



**CSM Proposal for a an HLPE report on  
"Agroecology for Food and Nutrition Security"  
as part of the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work  
(MYPOW) 2018-2019**

## Introduction

"The global food system is at a crossroads", that of "ending hunger and malnutrition in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way". This statement is included in the regional meeting information notes on agroecology, put forward for consideration at FAO regional conferences<sup>1</sup>.

As pointed out by José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General, at the International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition, held in Rome in September 2014, agroecology offers win-win solutions which raise productivity, improve the capacity to recover and which make a more efficient use of natural resources.<sup>2</sup>

Regional meetings on Agroecology were held in 2015 in Africa, Asia and Latin America<sup>3</sup>, jointly organized by FAO, governments, civil society organizations and academic institutions, as part of the process initiated by FAO with the September 2014 Symposium, brought together around 600 representatives from government institutions, UN agencies, regional multilateral institutions, civil society (including small-scale food producer organizations, INGOs and NGOs), research and innovation institutions, development institutes, universities and the private sector.

A clear message came out of these meetings: agroecological systems offer greater capacity for overcoming the challenges of the current crossroads that the global food system finds itself in, given that they provide solutions which are applied to each context with a capacity to combine knowledge, praxis and local innovation with scientific knowledge, while guaranteeing the sustainable use of natural resources.

Through agroecology, "*indigenous peoples, local communities and family farmers can overcome hunger and malnutrition while building resilience to adapt to climate change in a sustainable*

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1. LARC/16/INF/13; ARC/16/INF/20; APRC/16/INF/8 Rev.1

<sup>2</sup> The final report of the International Symposium on Agroecology for Food Security and Nutrition is available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4327e.pdf>

3. For further information please see: <http://www.fao.org/americas/eventos/ver/en/c/287503/>  
<http://www.fao.org/africa/events/detail-events/en/c/330741/>  
<http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/events/detail-events/en/c/1262/>

*way through agro-ecological food systems supported by conducive policies, adequate legislation, investment, knowledge sharing, research and innovation.”<sup>4</sup>*

The information notes state that agroecology:

- Plays an essential role in ensuring food and nutrition security, guaranteeing the human right to adequate food, improving equality, eradicating poverty and diversifying diets, all in a way which is suited to each culture and which promotes local food customs and traditional knowledge.
- Recognises the central role of women in laying the right social foundations and fostering knowledge which allow for sustainable food systems to develop.
- Promotes practices that allow young people to constantly regenerate knowledge, values, vision and leadership, which is all fundamentally important in moving towards food systems which are more sustainable.
- Prevents environmental degradation and pollution, fostering greater resilience in food systems and thus making it easier to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change.
- Reduces food loss and food waste, promoting integrated agricultural systems and resource saving which also shortens the value chain by building strong links between small-scale food producers and consumers as well as between economies and local markets.

Agroecology also plays a key role in the protection and restoration of the biodiversity, implementing a different relationship between production and nature, as well as promoting people’s rights to biodiversity as a cornerstone of sustainable food systems.

In 2016, the Thirty-fourth FAO Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean considered the Outcomes of the Regional Meeting on Agroecology in Latin America and the Caribbean (Brasilia) and recommended<sup>5</sup>:

- i. the implementation of a regional programmatic initiative on agroecology (paragraph 41);
- ii. “to strengthen family farming and rural development policies based on a territorial agroecology approach, placing special emphasis on the interaction of policies for sustainable production and responsible consumption, disaster risk management, agricultural insurance, technical assistance, rural extension and communication, social protection, and farm employment” (paragraph 31); and
- iii. urge FAO to continue working on agroecology (paragraph 37).

From 29-31 August 2016, an International Symposium on Agroecology for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in China was held in Yunnan, China. The Symposium was jointly organized by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), FAO, and the People’s

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<sup>4</sup> LARC/16/INF/13

<sup>5</sup> LARC/16/REP



Government of China and aimed at encouraging dialogue around the scientific basis and the experiences of implementing Agroecology in Asia and China.<sup>6</sup>

In short, agroecology provides concrete solutions for governments in promoting a transition towards sustainable food systems. An enabling policy environment is therefore fundamental. All that is required is courage and political will to promote actions which are responsible towards future generations.

### **CFS added value and contributions to CFS objectives**

The CFS, as the primary global space for promoting policy convergence on food security and nutrition, in honor of its founding principles and thanks to its capacity for building a synthesis between scientific discussions and multi-stakeholder political and practice-informed discussions, plays a fundamental role in promoting solutions for overcoming the crossroads that the global food system currently finds itself in.

As acknowledged by regional seminars and FAO regional conferences, agroecology is one of the best alternatives for achieving food and nutrition security. Furthermore, it is an area in which several different stakeholders (CSOs, academics, national food and agricultural agencies, policy-makers and different constituencies in some countries) have accumulated the necessary knowledge and experience to contribute to a HLPE report and to discuss its outcomes with a view to reaching agreements on CFS actions and recommendations on food and nutrition security.

An important added value of the CFS would be that of contributing to an exhaustive and up-to-date analysis of research and evidence accumulated thus far in the field through a HLPE report and by subsequently carrying out political deliberations and agreeing on specific recommendations for relevant public policies.

Furthermore, this proposal contributes to the CFS mandate of supporting national capacity to formulate policy for transitioning towards sustainable food systems, overcoming hunger and malnutrition and moving towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

### **Relevance and global impact**

Agroecology is ever more present in intergovernmental body discussions and it is a topic which comes up repeatedly at the CFS as well, particularly given the great importance it holds for food and nutrition security. Agroecology has become a reference point which is increasingly present in proposals for alternatives to current unsustainable models for production, consumption and sales and it is an incredibly important perspective in seeking out new concepts and methods for tackling the effects of climate change and biodiversity degradation, and addressing how it exacerbates food insecurity and malnutrition.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/agroecology-symposium-china/en/>

Family farming and agroecology are intimately linked when it comes to achieving food and nutrition security which is sustainable on the ground. "Family farming, the practice which agroecology is based on, involves at least 500 million family farms worldwide."<sup>7</sup>.

### **No Duplication**

This proposal does not run the risk of doubling up on relevant work carried out by other bodies and institutions, but rather represents an innovative approach which, given the characteristics of the CFS, will allow for expertise to be fostered and agreements reached through scientific and political dialogue which is inclusive and participatory, thus building the capacity of national governments to develop and promote necessary public policy for a transition towards sustainable food systems which foster food and nutrition security.

### **Knowledge and evidence**

As stated in information notes from regional meetings on agroecology, over the last decade there has been an exponential rise in research on agroecology and agroecological practices as well as a rise in research on how to implement policies which provide the necessary support.

It is therefore clear that there is a huge wealth of experience, expertise and knowledge accumulated by generations of small-scale food producers across the continents. There is also a wealth of analysis and programs from governmental and intergovernmental bodies on the topic and there are new studies coming from the world of academia and several contributions from other sectors in society and the economy.

A HLPE report would offer an exhaustive and up-to-date analysis of existing evidence, thus building the basis for a political deliberation process within the CFS.

### **Support from Rome-based agencies**

The Rome-based agencies are well placed to provide technical support to the topic. As referred above, FAO has played a leading role to broaden the knowledge on agroecology, in close cooperation with the other RBA, and to convene the expertise of government institutions, other UN agencies, civil society and small scale food producers' organizations, research and innovation institutions, universities and the private sector. Agroecology was also prominently discussed at the IFAD Farmers Forums in 2014 and 2016. The Forums appreciated the ongoing efforts of IFAD on this topic and requested IFAD to strengthen its support to agroecological training and communication initiatives undertaken by small-scale producers' organizations, and to strengthen coherence and synergies with other agencies, particularly FAO, and governments.

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7. LARC/16/INF/13