

CSIPM Interventions to the CFS Open Ended Working Group on Promoting Youth Engagement And Employment In Agriculture And Food Systems

OEWG 14 March 2022

Intervention on the Rationale of the Policy Recommendation - Sefu

- 1) Before opening the CSM's comments on the Zero Draft and Rationale section, we feel compelled to make brief statement about the war in Ukraine.
 - The CSM Youth stands in solidarity with the victims of this war, we fear for the lives of our sisters and brothers in Ukraine, we cry with the refugees, we want this war to stop.
 - There can be no right to food – no future for youth – where war and violence threaten their lives, destroy the planet, and limit their futures. Food must not be used as a weapon.
 - The war in Ukraine must be stopped now. We support the call for peace and an immediate ceasefire. We call for full respect and application of international humanitarian law. The full protection of all human rights is one of the fundamental pillars of the United Nations. Alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity must be investigated.
 - The international community must support the victims of this war with all the means necessary to ensure their human rights, particularly their rights to food, housing, and health.
 - We, as CSM Youth, stand in solidarity with all youth displaced from their homeland, with all youth who are forced to live in places where violence is inflicted on them. We call on all Member States to end this war and all other forms of armed conflict, illegal occupation, and forced migration in this world.
- 2) The CSM youth have been highly engaged in this policy process from the beginning.
 - We are disappointed to see that our contributions have not been included in this Zero Draft.
 - Above all, the Zero Draft lacks a strong focus on human rights, particularly the right to food.
 - Women's rights and peasants' rights are also absent in this document.
- 3) We believe that the HLPE report on youth is quite strong. Its scientific, evidence-based conclusions should be foundational and highly visible within these negotiations.
 - The HLPE identifies emerging issues to help Member States prioritize future action.
 - This means we must go beyond "agreed language" for the CFS.
- 4) To begin our comments, we are frustrated to see that the zero draft does not contain a preamble, and instead includes a "rationale"
 - Preambles are important for interpreting international documents, and this rationale should be converted into one

5) In addition, and more fundamentally, many crucial elements of the HLPE report are missing from the Zero Draft and from the framing paragraphs of the Rationale. I will outline 6 points that we believe are ESSENTIAL to the framing of this policy instrument, and should form the basis of the Rationale section:

- First, the conceptual framework of the report should be clearly described.
 - We underscore the need for a just transition toward economies of wellbeing based on food sovereignty, dignified livelihoods, and healthy environments.
- Second, the four pillars of the HLPE report are not included in the Zero Draft.
 - Rights, equity, agency, and recognition are fundamental to building economies of wellbeing.
- Third, we must emphasize one of the main messages from the report:
 - Redistributive and mediated market policies are required for supporting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems.
- Fourth, we hope that the First Draft of recommendations includes clear language about the need for significantly redistributing power in order for youth to be recognized and accompanied as agents of food systems transformation.
- Finally, we reiterate that Food Sovereignty and Peasant Agroecology must be central elements of these policy recommendations. Now is the time to transform.

Intervention on Point 1 of the Policy Recommendation - Jessie

While there is some inclusive language to be found in part 1, overall it's concerning that the term 'human rights' is not included once in the draft. Youth cannot simply be referred to as pieces of the market that can be engaged and employed: we must have our rights respected, and we must have agency to ensure that our futures are not being sold to the market, but rather that we are shaping our own futures by shifting our local food systems towards food sovereignty. I am going to pull specific phrases from this section and elaborate upon changes that must be made.

First, The policy recommendations need to be more specific about what 'youth rights' means. To the youth in the CSM, the realization of rights means a transformation towards food sovereignty. To do so, human rights instruments must be acknowledged and implemented by member states. The UNDROP and UNDRIP are key and relevant to a number of paragraphs in this section, because without a reckoning of how resources, land, and power can be redistributed, we have no future in the food system. Human rights instruments need to be clearly identified, along with a recommendation about how these legal frameworks can contribute to promoting youth roles in the food systems.

Next, It is necessary to consider "enabling environments" not only in abstract terms. As the HLPE report describes, the transition toward economies of wellbeing relies on building food sovereignty, dignified livelihoods, and healthy environments. To us, 'enabling environments' means having access to farmland, it means ecosystems being protected and not pillaged for extractivism, it means local or territorial, democratically run food systems. Destroyed ecosystems and polluted environments and market-based policies prevent youth from securing dignified livelihoods in agriculture and food systems.

Thirdly, The Zero Draft refers to “ensuring access to adequate education, health, hygiene and nutrition”. Again, we reiterate the need for a strong human rights focus, rather than framing these only in terms of ensuring access. ‘Ensuring access’ posits that some external force will be providing the access. What we need is agency and autonomy in shaping the systems that affect our lives. UNDROP is particularly relevant again because it has important language that defines the rights to basic infrastructure and livelihood needs.

Finally, we are pleased to see that the Zero Draft includes reference to the heterogeneity, intersectionality, and context specificity of youth aspirations, needs, and priorities. We also agree with the inclusion of language about intergenerational approaches and the need to address hierarchies that limit the collective and individual agency of youth. This is particularly important for youth in rural and urban areas where many cultural norms and traditions may particularly discriminate against young women, sexual and gender diversity.

To give some context about how this is relevant to me: as a young, agroecological farmer, an enabling environment is a rights-based environment. Accessing land was a challenge for me when I began my farm, as the financialization and lack of regulatory protection of farmland in Canada is rampant and unchecked. Myself and my peers are struggling to pay inflated prices with little to no government support. This similar lack of federal support continues: despite the fact that the majority of young farmers in Canada are using ecological, diversified, low emission farming practices, the bulk of agriculture support still lands in the hands of large, monocrop, export-oriented farms. For me, an enabling environment looks like one where support for agroecological and diversified farms comes first.

Intervention on point 2 of the Policy Recommendation - Louis

I am Louis, 29 from rural France and representing the NGO Spire, a Norwegian youth organisation focusing on implementing systematic changes in our societies, for a more sustainable and just world. I am part of the Food System working group there and have been working in the food sector as a chef and in farms.

For change to happen, we need clear and inclusive language.

Here, the Zero draft focuses heavily on youth employment but is diminished by the assumption that business goes on as usual and that we merely implement adjustments instead of considering the drastic changes that need to be adopted by all.

If policies let us determine our own way, we, youth, can be real agents of change and transformation in food systems. Transformations needed to leave the agro-industrial ideology. Our societies have been and still are based on peasant livelihood. We need to respect this.

Peasant’s agriculture feeds the world and follows the precepts of agroecology but the Zero Draft includes only one reference to it by “agroecological and other innovative practices”. This is an open door to industrial agribusiness and false solutions to ecological and climate crises.

CSM did not support the endorsement of those policy recommendations that don’t :

- prioritize the realization of human rights
- they do not adequately recognize the transformative potential of agroecology
- they fail to recognize the power imbalances and the impacts of the industrial agriculture in our food systems

- they fails to recognize ancestral and traditional knowledge of indigenous and peasant peoples and communities

Now, on paragraph 2:

Point a) :

This paragraph must be more ambitious and include the essential and radical transformations of food systems and how to secure human rights for youth. It lacks strong language regarding access and rights and is not inclusive for young people in all their diversity (gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, family and health status).

Point e)

“Labour laws and regulations” mentioned here should be based on human rights and existing declarations that safeguard them. When sustainable agriculture is mentioned, it should not only mean that it preserves environmental resources but also its workforce.

Point f)

When mentioning care work, it is important to include the word *recognition* of care work, *redistribution* and equity. We would like to be more ambitious here again by asking for a whole new economic and care system based on well-being.

Point g)

Monitoring working conditions, with community-led measures is important to ensure inclusive and rewarding livelihoods. The scope and content of youth labour rights should be clearly specified and be the condition to access to public and private funding.

Point h)

The formulation “other innovative practices” is too vague and discredits the solutions that agroecology offers We demand to base CFS recommendations on the Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology, the FAO’s 10 elements of agroecology and the HLPE’s 13 principles of agroecology which better recognise the needs of food producers.

Intervention on point 3 of the Policy Recommendation - Kris

"Increase Equitable Access to Resources" a reference to the HLPE-report recommendation "Access to Markets" point a. "...informal, newly emerging and alternative markets that promote short supply chains..." could be important.

Alternative markets based on short supply chains pose significantly lower barriers for youth to enter markets. They have also high potential to drive youth agency based on an equitable sharing of available resources. The zero-draft focuses on "sustainable food supply chains and support youth engagement in price premiums and certification systems...". Alternative markets based on short supply chains should be mentioned at least alongside certification, because they often hold the higher potential for price premiums with lower barriers for entry. This is particularly significant for youth, since youth are often the ones engaged in processing and product development in local value chains,

when they don't have access to land to engage in agriculture directly. Participatory Guarantee Systems.

Intervention on point 4 of the Policy Recommendation - Paola

On recommendation 4: “Enhance knowledge, education and skills”:

Guaranteeing the right to free and quality education for all youth is the entry point for enabling their identity and agency, both individual and collective.

- For point 4.a.: we ask you to change “ensuring universal access ” into “Realizing the right to free, quality, and culturally-specific education” in both rural and urban areas.

When it comes to the proposal of extending curricula, we believe that it is too broad.

- For point 4.b.: we ask you to include that in primary and secondary schools, agriculture is tackled in connection to others subjects, to make the students aware of the role that food production has on the environment, economy, culture, and vice-versa. For university curricula, we want that Agroecology and Food Policy & Processes are included as key subjects.

Regarding training:

- We urge you to include “farmer” in point 4.c as one of the major problems that our societies are facing is the loss of farmers, especially small and medium-scale ones.
- At the same time, we ask you to change the current entrepreneurial language – where agriculture is merely conceived as a “job” in the formal sense – and acknowledge that for many people is the world, farming is a way to sustain their livelihoods.
- Finally, we ask you to extend point 4.c by including the promotion of informal forms of trainings such as peasant schools and peasant-to-peasant trainings as they still represent the knowledge basis of family farming worldwide and the survival of locally-specific knowledge.

On research:

We face a huge disproportion in the way research funding is allocated: the larger percentage of the money is used to develop high-tech agriculture, digitalisation, new GMOs. Approaches which are now worryingly labeled as “sustainable” and “green”. This means supporting the type of extractivist agriculture which caused much of the ecological and social crisis.

- For point 4.d.: we ask you to include the redirection of funding from industrial agriculture to Agroecology and other kinds of small-scale farming, including peasant and indigenous farming. These approaches have been feeding people for thousands of years and they can continue to do so as long as resources are used to formally prove that they can do it.

Intervention on point 5 of the Policy Recommendation - Flavia

Regarding section 5, we understand that technological innovation and digitalization are important aspects of the current food system, however we believe that their potential benefits and risks depend entirely on the context of their applications. The HLPE report was also very clear about this.

In this sense, when we talk about digitalization the first and key question to ask is to which form of agriculture the digitalization is directed to? For example, digitalization in agroecological farming requires an entirely different approach from the one currently applied in intensive or industrial agriculture.

It's necessary to overcome the ongoing digital gaps so that the potential benefits of this technology can be accessible to all youth, and not only to those with access to higher levels of financial capital. In fact, the HLPE report has highlighted that "digital technologies have the potential to "expand knowledge democracy", if this digital divide is overcome.

We also want to point out that young people who do not have all the means to afford this kind of digital innovations are often left without any protection of their personal data and their territories, when they do obtain them.

We urge for an equitable use of technology, that safeguards small food producers and indigenous people with their knowledge and sovereignty, rather than big private companies, and we want this to be very clear in the draft as well. This is why, adding a point on data ownership is crucial when we speak about digitalization. It is also necessary to draw attention to the generation of technology from the territories, where young people are. Youth in territories do not only obtain technology that originates from big tech and big data, which dominate the global market, they use sustainable small-scale technology in a way to organise local food systems. Digital technologies, where data is controlled and owned by youth themselves, can also be an example when organizing the distribution of seasonal and locally produced vegetables.

Going into specifics, as for point A, we welcome the mention of "social innovation", but we think that it could be further strengthened by a clarification of the aim of such innovation. As CSM, we strongly believe that social innovation should be rooted in respecting ecological boundaries, while working towards economies of wellbeing, as presented by the HLPE. Point A could also benefit from adding solidarity-based or community-based economies and cooperatives as examples. This point only says that Indigenous and inter-generational knowledge should be taken into account. So, digitalisation is the framing while indigenous knowledge comes only as secondary. We believe that Indigenous Peoples' knowledge should be further prioritized within this paragraph.

Point B instead talks about extension services. We want to highlight that these conventional services might not be always adequate. This is why concepts like peasant-to-peasant training are necessary, and we believe that it is essential to include youth to youth training, by and for youth, as well . These methodologies have proven to work for more equitable food systems, but they often stay unrecognized. The Policy Recommendations could be innovative in recognizing and welcoming these types of trainings.