



Launch of the HLPE Report

Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: what roles for livestock?

1 July 2016

Patrick Caron
HLPE Chairperson

Opening statement

Dear Excellency Ambassador Gornass,

Dear Excellency Yaya Olaniran,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear FAO, WFP and IFAD delegates and representatives,

Dear Wilfrid,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Bonjour,

I would like to thank you, dear Excellency, for giving me the floor to briefly introduce this just printed and still hot, 10th HLPE report, my first one as a Chairperson – although 10 sounds like the birthday of a grown-up institution.

It was actually a big challenge for us to address the CFS request, as you probably imagine. First, because of the breadth and the complexity of the issue of sustainable agricultural development (I will say SAD even if I am not). Somehow, it is like we were tasked to review the whole history of humanity, globally and everywhere. Second, because of the last part of the request, I quote: “including the role of livestock”, and the very many ways to look at it.

We had long discussions about the key issues of SAD, within the HLPE Steering Committee, within the Project Team, and between the Steering Committee and the Project Team, taking into account as well the results of the open electronic consultations. Some of these key issues, such as investment, land, water, price volatility, nutrition and food systems, or sectoral perspectives, like fisheries or forestry, are treated, as you well know, in previous or ongoing HLPE reports and they are discussed in CFS, and we built upon this. Access to markets is currently being discussed within CFS as well.

And the more we discussed and the more we brainstormed the topic of this report, the more we felt that livestock could be a powerful focus to illustrate the dynamics at stake in SAD. This orientation was also confirmed during the last CFS Plenary session when the HLPE was requested, I quote, to: “focus particularly on the livestock component of agricultural systems”.

I see at least three main reasons for focusing on livestock, while, at the same time not forgetting the overall perspective of sustainable agriculture for development.

First, in past decades, reflections on agricultural development have often neglected to pay the livestock sector the attention it deserves, focusing on the “Green Revolution” in the crop sector. But, as underlined in the report – and you will see that –, livestock production is also going through its own “Revolution”.

Second, the livestock sector plays a considerable role as a driver of agricultural development. It is a major engine of economic, social and environmental transformations in agriculture, but in the whole food systems as well. And worldwide. It has often set the speed of change in agriculture in recent decades. It is a particularly dynamic, complex, quickly evolving agricultural sub-sector with strong consequences for the other sub-sectors, in particular through land use changes associated with feed production. As an example, much of the increased crop demand in the period to 2050 will certainly be feedstuffs for livestock.

Third, livestock is often criticised for its negative impacts on the environment, including climate change, and on animal welfare. Yes, negative impacts, but it has also positive impacts, and we have seen in this report, with Wilfrid Legg and his Project Team, an opportunity to give a more balanced appreciation of the livestock sector, highlighting also its positive contributions to SAD for food security and nutrition.

This focus on livestock, while legitimate and justified for the reasons I just shared with you, should in no way diminish the critical importance of looking at the agriculture sector as a whole, and at plant production in particular.

The common approach proposed in this report to elaborate context-specific pathways towards SAD, builds upon crop-livestock interactions. In addition, we hope it could inspire political decision-makers when elaborating wider sustainable development strategies for the whole agricultural sector at international and national levels.

As you stressed, your Excellency, beyond a logical focus on SDG-2, the report also showed the tight links between agriculture, food systems, environment, climate change, welfare, social justice, human and environment health, energy and last, but not the least, political stability.

The report leads us to the conclusion that fundamental changes in agriculture and food systems are needed to reach SAD for food security and nutrition. The *metamorphosis* I'm suggesting here and that is suggested in the report and in the recommendations is *certainly of the same magnitude as the one we called the Green Revolution*, although with a completely different set of challenges. And it should involve everyone.

All the livestock production systems will have their own role to play. Each production system must go through appropriate pathways of transformation, taking into account the very diverse, specific contexts. For that, many hurdles have to be overcome, not least the inertia of existing structure, production and consumption path-dependency and technological lock-in.

We propose in this report three operational principles, to address the three pillars:

1. Improve resource efficiency;
2. Strengthen resilience; and
3. Secure social equity and responsibility.

Three operational principles that could drive such transformation. We also highlight how SAD strategies must take into consideration diversity, context specificity and stakeholders' participation.

Yet, scaling up local success stories will not be enough. And we should put in place actions that make it possible to address consistently both local dynamics and global challenges, including trade-offs between such scales. This link between the global and the local is the basis of the architecture of the recommendations, as you will see later.

If pathways are needed for all farming systems, and I insist on that, one of the critical challenges is to consistently manage at national and international levels the co-existence of different production systems and of diverse context-specific pathways.

This report pays particular attention to the enabling environments needed to support transition, to ensure consistency, including governance and effective institutions. We also highlight in the report how SAD strategies must take into consideration: the role and limits of markets; the universal human right to food; and the principle of food sovereignty.

I would like to say a few words about the cover photo, that you all have in your hands with this report. We wanted to illustrate the dynamic nature of, and the critical role that livestock plays in agricultural development. This photo also illustrates the determination that will be needed from all stakeholders, at different levels, in different farming systems to shape

together sustainable agriculture and food systems in order to improve food security and nutrition for all, now and in the future, in line with SDG-2, and in line with all SDGs.

On behalf of the Steering Committee, I would like to acknowledge the engagement and the commitment of all the experts who worked for the elaboration of this report, and especially the Project Team Leader, Wilfrid Legg who has performed an incredible task, and Project Team Members. This report also benefited greatly from the suggestions of the external peer reviewers and from the comments provided by an ever increasing number of experts and institutions, both on the scope and on the first draft of the report.

As a new Chair, let me share with you a personal touch, quickly. Working on this collective report through an open and inclusive process is a truly unique experience. It has strengthened my conviction that science evidence and knowledge, beyond their importance to design technology, are essential to highlight controversies, to inform political debates, and to identify the critical and emerging issues that we will have to address in the coming years. I sincerely wish that this report contributes to decision making that, at the end of the day, leads to the metamorphosis that is really needed.

Finally I hope that you will take as much pleasure, passion and inspiration to read and discuss this report as we, with Wilfrid and all colleagues from HLPE and from the team, took to write it.

Thank you for your attention.