



To,
Ambassador Mohammad Hossein Emadi,
Chair, U.N. Committee on Food Security,
Rome

Dear Ambassador Mohammad Hossein Emadi:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), a non-governmental organization based in the United States focusing on fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. We want to thank you for sharing the Zero Draft of the CFS Policy Recommendations on “Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition,” and for inviting all CFS participants to submit written inputs, focusing on the substance of the document and concrete proposals for improvement in developing the first draft.

At this time of great global turmoil unleashed by the coronavirus pandemic, we are grateful for the continuing efforts by the U.N. CFS to address the sustainability concerns of our food systems while paying special attention to the food and nutrition security needs of over 820 million people, most of who are food-insecure despite being engaged in food production, collection or processing.

Indeed, the global food system is at a crossroads. Our food system, which leaves close to one billion hungry and many more malnourished, accounts for 26% of GHG emissions and 40% of the global biodiversity footprint.¹ Global agriculture by itself accounts for 69% of global water withdrawals. There is no doubt that a profound transformation is needed at all scales in the face of demographic changes, increased pressure and competition over renewable resources, increasingly severe consequences of climatic changes and the loss of biodiversity.

In addition, we are faced with a pandemic that has halted the world in its tracks as it deals with the crisis. As the Hon. CFS Chair points out, “The current situation could represent an opportunity to highlight the importance of strengthening government management of food markets, protecting marginalized populations who have less power and resources to adapt to such an unpredictable crisis, and difficulty accessing nutritious foods already. [...] In addition to saving lives and meeting immediate needs through emergency responses, we need to start

¹ Wilting, H.C. et al. “Quantifying Biodiversity Losses Due to Human Consumption: A Global-Scale Footprint Analysis” *Environ. Sci. Technol.* 2017, 51 (6) <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.6b05296>

planning for longer-term solutions to support recovery, strengthen preparedness, build resilience, and promote sustainable socio-economic development.”²

As we are in an emergency, we should look not only for top-down solutions and not just ahead, but also reconsider if we have ignored paths that may lead us to a more sustainable, fairer, healthier and resilient food systems. The decision box must consider the unusual situation we are in, and in that spirit, we offer the following comments and suggestions for the next draft.

Overarching comments and suggestions for the next draft.

1. Refocus on food systems transformation in policy recommendations for sustainable food systems (SFS) that ensure food security and nutrition (FSN).

The CFS-HLPE report, “Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Food Systems that Ensure Food Security and Nutrition” (hereafter, the “HLPE report”), recognized that the main recent shifts in the global agenda and priorities must be acknowledged. On the one hand, there is the need to move beyond the current approach primarily focused on food production and to consider the whole food systems approach to address Food Security and Nutrition (FSSN). On the other hand, it is important to look at food systems as a strong lever to achieve Agenda 2030 for sustainable development in its entirety.

We appreciate the HLPE report for its clarity in recognizing that the multitude of food systems (identified in earlier HLPE reports) are situated in different environmental, socio-cultural and economic contexts and face very diverse challenges and that to meet the ambition and the expectations inherent in the CFS’s request, the report must analyze the many available experiences and evidence from all these diverse contexts. The HLPE report sought to clarify the nature of differing views on the potentials and limitations of various technologies and approaches. The report also highlighted where diverging views, narratives and values can bring different perspectives to a common goal, to help the policy formulation process arrive at an informed decision regarding required policy shifts for transformative changes for SFS that ensure FSN.

The Zero Draft begins on a promising note by recognizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’s call for “bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path.” However, despite having the policy recommendations start with an emphasis on laying the “*policy foundations for transforming food systems to ensure sustainability and enhance food security and*

² Hon. Amb. Thanawat Tiensin], Chair of UN CFS: Letter to CFS stakeholders, Rome, dated March 24, 2020

nutrition” the Zero Draft falls far short of the promise to deliver a policy framework for transformative change for SFS that ensure FSN. Specifically, the Zero Draft fails to take advantage of the evidence gathered in the HLPE report on the various approaches considered, or to make meaningful recommendations to achieve policy shifts to overcome the structural barriers to bringing about urgently needed *transformation* of our food systems.

2. Recommend the adoption of the “ecological footprint” as a “fourth operational principle for SFSs” and “Agency” as a fifth pillar of food security and nutrition.

The need for profound **transformation** of food systems was recognized in the HLPE report as fundamental to address the ambitious, twin challenges of sustainability and food security. The HLPE report addresses this by enhancing our conceptual framework and advises that CFS add: a. a fourth principle to the operational principles on sustainability, and b. a fifth dimension to food security itself, the two key areas identified as needing greater attention.³

- a. A fourth operational principle around sustainability: Building on previous HLPE reports — especially the three operational principles (improving resource efficiency; strengthening resilience; and securing social equity/responsibility identified in HLPE#12 Report on Nutrition and Food Systems, as shaping transition pathways towards SFSs for FSN), 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.”
- b. A fifth dimension to achieving food security: Well-grounded in the human rights framework and PANTHER principles,⁴ the HLPE report requests the CFS to “consider the emerging importance of the concept of ‘**agency**’ and the opportunity to add it as a fifth pillar of FSN (the other four being: ‘availability’, ‘access’, ‘utilization’ and ‘stability’)⁵ with the view to progress towards the realization of the right to adequate food.” Having agency as a fifth pillar would ensure that ordinary people have the power to define and secure their own food security in their everyday lives. This would be key to the progressive realization of the right to food.

Based on this analysis, the HLPE report recommends that CFS adopt “ecological footprint” as a “fourth operational principle for SFSs” and adopt “Agency” as a fifth pillar of food security and nutrition. It is crucial that these recommendations are taken on board in the Zero Draft to clearly shed light on the direction and pathways leading to transformation to a more

³ HLPE. 2019. Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome. PP.65-66.

⁴ “FAO’s role in the fulfillment of the right to food,” The Right to Food, FAO, <http://www.fao.org/right-to-food/areas-of-work/en/> for more on PANTHER framework.

⁵ “An Introduction to the basic concepts of food security,” Food security information for action -Practical guides, FAO <http://www.fao.org/3/al936e/al936e00.pdf>

sustainable and equitable food system. **The decision box must ensure that the recommendations ask, to strengthen the four pillars of food security and nutrition (availability, access, stability and utilization) through adding and strengthening a fifth pillar, “agency”.**

Because it does not incorporate the conceptual advances around sustainability and food security, the Zero Draft misses the clarity established in the HLPE report that classifies the various approaches they examined into two distinct groups: (i) agroecological and related approaches (including organic agriculture, agroforestry and permaculture), which are considered transformative by their practitioners and the (ii) sustainable intensification of production systems and related approaches (including climate-smart agriculture, nutrition-sensitive agriculture and sustainable food value chains), which generally involve incremental transitions towards SFSs. For the decision box to effectively address the need for transformation of the food system, it is imperative that it adopt the conceptual framework that the HLPE report uses. **Thus, in the preamble, points two and three must be modified incorporating the HLPE recommendations.**

3. The need for decision box to focus on agroecological approaches, instead of an “innovation framework” that treats all approaches as undifferentiated.

The HLPE report, on the basis of an evidence-based analysis of various approaches for their implications for sustainable agriculture and food systems that ensure food security and nutrition, finds that agroecological (and related approaches) tend to be much more transformative than other more incremental approaches. Thus, the HLPE report focuses on agroecological and related approaches **with distinctive policy pathways for food systems transformation** as different from sustainable intensification and other innovative approaches that bring about incremental changes.

But, the Zero Draft shows a clear shift in focus: By considering all approaches in an undifferentiated manner under an “innovation framework,” the Zero Draft seems to incorrectly imply that they all lead to meaningful food system transformation for sustainability and/or food security of the poor. This shift in focus defeats the purpose of the HLPE report: to *assess agroecological* innovative approaches as well as *other* innovative approaches in terms of their ability to *contribute to SFSs for FSN*, with primary focus on the former.

The CFS, in making its request to HLPE in 2017, noted that “particular attention to agroecological approaches is envisaged in the HLPE report,”⁶ and sought “to be informed

⁶ CFS request (through Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2018-2019, approved by its 44th Plenary Session, 9-13, October 2017, G. Agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition (2019) Para. 58 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mu246e.pdf>

through the report on possible synergies and integration between different approaches and on the common and distinguishing features of agroecological approaches in the spectrum of innovative approaches, practices and technologies to enhance the sustainability of agriculture.”⁷

Accordingly, the HLPE report categorized the approaches into agroecological approaches (that are transformative) and other innovative approaches (that are incremental). Such classification helped assess their relative (common and distinguishing) contribution to providing food systems transformation towards sustainable food systems that enhance FSN.

This decision box must thus pay specific attention to this classification, so as to help meet the CFS objective of developing policy outcomes that “help countries achieve progress on SDG 2 (in particular 2.4 on sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices and 2.A on increasing investment in rural infrastructure, agricultural research, extension services and technological development), on SDG 6 (in particular 6.3 on reduction of water pollution and 6.4 on promotion of water-use efficiency) and on a number of others such as SDG 8 on sustainable economic growth, SDG 9 on resilient infrastructure and innovation, SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns and SDG 15 on sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems.”⁸

4. Recommend agroecological approaches as the pathway to sustainability and enhanced food and nutrition security.

The HLPE has laid out a clear framework for assessing various approaches for a number of parameters (point 30 in Zero Draft), enabling the reader to determine that agroecological approaches and other associated approaches are the clear winners. The decision box must refer to the co-advantages of agroecology, referred to by the HLPE report (one of which, employment, is referred in point 17 of the Zero Draft).

The other multiple benefits of agroecological approaches, in addition to rural employment opportunities, include: improved soil structure and quality; improved capacity of agricultural spaces to function as carbon dioxide sinks; climate resilience; improved water retention in soil; protection and enhancement of ecosystems functions and services; biodiversity enhancement (including soil microbial diversity); securing sustainable, healthy, diverse, micro-nutrient rich diets; elimination of agrochemicals pollution of soil and water (especially nitrous oxide emission); revitalized rural economies; healthier environment; and empowerment of those holding indigenous knowledge, locally specific agroecosystem and/or agroclimatic knowledge, often the most vulnerable.

⁷ Ibid, Para. 59

⁸ Ibid, Para. 62

In contrast to sustainable intensification (and related approaches),⁹ as a result of their co-advantages, agroecological approaches simultaneously contribute to adaptation, mitigation, climate resilience and carbon sequestration. The improved water retention in soil contributes to drought proofing and water security. Together, all these co-advantages of agroecological approaches help address the multiple environmental, social and economic crises, strengthening the three pillars of sustainable development and helping us closer to our SDG 2030 goals.

The HLPE report also recognizes that not all farming systems are at a similar stage, and thus the pathways for each farming system to transition to an agroecological farming system will look different in various contexts. The decision box must include recommendations on policy pathways, incentivizing agroecological transitions for all types of farming systems, and refer to how such agroecological transitions can help achieve many of the 2030 SDG goals, with the simultaneity of the co-advantages in the case of agroecological food systems.

5. Digital technologies and their compatibility with food systems transformation to enhance sustainability and ensure food security.

The HLPE report has recognized that digital technologies and other information communication technologies (ICT) are being used increasingly in agriculture and food systems. Given the positive and negative impacts any technology can have, the HLPE report explored their compatibility with various approaches to enhance sustainability and food security and highlighted the prospects as well as risks.

However, the extensive space given to the discussion of digitalization in the Zero Draft is out of proportion with the space accorded to digital technologies and other ICT in the HLPE report. In fact, nowhere in the report do we find justification for the Zero Draft's presentation of digitalization as "the most critical and far-reaching current innovative approaches presenting a new paradigm of innovation." Most importantly, the **HLPE report does not treat the use of *digital and other ICT as an innovative approach***, (and does not include them in the list of approaches assessed), but rather as a tool that is compatible and in service of any of the approaches discussed in the HLPE report.

While the HLPE report and the Zero Draft draw attention to the risks, and the use of these emerging technologies in food systems warrant full impact assessment and requires developing a strong regulatory framework.¹⁰ these are beyond the scope of this decision box.

⁹ Sustainable intensification (and related approaches) target specific benefits, say for example, GHG mitigation (or weed problems for that matter), without ensuring that the specific practices undertaken to achieve GHG reduction do not simultaneously result in increase in other externalities related to the three pillars — social, economic or ecologic — of sustainable development.

¹⁰ While a broader regulatory framework to govern the digital and ICT technologies is more into the realm of regulating internet companies and intellectual property, the proposed new International Digital Council for Food and Agriculture along with key multilateral mechanisms on science and technology such as the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD), a subsidiary body of the

However, this report can help provide the conceptual clarity needed to develop a regulatory framework to govern the use of digital and other ICT technologies, if appropriate,¹¹ in the context of food systems.

Thus the decision box must recommend that the use of digital and other ICT technologies in the context of agroecological and other innovative approaches, like any other interventions that seek to enhance sustainability and food security, must be guided by the **four operational principles of the sustainable food systems and address the five dimensions of food security** (which we expect will be included as recommendations in the decision box). The proposal to add a fifth dimension agency — to help access Food Security and nutrition — becomes critically important in the context of the use of digital and other ICT, as it will help empower food producers and workers in the food systems have better control over their food system related data. In sum, the Zero Draft must:

- a. Use the term *digital and other ICT technologies* used in HLPE, instead of *digitalization*.
 - b. Classify *use of digital and other ICT technologies* as a tool, and not an innovative approach.
 - c. Clarify that *digital and other ICT technologies* are compatible with all approaches considered in the HLPE report (both agroecological approaches and other innovative approaches).
 - d. Elaborate on guidelines for use of *digital and other ICT technologies* in food systems.
6. Correct the error (inclusion of a wrong sentence in the context of this decision box).

The Zero Draft refers to a continuum of food systems (includes three types of food systems — traditional, mixed and modern). This is in the preamble (point 2) of the Zero Draft where it is stated that “The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has recognized as a general guide three broad food system types” and has provided a footnote. When we checked the footnote associated with the statement, we did not come across any reference substantiating this statement. We examined all the other CFS products (published documents on agreed processes of CFS) from that year and could not find a reference to it anywhere else either.

This concept of a continuum (put forward in the 12th HLPE Report on Nutrition and Food Systems)¹² is inadequate for a report that examines the entire food system; the HLPE report

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism" (TFM) launched as per [Paragraph 70 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) must all work together to develop a regulatory framework for the use of digital technologies and other ICT as they are being increasingly used in agriculture and food systems.

¹¹ The word, “appropriate” is used in the sense of its original meaning, rooted in a philosophy that provides a framework for responsible adoption or intervention, especially relevant in the context of enhancing sustainable food systems.

¹² The 12th HLPE Report on Nutrition and Food Systems identified *three broad food system types in the continuum*: (i) traditional food systems; (ii) mixed food systems; and (iii) modern food systems, in an attempt to capture the different elements of the food supply chain and of the food environment—focused mostly on the consumption side of the food system—to help develop policy interventions to enhance Food Security and Nutrition.

(on AE and other innovative approaches) instead was made in the context of nutrition and food systems. It is also much too broad-brush conceptually to be capable of encompassing diverse food systems worldwide. This statement should be removed from the final preamble.

7. Right-based approaches.

While the Zero Draft refers to the right to food and other rights based global instruments in the preamble, it does not focus consistently on the need for ensuring food security and nutrition of the world's most vulnerable populations. Nor do the policy recommendations prioritize,

- working with and on behalf of the actors in the food systems in adopting transformative approaches to ensure sustainability of the food systems that enhance FSN, or
- protecting their common natural resources.

To strengthen the focus on right-based approaches, the preamble must stipulate inclusive and democratic decision-making mechanisms, as well as the agency of all, especially smallholder, peasant, indigenous and family farmers who are fundamental to making such transitions. In the context of rights-based approaches to food system transformations, the preamble **must emphasize the roles of peasant farmers, Indigenous peoples and rural communities, whose contributions to agroecology and sustainable food systems are paramount**, and also prioritize the needs of **over 820 million food insecure**, most of them food-insecure despite being engaged in food production, collection or processing or retail operations.

The Zero Draft ignores the close linkages and synergies between the right to water and the right to food that was explored in the HLPE report on Water for food security and Nutrition (2015)¹³ and recognized in the decision box on water for food security and nutrition.¹⁴ In addition to explicitly referring to this in the preamble, the recommendations must build on the CFS 44 decision to “improve coherence between water and FSN related policies, strategies and plans.”¹⁵ Thus the decision box on AE and other innovative approaches offers CFS the very first opportunity to develop an integrated policy framework to address food security with attention to water security and climate resilience especially when developing sections I, II and V.

Source: HLPE. 2017. Nutrition and Food Systems. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7846e.pdf>

¹³ HLPE. 2015. Water for food security and nutrition. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-av046e.pdf>

¹⁴ Committee on World Food Security (CFS), 42nd Session, 2015. Policy recommendations on water for food security and nutrition <http://www.fao.org/3/a-av046e.pdf>

¹⁵ Ibid.

Additional suggestions on specific paragraphs in Preamble

(Para 1-9) P.3. [Deletions in ~~strike-out~~; additions in **bold**]

Para 1.

- Please insert the following sentence in this para

The HLPE report emphasizes that “Food systems and agriculture are at a crossroads and a profound transformation is needed at all scales” to address Agenda 2030 in its entirety, including human and environmental health, climate change, equity and social stability.”

Para 2.

- As noted above (under 6. Correct the error and under 2.a) make the following edits.

There is a diversity of food systems which exist on a continuum, can be considered at different scales, and often co-exist within the same country.⁵ ~~The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has recognized as a general guide three broad food system types⁶ each facing particular opportunities and challenges, notably in relation to labour availability and ecological conditions. All food systems have the potential to contribute further to sustainability and food security and nutrition. Achieving this~~ their potential requires embarking on transition pathways that respond to their conditions **and that enable them to ultimately address converging climate, water, biodiversity, public health and food system crises. Three** ~~Four~~ intertwined operational principles define transition pathways toward sustainable food systems for food security and nutrition: (i) improving resource efficiency; (ii) strengthening resilience; ~~and~~ (iii) securing social equity/responsibility; **and (iv) ecological footprint.**¹⁶

Para 4.

- As noted above (under 3. and 2.b) please make the following edits.

Innovative approaches are required to bring about food system transformations **for SFS that ensure FSN**. Innovations include changes in practices, norms, markets and institutional arrangements, which may foster new networks of food production, processing, distribution and consumption that may challenge the status quo.⁸ Innovative approaches for sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition must contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) in such a way that they strengthen the **four five** pillars of food security and nutrition (availability, access, stability, ~~and~~ utilization **and agency**).¹⁷ Innovations, which include but are not limited to technologies, must be appropriate to the context, affordable, accessible and respond to the

¹⁶ HLPE. 2019. Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition.

¹⁷ Ibid

needs of ~~family farmers~~ **all food producers, and with appropriate¹⁸ safeguards in place to meet the specific needs of smallholder farmers, fishing communities and indigenous groups.** Harnessing innovative approaches with this aim will not happen without major shifts in policies at international, national and local levels.

Para. 5.

- As noted above (under 6.) make the following edits.

A given innovative approach may be more or less relevant to a specific context as a function of the nature of the challenge and context faced.¹⁰ Specific and distinct transition pathways toward sustainable food systems should be ~~implemented for different types of agriculture and food systems,~~ adapted to their contexts and to local needs and expectations. There is a spectrum of different pathways and approaches, which include agroecological approaches and sustainable intensification approaches, but given the transformation imperative, **they must all seek to optimize economic sustainability while prioritizing social and ecological sustainability of the food system.**

[This could be followed up with a recommendation in the later section, to read:

Ensure that policies promote innovations that are appropriate, affordable and acceptable and contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability — economic, social and environmental — in such a way that they strengthen the four pillars of food security and nutrition (availability, access, stability and utilization) through strengthening a fifth pillar, “agency”.

Para. 6a

- As noted above (under 3 and 4.) add a new paragraph focused on agroecology, including the following sentences.

Agroecological and other related approaches are among the most critical and far-reaching innovations for food security. In fact, the HLPE report notes, “Agroecological and other innovative approaches in agriculture are increasingly praised for their potential contribution to reach these [ensure food security and nutrition while addressing all sustainability challenges] crucial goals.”

Para 6b.

- As noted above (under 5.) make the following edits,

~~**Among the most critical and far-reaching current innovative approaches is digitalization, presenting a new paradigm of innovation.**~~ Digital technologies, services,

¹⁸ The word, “appropriate” is used in the sense of its original meaning, rooted in a philosophy that provides a framework for responsible adoption or intervention, especially relevant in the context of enhancing sustainable food systems, and in the context of marginalized communities.

products, and skills are fundamentally transforming modern economies and entire systems of production, management, and governance at a rapid pace. ~~Digitalization~~ and clearly has the potential to play an increasingly important role in **servicing agroecological and other innovative approaches become more effective** in achieving global food security and improving livelihoods especially in rural areas, provided

- a. that access to such technologies exists. ~~Digitalization~~Digital and other ICT technologies can support smallholders in improving their resource management and competitiveness.
- b. they are guided by the **four operational principles of the sustainable food systems and five dimensions of food security that the HLPE#14 emphasizes, so as to ensure that their use does not** undermine the interests of food producers and environment,

It can also lead to stronger inclusion of youth by creating more appealing jobs in rural areas, and preventing the migration of rural youth to cities.

Para 7.

- As noted above (under 5.) make the following edits,

However, ~~digitalization~~ **the use of digital and other ICT technologies in the context agriculture and food systems** can also create risks, particularly for the vast majority of farmers who are smallholders. These include deepening structural inequalities through the digital divide, and compromising data ownership and privacy when accumulating big data, especially for those less able to defend their interests such as smallholder farmers. Lack of transparency and trustworthiness around issues such as data ownership, privacy and liability contribute to a range of challenges, ~~which could be addressed by a strong regulatory policy framework to create a safe and level playing field for the sector.~~¹¹ **if guided by the four operational principles of the sustainable food systems and five dimensions of food security, especially the fifth dimension of agency.**

Para 8

- As noted above (under point 7) please make the following edits, and add one last sentence:

While there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, all governments must make efforts to enhance the environmental, social and economic sustainability of food systems in accordance with national and international obligations. Key among these ~~is the right to food~~ **are the progressive realization of the right to food and the progressive realization of the right to water**, which can serve to guide efforts to achieve food security and nutrition for all.¹⁹ Impact assessments are crucial for understanding the impacts of innovative approaches on food system sustainability, food security and nutrition and **the progressive realization of the**

¹⁹ HLPE. 2015. Water for food security and nutrition. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-av046e.pdf>

right to food. **With the call to transform the food systems for SFS that ensure FSN, it is also crucial that such assessments do not take place in isolation — along single vectors like water footprint or carbon footprint or biodiversity footprint. Rather, there should be a holistic approach enabling a composite assessment integrating all three — social, economic and environmental — pillars of SD.**

Para 9.

- There must be a reference to rights-based approaches in this sentence below, to read,

The recommendations also build upon, and complement in a synergistic manner existing CFS policies and instruments¹² **that adopt rights-based approaches**, as well as relevant global instruments and processes such as the UN Decade on Family Farming (UNDIFF), the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP), and the upcoming Global Plan of Action on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture and the UN Food Systems Summit.

Suggestions for the section, “Lay policy foundations for transforming food systems to ensure sustainability and enhance food security and nutrition through agroecological and other innovative approaches”

Para 10

- As noted above (under 2.a) make the following edits.

Ensure that public policies, budgets and incentives support sustainable food systems in a coherent manner, adapting policies and re-directing budgets and incentives based on **holistic** impact assessment findings, **using the concept of “ecological footprint”**.

Para 11

- As noted above (under 2.b) make the following edits.

Ensure that policies promote innovations that are appropriate, affordable and acceptable and contribute to the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – in such a way that they strengthen the four pillars of food security and nutrition (availability, access, stability and utilization) **through adding and strengthening a fifth pillar, “agency”**.

Para 12

- As noted above (under 7) make the following edits.

Strengthen the role of the public sector in monitoring and regulating innovative approaches, including technologies, which impact sustainable food systems, food security and nutrition

~~and~~—as well as the progressive realization of the right to food and the progressive realization of the right to water.

Para 15

- As noted above (under 7) make the following edits.

Support the use of participatory and inclusive territorial management planning to identify and foster locally sustainable practices, **and regulatory mechanisms around pollution and misuse** to protect common natural resources — **biodiversity, genetic resources, ground and surface water sources, soils and forests** — at different levels (landscape and community, national, regional and global), and to strengthen local, national and regional markets.

Para 17

- As noted above (under 4) make the following edits.

~~Where rural employment opportunities are needed or already exist, c~~ Consider the potential of agroecological approaches, **not only** to preserve existing jobs and promote decent job creation **where rural employment opportunities are needed or already exist, but also consider policy pathways to incentivize agroecological transitions for all types of farming systems that are unable to practice holistic sustainable practices.**

Suggestions for the section, “Support transitions to diversified and resilient food systems”

Para 20

- As noted above (under 7) make the following edits.

Strengthen and enforce regulations on the use of agrochemicals in order to protect and improve human and environmental health. Promote innovative systems that **prioritize ecological alternatives to reliance on synthetic chemical pesticides, including farm and landscape management measures aimed at preventing pest outbreaks by establishing healthy crops within biodiverse, resilient systems, maintaining soil health (soil fertility and biological activity), and preserving ecosystem services and natural habitats to augment the population of beneficial organisms.**

Para 22

- As noted above (under 7) make the following edits.

Encourage sustainable consumption patterns that maintain or enhance, rather than deplete, natural resources and support circular economies **by developing regulatory framework and supporting the use labeling, as well as participatory guarantee schemes.**

Suggestions for the section, “Next Steps”

Para 63.

- Make the following edits.

Invite the World Trade Organization (WTO) to co-organize a dialogue during the CFS plenary in 2021 on how trade agreements can better support transitions to sustainable food systems that ensure food security and nutrition. **Many WTO agreements have a direct bearing on sustainable food systems, including the Agreement on Agriculture, the General Agreement on Trade in Services, the agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and the proposed agreement on curtailing subsidies in the fisheries sector. An integrated discussion on the multilateral trading system in relation to the priorities for food security and nutrition, including the sustainability crisis confronting many food production systems, is long overdue. As part of this dialogue there must be space for elaboration of WTO Technical Barriers to Trade rules concerning the grading of raw agricultural commodities and the labeling and packaging of processed foods. The Secretariat might also helpfully explain whether WTO customs rules maintain tariff line definitions for sustainable produced products and, if not, why.**

Conclusion/suggestions for overarching framework for the decision box.

This decision box needs to be situated in our new reality of the upcoming — if not yet already here — food crisis; as we contribute to the planning for the immediate CFS response to the crisis, it must benefit from the insights we have learned from the HLPE report.

Today it is clear that, in conjunction with access to affordable health care, what is most important is the resilience of our food systems to address not only national level demands, but also individual level food security in an equitable manner. Even in countries such as the U.S., which has surplus production to “feed” the world, the current crisis is showing the vulnerabilities of the systems in place. In normal times, 9.5 million U.S. families with children are on supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP); they are under or barely above poverty line. Despite that, in 2019, 15% of those living in rural communities and 11.8% living in urban communities still experienced food insecurity.²⁰ The situation is even worse in some

²⁰ America's Health Rankings. “Analysis of U.S. Department of Agriculture, Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.” United Health Foundation, 2019. Web accessed April 18, 2019

other countries especially for migrants²¹ and refugees.²² Some reports indicate that India's poorest people fear dying from hunger even more than coronavirus.²³

Pre-existing inequities are exacerbated in times of crisis, and food insecurity is a real issue in every country. In many regions people are going back to rural communities and local food systems. As we address the immediate crisis at hand, we must ensure that the actions we take today contribute towards building resilient communities with access to better public infrastructure support.

This decision box is well situated to help deliver a policy framework to help food systems transitions in support of that. We wish every country success in ensuring food security for their people and building long-term food security for everyone through the progressive realization of the right to food, enabled through the recognition of *agency* of their citizenry and through transforming of food systems to be truly sustainable.

Thank you,

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²¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/india-fight-coronavirus-takes-toll-migrant-workers-200324084150540.html>

²² <https://time.com/5806577/coronavirus-refugees/>

²³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-52002734>