal, unjust and unsustainable relations both between different countries, regions and communities in the Global North and Global South, *and* between humans and the ecosystems on which they draw to survive. Thus, broadly, what youth need to thrive in food systems is, first and foremost, a radical transformation of the main pillars and principles that are currently structuring the ways societies work economically, politically, culturally and ecologically. **No youth-specific target or measure aimed at providing jobs or job-related education will be successful if we continue to destroy natural resources and ecosystems, drive global warming and perpetuate above-mentioned unjust structures of oppression and exploitation and thus rob youth of their equal rights to present and future healthy natural environments and dignified lives.**

Finally, while we do agree that Rights, Agency, and Equity are three important pillars, there are other values that we believe are fundamental to youth engagement in food systems which are not adequately captured by these concepts. These values include community, the good life, belonging, collectivity, and solidarity. **We would therefore like to propose the inclusion of a fourth pillar based on the concept of Buen Vivir / Living Well**, which conceptualizes the individual within a community and in a specific ecological context. Buen Vivir is also an explicitly decolonial stance. (We discuss this in more detail in section 3.4.3) The Zero Draft refers to alternative economies, such as “indigenous perspectives and philosophies of well-being or the “good life/buen vivir”, [...] economies of solidarity, care and well-being of both people and nature [...] as the basis for the sustainability and resilience of future food systems” (p. 4/5). By including Buen Vivir as a pillar, these elements could be elevated in the report and mainstreamed throughout. It would also support the Project Team’s aspiration to reframe the underlying principles on which current food systems are based, opening up a transition pathway towards food sovereignty and agroecological approaches to food systems transformation.

3.2 The Draft Report's Highlights

Along with the hopefully constructive critiques presented in this submission, we are encouraged by the breadth of topics covered and the progressive language with which critical issues are approached. In particular, we would like to comment on three highlights of the Zero Draft.

3.2.1 *Radical Transformations of our Food Systems are Necessary*

First, we welcome the report's emphasis on the need for "fundamental transformations towards more **agroecological, smallholder-based** modes of supplying the world's food needs" (p.4). In this regard, we encourage the project team to refer both to [FAO's 10 Elements of Agroecology](#), as well as the [Nyéléni Declaration on Agroecology](#). As mentioned, we commend a vision of "sustainable food systems that enable **dignified livelihoods**, a healthy environment, and **food sovereignty**" (p.7). We welcome the clear recognition of the "economic, social and ecological **superiority of small-scale farming** and other small and medium food systems enterprises (SMEs) in terms of their resilience and adaptive capacity." (p.32). We also welcome the reference to the important role of **territorial markets**, and encourage the project team to refer to the [CFS policy recommendations on Connecting Smallholders to Markets](#), as well as the [CSM's analytical guide on this policy instrument](#). We also welcome the Draft Reports' references to the HLPE Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030 and its call for a "radical transformation of food systems" that should be "empowering, equitable, regenerative, productive, prosperous and boldly reshape the underlying principles from production to consumption. These include stronger measures to promote equity among food system participants by promoting agency and the right to food, especially for vulnerable and marginalized people" (HLPE, 2020, p. 29). We share a belief that our food systems require radical transformation, and have recently produced our own [Youth Demands for a Radical Transformation of Our Food Systems](#).

3.2.2 *Education in Multiple Forms, Including Horizontal Knowledge Exchange, is Essential*

We were happy to see the importance placed on education in the Zero Draft. In particular, we were happy to see that conversations on education in the Report reflect that education is a human right and then both express concern for current models of education, and call for alternative, additional and new models.

First, on human rights. Education is a human right. It is a right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (see art. 26), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (see art. 13), and numerous other human rights instruments, including UNDRIP (see arts. 4(2)(d), 23(3), and 25). We embrace the HLPE's statement that "education [is] important not – or not only – as job preparation, but as a human right of children and young people" (p. 50).

Second, on the critique of current models, we were pleased to see the Report's acknowledgement that education must entail the **recuperation of culture and the appreciation for traditional**

livelihoods. We see the marginalization of rural livelihoods their communities, their territories, ecologies and land as a product of the exploitative structures of global capitalist urbanisation that have driven a cultural rift between rural and urban livelihoods and wrongly established an idea of rural interconnected human-nonhuman lives as remnants of a past to be overcome. For this reason, we welcome the Draft Report’s finding that: “Education itself, as currently practiced, is often an important contributor to the construction of aspirations for non-farming futures, fostering a process of de-skilling of rural youth, neglecting farming skills and local realities in curricula, and downgrading farming as an occupation only for those who do not succeed in school (Katz, 2004).” We note that Indigenous peoples have the right to “revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons” (Article 13 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

The examples below illustrate how community-based education models are responding to the issues identified by Katz above. Nonetheless, grassroots efforts like these still lack attention, validation and long-term governmental support, and are often embedded in structures that undermine their potential - such as violations of the right to health and healthy environments.

Case Study No. 1: Community-based Youth Training in Ecuador: Driving Food Sovereignty and Defending Rural Livelihoods

Example 1: Machete y Garabato, Province Los Ríos

“Machete y Garabato” was founded in 2015, bringing together students of Agronomy at the University of Quevedo (UTQ), with peasant youths of the Centro Agrícola Cantonal de Quevedo (CACQ). In partnership with [Centro Agrícola Cantonal de Quevedo](#), the project [Machete y Garabato](#) integrates youth into an agroecology training process that developed as a grassroots response to the economically and ecologically destructive effects of agribusiness in Ecuador. Their principal activities are the development of agroecological techniques for production and commercialisation, and the recuperation of the regional river Maculillo - which had been contaminated by regional agro-industry. Machete y Garabato understands itself as resisting against the advancement of capitalism in their region.

The organization has contributed to the organising of people, bringing farms together in favor of agroecology and creating rural community cohesion - in a region where, as members of Machete y Garabato stress, there had not been a cohesive community previously. It has opened up spaces of reflection and debate on the agrarian question, and on the topic of the right to nature and nutrition. The initiative furthermore builds connections between rural and urban, selling the agroecological production at a local market in the town of Quevedo. As one of their activities, Machete y Garabato also connects to other youth groups and community youth training programs, such as the youth group of the Union de Organizaciones Campesinas de Esmeraldas (UOCE) (see below).

Popular education training programs like Machete y Garabato demonstrate that, as one of the leaders emphasizes, “Food sovereignty is not a slogan. Food sovereignty is a real exercise, which we’re doing here with this countryside-city, city-countryside relationship”. This report by the Movimiento Regional por la Tierra outlines the history, activities and ideas of Machete y Garabato in detail: <https://www.porlatierra.org/docs/05c68d34f221adcb473cddca2da8d81b.pdf>

Example 2: Utopía Popular, Province Esmeraldas

[The Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas de Esmeraldas](#) (UOCE) created the [educational project](#) “Universidad Campesina Utopía Popular.” The project is for them an “act of rebellion”, as it offers education and training to rural Youth whose right to education is often not fully realised, particularly so in times of covid-19. In Utopía Popular, Youth obtain, throughout four years, knowledge in critical politics, sciences, history and agroecology. The project rests on the idea that knowledge is power, and that the unequal and unjust distribution of access to education needs to be challenged, among others by creating spaces of education and empowerment like these. The project also focuses particularly on the empowerment of women of the region of Esmeraldas, which they describe as defined by a macho-and patriarchal culture. During the COVID19 pandemic, the [Youth of Utopía Popular were at the heart of community responses](#). They did not only support the agricultural work of their families, but also visited the communities, made a mapping of the problem, informed about the virus, organised transport of products of necessity and exchange of products between communities. The youths quoted in the [report](#) of the Observatorio del Cambio Rural (OCARU) describe the number of difficulties they are facing, emphasising their struggles with the unequal realisation of their right to education:

“We have a health care system without the capacity to attend to all the sick people, and there is a lack of medicines which makes people afraid to go to health centres, not to mention that for most communities that are far away, two or three hours away by road. Another urgent issue is education: if before the pandemic education was already a privilege for families with certain economic possibilities, now this gap has become much more noticeable”, José Macías, 26 years, communication director of UOCE

“I am concerned about education because it should be free and equal in both urban and rural areas. What we are experiencing in this pandemic in the educational system shows us that those in government do not see the reality of the countryside, because they impose a system of virtual education when in reality the majority of rural students do not have the tools to receive this form of education”, Tatiana Ángulo, 20 years, education director of UOCE

The Youths bemoaned that their work and the work of their communities was not getting media- and political attention: *“I would like the Peasant University Utopía Popular to be shown on a TV channel so that the dream of freeing our territory can become greater. And that all young people see an alternative perspective for our future”* (Maikel Guzmán).

In this sense, the work of UOCE and Utopía Popular is even more important, as it educates youths about the value of their territories, territorial culture and peasant practices. Particularly at the moment of the pandemic, it stresses the potential of their peasant way of life, strengthens peasant struggles and thus counters adversary cultural discourses that marginalise and belittle rural livelihoods: *“Being organised allows us to reflect with our comrades on the importance of the territory, and even more so in these difficult times, to encourage many people to give double value to our farms, so that they realise how important it is to have a piece of land to be able to produce their food, medicinal plants and that in any case we have cleaner air, which could reduce the risk of contagion. Educating children is part of this because it allows them to use a lot of knowledge to make their territory respected and to defend it, for the good of all communities.”* (Gina Guzmán, 15 years, member of Utopía Popular).

Third, on strengthening and building new models of education. We were pleased with the Report’s highlighting of horizontal knowledge exchange through grassroots and intergenerational networks. We note that Indigenous Peoples have “the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning” (Article 14, UNDRIP) in order to ensure this intergenerational learning.

Youth are already practicing these models - as the Zero Draft acknowledges in its references to civil society examples of horizontal knowledge exchange (p. 53, examples of La Via Campesina, Urgenci, Brazilian Landless Rural Workers Movement). We agree with the Draft’s assessment that comprehensive government support is needed for such models and that governments should take care not to impede such approaches in their support for other educational models.

Case Study No. 2: Scaling Agroecology in the Caribbean

In Puerto Rico, [La Organización Boricúa de Agricultura Ecológica](#) facilitates popular education processes for members, especially youth, who are interested in strengthening and sharing agricultural skills while enhancing community relationships through [solidarity work brigades](#), technical and marketing support, and opportunities to participate in international social movement spaces such as [CLOC-Via Campesina](#).

In addition to focusing on realization of the right to land for farming and ecosystem restoration, La Organización Boricúa utilizes [the peasant-to-peasant method](#) for scaling agroecology, primarily involving small scale models (peasant farms, farm cooperatives) for community-supported food production. These models entail food production for local markets and informal food distribution, as well as on-farm experimentation, learning exchanges to collaborate on peasant-led innovations, and the sharing of resources within mutual aid networks. Similar to many other grassroots organizations and popular movements, La Organización Boricúa advances its work with no formal government support. Government bureaucracy and pro-

corporate policies greatly limit the social and ecological policy campaigns of the organization and the policy work of grassroots coalitions within which it participates, such as the [Just Recovery](#) initiative of Climate Justice Alliance.

The UNDROP provides further support for the validation of diverse approaches to education, highlighting the effectiveness of horizontal approaches as well as education that celebrates rural livelihoods and supports agroecological models. The UNDROP provides *inter alia* that “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to adequate training suited to the specific agroecological, sociocultural and economic environments in which they find themselves. Issues covered by training programmes should include, but not be limited to, improving productivity, marketing and the ability to cope with pests, pathogens, system shocks, the effects of chemicals, climate change and weather-related events” (see UNDROP, art 25.1).

We embrace the Zero Draft’s engagement with Traditional Ecological and Local Community Knowledge in chapter 4.3. The Zero Draft refers to and makes use of non-Western, including indigenous perspectives for sustainable societies as well as Indigenous and traditional forms of knowledge and knowledge production (e.g. p.4; all of chapter 4, p.48ff.) We embrace the need for a democratisation of knowledge production as stated on p. 48: “the transition to more sustainable food systems also requires a democratization of knowledge production, allowing the construction of technical and policy related knowledge for food sovereignty, agroecology and biocultural diversity to be more actively shaped by food producers and consumers.” We elaborate further on this in section 3.3.3, where we highlight the need to transform research funding structures and directions.

Access to knowledge, including traditional knowledge, is also a human right. Article 26(1) of UNDROP provides that:

Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to enjoy their own culture and to pursue freely their cultural development, without interference or any form of discrimination. They also have the right to maintain, express, control, protect and develop their traditional and local knowledge, such as ways of life, methods of production or technology, or customs and tradition. No one may invoke cultural rights to infringe upon the human rights guaranteed by international law or to limit their scope.

And Article 31(1) of UNDRIP provides that:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop

their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

Finally, we note that education in general is important for youth, beyond education in agriculture. Education is important for providing youth with a grounding in cultural and cosmological systems, encouraging imaginative and critical perspectives and to provide them some of the tool sets needed to engage in society, earn a living and improve their prospects. Education is important for youth who are parents – so that they can work and meet their family food needs (including where school provides meals for children). Education is important for teaching children about the political, historical, economic and cultural aspects of food systems, nutrition and to ensure their food literacy in a holistic sense.

3.2.3 Recognition of Urban and Peri-urban Food System Actors is Vital

We were pleased to see the recognition of urban food system jobs and urban food workers, as well as the recognition that food systems are much more than agriculture on p. 25 of the Zero Draft. It is important to pay attention to the many ways urban youth are shaping and participating in the transformation of food systems, as our example below on student organising during the pandemic illustrates very well.

Case Study No. 3: Youth Agency Against Urban Food Insecurity in Brazil

NATRA is an extension group of the Franca Campus of Sao Paulo's Universidad Estadual Paulista (UNESP) that works together with the camps and rural settlements in the region of Ribeirão Preto/SP. NATRA follows the idea of university and society working hand in hand, stressing that universities should be socially engaged and support members of society.

During the COVID19 pandemic, the Youth of NATRA (O Núcleo Agrário Terra e Raiz/NATRA) are taking part in two projects connected to the defense of urban food security, both of them assuring "Cestas Verdes" ("Green baskets") with healthy food from a MST (Landless Rural Workers Movement) in Restinga-SP and from COOPERVAL, an organic food cooperative group from Claraval-MG. The baskets are delivered by municipal social services institutions, who have access to the information of people in social vulnerability, and then the institution realizes the distribution properly. Flyers are delivered with the baskets, containing information about prevention habits during the pandemic, as well as about family agriculture, what to do in cases of domestic violence and proposed recipes for preparing the food delivered in the basket. Through the baskets, NATRA is working to stimulate healthy food habits, addressing social issues, helping with the connection of smallholders with consumers and providing vulnerable people with nutritious food.

Beyond these short-term initiatives, the Youth are advocating for public policies that support regional food sovereignty. They stress how the pandemic highlights the dependence of Franca, an inland city, on trade, making its citizens particularly vulnerable to the effects of the Covid-

related policies. And, beyond that, the most fundamental context to their work is, they stress, the tremendous social inequality in their region and the country of Brazil more broadly. Member of NATRA, Gabriel Palma notes: *“Brazil deals with people who are struggling against starvation, at the same time Brazil faces an increasing number of cases of obesity, demonstrating how precarious the debate and the concern about accessing good quality food is and how much influence food enterprises and ruralists have in politics.”*

3.3 What Needs to be Strengthened

There are other areas of the Draft Report that we commend but feel could be strengthened by a shift in analysis, an inclusion of more details or stronger language.

3.3.1 Rights to Productive Resources (right to land, seeds, water and other productive resources) - Not Simply Access

The Draft report is clear that youth need access to productive resources – land, seeds, water, traditional knowledge, biodiversity etc. – if they are to engage in agriculture and food systems work and see futures for themselves in rural, peri-urban and urban places more broadly. Access to productive resources is of course central to realizing the pillars of equity and agency. However, international law is clear that peasants, Indigenous peoples and other people working in rural areas should not have access as a matter of charity or as an abstract goal – rather they have a right to these productive resources. These rights place corresponding obligations on states, elevating the claims of rights-holders to resources over those of corporate interests. The framework of rights to productive resources articulates a core set of principles for the governing of food systems.

We will address here more specifically rights to land below, though we note peasants, Indigenous peoples and other people working in rural areas also have rights to:

- **Information:** “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to seek, receive, develop and impart information, including information about factors that may affect the production, processing, marketing and distribution of their products” (UNDROP, art. 11).
- **Food:** “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to adequate food and the fundamental right to be free from hunger. This includes the right to produce food and the right to adequate nutrition, which guarantee the possibility of enjoying the highest degree of physical, emotional and intellectual development.” (UNDROP, art. 15).
- **Tools and financial resources:** “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, and to facilitated access to the means of production necessary to achieve them, including production tools, technical assistance, credit, insurance and other financial services” (UNDROP, art 16)

- **Seeds:** “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to seeds ... including (a) The right to the protection of traditional knowledge relevant to plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; (b) The right to equitably participate in sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; (c) The right to participate in the making of decisions on matters relating to the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture; (d) The right to save, use, exchange and sell their farm-saved seed or propagating material.” (UNDROP, art 18). “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures.” (UNDRIP article 31).
- **Water:** “Peasants and other people working in rural areas have the right to water for personal and domestic use, farming, fishing and livestock keeping and to securing other water-related livelihoods, ensuring the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of water. They have the right to equitable access to water and water management systems, and to be free from arbitrary disconnections or the contamination of water supplies.” (UNDROP, art 21). “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.” (UNDRIP, art. 25).

Indigenous peoples’ rights to their lands, territories and resources: “Food sovereignty is the right of Peoples to define their own policies and strategies for sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas and is considered to be a precondition for Food Security.” “The rights to land, water, and territory, as well as the right to self-determination, are essential for the full realization of our Food Security and Food Sovereignty.” (The “Declaration of Atitlan”, from the 1st Indigenous Peoples’ Global Consultation on the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty, Guatemala, 2002).

Indigenous Peoples’ right to food is inseparable from their rights to land, territories, resources, culture and self-determination. Indigenous Peoples’ relationships with their traditional lands and territories forms a core part of their identities and spiritualities and is deeply rooted in their cultures, languages and histories. Since land and its resources form the basis of Indigenous Peoples’ subsistence activities, losing control of these undermines their food and livelihood security and can threaten their survival as peoples. The right to food of Indigenous Peoples rests on the “pillar rights” of lands, territories and resources; free prior and informed consent; and the right to decision-making in development.⁵

⁵ See Woodley, E., Crowley, E., de Pryck, J. D., & Carmen, A. (2006). Cultural indicators of Indigenous Peoples’ food and agro-ecological systems. *SARD Initiative commissioned by FAO and the International India Treaty Council*, 1-104. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/011/ak243e/ak243e00.pdf> .

As of now the Zero Draft does not reflect the underlying problems that currently hinder Indigenous Peoples' rights, including the rights to their food systems. Indigenous Peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, *inter alia*, genocide, the colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests (Preamble, UN Declaration). The displacement from traditional lands due to development, agriculture and extractive activities has resulted in a loss of access to traditional food and medicines with devastating effects on the wellbeing of Indigenous Peoples. We therefore emphasize the “urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies, especially their rights to their lands, territories and resources.”⁶

There is an urgent need to recognize and affirm the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the lens through which the CFS develops policy and promotes youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems. We hope the HLPE Project Team will elevate this important declaration in its report.

The Right to Land

In the following paragraphs we analyze the right to land as an example of how a human rights approach could be better integrated into the Report.

The right to land is a human right: We appreciate that the Zero Draft notes that access to land “is often a key barrier to young people’s participation in food systems, from primary production to food distribution and consumption” (p. 31) – but also recognizes that “Peasants and other people living in rural areas have the right to land, individually and/or collectively ... including the right to have access to, sustainably use and manage land and the water bodies, coastal seas, fisheries, pastures and forests therein, to achieve an adequate standard of living, to have a place to live in security, peace and dignity and to develop their cultures.” (UNDROP, art 17).

In addition to the articles mentioned in other parts of this submission, it is critical to respect and protect Indigenous Peoples’ rights to their traditional lands, territories, resources and subsistence activities including:

- Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired and the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. (UNDRIP, art. 26).

⁶ Preamble, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination. States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent. (UNDRIP, art. 29);
- Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for the development or use of their lands or territories and other resources. States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources. (UNDRIP, art. 32);
- Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return. (UNDRIP, art. 10).

The text box below provides a very concerning example from Mozambique, showcasing how people's right to land is repeatedly violated, impacting youth for generations to come.

Case Study No. 4: Mozambique: Exploiting the Pandemic to Curtail People's Right to Land

Members of the World March of Women (WMW) reported that in Mozambique, communities developed solidarity responses to Covid19 and more urban people engaged in agriculture. The restrictions forced people to live from activities in the informal sector, and people needed to do agriculture to feed themselves. Youth were the ones selling these products to urban communities. They also provided products to associations taking care of more vulnerable people. Yet, at this time, when civil society was struggling with the multiple crises happening as consequences of the Covid19 pandemic, and busy providing care and food for communities and vulnerable members of the communities, the government started to revise the land law, making it very hard for civil society to be involved in the process or monitor the activities of the revision of the law. In the context of the pandemic, civil society cannot engage in a mass mobilisation about this revision. The women's and youth movement responded nonetheless with high alert, raising a lot of debate in television, radio, raising awareness of the implications of the changing of that law. They felt almost powerless in that situation of multiple crises. The government signed contracts with companies to give large portions of land to big industry actors that are not producing food for local consumers. WMW reacted immediately, also especially as women, asking why women are not equally represented in the composition of the commission of the revision, and why women are less represented (there are 10 members and only 1 member is a woman). The women and youth movement fears the revision of the law will eventually lead to the privatisation of

land, and that the global pandemic has served as an opportunity to avoid inclusivity and participation through consultation processes.

The right to land can be held individually or collectively: We are similarly pleased to see the HLPE’s strong endorsement of collective ownership and collective land rights, including the identification of private ownership as a problem and examples of good practices in reimagining access to land for young people. In particular we endorse the following passage on p. 34:

Land tenure based on private heritable ownership is “a key to the high and persistent levels of inequality seen in societies practicing intensive agriculture” (Shenk et al., 2010, p. 65); among both farmers and pastoralists (unlike shifting horticulturalists, foragers and forest users) the intergenerational transmission of land, fisheries resources and livestock is a key factor in the perpetuation and strengthening of inequalities (Mulder et al., 2009). It is important to note that the principle of collective or community ownership and (secure) individual use rights – espoused by the global peasant and indigenous movement La Via Campesina, among other organizations – is relevant not only for Indigenous peoples and “traditional” communities. The same principle can also be explored and applied wherever national legal structures permit it by institutions and groups promoting young people’s access to land. For example, former plantations, unused lands, new settlements, land acquired or allocated for urban farming, among others (Assies, 2009).

Comprehensive agrarian reform is part of the right to land: As part of realizing the right to land, comprehensive agrarian reform is essential. The Zero Draft does highlight the need for access to land, and, refers to the destructive role played by large-scale land acquisition and land grabs (p.33/34), as well as give cases of agrarian reform from below as positive examples of good practices in reimagining access to land for youth (p.35). However, we urge the HLPE to be more explicit about the required steps, procedures, and policies of a comprehensive agrarian reform that would benefit youth. As highlighted in the Zero Draft, the agrarian reform campaign of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in Brazil is arguably the most significant case of popular organizing for the appropriation of large-scale holdings to redistribute among peasant communities. In this regard, we urge Member States to urgently include redistributive discourse into their national constitutions to allow for the expropriation of property or judicial nullification of ownership based. Property must properly serve social and ecological functions determined according to criteria such as rational and adequate use, equitable use of the common sources of life, compliance with labor regulations, and the wellbeing of property owners, workers, and the environment. The Constitutions of Colombia (1991; Article 58), Brazil (1988; Articles 184 and 187), and Mexico (1917; Article 27) serve as examples. Member States should also develop policies that allow for direct democratic control over rural and urban land markets, specifically to realize the right to land, fisheries, and forests to achieve people’s food sovereignty as well as the right to adequate housing for all.

Case Study No. 5: Food Sovereignty for Small-producers in Canada

Youth leadership is foundational to the [National Farmers Union](#) in Canada, a member of La Via Campesina North America. Youth organize annual gatherings for debate and sharing insights from their experiences as farmers and workers. In-person and virtual convenings allow for relationship-building and greater solidarity within the Union. Youth are presently leading communications projects for political education and to respond to other needs expressed by members.

The National Farmers Union works with programs like [Young Agrarians](#) which has a land matching program to connect young, beginning farmers with older farmers to better ensure that land transitions advance with a shared vision for people's food sovereignty and ecological stewardship. Other campaigns in Canada address the need for decolonization, respect for indigenous territorial sovereignty, and restoring land as a commons.

Lack of government support for the National Farmers Union and other farm organizations like [Union Paysanne](#) greatly constrains overall capacity for agrarian movement organizations to advance political education, technical training, and local market support at the scale that their members and the public in general truly need and deserve.

Women's rights to land: While the report does refer to the women's access to land on several occasions (p. 31, 32, 46), we encourage a more thorough analysis. As quoted in the Report, "women are significantly disadvantaged relative to men with regard to their land rights" (FAO, 2018d, p. 1). This is a key point when considering that women, while disadvantaged, also comprise a significant proportion of the small-scale food producers in the world (FAO, 2011)⁷. Despite women's multiple roles in care work, domestic work, subsistence food production, and the waged labour force, their right to land and right to inherit land is subverted by archaic laws and norms in many places in the world. Their right to land can also be jeopardized by the perpetuation of patriarchal and oppressive norms associated with the family farm model. FAO's 2011 State of Food and Agriculture focuses on women in agriculture notes that "[i]f women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent...[and] reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17 percent"⁸ Further, the report emphasises that access to and tenure security of land must be considered in relation to other productive resources

⁷ Women comprise 43 percent of the agricultural labour force, on average, in developing countries; this figure ranges from around 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in parts of Africa and Asia, but it exceeds 60 percent in only a few countries (FAO, 2010a). Critics argue that labour force statistics underestimate the contribution of women to agricultural work because women are less likely to declare themselves as employed in agriculture and they work longer hours than men (Beneria, 1981), but evidence from time-use surveys does not suggest that women perform most of the agricultural labour in the developing world (see Chapter 2). (FAO, 2011, p8). State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development. Retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2010-11/en/>

⁸ FAO (2011) State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development. "Main Messages" retrieved from <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2010-11/en/>

such as water rights, access to and ownership of equipment and processing infrastructure, capacity to own livestock, access to non-exploitative credit or insurance systems, and extension services.

Due to the inextricable connection between women's access to land and its direct impact on youth livelihoods in food systems and the pursuit of equity, we offer the following as recommendations to be included in the Report.

Section 4.6 of the VGGTs states:

States should remove and prohibit all forms of discrimination related to tenure rights, including those resulting from change of marital status, lack of legal capacity, and lack of access to economic resources. In particular, States should ensure equal tenure rights for women and men, including the right to inherit and bequeath these rights. Such State actions should be consistent with their existing obligations under relevant national law and legislation and international law, and with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable regional and international instruments.

Furthermore, 5.4 states:

States should consider the particular obstacles faced by women and girls with regard to tenure and associated tenure rights and take measures to ensure that legal and policy frameworks provide adequate protection for women and that laws that recognize women's tenure rights are implemented and enforced. States should ensure that women can legally enter into contracts concerning tenure rights on the basis of equality with men and should strive to provide legal services and other assistance to enable women to defend their tenure interests.

General Recommendation 34 on the Rights of Rural Women from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) could also be noted in the Report to strengthen the rights-based demand for increased access to land. Reference to La Via Campesina's concept of 'popular peasant feminism', an understanding of rural feminism rooted in the struggle against capitalism, would strengthen the report's attempt to address the gender question as it relates to land. We also encourage an assessment of LGBTIQ+ groups in relation to land access and resource rights. In addition, reference to the [CSM Women's Vision](#) statement would strengthen the gender analysis of the report.

Case Study No. 6: Learning from the World March of Women and the Young Feminist Movement in Mozambique

World March of Women is a Global Movement that articulates women's human rights agendas around the world. In Mozambique, the Movement was hosted by Forum Mulher, a civil society organization that works at the national level in the coordination and development of feminist agendas through a network of organizations that operate in different areas but that work together

to achieve a common goal, improve women's lives. For food security and nutrition agendas, the World March collaborates with the Young Feminist Movement of Mozambique (Movfemme).

The Young Feminist Movement of Mozambique (Movfemme) is a non-profit association made up of women that aims to develop actions aimed at promoting the rights of girls and young women. It is non-governmental, democratic, non-partisan, anti-capitalist, non-sexist and non-hierarchical. In the sovereignty and food security agenda, the organization collaborates with more than 30 young women between 18 and 30 years of age, most of whom are students and residents of peripheral and marginalized neighborhoods. They are a movement based on feminist politics and in this perspective defend the practice of agroecology as their symbol of resistance to the oppression of the capitalist system. Their work consists in part of training young women politically so that they can be and be equipped with arguments that defend feminist philosophy, and encourage and assist in the practice of urban agroecology in order to fight for food sovereignty.

They describe the context of their work as follows:

- Food systems have undergone important transformations over the past two decades: the globalised distribution of technology related to food production, transport and marketing; the centralisation of food processing structures and facilities; large-scale production companies; the international flow of capital and services; a modern food technology; among others (Popkin, Adair and Ng 2012). These transformations are changing the way food is produced, harvested, stored, processed, distributed, marketed, prepared and consumed.
- The Mozambican economy is essentially agrarian. This sector contributes 24% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and currently employs 80% of the country's female labour force and 70% of the male labour force, representing a total of 80% of the economically active population. However, subsistence agriculture with low production is predominant. The country is also extremely vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, mainly droughts, floods and cyclones.
- Low productivity is a challenge in most regions of the country, which also faces problems with storage, processing and conservation infrastructure, as well as food distribution and marketing systems and networks. Transport is a major structural problem in the country and, due to road conditions, the cost of food distribution to the domestic market is so high that much of what is produced is traded in neighbouring countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe and others.
- HIV/AIDS is one of many factors affecting productivity. There are also important challenges to food and nutrition security emerging from recent discoveries of natural resources in Mozambique (such as coal, natural gas and heavy sands) and the extractive industries associated with them (which will attract more wage earners), as well as the favouring of cash crops such as cotton and tobacco over traditional food crops, encouraging monoculture and increasing land conflicts between the community and businesses.

- Agriculture, nutrition and health have clear links: adequate levels of food production are the first necessary step to ensure the availability of nutritious food for consumption, which influences the health and nutritional status of individuals and populations. But although closely related, these three areas have very little dialogue. There is a major disconnect between production priorities and food consumption needs.

From their feminist perspective, the following agricultural strategies can be considered to encourage greater employability of young people:

- Assess the context at the local level in order to plan appropriate activities to address the types and causes of young people's lack of interest in engaging in food production;
- Target efforts at the most vulnerable and promote equity through participation, access to resources and decent employment;
- Collaborate and coordinate with other sectors through joint strategies with common objectives to address the multiple underlying causes of employability in the agrarian sector
- Maintain or promote the improvement of available natural resources (water, soil, biodiversity);
- Empower women by ensuring their access to productive resources, income opportunities, extension and information services, credit, labour and time-saving technologies, supporting their voice at home and their participation in decisions related to family rural productive activity;
- Facilitate the diversification of production, and increase the production of nutrient-rich crops and small-scale livestock; and
- Improve the processing, storage and preservation of food to retain its nutritional value, prolong its shelf life and promote food safety to reduce the seasonality of food insecurity and post-harvest losses by encouraging youth labour in all production processes.

Land-grabbing is a violation of the right to land: Finally, on access to land, we welcome the explicit reference to present-day land grabbing, both by corporate agribusiness and speculative investors, as a key driver behind the violation of people's right to land and other resources. We also note the importance of addressing the increasing concern that has always existed of the criminalization of land defenders who are defending their right to their food systems and life ways and who face political repression, violence and criminalization for opposing dispossession, forcible relocation, environmental degradation, the impacts of climate change and land-grabbing. In this light, we welcome the explicit reference of present-day land grabs as a key driver behind the violation of people's right to land and other resources (p. 33/34).

A decolonial approach to land (and resource) rights is needed: A decolonial approach to resource access, rights, and reform as they relate to youth is necessary. Recognizing and respecting Indigenous sovereignty must be an integral part of the rights pillar. As we note above, reference to the rights of Indigenous peoples, collective landholding, and the UNDRIP is made in section

3.1.2 and 3.1.3 of the Zero Draft, but a broader decolonial approach would incorporate Indigenous perspectives into each section of the report. Integrating information from the resources provided by the [International Indian Treaty Council's database on food sovereignty work](#) could be beneficial throughout the report. In particular, Article 9 of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security articulates a decolonial approach to land tenure. Article 9.2 states:

Indigenous peoples and other communities with customary tenure systems that exercise self-governance of land, fisheries and forests should promote and provide equitable, secure and sustainable rights to those resources, with special attention to the provision of equitable access for women. Effective participation of all members, men, women and youth, in decisions regarding their tenure systems should be promoted through their local or traditional institutions, including in the case of collective tenure systems. Where necessary, communities should be assisted to increase the capacity of their members to participate fully in decision making and governance of their tenure systems.

As part of the decolonial approach, the Report should call for the recognizing and respecting the territorial sovereignty of indigenous peoples and the return of land to Indigenous peoples. It should also consider reparations as part of a transformative justice approach to address the history of enslavement and land dispossession for Indigenous and other colonized peoples.

Integrating a human rights approach: Finally, we stress that an integrated approach to rights must be taken by the Report. The present approach focuses mainly on young people's right to work and access to resources, but this narrow emphasis neglects a more holistic approach. For more detail on this, see section 3.4 of our submission. Other rights of young people are acknowledged but not given the same level of assessment as the right to work and the right to resources. This is problematic because it implies that if the right to work and access to - not the right to - resources is broadly achieved via policy mechanisms, youth can have meaningful, sustainable livelihoods. Evidently, this is not the case, as rights demands cannot be siloed and doing so neglects underlying structural conditions that create marginalization and inequality. For example, as we note above, access to land says nothing about tenure security, which is essential to stimulate investments by young people to support the longevity of food production. A focus on access is therefore not an adequate rights-based approach regarding youth needs, and we encourage the inclusion of the following to strengthen rights demands:

1. More examples of grassroots initiatives engaging in multi-pronged approaches in response to rights violations (section 3.1.3 of the Draft is excellent - using this model for other rights demands would be effective),
2. Elaboration upon pathways for youth to achieve agency over policy processes that focus on their rights to resources and knowledge including examples, building from section 5.1 (p. 61), Here, we encourage the Project Team to refer to the FAO UN Decade for Family Farming 2018- 2029's Global Action Plan (GAP), which mainstream both youth and women as "transversal pillars". The DFF GAP mainstreams a human rights approach throughout, and emphasises both the right to access land and productive resources as well

as “control of natural resources and productive assets, in particular of youth and women, indigenous and landless people” (FAO and IFAD, 2019: 56)⁹

3. A decolonial lens employed in each section and in relation to each right, for which we have provided examples throughout this submission.

3.3.2 *Mainstreaming of Food Sovereignty*

We were delighted to see the Report reference food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is “right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems” (Nyéléni Declaration, 2007). Peasants and other people working in rural areas “have the right to determine their own food and agriculture systems, recognized by many States and regions as the right to food sovereignty. This includes the right to participate in decision-making processes on food and agriculture policy and the right to healthy and adequate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods that respect their cultures.” (UNDROP, at art. 15(4)).

Despite the inclusion of food sovereignty in the draft, the concept and principles of food sovereignty should be mainstreamed through the report and more comprehensively elaborated. To further strengthen the report, we first call attention to conceptions of Indigenous food sovereignty. Food Sovereignty is a prerequisite for food security for Indigenous Peoples as defined in the Declaration of Atilan: “Food Sovereignty is the right of Peoples to define their own policies and strategies for the sustainable production, distribution, and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas, and is considered to be a precondition for Food Security” (2nd Global Consultation on the Right to Food, Food Security and Food Sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples).

We also call attention to the six pillars of food sovereignty developed at the 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty in 2007. Together, these pillars provide a more holistic framing for the promotion of dignified engagement in transforming unjust agri-food systems, for youth and older generations alike. Youth in the CSM regard food sovereignty and agroecological approaches as a comprehensive solution to the global crisis of hunger and malnutrition. We underscore that sufficient, healthy, and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples, and communities is **a basic human right** which governments must center in agricultural, livestock, and fisheries policies. We resist and strive to end the extractivism, structural violence, and direct human rights violations that define industrial agribusiness and capitalism in general. Food sovereignty entails the **reevaluation, honoring, and celebration** of contributions to society made by food providers, specifically through respecting and defending individual and collective human rights and sacred responsibilities. We are working to **localize food systems** by building and strengthening solidarity and cooperation among providers and consumers, particularly for the good health of individuals, the wellbeing of communities, and ecological resilience. We also **assert popular control** over agri-food systems at the local level and advocate for mutually beneficial interactions between local

⁹ FAO and IFAD. 2019. United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028. Global Action Plan. Rome. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

food providers of different territories. Radical transformation of agri-food systems requires the abrogation of laws, intellectual property regimes, and commercial contracts that privatize and enclose our common sources of life, specifically land, fisheries, and forests. Rejecting corporate-controlled, technological “fixes” to the problems created by industrial agribusiness, we **build local knowledge and share skills** through horizontal organizing, liberatory education, collective work brigades, intergenerational communication, learning our histories, and collaborating to enhance dialogue and popular applications of ancestral wisdom, scholarly research, and visionary strategic plans for social change within our communities and territories. Finally, as youth protagonists of food sovereignty, we emphasize our shared commitment to embracing the politics and science of peasant agroecology. **Working with nature** means restoring biological and cultural diversity, positively contributing to the maximization of benefits resulting from complex ecological processes, developing production models based on minimal dependence on external inputs, and improving the adaptive and resilient qualities of ecosystems.

3.3.3 Research funding structures must be transformed to support youth in their efforts to transition to agroecological food systems

We welcome and appreciate the recognition in the Zero Draft that “the transition to more sustainable food systems also requires a democratization of knowledge production, allowing the construction of technical and policy related knowledge for food sovereignty, agroecology and biocultural diversity to be more actively shaped by food producers and consumers”. We support the report’s advocacy of Pimbert’s (2017) two-pronged approach to democratising food systems knowledge: 1) strengthening both horizontal grassroots networks and 2) democratising public research institutions and universities), as noted on p. 48.

Building on these statements, the report should further highlight the need to transform research funding structures as an inherent part of both 1) and 2), as emphasized in [the 2019 HLPE report: *Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that enhance Food Security and Nutrition*](#), which notes: “There has been much less investment in research on agroecological approaches than on other innovative approaches, resulting in significant knowledge gaps including on: relative yields and performance of agroecological practices compared to other alternatives across contexts; how to link agroecology to public policy; the economic and social impacts of adopting agroecological approaches; the extent to which agroecological practices increase resilience in the face of climate change; and how to support transitions to agroecological food systems, including overcoming lock-ins and addressing risks that may prevent them” (p 15).

A series of recent reports provide further evidence for this significant gap. For example, the [2020 IPES-Food Panel Report on investment in agroecological research in sub-Saharan Africa](#) details the challenges faced by national agricultural research systems in this region “including low levels of public investment, dependence on external donors and volatility of funding flows” (p 5). The report notes the deep-rooted obstacles to agroecological research, highlighting that “research pathways are highly resistant to change, given that most incentives (e.g. funding timeframes, institutional specialisation and career opportunities) favour conventional, specialised approaches.

PPPs and multi-donor programmes reinforce existing approaches and amplify the influence of leading donors”¹⁰ (p 5).

A [2020 CIDSE policy brief](#), building on research led by Nina Moeller at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) of Coventry University in the UK, assessed the contributions of European and International Institutions to food system transformation. The policy brief notes that:

“As prominent public investors, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the European Union (EU), European countries (EU Member States and others), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have the potential to play a big role in supporting the transformation of our food systems. Unfortunately, our findings show that public money channeled towards agroecology is insufficient in quantity and quality:

- Projects supporting transformative agroecology were only found in the GCF portfolio and represent 10.6% of the money invested in agricultural projects by the GCF.
- Projects partially supporting agroecology represent only 2.7% of the EU funds channeled through FAO, IFAD and WFP projects between 2016 and 2018.
- 79.8% of the EU funds channeled through the FAO, IFAD and WFP and 79.3% of the GCF agricultural money flows are still targeting programmes and projects focusing on conventional agriculture and/or efficiency-oriented approaches (such as sustainable intensification).
- The room for improvement compared to the current situation is huge”
(p 2)

At the same time, the IPES Food-Panel report emphasises that these challenges are not insurmountable, pointing to a range of significant opportunities for changing course and outlining

¹⁰ The IPES Food Panel report notes that: “Only a handful of donors — including France, Switzerland, Germany, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development — have explicitly recognised agroecology as a key solution for building sustainable food systems. Recent studies have found that a fraction of United Kingdom (UK) and Belgian development aid, and minimal United States (US) agricultural research funding, goes to agroecology. This report adds to the emerging picture of what agri-development funders are supporting, and why. It shines a light on Switzerland, another major bilateral donor; the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the biggest philanthropic investor in agri-development; and Kenya, one of Africa’s leading recipients and implementers of AgR4D. The report found that agroecology remains marginal within many of these funding flows. As many as 85% of projects funded by the BMGF and more than 70% of projects carried out by Kenyan research institutes were limited to supporting industrial agriculture and/or increasing its efficiency via targeted approaches such as improved pesticide practices, livestock vaccines or reductions in post-harvest losses. Meanwhile, only 3% of BMGF projects were agroecological, i.e. they included elements of agro-ecosystem redesign. For Kenyan research institutes, the figure was 13%, with a further 13% of projects focussing on substitution of synthetic inputs. By contrast, 51% of Swiss-funded AgR4D projects had agroecological components, and the majority of these (41% of all projects) also included aspects of socioeconomic and political change like decent working conditions and gender equality” (IPES Food-Panel, 2020: p 4).

six broad recommendations to support this change: 1) Focus on operational elements of agroecology as first steps in a well-sequenced strategy for transformation; 2) capture the benefits of agroecology by measuring food system outcomes holistically; 3) build bridges between different parts of the research world; 4) change must begin in training and education; 5) shift towards long-term funding models; and 6) give primacy to African research institutions and support bottom-up alliances (further details on pgs. 6-7 of the report). The Zero Draft should therefore refer to studies like these, highlighting the essential need for governments and international institutions to support the transformation of funding structures as an essential pillar to support youth in building economies of well-being, food sovereignty and dignified livelihoods.

3.3.4 Inclusion of Youth in Governance

We wholeheartedly agree with the Report's acknowledgement that youth engagement in food systems is integrally linked to their access to decision-making spaces. However, Youth engagement in policy-making is not just a progressive policy option for governments - it is our human right. Youth - as populations impacted by policies related to food system governance - have a right to real and meaningful participation. This is a right guaranteed as part of the right to food (see CESCR, General Comment No. 12, at para. 23), recognized specifically for peasants and people working in rural areas in UNDROP (see art. 10) and central to the rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, see art 18 and 19) as well as to their right of self-determination (UNDRIP, see art. 3, 4, 5).

We are concerned that while the Draft report notes that youth are increasingly engaging outside the formal sphere of politics (p. 20) there is no analysis of the decline in engagement in formal political spaces and the reasons that youth choose alternative pathways to fight for their causes. These include: a disillusionment with and lack of trust in democratic systems that are more and more corrupted by private sector interests; the rise of authoritarian governments and their outright repression of progressive calls for change; and an overall evacuation of political and civic training from educational institutions. There is no acknowledgement of the risks of state-sanctioned violence and oppression faced by youth, their families and communities when engaging in activism. The report goes on to mention that "Young peoples' engagement and agency in food systems can also take place through youth active participation in policy processes and democratic representation" (p. 20), however, this statement seems disconnected from the previous statement on youth disengagement from formal political processes. The report is therefore lacking in analysis of the terms and character of youth political participation, the quality of their engagement in politics, and the structural constraints they face in shaping and taking ownership of outcomes. It therefore presents a rather simplistic view of youth "choosing the preferred policy program" without an acknowledgement of the structural barriers to youth political engagement.

Here are some recommendations on inclusive governance spaces:

- **Recognition:** Governance systems should recognize and value the essential role of youth as economic, social and cultural actors as well as the leadership, agency, autonomy and diversity of youth in food security and nutrition related processes. Governance systems

should develop an inclusive, transversal and cross-cutting approach toward youth in agriculture and food systems.

- **Inclusivity and Equity:** Governance systems, at international, national, and local levels, must ensure strategic intersectional youth engagement by ensuring the participation of youth from all sectors relevant to agriculture and food systems. Participation models should ensure representation across gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, culture, and social and physical ability. Governance systems should focus on realizing equity, including the pivotal role of indigenous youth. Quotas should be instituted to ensure space for youth – and youth should be supported in this participation, including through financial support and as discussed below with educational opportunities, to ensure our ability to participate.
- **Meaningful not Symbolic Participation:** Including youth in governance spaces must be more than symbolic; it should fully include us in agenda-setting, research, decision-making, implementation and monitoring processes. Participation of youth in law and policy development, implementation and monitoring is our right and is a necessity for the development of good law and policy. As young civil society and indigenous peoples, we are very aware and critical of the exploitation of youth participation as mere tokenism; we are very aware and critical of the pitfalls of multi-stakeholder platforms and other power-blind formats of superficial participation. Thus, when we demand participation, we do not only demand a seat at the table, but also that what we say at the table shapes policy development, implementation and monitoring – instead of just legitimizing the decisions of powerful actors that had already been taken prior to our participation. Where laws and policies directly concern youth, however, even more is needed. Where policies and laws are directed at youth, their development, implementation and monitoring must be youth driven and youth-led – with the support of other law and policymakers. For example, in NYC, Youth as young as 16 are able to run and join community boards and become decision makers on committees such as committees on land use and discretionary funds. See, for example: <https://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov/communityboards/>
- **Education and Training:** Education and training are essential for youth to build the necessary skills and confidence to fully engage in governance processes. Theoretical and practical civic education should be available to all youth. Accessible practical and theoretical food system education is also integral to ensure informed decision-making. Grassroots and peasant agroecology schools and popular education models are already supporting youth to develop our leadership and governance capacities. Youth-led education and training initiatives should be identified, encouraged and supported. One example is the youth program TRACKS, at Trent University, in Ontario, Canada. TRACKS, or TRent Aboriginal Cultural Knowledge and Science, is an educational program which provides hands-on experiences for youth interested in the intersections of Indigenous and Western sciences. <https://www.tracksprogram.ca/>. La Via Campesina’s Agroecology Training Schools provide political and technical food systems training, using popular education approaches, in over 70 countries around the world. These schools and training programs are organised by grassroots communities around common principles adapted to their own context-specific needs and aims.

We very much support the idea that “young people’s interests should not (or not only) be channeled into youth-based institutions, but also recognized and represented in adult organizations and

movements” (p. 46). This is in line with the UN Decade for Family Farming Global Action Plan, which emphasizes the importance of strengthening grassroots producer organizations under pillar 4 “Strengthen family farmers’ organisations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum” (FAO and IFAD 2019: pgs. 44-51).¹¹

Based on these considerations, we hope to see a stronger analysis in the report on the factors that constrain youth from representation in adult - or better: intergenerational - organizations and movements and particularly the factors that obstruct youth from doing politics inside the formal political sphere.

3.3.5 Mobility and Migration

The Draft report is descriptive of different “conditions, outcomes and impact” of youth mobilities and migration (p 17 -18) but there is little analysis of the factors that push youth out of rural areas. These factors include an inability to earn livelihood with dignity (either because of a lack of good employment in rural areas or a lack of resources to grow food); the impacts of the climate crisis; protracted crisis; land-grabbing, a lack of education and infrastructure, and a systemic undervaluing of work in agriculture and food systems as “as economically rewarding, intellectually satisfactory and socially respectable professions” (HLPE, 2020a, p. 42). We need to analyze the root causes of this lack of opportunity and the need for migration and how the current industrial agriculture and food systems, underpinned by neoliberal policies have driven so many youth away from food production. Further, the report mentions seasonal labour migration but lacks an analysis of the structural drivers, impoverished contexts and working conditions faced by many migrant workers around the world.

3.3.6 Innovation, Digitalization and Technology in Agriculture and Food Systems

Narratives around youth and technology can be highly problematic. Politicians, the private sector and even some youth like to speak in broad all-encompassing generalities, arguing that (1) youth are innovators and want to innovate - with innovation understood as referring to using technology, new gadgets etc. whether in agriculture or anywhere in the food chain, (2) youth will want to be in agriculture if only they had the most recent and up to date technologies, (3) technologies, like digitalization of agriculture, will solve all the problems of agriculture today and make it an attractive option for youth. In this section, we aim to (1) complicate that technology offers all the solutions, (2) offer a broader definition of what constitutes innovation, and (3) critique the notion that it is “technology” that will drive youth back into agriculture. We will do so by first discussion innovation, then digitalization and end with comments on increasing discrimination and inequality.

¹¹ FAO and IFAD. 2019. United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028. Global Action Plan. Rome. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Innovation: We welcome the report’s questioning of innovation as a main demand and attribute of youth: “we recognize that the assumed role of young people as innovators rests on shaky empirical evidence and should be seen as a matter of debate” (p.10).

We also welcome the Project Team’s recognition of the complex and contested meanings of the term innovation itself. We were pleased to see the Zero Draft’s framing of innovation as found “as much in the continuous experimentation characteristic of “traditional” farming practice as in today’s rapidly advancing technological innovations with their serious implications for employment” (p 10). Similarly, we appreciate the Zero Draft consideration of the “double-edged role of youth mobility and technological innovation in both destroying and creating opportunities for youth employment, and the possibilities for promoting technologies that advance young people’s right to work and to protection from unemployment.” Yet we would like to emphasize that the innovation needed for the transformation of food systems should not be reduced to the insertion of novel practices. Rather, innovation must also be understood as including the re-insertion and strengthening of lost, threatened or marginalised traditions in agriculture, such as agroecological practices, knowledge and worldviews that have been practiced for generations and need reanimation, protection and adaptation to current circumstances.

We would also like to encourage the HLPE to make their statement on the ownership and use of innovation the overall framing of their section on innovation, rather than an addendum at the end of the section: *“advocacy and policies related to food systems innovation should consider questions raised by global social movements (e.g. Nyéléni 2019) such as: which actors are developing food systems technologies and for what purpose? Who has control over data produced by these systems, and how are the technologies and innovations governed to benefit diverse stakeholders across the food system, including youth”* (p.56).

We also appreciate the HLPE Project Team’s attention to and referencing of the extremely important [2019 HLPE report: *Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that enhance Food Security and Nutrition*](#). The report makes an important distinction between “two categories of innovative approaches (sustainable intensification and agroecological)”, emphasizing that each approach is “grounded in very different visions of the future of food systems, in terms of what the main characteristics of SFS should be, and on very different strategies for how to implement transitions towards more sustainable food systems” (p 62). The report further highlights the presence of “diverging narratives on the priorities for transition, on the directions that social and technological innovation should take, and hence on the tools, practices and technologies that can contribute, or not, to facilitate transitions towards SFSs” (p. 62). The distinction between these diverging pathways should more closely guide the Zero Draft’s analysis of technological innovation in the food system,

While the Zero Draft does a fantastic job of linking the importance of grassroots, horizontal, democratized educational approaches to the notion of innovation in Section 4, this same attention should be brought to Section 2.4 “Technological opportunities and challenges in youth employment”. This section highlights some important issues around the potential for technological innovation to “cause a massive shedding of labour” and points to its role in the informalization of

workers in the gig economy. It goes on to consider the positive potentials for digital tools in improving “efficiency, equity, and environmental sustainability in the food system” (p 30).

Digitalization: We are happy to see Table 5 in Chapter 4.5 (p 55) highlighting the principles that should be at the core of digitalization processes. However, the Zero Draft lacks an analysis of power dynamics in digitalization efforts. What digital technologies are being promoted and by whom? Who benefits? What are the risks to the rights, food security and livelihoods of people and communities of digital agriculture? We strongly urge the Project Team to undertake a more careful and critical approach to the topic of digitalization of food and agriculture. Crucially, this includes the approaches and tools that may be used to collect further data on youth in AFS. While many technologies may be desirable and useful, many of the new digital technologies being developed under the umbrella of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies (such as Digital Sequencing of genetic resources, precision agriculture, big data and cloud analytic technologies) risk exacerbating already existing inequalities and dispossession, particularly of small-scale and peasant food producers and workers. In the preface to the [2019 UNCTAD Digital Economy Report](#), Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations notes:

New technologies can make significant contributions to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, but we cannot take positive outcomes for granted ... Digital advances have generated enormous wealth in record time, but that wealth has been concentrated around a small number of individuals, companies and countries. Under current policies and regulations, this trajectory is likely to continue, further contributing to rising inequality.

Any process of digitalization undertaken by governments and/or the private sector must respect pre-existing international human rights declarations, relevant treaties, conventions, and national laws.

Many of the industrial digital innovations being advanced by multinational corporate tech firms under the umbrella of the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) or Agriculture 4.0 are designed for large-scale, capital-intensive industrial production models embedded in global commodity chains - not for the majority of the world’s food producers. These industrial innovations are embedded in a productivist model and are designed to support “business as usual” and may in fact contribute to the undermining of human rights and pathways to food system transformations to sustainability (HLPE 2019). Private sector industrial innovations have already been shown to undermine democratic rights of people and communities to have a voice in decisions that affect them, and the autonomy of diverse cultural food and life ways of peoples and communities across the globe. Governments must conduct comprehensive risk, impact, and benefit assessments of any new technology in a participatory and inclusive manner, prioritizing the inputs of those most affected by hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity. Governments are responsible to create strong legal and regulatory frameworks to protect people and communities from the potential negative impacts of digital agriculture technologies.

In their [2019 submission to the Secretariat of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture \(ITPGRFA\)](#), FIAN International outlined the crucial importance of

developing strong regulatory frameworks and safeguards for technological innovations such as Digital Sequencing Information (DSI), now being applied to plant, animal, aquatic, fungal and microbial genetic material. The submission highlights that at present, in the absence of such regulatory frameworks, DSI processes in combination with patents directly contravene existing international Treaties and Conventions, and undermine international human rights law:

Research and innovations, including technological innovations such as Digital Sequencing Information (DSI), may create benefits for the realization of the right to food and nutrition. However, they must be embedded in regulatory frameworks and safeguards, which ensure that science and knowledge production serves the public interest and well-being, instead of particular interests that are geared towards financial gains. Science and technology are embedded in existing power relations and therefore need to be subject to social control, through public governance institutions that can oversee, regulate and orient the research agenda towards the public interest and well-being, based on democratic processes and transparency. Thorough, independent assessments of the impacts of DSI and other technologies are a critical aspect in this context, in particular regarding the impacts on human rights and biodiversity...DSI, in combination with patents directly undermine key provisions of the ITPGRFA, the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol, as well as international human rights law, including regarding the right to food and nutrition; farmers' rights; the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of PGRFA; as well as obligations on the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples and farmers regarding access to PGRFA and traditional knowledge (p 2)

In this light, it is crucial to ensure digital technologies for food and agriculture are designed as tools for people and communities to protect their rights and enhance their livelihoods, as well as the integrity of biodiversity and ecological systems. As such, digital technologies need to be accessible, affordable, ethically designed, produced, and distributed. The process of developing these tools should be democratic and bottom-up and respond to the needs and aspirations of people and communities while ensuring decent work, ecological integrity, sustainability, and equity.

We refer the HLPE Project Team to the following further resources on this topic:

- <https://www.righttofoodandnutrition.org/when-food-becomes-immaterial-0>
- <http://www.fao.org/3/ca4668en/ca4668en.pdf>

Possibility for further discrimination and inequality: Although there are potential benefits for youth in digital technologies, it is crucial to emphasize that those youth most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition globally are also most at risk of further marginalization and dispossession by these technologies. Open source and grassroots-owned technologies can provide democratically owned tools for youth, but the reality is that the ownership structure of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector is highly concentrated, holding oligopolies or even monopolies over digital platforms, data flows and digital infrastructure. Therefore, digital technologies and their application entail the risk of deepening existing inequalities and creating new forms of dispossession. For instance, digitalization of land and land

administration data, as well as automatized land transactions using blockchain technology and smart contracts risks facilitating land grabbing. In addition, digital technologies are used to increase surveillance of farm workers as well as food processing and retail facilities, reducing their space to freely associate in trade unions and struggle for their labor and human rights (FIAN, 2019). Innovation and technology are therefore not a “panacea” for solving food insecurity and malnutrition or ensuring youth participation.

3.4 What Needs to Change and What Must be Added

3.4.1 *Systemic Challenges are Not Addressed*

As mentioned already above, the Report as currently drafted fails in any real way to address the systemic challenges that shape youth’s future - and the future of food systems and agriculture more broadly. While the Report implies - when presenting the equity pillar - “that current generations of children and youth are growing up in a context of persistent and growing inequalities in income and wealth, both within and between societies” (p.9), it fails to name, explore, criticise and propose approaches to challenge the key structures of exploitation and discrimination that are producing this context of persistent and growing inequalities.

These are:

- **Global capitalism** and the **corporate capture** of public goods, including productive resources and policy making spaces, which have been built on historical legacies and ongoing reproduction of **imperialism and neo-colonialism**.
- **Institutionalized patriarchy:** While the report does occasionally address instances of disadvantage to women (in access to land, resources, finance) (p.31, p.32, p.46), it fails to conduct a deeper analysis of enduring practices of female subordination and their impacts on women, and society at large.
- **Racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination:** The Report only mentions that “social factors such gender, race, class and caste can also influence access to resources such as land or credit” (p. 31), without addressing the root causes of these disadvantages.
- **Caste and classism:** The Report only mentions that “social factors such gender, race, class and caste can also influence access to resources such as land or credit” (p. 31), without addressing the root causes of these disadvantages.
- **Global environmental change, climate change and biodiversity loss:** Although the report refers to climate change and youth activism (that has been one of the most crucial forces in holding governments to account), the report lacks a sufficient acknowledgment of the centrality of global climate change. It also fails to mention biodiversity loss when identifying the key barriers for the flourishing of youth in food systems. We believe that climate change is one of the single most impactful factors influencing the ability of food systems to deliver healthy diets and production in the context of a healthy environment. Increasingly severe impacts of climate change threaten ecosystems and food production around the world for all youth. Indigenous Peoples are often among the most vulnerable to

the effects of climate change and are disproportionately affected by it as they are the first ones to face the risk of losing their lands, cultural practices and natural heritage. Past and current generations of the Global North have produced the current ecological crises that are robbing current and future youths of their right to a healthy natural environment - which is undeniably one of most crucial conditions for the realization of the human right to food. Successful and beneficial youth engagement in agriculture and food systems depends on healthy natural environments in the present and future. Holding governments accountable for their global ecological footprint, their pledges of reducing GHG emissions and halting biodiversity loss is essential to create favorable conditions for youth engagement in agriculture.

Without addressing these barriers, food systems cannot be transformed. This means, evidently, that policies in line with the interests and needs of youth must be based on or at least framed within the broader objective of addressing these structural barriers. Playing into neoliberal logics or prolonging or strengthening carbon-intensive industries must never be justified by reference to the provision of jobs for youth or fighting young people's unemployment as these actions are in themselves destroying the very foundations on which youth depend to flourish in the food system.

Case Study No. 7: USA: The Systemic Oressures of a Broken Capitalist Food System and Structural Discrimination against Black, Brown, Indigenous and Poor Communities

Youth in the U.S are participating in the Black Lives Matter uprisings and are leading them in many cities. With regards to the Covid-19 crisis, youth are coordinating mutual aid networks in their communities to make sure people are getting fed and supporting protests being held by food chain workers, including meat packing plant workers, demanding their rights and hazard pay.

The background to this all: While corporate food industry executives get richer, their workers struggle to feed themselves, pay their medical bills, care for their families and communities, and survive. This is because our current food system places a higher value on profits and corporate control than on human health, dignity, and the right to be nourished by and connected to land, culture, and community. The global Covid-19 pandemic and uprising for Black lives have showcased these drastic inequalities and the lack of access to food, public health, sanitation, housing and basic civil rights in many different countries. Globally, oppressive states continue to fail mainly Black, brown, indigenous, and poor communities through mismanagement, neglect, and violence.

In the midst of state failures, youth are focusing on long-standing and emerging mutual aid systems that circulate resources directly in local communities. This situation has shown the unsustainability of our system that values money over people, and also shows the necessity of popular organization, grassroots work and base building to fight our rights and radically change the current power structure. The strengthening food systems run by the people/for the people and organizing internationally to continue to uplift and scale out agroecology and food

sovereignty, so from the ground folks can continue to build solutions and organize to protect each other.

Also, at the grassroots level, there need to be conversations about land and labor. There is also a need to make food sovereignty organising and alternative food networks accessible for Black and Indigenous folks.

3.4.2 Youth Aspirations for Food Systems Work Is Not Rooted in an Understanding of Systemic Barriers

Together these systemic challenges, and the development, economic and production models that have been built on them, make food systems work difficult, dangerous, dirty and unwanted by youth. The Zero draft rightly points out the multiplicity of human rights violations experienced by young people working in food systems, particularly in primary agricultural production. The Draft also states that “the major challenge for transforming small-scale farms into attractive places of work and living for young people is to provide better access to agricultural land, capital, knowledge and markets” (Zmija et al. 2020, p. 8), the relationship between these issues could be better highlighted in the Report. The Zero Draft cites McCune et al., writing “Systematic surveys, anecdotal evidence and “common knowledge” all suggest that today’s rural youth, including the sons and daughters of farmers, on the whole do not aspire to the same farming futures as experienced by their parents and previous generations”. Not only do we refute the accuracy of this statement - indeed many youths do aspire to farming futures - but this statement fails to capture that laws, policies, and frameworks put in place make the future of farming appear (and in often cases be) bleak. It similarly fails to capture, refer to or acknowledge the centuries of colonial, neocolonial capitalist exploitation and dispossession that have produced the current violations of Indigenous Peoples, peasants and other rural dwellers’ rights to land and resources; that have continued to dispossess and disempower the people who still produce the majority of the world’s food; and that have commodified and financialized food and land and undervalued food system work in a way that makes it precarious and unattractive. If these conditions were not present, the possibilities in farming and the prospects would be entirely different - as would youth decision-making.

3.4.3 Broadening and Reframing the Conception of “Work”: Beyond Waged Labour and “the Heroic Entrepreneur”

The CSM youth were delighted that the report centered “dignified livelihoods” over economic growth. However, the concept of dignified livelihoods could be better addressed and theorized. As previously noted in section 3.3.1 of our submission, the Zero Draft Report’s Section 2 (on Youth Employment in Food Systems) focuses mainly on young people’s right to work and access to resources. We agree that these elements are crucially important - given that most people meet their food needs through purchasing food with income gained through work. However, as the Zero Draft points out, there are serious limitations with conventional labour force and employment statistics

because they miss the plural character of young people’s work in food systems (as noted on page 26 of the Draft). Given this observation, and the inclusion of dignified and rewarding livelihoods in the framing of the report, the focus on work as paid employment should be broadened to reflect a more holistic approach to work based on the concept of livelihoods.

Waged labour or livelihoods? We note that the Zero Draft does not define its use of the concept of “livelihoods”. The dominant approach, used by the FAO and most development agencies in the implementation of development interventions, is some form of the “Sustainable Livelihoods Approach” (SLA)¹². The SLA as it is used today was developed and adapted from the initial work of Robert Chambers in the 1980s. Although the SLA has shifted over time from a material perspective to a social perspective that focuses on enabling peoples' capacities to secure their own livelihoods¹³, it remains mired in a “capitalocentric” discourse (Gibson-Graham, 2006)¹⁴. A “capitalocentric” discourse privileges designated capitalist economic activity (private ownership, waged labour, and “the market”) as the only legitimate form of economic activity. In privileging certain kinds of economic activity, this framing makes invisible and/or marginalizes the vast diversity of non-monetized labour activities, forms of enterprise, and types of transactions that comprise livelihood activities (see “iceberg” image below). The tendency to privilege capitalist economic activity is apparent in the SLA and similar approaches as used by development agencies. It is present in the language of “formal” vs “informal” work, markets, and food systems, and in the false separation of so-called “productive” (waged labour performed outside the home) and “reproductive” (domestic, care and other forms of unpaid work performed inside the home).

Case Study No. 8: Youth participation in the IUF

Youth affiliates of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF) participate in cooperative development workshops, debates, learning exchanges, trainings on strategic action planning, and many other forms of political economic training concerning collective decision-making, [scaling solidarity economics](#), and additional aspects of participatory and representative democracy which are at the core of union organizing. Young workers in university, technical degree programs, and alternative forms of education are encouraged to critically examine world history in order to better understand the ethics, political programs, and essential social functions of cooperatives and trade unions. The IUF particularly benefits from the participation of youth with technical and theoretical specialization or, in other words, youth who are passionate about specific topics and thus motivated to learn more and passionately engage in their cooperative or union, while also earning fair salaries for their contributions to society.

The IUF collectively bargains with [transnational corporations](#) that dominate food and agricultural systems. The IUF has heavily focused on negotiating and immediately implementing

¹² Morse, S., & McNamara, N. (2013). *Sustainable livelihood approach: A critique of theory and practice*. Springer Science & Business Media.

¹³ <http://www.fao.org/3/X9371e/x9371e22.htm>

¹⁴ Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A postcapitalist politics*. U of Minnesota Press. p 70

agreements [to end gender-based violence and discrimination](#). The leadership of affiliated workers organized at the local to global levels has proven that reforms are possible within agri-food systems, though the civil society and indigenous communities continue to demand that governments and multilateral institutions implement structural changes to agri-food systems in order to truly realize the rights of rural and urban youth actively working to craft grassroots, internationalist solutions to the multiple crises and political challenges that we all presently face.

Recognizing diverse economic activities: Despite its central framing of livelihoods, the Zero Draft does not integrate the concept into Section 2 on Youth Employment. This section focuses on paid employment but there is very little mention of unpaid work throughout (non-monetized care and domestic labour) nor does the Zero Draft sufficiently acknowledge the range of different kinds of economic activity youth are engaged in. Acknowledging the plurality of economic activities (gift or barter systems, reciprocity, working with / caring for the land) and legitimizing and valuing care work is crucial. This does not mean we should seek to monetize all forms of economic activity - quite the opposite. Today, as these divisions become increasingly blurred, we have an opportunity to avoid the further incorporation of economic activities into a narrow and fixed capitalist model. Instead, we need to rethink the underlying principles on which economic activity is based, questioning the destructive attachment to unparalleled economic growth and a narrow vision of economic life that undermines bio-cultural and economic diversity and the planetary boundaries which we humans must learn to live within.

Diverse economic activities and arrangements should be recognised as being embedded in cultural and ecological systems in specific contexts. We therefore encourage the project team to consider different framing concepts to guide its discussion of youth in food systems work, such as “Ecological Livelihoods” which integrates economic, social and ecological aspects of life¹⁵; and of concepts like “Buen Vivir” / Living Well which emphasize a decolonial stance based on relationality, interdependence, and a placing of individual rights and responsibilities “within a community in relation to a specific nature-cultural environment”.¹⁶ Indeed, this is why we are

¹⁵ Ethan Miller critiques the separation of “the economy, society and the environment” identifying the “divisions between nature and culture (Latour 1993; Plumwood 2002), oscillations between dynamics of state coercion and capital accumulation (De Angelis 2007), and a linear movement of development pushing toward “growth” and a never-achieved Promised Land (Escobar 2012). In this sense, economy, society, and environment constitute a particular “problem-space” (Scott 2004) in which certain relations appear as inevitable, certain questions can be asked and others not, and certain solutions posed as viable while others appear impossible...[t]his has entailed the naturalization of capitalist employment and monetary exchange as the only legitimate modes of sustenance; the autonomous, self-sufficient (employed) individual as the model of humanity; a reinforcement of separations between humans and the more-than-human living world; and an obligation for all other concerns to subordinate themselves to the demands of these articulations in order to appear legitimate” Miller, E. (2014, p5). *Ecological Livelihoods: Rethinking “Development” Beyond Economy, Society, and Environment*. In *Institute for Culture and Society Seminar Series*. Sydney: Western Sydney University Australia (Vol. 13). Retrieved from https://www.communityeconomies.org/sites/default/files/paper_attachment/Miller-Ecological-Livelihoods-ICS.pdf

¹⁶ “There is no single definition of Buen Vivir. Collective well-being comes close. It is germinating through a range of perspectives and social actors across South America. Buen Vivir is still a concept and a lived practice under construction. To give a clue to what it is not, it’s the opposite of the Fairfax-Lateral [Economics Wellbeing Index](#), which puts a dollar figure on national wellbeing using a range of indicators. Unlike any index based on logarithmic

advocating for the inclusion of Buen Vivir as a fourth pillar of the HLPE Report. We agree with the statement in the Zero Draft that “[t]he complexity of food systems requires *cross-sectoral and multilevel governance approaches* to simultaneously address challenges of different sectors, scales, and spaces of food systems. It is also important to consider the heterogeneity of youth before planning or implementing any youth engagement and employment programmes, initiatives, or policies” (p 62). In addition, any policies focused on addressing youth employment must necessarily consider how employment models will address the wicked problems of socio-economic inequality and climate crisis which today’s young people are being forced to contend with.



FIGURE 18. The iceberg. From Community Economies Collective 2001; drawn by Ken Byrne.

The iceberg. Source: Gibson-Graham (2006:70)¹⁷. Used with permission.

Entrepreneurship: The Zero draft makes multiple references to entrepreneurship, without clearly framing the concept or offering a critical analysis of how it is presented and practiced in a neoliberal context. With the erosion of decent, rewarding and stable employment opportunities for youth, and the ongoing and systematic displacement of young people from their lands and communities, “entrepreneurship” has been presented by neoliberal policy-makers as the economic

economic indicators, in Buen Vivir the subject of wellbeing is not the individual, but the individual within a community in relation to a specific cultural-natural environment. Buen Vivir is foremost a decolonial stance. According to leading proponent Eduardo Gudynas, executive secretary of the [Latin American Centre for Social Ecology](#), it [calls for a new ethics that balances quality of life, democratisation of the state and concern with biocentric ideals](#)” Salazar, J. (July 24, 2015, n.p) Buen Vivir: South America’s rethinking of the future we want. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/buen-vvir-south-americas-rethinking-of-the-future-we-want-44507>

¹⁷ Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A postcapitalist politics*. U of Minnesota Press. p 70

solution. While the Zero Draft says that “[e]ntrepreneurship, among other pathways, is acknowledged as a way to engage youth in practices of social navigation and participation that see them adjusting to rapidly changeable circumstances (Flynn, Mader and Oosterom, 2017)” it also acknowledges entrepreneurship is a short-term approach that policy-makers should distinguish from long-term approaches (p62).

The report should go much further than this and provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of entrepreneurship, and the context it is being promoted in: the withdrawal of the State from its human rights responsibilities; the State’s role in enabling the increasing dominance of the private sector in shaping economic life and in undermining and capturing public goods; and the devolution of state responsibilities onto individual citizens using the rhetoric of “empowerment”. These dynamics contribute to the evacuation of young people from their lands and communities into urban centers, where they are encouraged to “innovate” and establish their own businesses in a highly competitive environment, with little or no access to capital, credit, insurance, property, equipment, or long-term systemic support. We must reassess the business model that elevates economic success / profit-making over other aspects of life while simultaneously setting young people up for failure in a neoliberal market system. This approach has done little to ensure rights or empower youth in a sustainable way.

These are critically significant issues for youth. Indeed, entrepreneurship as it has been defined over the last century is based on the image of the heroic individual who, if they just work hard, can achieve success. This model of entrepreneurship completely ignores structural and systemic issues and reproduces the very ‘business as usual’ approach that we are all seeking to avoid and is incompatible with food sovereignty. We of course recognize and support young people who want to have secure incomes by developing economically viable businesses. At the same time, we need to carefully consider the model of entrepreneurship we are using, and the relationship of entrepreneurship to rights, responsibilities, and the provision of public goods. When using the language of “entrepreneurships” and “employment” we should again consider them through the concept of “dignified livelihoods” that encompasses not just economics, but also human rights, social relations, reproduction, community engagement, culture, tradition and relationship with / care for land. In this way, we re-embed economic activity in social-ecological frameworks.

Right to decent work and safe working conditions: We note that a high percentage of people around the world still meet their food needs through income earned through different forms of employment. For this reason, decent work, fair wages and safe working conditions are essential to the future of youth in agriculture and food systems - as well as their ability to realize their right to food.

The Zero Draft section 2.3 reviews issues relating to conditions of employment and decent work in food systems, pointing out that “jobs in food systems, and in particular in primary production in agriculture, witness fundamental violations of ... fundamental labour rights” (p. 28). However, these fundamental labour rights are not spelled out. We note that under international human rights law, everyone has “the right to work”, to choose their employment freely and to have favorable conditions of work. (UDHR, art 23(1), ICESCR, art 7, UNDROP, art 13 and 14). Favorable conditions of work include the right to:

- non-discrimination in the work place (UDHR, art 23(2), ICESCR, art 7(c), ILO, *Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention*, 1958 (No. 111))
- equal right to equal pay (UDHR, art 23(2),
- just and favorable remuneration that allows for individuals and their families to live in dignity (in other words a living wage and not a minimum wage) (UDHR, art 23(3), ICESCR, art 7(a), ILO *Declaration of Philadelphia*, 1944, ILO *Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization*, 2008)
- Join a trade union (UDHR, art 23(4), UNDROP, art 9)
- Safe and healthy working conditions (ICESCR, art 7(b), UNDROP, art 14, ILO, *Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention*, 2006 (No. 187))
- Rest and leisure (ICESCR, art 7(d))

These rights extend to “people working in rural areas, irrespective of whether they are temporary, seasonal or migrant workers” (UNDROP, art 14(1)).

Case Study No. 9: IUF Young Workers

We encourage the Project Team to refer to the Youth section of The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tourism, Tobacco and Allied Workers’ Associations (IUF) website for further guidance on the needs, aspirations and actions of young workers in food systems: <https://www.iuf.org/what-we-do/young-workers/>

4. STEPS GOING FORWARD

The CSM Youth Working Group would like to express our appreciation to the Project Team for their collective efforts to produce the Zero Draft. We also deeply appreciate the Project Team’s attention to our contribution to the Report and look forward to the opportunity for dialogue on revisions to the draft. We sincerely hope the following version will fully mainstream human rights and food sovereignty, and include a critical assessment of the systemic challenges that currently limit the future for youth and their engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems.

In our final comments, we would like to address the steps ahead and the importance of a continued participatory, transparent and human rights-based process with respect to completing the HLPE report.

In order to achieve such a process, it will be necessary to ensure that HLPE drafts are prepared not just in English, but in all official CFS languages. It has been a challenge, particularly given the time restraints we were given, for the CSM to seek broad consultation and comments with just an English draft. Many of our Working Group members do not speak English, which makes it particularly challenging to ensure the right to participation. It is already challenging for youth to

participate in the CFS processes, and further barriers should not be put in place as a result of a failure to translate and make documents accessible. With respect to timing, particularly where documents only exist in English, we would ask that ample time be given at each stage going forward where feedback is being sought. With regard to the capacity of CSM Secretariat members and our collective capacity as a working group, our consultative process requires significant work to facilitate the participation of social movements and civil society into CFS work. Longer deadlines ensure greater participation, which is of the utmost importance to the legitimacy of this process. We realize that the HLPE Project Team may have limited agency over translations and consultation timelines, and we will be bringing these issues to the attention of the CFS Chair and Secretariat. Nonetheless, we wanted to highlight these aspects of the process as being crucial to a fully inclusive, participatory process. In many ways, the challenges that CSM Youth experience in trying to ensure meaningful participation in CFS work are reflective of the challenges faced by youth in agriculture and food system governance and decision-making processes more broadly.

In respect to the completion of the HLPE Report, the CSM Youth Working Group is open, ready and eager to continue supporting the HLPE in its work. If anything in these submissions remains unclear or if the CSM Youth Working Group can provide further support, please notify us via the CSM Secretariat. **We also welcome the opportunity to meet with the HLPE drafting team** to discuss our potential next steps. CSM Youth affirm our commitment to positively influencing this policy process as part of our collective efforts to secure a more livable, equitable future for all people.

5. REFERENCE KEY TO ZERO DRAFT QUESTIONS

Here, we cross-reference the different sections in our submission where we respond to the questions posed in the HLPE Zero Draft.

1. The V0-draft is structured around a conceptual framework which presents three fundamental pillars for youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems (AFS): rights, agency and equity. Do you think that this framework addresses the key issues affecting youth engagement and employment in AFS?

- **See our response to framing in section 3.1.**

2. The V0-draft identifies main trends for youth engagement in agriculture and food systems, focusing on employment, resources and knowledge. Do you think that the trends identified are the key ones in affecting outcomes with respect to youth's engagement in AFS and broader FSN outcomes? If not, which other trends should be taken into account? In particular, can you offer feedback on the following:

- **See our response on employment in sections 3.4.1, 3.4.2 (systemic challenges) and 3.4.3 (reframing work)**
- **See our response on resources in section 3.3.1 (rights to productive resources)**
- **See our response on knowledge in section 3.2.2 (education) and 3.3.3 (research funding structures)**

2.1. Where are youth currently under- and over-represented in food systems employment/work? How does this change when considering intersectional categories such as gender, place, ethnicity?

2.2. How has digital technology, agriculture 4.0 and automation affected youth employment in AFS? What is their likely impact in the coming decades?

- **See our response in section 3.3.6 (innovation, digitalisation and technology)**

3. Employment

3.1. What can make i) farming/fisheries/livestock rearing and other forms of food provision and ii) other roles in the food system a more attractive option for youth employment?

- **See our response in section 3.3, specifically 3.4.2 (systemic barriers) and 3.4.3 (reframing work). In addition, we provide the following comment:**

The framing of this question suggests that youth universally have a choice regarding their employment and are not subject to the economic and/or political circumstances in which they find themselves. Making food production or other roles in the food system ‘attractive’ employment options implies that there is an option in the first place. Again, our response to this question refers back to our observation that this report must engage more meaningfully with systemic challenges. Section 2.1 lays out multiple statistics outlining high levels of youth unemployment around the world: the ILO states that the global labour force of youth has significantly declined and unemployment rates for youth are three times higher than for adults in all regions. Despite food systems employing more than one billion people worldwide, COVID-19 is implicating millions of food systems jobs. This leads to another question before being able to address what can make food system employment more attractive for youth: what specifically is preventing employment in food systems from being adequate and sustainable? Can anything less than food systems change allow for better work conditions? Of course, factors like higher wages, job security, and work close to home can make farming and other food systems work more attractive, but these would be band aid fixes to deeper, structural crises across food systems that first must be addressed. What can make food systems work more attractive is the guarantee that rights - specifically those outlined in the UNDROP - be upheld and respected.

3.2. Under what conditions should children be allowed to work in AFS when they want to?

4. Land and other resources

4.1. What models of land and resource access and redistribution best support young people to engage in food systems for sustainable livelihoods?

4.2. Do these models take account of the differences amongst youth in terms of gender, indigeneity and other characteristics?

- **See our response in section 3.3.1.**

5. Knowledge

5.1. What policies/initiatives could stop the loss of, and support the revitalization of, traditional, ecological and marginalised forms of knowledge in AFS?

5.2. What policies/initiatives could integrate traditional and modern knowledges (including educational programming in primary, secondary, post-secondary, and technical training), to prioritize equity, agency, and rights in AFS and create new opportunities for youth?

5.3. How do the experiences of young women differ from those of young men in knowledge generation, acquisition and transfer?

5.4. How can grassroots and youth-driven learning opportunities and knowledge transfer be strengthened and supported?

5.5. What are the implications (potentially positive and/or negative) of online platforms and social media increasingly playing the role of knowledge providers?

- **See our responses in various sections: in relation to education, section 3.2.2; in relation to rights, section 3.3; in relation to technologies, section 3.3.6**

6. Drawing on HLPE reports and analysis in the wider literature, the report outlines several examples of potential policy pathways to address challenges to youth engagement and employment in AFS, and to transform AFS to make them more “youth-friendly”. The HLPE seeks input on case studies that could illustrate successful policy initiatives that have improved youth employment and engagement in AFS, and in particular:

6.1. Successful implementation of existing policy commitments, including examples of rights-based approaches to youth employment, as well as protection from unemployment, in food systems.

6.2. Initiatives to improve equity in access to resources and improved working conditions (including in conditions of informality) for young people within AFS.

6.3. Pathways for increased youth agency in AFS policy, including best practices and mechanisms to improve the leadership role of youth, including young women, in their own organizations, and in broader AFS and food policy discussion spaces.

6.4. Pathways for equitable use of technology and digitalization, in particular ensuring access to and control of information and data by youth.

6.5. Financial instruments and marketing tools that are available to youth within AFS.

6.6. Examples of economies of solidarity, collective enterprises and other collaborative initiatives among young people in AFS.

6.7. Examples of how consumers and urban actors are involved in working towards a sustainable food system that values and involves youth.

- **See our case studies integrated throughout our submission**

7. On data and knowledge gaps:

7.1. Do you have additional data or information that could help refine the analysis of the interplay between youth's characteristics, aspirations, rights, resources and knowledge, AFS sustainability and FSN outcomes?

7.2. Is the set of case studies appropriate in terms of the dimensions and issues chosen and their regional balance? Do you have other good practices and examples of policy and interventions that could accelerate progress towards the SDGs by enhancing opportunities for youth?

7.3. What are ways to collect better data on the situation of and prospects for youth in AFS? What can be done to improve population and employment data to give a more accurate picture of young people's multidirectional mobility between places and sectors and multiple income sources?

- **See our response to 7.1 and 7.3 in section 3.1 on framing, section 3.3.2 on food sovereignty, section 3.4.3 on reframing work and crucially, any approaches to data collection should consider the points in section 3.3.6 on innovation, digitalisation and technology.**
- **On question 7.2, see our case studies throughout our submission.**

8. Are there any major omissions or gaps in the V0-draft?

8.1. Are topics under- or over-represented in relation to their importance?

8.2. Are there any redundant facts or statements that could be eliminated from the V0-draft?

8.3. Are any facts or conclusions refuted, questionable or assertions with no evidence-base?

8.4. If any of these is an issue, please share supporting evidence.

- **See our response in section 3.1 on framing; 3.3 on what must be strengthened; and 3.4 on what needs to change and what must be added.**