

## Informal Discussion on problem statement – 7 May 2020

### CSM Written Inputs

As Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM), we would like to thank the Rapporteur and the CFS Secretariat for organizing the series of informal and virtual discussions to explore possibilities for promoting further convergence. **We hope that this process will support the work towards developing a First Draft which reflects the findings of the HLPE report on "Agroecological approaches and other innovations", but also provides a coherent unifying framework for decisive policy action by endorsing a holistic approach to food systems.**

#### Modalities of the process

The first session provided a good space for discussion among the different actors which were present, and we appreciated the moderation led by the Rapporteur. **However, we must be clear that these remain informal discussions and do not become into actual negotiations. This would be detrimental to the process and could most likely imply the loss of ambition projected by this policy convergence process.**

**Although the first discussion hosted a good number of participants, we would like to express the proposed process' inadequacy for social movements.** As CSM, we have been voicing that our constituencies, particularly small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples and workers, are completely overtaken by the urgent need to provide immediate responses to the COVID-19 crisis within their localities and communities. **While they should be at the core of this process, as stipulated by the CFS mandate "ensur(ing) that the voices of all relevant stakeholders – particularly those most affected by food insecurity - are heard", we strongly feel that the scheduling proposed challenges this agreed basis.**

First and foremost, the sessions' dynamics should respect **the need for translation/interpretation that the CSM has.** In this sense, the background documents should be provided well in advance for not only ensuring the possibility of translations, but also to allow adequate diffusion and understanding of such documents. In addition, more time should be granted in between sessions for **safeguarding the organization of the participation of the CSM's constituencies.** Therefore, a weekly basis for the discussions proves to be extremely challenging.

**On the other hand, the access to the platform for the first session presented difficulties.** In fact, without a Zoom account this was not possible, which resulted in a late entering from most of the CSM participants, and even blocked it in some cases. We strongly recommend to the CFS Secretariat to review the settings for the next session.

In terms of content of the sessions, we are concerned about the unbalance of the proposal presented in the Concept Note. For instance, although addressing digitalization is important, a full session dedicated to this area gives it disproportionate relevance within the scope of policy recommendations. At the same time, issues such as sustainable healthy diets and agency will deserve much more time of dialogue. We therefore would like to convey a proposal for regrouping the issues.

#### *Proposal:*

1. Problem statement (situation analysis)
2. Agroecological and other innovative approaches; Digitalization; Assessment
3. COVID-19; Right to Food; Sustainable healthy diets
4. Markets; Incentives; Agrochemicals
5. Stakeholders; Gender; Agency

## **Comments on “Problem Statement”**

As presented in the Background document, the radical transformation of food systems has been already called for by numerous HLPE report and especially the one on “Agroecological approaches and other innovations”. Furthermore, the HLPE note on CFS policy response to COVID exposes that “the present crisis highlights existing challenges in food systems”. In this sense, the health crisis reveals like never before the urgency of clear pathways towards inclusive, equitable and sustainable food systems. The transition should claim the centrality of local food systems in ensuring food security and resilience, the importance of small-scale producers and workers, and the need for local short-circuit markets to ensure access to sustainable healthy diets at reasonable prices for all.

The conceptual framework of transforming food systems, which is also a priority within the Agenda 2030 process, should have a holistic approach to food systems, one that clearly sets out the multiplicity of public objectives that food systems serve and how they can help advance multiple SDGs within the 2030 Agenda.

- 1. In terms of transitions, are the principles mentioned above (and contained in the Zero Draft) helpful? e.g., i) improving resource efficiency, ii) strengthening resilience, and iii) securing social equity/responsibility. Should they be modified in any way?**

We believe that these principles are not enough. A fourth operational principle around sustainability should be added as the HLPE report has already recommended, namely the ecological footprint. The HLPE report identifies the “utility of adding ecological footprint as a fourth operational principle for SFSs to adequately capture how consumption patterns affect what is produced, and how ecologically degradative and regenerative practices have impacts beyond those that occur through resource efficiency, since resource-efficient practices can still be degradative.”

- 2. How could the most appropriate transition pathways for each context be identified?**

We also agree that each context is different. However, some critical elements need to globally be considered, namely sustainability in all different dimensions. All dimensions need to be looked at in a holistic way. COVID-19 has already showed that we cannot look at one dimension only, it has exposed that “economy-first” does not work. A transition pathway should be the one that in each context takes into account all the dimensions of sustainability, including the environmental, social, and health one.

Another crucial element is to put small-scale food producers, indigenous peoples and workers at the forefront of any transition pathway. This is embedded in the concept of agency and implies that the rights and the resilience of these communities are put at the center. Linked to this is the need to re-localize food systems in a coordinated way and ensure public support to local markets where most of the food transit.

Finally, any transition must be grounded in the framework of human rights.

- 3. Based on today’s discussions, what points do you think the First Draft of the Policy Recommendations should cover?**

The COVID crisis has amplified the inequalities among and within countries. The CSM is in constant dialogue with people on the territories, and the food crisis still questioned by some is already a reality for them. It is therefore crucial for the most affected by the structural dysfunctions of our food systems to be at the center of the transformation envisaged. This recalls the need for public interest to pave the transitions towards localized, sustainable, healthy and equitable food systems.

We call for the Policy Recommendations to be primarily directed to informing public policies and systems, reclaiming the public nature of food systems, and the centrality of healthy and sustainable diets in reclaiming our commons and advancing a deeper understanding of how public goods and services can strengthen the Right to food, and food security and nutrition. The science of Agroecology is the study of the dynamic landscapes - it protects the environment and producers by enabling the local production of healthy and sustainable food for all. Agroecology offers local solutions and empowers local economies and markets by improving livelihoods and a better quality of life. In this sense, the outcomes of the policy convergence process should provide guidance to strengthen agroecological transition pathway towards food systems that ensure resilience in all dimensions.