



Thursday 7 May 2020, 15:00-17:00

Informal discussion on problem statement

Rapporteur's Summary

Item 1 - Introduction by the Rapporteur

Rapporteur, H.E. Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Iran) presented the concept behind the informal discussion groups, and stressed the rationale and objective of the informal discussions. These discussions are a new experiment for CFS, and stakeholders' feedback will be used to adapt the upcoming sessions as needed.

The background document of this informal discussion and its three guiding questions were presented by the Rapporteur.

Item 2 - Exchange of feedback by CFS stakeholders on:

2 a) Discussion on questions (1, 2, and 3)

- 1. In terms of transitions, are the principles mentioned above (and contained in the Zero Draft) helpful? e.g., i) improving resource efficiency, ii) strengthening resilience, and iii) securing social equity/responsibility. Should they be modified in any way?*
- 2. How could the most appropriate transition pathways for each context be identified?*
- 3. Based on today's discussions, what points do you think the First Draft of the Policy Recommendations should cover?*

The open floor discussion included the following points:

- Need of a profound transformation of food systems, as recommended by the HLPE report, and further highlighted by the HLPE COVID-19 Issue Paper, as well as in the 2030 Agenda which calls for bold and transformative steps.
- Need of coherence and a holistic approach to food systems. Food systems challenges are inter-linked, and different approaches should not undermine each other.
- Suggestion to improve and unpack resource efficiency, which is broad. Social equity and responsibility are also very important, as mentioned in the HLPE report.

- Suggestion to consider that transition pathways depend on specific agroecological and country realities and, hence, will be differentiated by those realities.
- Highlighted that the Food Systems Summit is focused on these transitions. Multi-stakeholder collaborative models are what is needed at the appropriate landscape level.
- Need to develop the “how” of transition pathways. Countries should be able to develop, implement and monitor those pathways.
- Need to be coherent with the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.
- Suggestion to consider the wide diversity of food and farming systems, as noted in the HLPE report, and each of them should increase their contributions to sustainable food systems.
- Need to increase investment in public and private research.
- Highlighted the diversity of transitions from different starting points, different pathways, different challenges, different people.
- Support for recognizing the importance of the three operational principles while recognizing the need to add “delivering safe and nutritious food” as a new principle.
- Need to identify the most appropriate transition pathway by assessing existing agricultural production systems based on their impacts, including all possible positive and negative externalities (see paragraphs 30-33 of zero draft on assessments). Impact on farmers’ incomes should also be assessed.
- Support for strengthening early sanitary and prevention systems for food producers/workers and provide compensation in case epidemics incur economic losses.
- Suggestion to add a fourth new Principle: sustainability in general and ecological footprint in particular (as per HLPE report). This is the principle that allows capturing consumption patterns’ impacts, taking into consideration that resource efficiency practices might even have negative impacts, for example on the environment.
- Support for including “climate change” in the principles.
- Suggestion to look at the three pillars of sustainability in a comprehensive way; and, to consider looking at all dimensions of transition pathways together.
- Need to re-localise food systems and ensure public support to local markets. COVID-19 is showing how important these systems and markets are.

- Suggestion to ground everything in a human rights framework.
- Support for including water management/usage, as it is missing in the current Zero Draft. Proposal for CFS to connect with the World Forum on Water (Dakar 2021). Moreover, water and land resource efficiency are important, using scientific evidence, and will facilitate investment in research and development.
- Support to include COVID-19 in the document as any document in international system now should address COVID-19 and its implications.
- Highlighted the view that not all food systems need to transition or transform. Suggestion to capture in the First Draft the same wording presented in the FAO “Ten Elements of Agroecology”, endorsed by Council, which includes “as appropriate” after transformation.
- Need to capture in the First Draft the different levels of transformation that exist in order to ensure sustainable food systems.
- Highlighted the importance of the three dimensions of sustainability.
- Suggestion to align transition pathways, when considered appropriate, with local needs, conditions and development objectives, taking into account that some systems are more advanced and may already be sustainable.
- Suggestion not to use the word “principles” as it may create confusion.
- Support for keeping alignment of “principles” with those used in the HLPE report, which properly describes them, while highlighting ecological sustainability, including “footprint.”
- Suggestion to refer to *Figure three* from the HLPE report when developing a section on transition pathways.
- Suggestion to take into account the importance of metrics in measuring transformation in order to be able to describe the pathway.
- Highlighted the impacts of COVID-19 on how we produce, transform, transport food along supply chains, showing the fragilities of some food systems and the resilience of others. Therefore, support to underline in the First Draft that agroecological and other innovative approaches are needed under present circumstances, taking into account stakeholder capacity and context.
- Suggestion to consider country realities, and that ‘no one size fits all’. Not all aspects of all food systems must be transformed, but all food systems can contribute further to sustainability.

- Support for greater inclusion of the concept of “access” to food. Agroecology should not create further barriers to access to food but guarantee the right to food for all.
- Suggestion to highlight alignment of the Draft with the SDGs, and the need to transform food systems to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- Calls for including a right to food approach and specific policies that were proposed in the UN Decade of Family Farming, which should be integrated in the First Draft. Many family farming systems contribute to biodiversity, preserve traditional food products and contribute to a balanced diet; such systems should be supported.
- Suggestion to take into account the “Ten Elements of Agroecology” in particular with regard to transformation and transitions.
- AE mentioned as valuable tool, but one among several options. Other innovative approaches should be recognized and promoted.
- Support for highlighting different needs due to different local contexts. The three dimensions of sustainability should be considered equally in a balanced way.
- Need to consider capacity building for stakeholders.
- Need to balance between agroecology and other innovative approaches.
- Need to strengthen the concept of ending discrimination.
- Need to develop a general text, but with common threads, taking into consideration that agroecology is one of many innovations.
- Suggestion to highlight the importance of smallholders and local food systems, especially in developing world, focusing on what is needed to make them more efficient.
- Suggestion to strengthen actions at country level.
- Suggestion to consider that COVID-19 crisis has amplified inequalities between and within countries. The most affected must be at the centre of transition towards sustainable, healthy and equitable food systems. Therefore, the policy recommendations should stay focused on the public sector, which is at the centre of this transition, and deepen understanding of how the public sector can strengthen the progressive realization of the right to food and FSN.

- Support for highlighting the role of agroecology in protecting the environment, and in producing and providing local and healthy food for all. Therefore, the recommendations should focus on how to strengthen agroecological food systems.
- Support for taking into consideration that "other innovations" could be considered if they meet the criteria of sustainability.

2 b) Feedback on the format and process of informal discussions

- Appreciation for the initiative of having informal discussion during the lockdown, and for the useful guiding questions provided, which allow participants to open a dialogue with related constituencies and colleagues.
- Requested the next background documents several days prior to each informal group discussion.
- Support for the Rapporteur on this process of informal consultations and in view of working towards consensus.
- Call to avoid creating an entirely new set of recommendations, different from those contained in the HLPE report.

Item 3) Wrap-up and closing remarks by the Rapporteur

In thanking all stakeholders for their continued engagement and participation, the Rapporteur reaffirmed the importance of continuing holding informal discussions aimed at bringing stakeholders with different views closer. More detailed information on the next informal discussions and related background documents, will be communicated in writing. He noted the importance of FAO's "Ten Elements of Agroecology" and the HLPE report as key reference documents for this policy process.