

CSM additional comments on the Zero Draft “Connecting Smallholders to Markets”

29 April 2016

These comments are additional to those submitted on 15 April. They synthesize the remarks presented by the CSM delegation to the Informal Consultation on 28 April.

I. GENERAL COMMENTS

Recognize our markets

- The focus of the CFS’s work concerning this topic is on the relations between smallholders, markets and food security. The bulk of the food consumed in the world (70%) is produced by us, the smallholder producers. Most of this food is channelled through our markets. They are the most important spaces to ensure food security and nutrition. Only a minor percentage of food – as distinct from agricultural commodities in general – is traded on the international market). The idea of “connecting smallholders to markets” is misleading: we are connected to markets. We want these markets to be recognized and supported by appropriate public policies
- Our markets are situated in and identified with specific territories. In this sense they are localized, but they are not only “local”. They can range from the village level on up to the district, national, transboundary or regional. They can include rural, peri- urban and urban areas. What distinguishes these markets are the multiple functions they perform within their given territories, starting with but not limited to food provision, and their contribution to the territorial economy. These markets are based on a human rights approach, specifically the right to food which is in the core mandate of the CFS, since they are highly inclusive of and accessible to smallholders and other categories of food insecure.
- They are markets which exalt the gender dimension, since women are main actors in them, and in which young people are increasingly playing a fundamental role in value addition.
- These essential markets exist, they are the most important space of food provision, but their functioning is insufficiently understood and supported.

II. CONVERGENCES

1) Policy convergence is a process

- We are engaged in a process towards policy convergence: it is something we need to build together, not something that is already achieved.
- We do not agree that several points listed can be seen as ones of convergence,

especially:

- We recognize the existence of international trade and that some smallholders engage in commodity export, but in our view this sphere of market activity is of limited relevance to the key relations between smallholders-markets-food security which is our focus in the CFS.
- Since the data gap on our markets has been recognized by all it does not make sense to insist that existing evidence is a sufficient basis for policy considerations.
- The terms “private sector” and “market-oriented” are vague. If what is meant are the dominant idea of market and private sector understood as large agribusinesses and multinational corporations as distinct from small- medium enterprises in our countries (which can be smallholder cooperatives) we do not agree that they offer substantial benefits for smallholders and food security. The concepts need to be clarified.
- We believe that there is broad support to keep the structure of the Zero Draft
- Priority points on which we feel the policy convergence process should focus include:
 - Recognizing and supporting territorial markets
 - Reaffirming and respecting the human rights approach
 - Mainstreaming the gender dimension, going beyond women’s economic empowerment to cover their rights as human beings
 - Supporting innovative youth engagement in markets in ways that allow us to ensure the continuation and enriching of our practices and knowledge, including agroecological, e.g. through mentorship methods such as learning alongside of experienced producers or incubator farms and apprenticeship schemes.
 - Recognizing the “positive externalities” of social and environmental benefits and not only beyond economic aspects
 - Recognition of indigenous/traditional knowledge
 - Recognition of the multiple values of local food systems including their contribution to diversified and nutritious diets and to the defense of biodiversity.
 - Establishment of local food policy councils.
- We attach great importance to public policies including in the following areas:
 - Documenting our markets, filling the data gap to improve the tools available for better public policies
 - Food safety regulations - hygienic and sanitary regulations that are scale and context appropriate
 - Public procurement in support of local/territorial food systems, that takes into account social/environmental/nutritional benefits and not just the economic cost of the food.
 - Special attention should be given to the preservation of natural resources: land, water, seeds, oceans (in line with VGGT and SSF)
- To underline the importance of public policies we propose that the title of

Section IV be renamed “Public policies to support smallholders in transition”. It should be recognized that transitions are constant and dynamic and that smallholders are key change agents. The point is not to promote smallholder compliance with changes that are not to our advantage, but to support our capacity to direct change in ways that are advantageous to us and to food security.

2) Implementation, follow-up and monitoring

Section IV should include a section on implementation, follow-up and monitoring. We propose the following text:

- Governments are responsible for applying the recommendations at national level and local authorities at local level, with the participation of smallholders’ organizations.
- At global level, appropriate UN agencies can lead the way on some concrete steps, with the collaboration of small-scale producers’ organizations and academics:
 - Data collection: FAO could be invited to take the lead in mapping existing experiences of data collection on territorial markets that are qualitative and participatory as well as quantitative, and developing methodological guidelines.
 - Food safety: WHO/FAO, with the support of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, could be invited to take the lead in mapping/assessing existing approaches to developing mechanisms that ensure food safety for consumers but are adapted to the specific contexts and scales of smallholder food production and markets and developing guidelines.
 - Public procurement: FAO could be invited to assess existing experience in targeting public procurement programmes to requirements of small-scale producers and developing guidelines.
- The CFS should come back to this issue in 3 years to take stock of progress made in filling the data gap and applying the other recommendations.

III. DIVERGENCES

The impact of international trade on smallholders’ access to markets and food security

The rules established in the context of international trade agreements impact on smallholders’ access to the markets that are the most beneficial for them and for food security and on the capacity of governments to formulate appropriate policies to defend

and support these markets. We have a very great range of evidence of how these impacts affect our communities and constituencies (small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples, urban food insecure, etc.) which we would be happy to contribute. It is appropriate for the CFS to assess these impacts. The possibility of requesting the HLPE to undertake a study on this topic is in consideration in the MYPoW OEWG.

The concept of territorial markets

Territorial markets are physical, “real”, localized spaces (not virtual) at different scales (local, provincial / departmental, national and transboundary) which are directly linked to local, national and regional food systems. These territorial markets have specific characteristics including the following:

- They are oriented towards satisfying the needs of the local, national, regional food systems first, through exchanges among the different actors in various positions, while creating wealth and sustainable employment in the local, national and/or regional economy.
- In addition to serving as a place where supply and demand meet, they ensure the dimension of social construction and of reconstruction of political and cultural power relations.
- They are structured according to a scale that goes from the local to the transboundary with a logic of interdependence of the actors (solidarity).
- They are controlled by the producers, consumers and the local authorities of the territory concerned (local, departmental / provincial, national and regional)
- They contribute to the structuring of the local economy with a redistribution within the territory concerned of the wealth generated by the systems of production and value addition of products (redistribution of the fruits of growth in production, processing of products and their marketing). This redistribution prioritizes actors within the territory but is open to other players of different profiles.
- They are inclusive since they offer space for all actors (internal and external) to exchange their products
- The diversity of food products and other products subject to various uses (never concentrated on a single product) that arrive in these markets reflects the diversity of the food production and food systems of the territory.
- They have links with local authorities both through tax collection of taxes and, in return, for structuring investments (infrastructure, knowledge, organization ...).
- They are open to other levels of markets with collectors or other actors who are external to the territory. It should be underlined that these territorial markets which are our markets are those that ensure the exchange of products for food security in in our countries, that create sustainable employment around the agricultural, fisheries and livestock products, and generate wealth with a more redistributive logic.

IV. NEXT STEPS

- The CFS is an extremely important body for policy convergence and negotiations to address food security and nutrition in the UN
- The topic of smallholders' access to markets is fundamental for us and for food security and nutrition.
- For these reasons we feel that the upcoming negotiations in the CFS are very significant and serious, and should not be considered as light negotiations.
- We need to be realistic: the methodology adopted in June needs to produce an outcome document that is useful for and accepted by governments and all actors involved, and the process needs to be inclusive and to give particular importance to our contributions as organizations of smallholders. We will reflect further on what methodology could ensure that these expectations are met.
- We encourage the Chair to build on the existing structure of the Zero draft, when taking into account the contributions received so far.