

Contribution of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) Youth Working Group to the HLPE e-consultation on the scope of the report "Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems" (January 2020)

The world is at a crossroads. The number of food insecure and malnourished is rising, current food systems are broken, communities and ecosystems are facing unprecedented loss of biodiversity, and climate change has become a crisis, dramatically changing our relations with natural resources and territories, and forcing millions to leave their homes and families. We cannot ignore longer these huge challenges. What will be left for us as youth and future generations?

The Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM) warmly welcomes both the CFS's collective process to reflect on and engage with the critical issue of youth and the HLPE's efforts to seek out our views on the scope of their report. As CSM, and in particular as the CSM Youth Constituency, we have been among the strongest advocates for the CFS to adopt a Youth work-stream. We believe strongly in this process and the possibility it affords to strengthen the social capital of youth as active members of our communities and territories; to promote and support our agency, autonomy, and self-determination, as well as our full and sustainable inclusion in governance and policy-making processes. We reaffirm our commitment to engage comprehensively, and with the full scope of our diverse constituencies, in this report process and the policy engagement that will follow.

This submission is on behalf of the Youth Constituency of the CSM. The Youth Constituency of the CSM gathers smallholders and family farmers, indigenous peoples, fisherfolks, agricultural and food workers, women, landless, consumers, pastoralists and urban food insecure from around the globe. 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. Together we defend the explicit recognition of the different constituencies within youth while also presenting this shared contribution to the HLPE on our vision for the scope of the "Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems" report.

The submission highlights what we envision as the scope of the HLPE report. We strongly believe that the report should reflect the complex rights, needs and demands of youth around the globe. The report should be holistic and inclusive, representing youth not as a potential workforce for an industrial global food system – but as a dynamic and diverse set of actors with ideas for policy, desire for engagement and passion for shaping a more just, ecological, sustainable, localized, and diverse food system. As youth are dynamic actors in local communities and territories, the scope of the report needs to address public policies that ensure permanence, retention and return to the rural areas of young people, decent employment, decent salaries and decent working conditions as well as access to territories, to natural resources and to the means of production, including the ownership of land and natural resources such as water and land. We can no longer ignore the huge challenges of climate change, loss of biodiversity and ecological destruction: they are the main drivers of hunger and malnutrition for present and future generations. The Youth Constituency of the CSM believes that these questions which are so central to food security and nutrition, and so central to our lives and communities and future generations must be addressed in the report. We ask that the HLPE report be responsive to contributions the CSM Youth Constituency – and the HLPE ensure that the drafting process of the report is participatory and inclusive of the voices of

the young small food producers who are also those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.

1) Why is there a need to promote youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems? What are the key issues and opportunities?

Youth are political subjects and have the right, capacity, and agency to build spaces of solidarity, inclusion, and dignity. We learn from and exchange with different struggles, movements, institutions and alternative voices. Through practicing and sharing our diverse knowledges and cultures, including indigenous knowledges and practices, we resist growing corporatization while co-creating life-affirming worlds and futures by building strong connections to the land, water, seeds, plants, and all living beings.

More than a need to promote youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, there is a need to support youth driven models of engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems and to make space for youth to be active policy-makers on issues concerning agriculture and food systems. Youth around the world already want to engage in and work in agriculture and food systems. We have innovative ideas on how to care for ourselves, others and the planet through agriculture and employment in food systems. We want to grow good and nourishing food in sustainable ways. We are energetic, vibrant and engaged. However, in most places around the globe we lack the resources for this work. We lack access to land, to seeds, and to water. We lack access to education in agriculture and food systems. We lack access to remunerative markets. We are unable to pursue agroecological production methods. We are forced out of rural areas to urban centers to look for employment. We lack access to decision-making spaces. We face a present already impacted by climate change, and an unsure future. We face criminalization and marginalization when we seek to better our future, the future of others, and the future of the planet.

All of this is a direct violation of our rights as youth – rights recognized in the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas*, as well as in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)*, the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, *General Comment No. 12* to the ICESCR on the right to food and *General Recommendation No. 34* to the CEDAW on the rights of rural women.

There are a number of issues and opportunities that are key for youth:

- *Migration*: Many Youth today are forced to move from rural areas. Sometimes we are forced to move to new countries and territories, other times to urban areas in our own country. We are forced to move due to: the exploitation of our labour; our inability to earn livelihood with dignity (either because of a lack of good employment in rural areas or a lack of resources to grow our own food); the impacts of the climate crisis; protracted crisis; and a whole host of other structural reasons. 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, the climate crisis, protracted crises and neoliberal policies (as well as their legacy) have driven so many youth away from food production.

- *Access to Resources*: Access to land and productive resources is a key issue – land grabbing and speculation, industrialization of rural areas, monopolization of natural resources have all driven youth from agricultural livelihoods.
- *Agroecology*: Many Youth want to pursue agriculture – but we know industrial agriculture is a dead end. We need transition plans away from destructive and exploitative industrial agriculture and towards agroecological approaches. Agroecology is both innovative and traditional. It offers a path forward for feeding the future. But it must be supported.
- *Social and Political Dimensions*: The report must focus on social and political dimensions of agriculture and food systems, not just technocratic, economic perspectives.
- *Climate Crisis*: The climate crisis is a key issue and opportunity for youth to be primary actors in mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- *Decent, Dignified Work and Livelihoods*: Work should not simply be equated with waged employment, but rather as a range of productive activities that support livelihoods. Work in agriculture and food systems should be safe, should support individual and community health and well-being, be fairly remunerative, meaningful, and allow opportunities for creativity and leadership. Work is not simply an economic activity, but a social and ecological activity, and these dimensions should be considered together.

2) How do the evolution and transitions of agriculture, food systems and nutrition affect youth engagement and employment? How can agriculture and food systems employment become more attractive for youth, especially considering the rural-urban continuum? What would be needed to improve standards of living and services in rural areas and mid-sized towns, to retain youth and young families?

The ongoing processes of industrialization, financialization and neoliberalization of agriculture and food systems have dramatically changed the relationship between communities and their natural resources and territories and have led to an unprecedented loss of biodiversity and the current crisis-level global warming. The ecological systems at the basis of our livelihoods, as young fisherfolks, gatherers, hunters, family farmers and pastoralists, are degraded; the knowledge systems we depend on are threatened. This evolution of the food system has affected small-scale producers' access, control and ownership over land, water, all natural and material resources and means of production, threatened remunerative prices for agricultural products due to competition in the globalized market and encroachment on territorial markets.

Although the majority of agriculture still takes place in rural areas, these effects have been felt in rural and urban areas alike. In urban and peri-urban areas, gentrification, lack of livable wages, degradation of arable land and inequitable agriculture and food policies have increased our food and job insecurity and have further kept us, urban youth, from being landowners and environmental stewards. As young rural dwellers, we have been forced to leave our homes and families in search of decent work and working conditions in spite of our embeddedness and pride in our communities. This has disrupted the conservation and transmission of indigenous and territorial agricultural knowledge from generation to generation.

Many youth are proud to live in the countryside and to make a living with fishing, gathering, hunting, farming and pastoralism, and we want to continue to be able to do so. Youth in urban areas share similar visions as their rural counterparts. Both rural and urban youth want to be able to stay in their territories and produce food in harmony with the ecological systems they and their

children depend on. The livelihoods of traditional, small-scale and/or family production are thus already attractive for us, but they have to become remunerative and socially valued again, to be viable life choices for us. For example, many youth in agriculture have also begun to explore how to build, engage and support solidarity economies; that is, economies that are not based solely on maximizing profit, but that consider the social and ecological dimensions of productive activity, and seek to build healthy, resilient and inclusive communities.

To assure permanence, retention and return to the rural areas of young people, and to ensure decent livelihoods in urban areas, we, as youth, thus need access, control, ownership and autonomy over land, water, natural and material resources and means of production to process and value our works and products through the local knowledge and capacity already existing within our communities. Market access is a key policy area, particularly in rural areas and mid-sized towns. Territorial and localized markets need to be strengthened and the engagement and access of youth to markets further analyzed. This analysis should consider the diversity of youth backgrounds, perspectives, needs, and aspirations. For us, as youth of the CSM, a transformation of smallholder production or pastoralism into entrepreneurship or large-scale agribusiness will not raise the attractiveness of agricultural employment.

We need a just transition in food systems through the spreading of Agroecology. Agroecology has the capacity to make engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems attractive for youth. Models of production rooted in agroecological principles to achieve food sovereignty – like collective, participatory agriculture and food systems based on peasant rights – can improve standards of living and services in rural areas and mid-sized towns. The roles of youth in these processes should be recognised, supported and further strengthened. In order to take our role as the main protagonists in current and future food systems, young people need access to and support for agroecology training, for example through horizontal education networks that successfully engage youth and equip us with agroecological and traditional knowledge. See, for examples in Argentina, the article by Juárez, P., Balázs, B., Trentini, F., Korzenszky, A. and Becerra, L. (2015, listed in references below). Below, you also find a list of also case studies on youth engagement and education.

Generally, instead of building a false dichotomy between town and countryside or pitting us against each other, coherent policies are needed that engage and support the diversity of young rural smallholders as much as young urban food insecure or youth engaged in urban food production processes.

3) What governance transformations are necessary to enable and encourage youth participation in agriculture and food systems, and what actions are required to equip youth with the necessary skills and confidence in fully engaging in these decision-making processes?

Governance systems today are faced with the challenge of managing complexity. Food systems are complex, dynamic systems with ecological, social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions. A number of governance transformations are necessary to enable and encourage youth participation in agriculture and food systems.

Governance Needs to be Transformed To Be Intersectoral and Multilevel

Currently, the governance of food systems is based on individual, only loosely or un-related sectoral policies (i.e. the separate governance of agriculture, health, urban planning), which fail to achieve a coherent approach to food. Yet, the complexity of food systems calls for a cross-sectoral, multilevel governance approach that is able to integrate the different sectors of the food system as much as the different scales and spaces at which the food system plays out. This also means that, rather than governing rural and urban areas separately, governance approaches should consider the linkages between rural and urban. Only in this way can we, as the variety of youth engaged in the diversity of sectors forming the food system, engage, together, in the governance of our common food system.

Governance Spaces Need to Make Room for Diverse Youth Participation

Opening up governance, law, and policy spaces to youth, and facilitating our meaningful participation is key. 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.

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. Recognizing the intersectional identities of youth, 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.

But Youth Need More than Just a Right of 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. (<https://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov/communityboards/>).

Governance Systems Must be Human Rights-based

Our rights as Youth, women, indigenous peoples, peasants must be acknowledged, protected and central to all governance systems. Rights-based governance spaces require the meaningful inclusion of those voices most affected in all aspects of law and policy making.

Tools for Youth Engagement

For youth to build the necessary skills and confidence to fully engage in governance processes, education and training are essential. 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/>. Another example is the Agroecology School and Rural Peasant University System of MOCASE-LVC in Argentina. See country case studies below.

4) What are the most promising pathways to transform current agriculture and the food systems in developing countries to make them more attractive to the youth?

We recognize that agro-industrial production models are not only unable to respond to persistent hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, but that they have contributed to the creation of these ongoing injustices. They have driven the decrease of biodiversity, dietary diversity and nutritional quality. They have driven environmental destruction and global warming.

A fundamental transformation of industrial food systems is desperately needed. Agroecology offers a truly transformative approach towards sustainable food systems. The 2019 CFS HLPE report “Agroecological and Other Innovations for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that Enhance Food Security and Nutrition” clearly shows there are two distinct sets of approaches to food system transformation. Industrial innovations such as climate smart agriculture, sustainable intensification, and new biotechnologies attempt to make incremental reforms to a broken and failing industrial food system. Agroecological approaches are truly innovative, as they offer a holistic understanding of the food system, can be adapted to any context, and provide a range of transition pathways to diverse and resilient food systems. They also respond to food system governance challenges. Agroecological approaches to governance include youth small-scale food producers and our knowledge, practices and organizations. The HLPE report on Youth could seize the opportunity and strengthen the obvious synergy between the two CFS policy convergence processes to be concluded by 2020: the CFS Food Systems and Nutrition Voluntary Guidelines and the Agroecology Policy Recommendations.

The most promising pathways to transform the current agriculture and food system in a way that engages Youth are in line with the following principles:

A. *Centrality of people:* Recognize the centrality of youth, in particular small-scale food producers and women, and our agency in shaping food systems and nutritional outcomes.

B. *Realization of the right to adequate food:* The reshaping of food systems should be based on and contribute to the realization of the right to adequate food for all, with a particular focus on the needs of youth and the challenges we face. This requires systemic rather than siloed sectoral change, and overall policy coherence with the right to food.

C. *Healthy diets require a healthy planet:* Food production, preparation, distribution, and exchange should be kept within planetary boundaries, respecting and maintaining the Earth's ecosystems and regenerative capacities. Quality and safety of food (composition and origin) should be key pillars in the transition. Biodiversity and traditional varieties are the foundation of dietary diversity and should be protected and enhanced. This is key for the rights and flourishing of current and future generations.

D. *Interrelatedness of human rights and holistic transitions:* The health-food nexus should be addressed in close conjunction with the livelihoods and ecological foundations of healthy and sustainable food systems. Agroecological approaches to food systems are the best suited to achieve a holistic transition that respects and realizes human rights.

E. *Equality and non-discrimination:* Existing inequalities and structures of oppression should be overcome in order to guarantee the full realization of the rights of discriminated, disadvantaged and marginalized groups. These are in particular: youth, refugees and displaced people, disaster affected communities, elderly, and groups marginalized on the basis of gender, caste, race or religion. The transition to healthy and sustainable food systems should be guided by this principle and informed by the experiences, knowledge, and perspectives from these groups.

F. *Rights of Indigenous Peoples:* Recognize and affirm 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.

G. *Women's rights:* healthy and sustainable food systems will never be achieved without ensuring the full respect, protection and fulfilment of women's rights. Young women and women play a central role in food systems. We are active political subjects, agents of our own change and development, and must be recognized as having the right to self-determination over our bodies, and our lives, and to live free from violence. In particular, women have the right to be free from exposure to hazardous chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics and toxics related to food production to ensure reproductive health and the health and wellness of children.

H. *Recognize and support care work:* Care work – such as cooking, feeding and breast-feeding – plays a central role in food systems but so far, its value and importance for healthy and sustainable food systems is completely ignored. Having adequate time for care work related to food, as well as a more equal distribution of it so that it is not based on the exploitation of women and girls, is paramount to achieve truly healthy and sustainable food systems.

I. Food traditions and cultural heritage: Protect and enhance traditions, knowledge, and cultural heritages associated with food production, exchange and consumption, with due regard to their dynamic nature and intergenerational transmission. Ensure the cultural adequacy of available, accessible, and affordable dietary options.

J. Participation, sovereignty and self-determination: Respect the plurality of world views, and Indigenous Peoples', communities', and individuals' rights to self-determination, autonomy, and free and prior consent. Recognize and protect the intrinsic relationship between territory, food systems, and food as common good, as well as the existence of other noncommercial forms of production and exchange (indigenous, social, and solidarity economy). Acknowledge the power differences between different actors in food systems and consciously address these in the implementation of these principles, ensuring meaningful participation of groups most affected.

The engagement and retention of Youth as real transformative actors in the reshuffle of current food systems requires the following actions:

A. Real Agrarian Reform: Agrarian reform should be ensured, including the right to territories (land, water, forests, fishing, foraging, hunting) and the secure access to and control over productive resources for Youth. The right to freely save, plant, exchange, sell and breed seeds, phytogenetic resources (plant and animal species) and livestock should be restored. Regulations (i.e. sanitary laws) impeding the normal functioning of local and territorial markets and diversity should be removed. Resource management and food production should be inclusive and responsible, and since any distribution of productive resources implies a gender power relationship, the agrarian reform must include women as fundamental protagonists.

Concerning urban access to land, urban youth are finding innovative ways to access land in urban areas and these should be supported by governments, through regulatory reforms and financial and technical support. Strategies to support and develop urban agriculture systems can enrich and supplement urban food systems.

B. Solidarity Economies: Social and solidarity-based economy rules should be instituted, determined by small-scale food producers-led policies inclusive for Youth participation. Regulations, policies, and laws should be categorized according to the size and mode of production of enterprises (i.e. Small agroindustries/cooperatives making benefits out of agroecological productions are affected by having to comply to the same sanitary laws as big enterprises).

C. End Violence against Communities: Policy measures should be put in place to prevent and end state, parastatal and private interests' ongoing violence against Indigenous and rural communities, Youth peasant farmers, women and associated social formations (including not only physical violence but also economic, environmental and cultural violence in the form of land, water and seed grabs).

D. Decent Working Conditions: Decent work conditions should be established for Youth by respecting the rights of all workers, including the rights of migrant workers, the right to union representation, and the rights to collective bargaining and to living wages. They should also ensure fair, safe and healthy working environments that are free from any form of discrimination, violence, and/or harassment. They should also include access to public services.

E. Education and Training: Education, training and formation are fundamental dimensions of agroecology. Public research and training for development should be reoriented to build on the agency of Youth peasants and respond to their needs (training in transition practices and agroecological production between peasants and rural extension technicians). Public policies should promote participatory research schemes given the key role that small-scale food producers play in research and development

F. Women's Rights: The rights of women in all their intersecting gender identities should be protected, respected, re-affirmed and fulfilled while pursuing gender equality and justice, by the medium of policies or participation quota and of resources targeted specifically for women

- This explicitly relates to female autonomy and the construction of spaces of equal participation between men and women by incorporating respect, care, solidarity, shared responsibility, by ensuring equal income and shared power, and by putting an end to gender violence and sexism;
- It also relates to equal access to territories (land, water, forests, fishing, foraging, hunting) and public services; and
- Agroecology must be recognized for its potential to transform social relations and traditional sexual division of labour, by promoting practices that are accessible to women and youth and increase their access to resources and their decision-making power at all levels.

G. Public Policies: Public policies and investments should be focused on the strengthening of territorial agri-food systems, including:

- Investment in public services, such as in public health (through a preventive approach), in universal and free education, libraries and extension services, is the most concrete way of contributing to the quality of life and reducing poverty among youth. Public services are crucial to development of healthy inclusive communities. Public services also create decent employment opportunities and jobs;
- the strengthening of territorial markets, shortening of food supply chains, and building of direct consumer-producer relations and markets that incentivize youth to engage in agroecological production models;
- (local/territorial) public procurement schemes that are inclusive, support communities, their cooperatives and producer associations, while creating positive opportunities for Youth to distribute healthy food to the places where it is most needed: nursing homes, maternity and recovery centers, hospitals and schools;
- the provision of infrastructure needed for the local and territorial processing of farm produce (local mills, abattoirs, micro-dairies, community food processing facilities, waste recycling, renewable energy systems etc.) to create decent jobs and wealth for youth within territories whilst reducing overall carbon and ecological footprints;
- an inclusive and responsible approach to the provision of urban and rural infrastructure in territories, as well as an approach to urban, rural and territorial planning that consults the vision of both urban and rural youth. Appropriate road and communications infrastructure are key to providing access to territorial markets and extension services, also allowing for the marketing of a greater diversity of fresh products; and
- the generation of decent jobs in new sectors associated with sustainable lifestyles, that support the flourishing of local communities and territories.

5) What are the best strategies for fully engaging youth, in particular young women, in opportunities to acquire adequate skills and learning opportunities to further develop their knowledge and enable them to be leaders in innovative agriculture and the transformation of food systems?

Youth, as a heterogeneous group, experience different barriers to full engagement in agriculture and food systems which include, among others, growing disillusionment to conventional, large-scale agriculture and lack of access to decision making spaces, organized markets, requisite trainings and financial services. There is a significant gender dimension as well. Women are more likely to face constraints in accessing resources and services including land and markets. Other systemic and cultural barriers are also more likely to keep women away from accessing educational and training opportunities.

There are several basic strategies that can fully engage youth in opportunities to acquire adequate skills and learning opportunities. Integration of agroecological food system approaches and practical food education in school curricula at all stages, starting at a young age, will lay the foundation for future food system leaders. There should be a variety of pathways for skills and knowledge development through quality higher education. The needed strategies should further entail horizontal exchanges of knowledge and horizontal learning arrangements, such as peasant-to-peasant, fisher-to-fisher, pastoralist-to-pastoralist, consumer-and-producer knowledge exchanges, as well as intergenerational exchanges between generations and across different traditions, including the exchange of new ideas. Social media platforms are key to raise awareness of and promote engagement, as well as for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and education, but some youth lack stable access to digital infrastructure.

Moving a step further from including agroecological approaches in school curricula, there should also be an increased focus on providing vocational, business and entrepreneurial skills training in food system activities to young people. However, this training needs to move away from traditional business school models based on a narrow vision of business that focuses on economic growth and profit maximization. Business should be reconceptualized as a productive economic activity, where the economy includes ecological and socio-cultural dimensions. Diverse forms of enterprise, ownership, labour, finance, and markets such as worker or producer cooperatives, social enterprises, barter and gifting systems, community supported agriculture, traditional and indigenous economic systems, community credit systems, and so on should all be in the core curriculum in business skills training, to move away from “business as usual”. See <https://communityeconomies.org/about/community-economies-research-and-practice> for more information.

In order to encourage participation of women in training spaces, establishing quotas can be an effective step. There is also a need to ensure that women get equal legal rights, especially with regard to ownership of land, inheritance and income.

6) What are the most appropriate policies to remove obstacles to empower youth initiate and/or upscale activities in agriculture and related services, in the food supply chain,

in agroecology, and in the food environment, as well as in nutrition and innovation, in accordance to their skills, aspirations, assets and contexts?

As Youth Constituency of the CSM, we demand the removal of those policies and practices contributing to social inequalities and the alarming rates of hunger and malnutrition in the world. These harmful policies and practices include land grabbing, exploitation, discrimination and destruction of our planet which continue to undermine the livelihoods of our generation as well as of future generations. They are key obstacles to the empowerment of Youth.

In order to remove these obstacles, we demand strong human rights-based processes that acknowledge the participation and rights of Youth as a cornerstone of food systems, food sovereignty and nutrition and ensure the active and inclusive engagement of young women and men across all sectors.

As the Youth Constituency of the CSM, we see a number of obstacles to the empowerment of youth. They include, among others:

- increasing food insecurity and malnutrition
- loss of biodiversity
- the climate crisis
- changing communities' relation with natural resources and territories
- forced migration of millions leaving their homes and families
- land grabbing
- exploitation, destruction of environmental resources
- marginalization of and pressure on small-scale producers, including family farmers, indigenous peoples, fisherfolks, pastoralists in the globalized market economy
- high rates of youth unemployment

In order to remove these obstacles, we must lay down the basis for strong human rights-based policy dialogues acknowledging the participation and rights of Youth as a cornerstone of public policies on food systems, food sovereignty and nutrition and ensure an active and inclusive engagement of young women. This requires the establishment of coherent public policies conducive to our self-determination as youth, and our full inclusion in the governance of our families, communities and organizations.

Public policies, with the goal of removing obstacles to Youth empowerment, should focus on:

- **inclusion of Youth**
 - ensuring Youth involvement at all levels of decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; this includes the direct participation of families and communities in political decisions, in the aim to find the best solutions in accordance with their own vision and socio-cultural background;
 - building and facilitating a united alliance of Youth;
 - allowing Youth to advance in the way we define ourselves in terms of ways and means of production, in health, in education, in recreation, social services, access to local markets, to native seeds; and
 - strengthening the gender perspective, particularly for women youth:

- by targeting discriminations among against women and youth inside food systems;
 - by implementing women’s rights and gender equality; and
 - by protecting, respecting, fulfilling and re-affirming the rights of women in all their intersecting gender identities (including race, sexuality, origin, religion, social status, abilities, age) in all policies.
- **transforming agri-food systems and production processes**
 - shifting away from the current industrialized agri-food system of production and consumption in food;
 - adopting policies against the dumping of cheap food, the control of global agri-food markets by few large corporations and biotechnological innovations that support genetic modification and the dematerialization of seeds and genetic resources;
 - adopting a cyclical view of the production process, involving youth at all levels of production, as well as taking into account the cyclical aspect of production in time and its effect on present and future generations;
 - strengthening practices that protect and enhance biodiversity;
 - shifting the paradigm of agroecology from an ‘alternative’ to being a viable and truly transformational pathway;
 - prioritizing and funding agroecology research;
 - supporting local and territorial markets to increase food producers’ direct influence on prices and modes of production; and
 - supporting territorial initiatives, like community banks, solidarity funds, local seed banks and autonomous funds that protect farmers against financialization and dematerialization in the food system.
- **providing engagement and employment opportunities**
 - providing opportunities for Youth to create job opportunities (instead of just being workers), by guaranteeing decent working conditions, decent incomes and decent employment conditions
 - access to financing programs, credit and technical support
- **stopping criminalization and corruption**
 - adopting stringent laws against criminalization and murdering of human rights defenders and community leaders;
 - building capacity to ensure youth voices and advocacy on structural causes of dispossession and reinforcing the importance of autonomy over our own diverse and territorial markets; and
 - eliminate corruption at local, national and international levels.
- **securing access, control, and ownership over land, water, natural and material resources for Youth**
 - adopting policies and actions against and land grabbing, the exploitation of oceans, rivers, lakes and marine resources;
 - implementing an agrarian reform based on food sovereignty: secure Youth’s access, control, ownership and autonomy over land, water, all natural and material resources and means of production;

- adopting inclusive and responsible resource management and food production models; and
- ensuring gender-equal access to territories (land, water, forests, fishing, foraging, hunting) and public services.
- **protecting youth from the effects of conflicts, wars and occupations and including youth in peace processes**
- **linking struggles and policy processes**
 - creating an enabling environment and establish linkages, synergies and convergence processes between local to global struggles of peasants, pastoralist, fisher-folk, tribal and indigenous communities and their rights; and
 - implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP).

7) What are the most appropriate policies and initiatives to facilitate the education-to-labour market transition and youth recruitment and retention in agriculture and food systems' related activities? What nodes and activities in supply chains have the highest potential for generating decent jobs for youth? What new types of training are needed foster more agroecological approaches to farming?

We cannot think about young people only as employees of the industrial labor force: we feel proud to live in the countryside, to produce, to generate our own income and to contribute to the economy by being job providers as well as seekers. However, a transformation in the perception of Youth is required if we are to be able to make a respected living fishing, gathering, hunting, farming and engaging in pastoralism.

Importantly, we need access to non-exploitative financing programs. Youth need access to appropriate credit and technical support for the permanence, retention and return to the rural areas of young people, and to support urban youth to develop food system enterprises. As young people, we often have to cover our livelihood costs (i.e. school, food, clothing, rent) or contribute financially to support our families. This forces us to opt out of policy and agricultural work given the expectation to provide unpaid volunteer hours or receive small stipends.

To promote our engagement and involvement in agriculture and food systems, there needs to be a promotion of intergenerational exchanges, including the exchanges between traditions, communities and the provision of opportunities to learn and build on historical memory, traditions and people's knowledges.

8) What is the extent of wage discrepancies against youth and women in agriculture and food systems, and what are some successful experiences in removing such wage differentials?

As previously mentioned, Youth is not one unique homogeneous group and should be understood through an inclusive, transversal and cross-cutting approach. The challenges faced by young individuals are determined at the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, culture,

social and physical ability, constituency and continent. Youth engage in food systems that are shaped by power imbalances and patriarchy, where women, especially in rural areas, are the most affected.

In this sense, wage differentials have greater impact on women than on men. This is due to an unfair division of labour which generates an unequal sharing of the burden of reproductive and unpaid care work. The burden of cooking, feeding and caring for family members is unfairly put on women and girls. This unpaid household work constitute 50% of economic activities globally, and makes possible the reproduction of life, communities and society in general. Yet, this work not acknowledged, and is taken for granted. The role of women both in rural and urban areas needs to be recognized and addressed, including through sharing in the care of all members of the households, communities and societies.

Moreover, women play an essential role in transforming rural areas and the care of non-human living forms (e.g. seeds, poultry, livestock, fish and flora). The current industrial agri-food model has led to an impoverishment of small-scale food producers, leading to not only the migration of youth from rural to urban areas, but also to men leaving their households or agricultural activities to search for better economic opportunities. This is often associated with a feminization of agriculture, mostly for women and their families' own subsistence, increasing women's unpaid work.

It is challenging to ensure the right to food and nutrition, as well as healthy diets. Women often lack time due to the many roles they take on, from labour in the market place to productive and reproductive work at home, to activism. The lack of time and the lack of access to healthy food are disabling factors for many young women to realize their right to food and nutrition.

More broadly, neo- and post-colonial regimes still sustain an unequal international division of labour; and certain social and ethnic groups are confined to slavery conditions in agricultural production systems. This generates wage disparities directly affecting Youth. In addition, the digitalization of food and agriculture has negatively impacted wage disparities. Markets that were once places of sociability are now replaced by e-markets, where customers chooses between hundreds of products, disconnected from the people and cultural values that produced them. Seeds are becoming data stored on clouds but can't be exchanged in real life. New payment programs are inaccessible to many people, especially to the Youth. As production is more fragmented and delocalized, young food producers become wagedworkers for huge agro-food companies instead of self-sufficient producers.

As the CSM Youth Constituency, we believe that this report and the overall Youth policy convergence process should not only rely on "best practices" and successes stories without addressing the root causes of problems. Recommendations should look at the challenges and fill in current policy gap to strengthen the social capital of Youth in communities and territories.

In this sense, agroecology has proven to transform gender relations and promote just and local economies. Agroecology benefits women and young people, who gain respect and are valued for their work, and empowered in their communities. Several experiences that combine agroecological and feminist approaches have proven to be very successful. Some are only women-led projects, such as Jinwar, the women's ecological village in Rojava, while others are family projects, such as the Land Dyke Feminist Family Farm, in Taiwan.

9) What data is necessary to support policy development to enhance youth engagement and employment, and to create awareness of the specific needs, vulnerabilities and opportunities of disadvantaged youth?

The inclusion and engagement of Youth in policy development requires people-centered approaches in relation to data collection, data ownership and knowledge sharing. Both qualitative and quantitative data needs to comply with the de-concentration of knowledge and with the objective to share, value and collectively develop knowledge, not only about youth, but with, by, and for youth. We must promote horizontal exchanges from peasant-to-peasant, fisher-to-fisher, and pastoralist-to-pastoralist, and intergenerational exchanges. We must also promote exchanges between traditions and communities, as well as opportunities to learn and build on historical memory, traditions and people's knowledges.

The data gathering process aiming to support policy development in favor of youth engagement and employment should address Youth as agents of change in their lives, and not simply as objects of policies. The data collection process should therefore be designed using inclusive and participatory approaches and methodologies. Youth should be actively engaged in shaping the scope, questions and the methodology of research, through their full participation in research steering committees. The CFS principle of prioritising the voices of those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition should be followed in regards to youth-related research. In addition, research should not only focus on youth employment and engagement in food systems, but youth as members of communities. This more holistic focus will allow a fuller understanding of the specific needs, vulnerabilities and opportunities of youth, as their capacities are influenced by current economic, social, and political systems.

As big data and analytics systems become more complex and powerful, it is essential for governments to put in place strong regulatory structures that protect youth data from being exploited. Data collection and processing practices should protect Youth constituencies and communities' rights to ownership and use of their data. Transparency and accountability around data collection, ownership, and use is essential. The data needs to explore the possible path of inclusion and engagement of youth in policy making processes on all levels (local, national, regional and global).

We should take a strengths- or asset-based approach to research: Youth already have concrete examples and experiences from local territories and communities, including lessons learned through the study and practice of agroecology and food sovereignty, of territorial markets and solidarity economies. This knowledge could be integrated into data collection to inform policy and strategic measures for promoting Youth engagement in ensuring food security and nutrition.

If we are to have substantial shifts in food systems towards agroecology then the role of Youth is essential. That's why data related to agroecological practices and social technologies of production are needed. We also need transdisciplinary participatory research conducted through innovation platforms that foster co-learning between practitioners and researchers, and horizontal dissemination of experience among practitioners (e.g. farmer-to-farmer networks, communities of practice and agroecological lighthouses) in order to reshuffle the imbalance between conventional agriculture and agroecological research. In this sense agroecological research and mainstreaming

data about agroecological practices should be further legitimized and prioritized by adequate policy process, including through the involvement of Youth in data collection. There should be a special focus on the management of conflict of interest and power imbalance regarding knowledge within agricultural and food value chain.

To support the needed transitions to sustainable and equitable food systems, significantly more research is necessary on agroecological approaches to food security and nutrition. This was the conclusion of the CFS HLPE Project Leader, Fergus Sinclair, at the 46th CFS Plenary. When thinking about designing food systems for the future then, we need to think about agroecological approaches in relation to youth.

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Case Studies

Australia

Farming Democracy

Case Studies of small-scale regenerative farmers in Australia, a number of them youth-led, and the regulatory, policy, and practical obstacles they face in maintaining viable livelihoods without government support.

See: <https://afsa.org.au/afsa-merch/farming-democracy-2/>

Argentina

MOCASE-LVC

Founded in 1990, MOCASE-LVC has become the reference for farmer struggles in Argentina. Engaged in political and productive activities, the main strategy of this movement is grassroots training, focused on young people, through learning-by-doing in different spaces – most significantly the Agroecology School and UNICAM-SURI the Peasant's Rural University Systems.

See: Juarez, P., Balázs, B., Trentini, F., Korzenszky, A. and Becerra, L. (2015) WP4 Case Study Report: La Via Campesina. TRANSIT Deliverable 4. Grant agreement no: 613169.

Canada

National Farmers Union of Canada Youth Advisory Committee

The NFU Youth is a network of young Canadians who are concerned with the future of food and agriculture in Canada and around the world. NFU Youth members are young farmers and farmer supporters committed to building Food Sovereignty: a food system that is economically viable, ecologically sound, socially just and locally focused.

See:

<https://www.nfu.ca/about/nfu-youth/>

<https://www.nfu.ca/about/nfu-youth/national-new-farmer-coalition/>

<https://youngagrarians.org/>

TRACKS Youth Program

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.

See: <https://www.tracksprogram.ca/>

Ecuador

Universidad Campesina Utopía Popular

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 who do not have access to higher education. 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.

See:

<https://ojarasca.jornada.com.mx/2018/03/09/mujeres-y-jovenes-en-la-costa-de-ecuador-recrean-comunidad-en-esmeraldas-2992.html>;

<https://ocaru.org.ec/index.php/comunicamos/noticias/item/9586-universidad-campesina-utopia-popular>

Hawaii

the Wai’anae Community Re-Development Corporation (WCRC)

Established at the turn of the new millennium, a group of residents, traditional practitioners, teachers, and business experts to together to create the Wai’anae Community Re-Development Corporation (WCRC), a federally recognized 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization designed to had a desire to address the challenges of our youth and community. Our impact strategy strives to meet five critical areas of need: under privileged youth, sustainable economic development, organic agriculture, health & well-being, and Hawaiian culture. Training youth to be culturally rooted and communally relevant social entrepreneurs and leaders is our core objective.

See: https://www.maoorganicfarms.org/about_us

Hungary

Magosz (National Association of Hungarian Farmers’ Societies and Cooperatives)

a bottom-up organisation of farmer societies

See: Juarez, P., Balázs, B., Trentini, F., Korzenszky, A. and Becerra, L. (2015) WP4 Case Study Report: La Via Campesina. TRANSIT Deliverable 4. Grant agreement no: 613169.

New Zealand

Cultivate Christchurch

A social enterprise supporting youth education and vocational training in regenerative agriculture, on earthquake-impacted land.

See:

Fiona Stewart & Bailey Peryman from Cultivate: Vodafone Foundation Recipients
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fje04fYzPpw>
Crowdfunding campaign: invest in Cultivate's Social Enterprise
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbl_q-qhTaw

United Kingdom

Social Farms & Gardens

A UK wide charity supporting communities to farm, garden and grow together. SF&G set up and co-ordinates the School Farms Network as a mutual support and specialist network of practitioners and those interested in starting a new school farm. There are now more than 120 School Farms across the UK.

See: <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/school-farms-network>

United States

Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA)

The Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA) is dedicated to restoring the Indigenous food systems that support Indigenous self-determination, wellness, cultures, values, communities, economies, languages, families, and rebuild relationships with the land, water, plants and animals that sustain us. NAFSA brings people, communities (rural, remote and urban), organizations and Tribal governments together to share, promote and support best practices and policies that enhance dynamic Native food systems that promote holistic wellness, sustainable economic development, education, reestablished trade routes, stewardship of land and water resources, peer-to-peer mentoring, and multi-generational empowerment. NAFSA works to put the farmers, wildcrafters, fishers, hunters, ranchers and eaters at the center of decision-making on policies, strategies and natural resource management.

See: <https://nativefoodalliance.org/about/>

Student Farmworker Alliance

The Student Farmworker Alliance is a national network of students and young people organizing with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to uproot exploitation in the fields and build a food system based on justice, respect and dignity for farmworkers.

See: <https://www.sfalliance.org/who-we-are>

Youth participation on Manhattan Community Boards

<https://www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov/communityboards/>

International

<https://communityeconomies.org/about/community-economies-research-and-practice>

Philippines

<https://www.waggs.org/en/news/20200201-girl-scouts-lead-call-philippines-ban-unhealthy-food-and-beverages-schools/>

Madagascar

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