

Multistakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda

e-consultation on the scope
proposed by the HLPE Steering Committee

From 7 December 2016 to 28 February 2017

Synthesis by the HLPE Secretariat

This consultation on the scope of the HLPE report #13 on *Multistakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda* attracted 56 contributions, from 27 different countries, totalling 104 pages and more than 40,000 words. 5 contributions came from national governments, 10 from the civil society, 7 from the private sector, and 12 from academic or research institutes. 53% of the contributions come from developing countries.

This note proposes a summary of the main comments, referring to the numbered contributions in order to ease the reading. Some contributions (such as 55, 56 among others), propose several examples of existing multistakeholder partnerships (MSPs) that should be studied in the report.

This note is organised in four sections. The first one is devoted to the scope and structure of the report; the second discusses the notions of “stakeholders” and “partnerships”; the third covers the objectives of MSPs and their assessment; the last one discusses the tools and means needed to improve them.

1) Scope and structure of the report

Agriculture, climate change, food security and sustainable poverty reduction are inextricably linked (46). Food security and nutrition (FSN) is a cross-sectoral issue, involving multiple stakeholders (2). The challenge today is not only to achieve food security but to achieve it in a sustainable way, which requires the involvement of all stakeholders (SDG 17) and the strong collaboration amongst the different economic actors (46).

In line with CFS mandate and previous CFS products (36), this topic of MSPs related to FSN should be addressed through holistic (42), systemic and intersectoral approaches (40) – involving health, agrifood, education, economic sectors (52) -, in the framework of Human Rights, in particular the Right to food (6, 7, 13, 23, 34, 36, 39, 40, 45, 53) and food sovereignty (13, 40).

For some contributors, the proposed scope of the HLPE report is good / most pertinent (15, 19), and covers a wide range of issues relevant to MSPs (13, 15, 19, 22, 24) in light of the 2030 Agenda (19). The basic structure proposed is sound, and in general the issues are

correctly identified (27). The description of the scope is improved with regard to the text that was contained in the MYPoW and is a good indication of the importance of dialogue between political process and technical/academic inputs (36).

A contribution considers that the suggested scope has a strong normative tone: recommendations should come after an assessment of current decision-making process (27). The report should explore how multistakeholder partnerships **help to implement policy** at local, national or international level (37) contributing to build a “win-win situation” where public and private partners pool their resources and competencies to address common social or environmental aims more effectively (42).

The methodology should combine literature review and field interviews or case studies with various stakeholders intervening in the policy and implementation process (15, 19). The report could focus on key priority of countries bearing high burdens of food insecurity and malnutrition (19)

CFS request focused on **financing** the improvements in FSN, whereas the emphasis in the HLPE scope is on MSPs (12). Therefore the report should: first define the purpose of those MSPs (14), i.e. what “improving FSN” means; then identify the actions needed by 2030, their cost, the potential ways and sources of financing, and the main stakeholders involved; finally the report could analyse how those stakeholders could be articulated in fair and efficient coalitions (12) and what is needed to improve MSPs (16). The major challenge is to strengthen MSPs through co-interest and motivation (41). The focus of this report is about policy-making, implementing, monitoring, and guiding the destination of public resources (28).

The report should focus on identifying the key stakeholders with incentives and capacities for entering or supporting MSPs, and indicate where there is evidence that such MSPs are advantageous or not (e.g. transaction costs) to tackle nutrition problems and opportunities (27).

The report should analyse the existing MSPs (16, 19), in particular those related to Nutrition and Health (55), as well as existing **funding mechanisms** and their gaps (16) from local to international levels. The report could look into innovative finance mechanisms (55).

The study should leverage economic, political and institutional **arguments/controversies** about MSPs in general (15, 42). Lack of agreement on a common goal, well-being of the environment (14) – in a context of climate change and related disasters (31) -, preference for the capital-intensive in preference to labour-intensive that would most benefit many developing nations, disregard for local food culture and imposition of high-yield foreign cultivars ... are among the most important **bones of contention** (14).

There is no “one-size-fits-all” solution to tackle hunger (26, 29, 37), or to build MSPs (42, 48), and the HLPE should provide contextualized conclusions and recommendations (36).

2) MSPs: Stakeholders involved, their respective roles and responsibilities:

Stakeholders:

The term “stakeholder” should be clearly defined (person or group with an interest into or who are affected by or can influence a project or an issue) and distinguish from “partner” (42, 45, 52). Attention should be given to differences between ‘stakeholder categories’ and the particular ‘organizational/individual stakeholder’ representing each stakeholder category and to the way those ‘representatives’ would communicate with their ‘category’ (38). Among stakeholders, the HLPE report should distinguish: “**claim/right holders**” (people) and “**duty**

bearers” (states) which have totally different rights / interests / motivations and face different challenges (6, 8, 16, 23, 25, 45, 52). Primacy should be given to right holders (53). No similar logic exists to justify the private sector/corporate actors participation in decision making processes (23, 39, 53). The report should identify the ways to encourage the engagement of each group of stakeholders, all along the value chain (29, 46).

The “multi-stakeholder” partnership terminology disguises the immense differences (in **rights, interests, roles, economic and political power, legitimacy**) between the various actors involved (23, 25, 32, 53). Not every *stakeholder* has an equal *stake* (45). We should ensure a balance between profits and rights which cannot become commodity (34).

The **State** always has to bear the major responsibility (6): they are **accountable** with regard to their human rights obligations (23, 34). Governments need to have both the space and capacity to act in the public interest (45).

The role / influence / legitimacy of the **private sector** - and of donors through earmarked funding (39) - in MSPs, the **power relationships** within a MSP, and the possible **conflicts of interest** (6, 13, 23, 25, 36, 40, 42, 52, 53, 55), as well as **institutional corruption** (23, 25, 53), are key issues for this report. Conflict of interest is characterized as the inability or limitations of organizations in the performance of actions in an impartial manner, as well as the existence of unfair competitive advantages in their relationships or activities (13). The private sector has demonstrated its commitment to join **anti-corruption** efforts (29). The report should review the controversies related to the appropriate/ legitimate role of TNCs and rich funders/funding agencies in public and scientific decision making processes (25). It should assess the impact of private sector engagement in MSP on public policies and human rights (23). The HLPE should not treat the private sector as a single constituency but distinguish (large) corporations from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which have quite different roles to play (36). Markets don't consider access to those most in need, distribution, research direction for the neediest, inequality, justice (45).

MSPs should have a participatory approach (46). How to safeguard meaningful participation of those who are normally excluded from negotiations (illiterates, informal market actors, marginalized communities) (24)? How can MSPs contribute to increase the power of **southern** partners and social mobilization led by those affected by food insecurity and malnutrition (19)?

In line with the CFS reform document, the HLPE report should give priority to those actors who are most affected by food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition (36, 53). Multistakeholder partnerships (MSPs) will have to involve **farmers** (3, 7, 45, 46, 49), from **small-scale producers** (36, 45) to large scale (46), consumers (49) and local actors / communities (26, 42, 50, 54), as well as youth (46), women and other marginalized or vulnerable groups (42, 46, 52). Farmers feed the world and play a critical role in the social and economic development of rural communities as well as in the Planet's sustainable development (46). Family and peasant agriculture, women, indigenous peoples and traditional communities are leading elements of food and nutritional sovereignty and security (40). Partnerships between (local) governments and civil society can be very useful in building local food systems valuing traditional knowledge, especially through **local food policy councils** and **community supported agriculture** in line with SDG12 (18, 40). MSPs should also pay attention to the specific needs of women, youth, and children (34).

Partnerships:

UN defines partnerships as “voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits” (42). MSPs can be defined as tools to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, financial and technological assistance among different stakeholders with different but complementary needs, resources and solutions (46).

The report should reflect a **broad diversity** of partnerships (29), involving different participants, including governments, multilateral institutions, private sector, civil society, academia (7, 13, 15, 29, 34, 41, 42, 43, 52), financial institutions and donors (54), media, agriculture, environment and health professions, consumers, teachers... (7, 31) organizations working on micro-financing and poverty alleviation, climate change, oceans and biodiversity (34). Civil society is a key actor in FSN (40). Those partnerships can take different forms including: contractual partnerships, joint ventures, memorandum of understanding (29), concession agreements (35).

Public private partnerships (PPPs) (35, 36). PPPs contribute to a better understanding by the private sector of the public needs and more strategic planning by governments that can better leverage private sector capacities, leading to a more efficient allocation of resources (29). PPPs create financial and economic dependencies of public institutions on private sector and, thus, an incentive for them to align their policies with the commercial interests of private sector actors, compromising their objectivity and independence (6, 28, 45). PPPs are very important regarding **funding** and the food industry should be approached to give open donations to promote FSN (7). PPPs might be considered under certain conditions and prior regulation (40).

The report should distinguish between cooperation and knowledge networks (52). It should differentiate four types of MSPs: (a) MSPs that provide advice to Governments at the FAO; (b) MSPs that are focused on a particular sector-based problem; (c) MSPs that are focused on delivering a project in a developing country; and (d) MSPs that are setting socially responsible global food market standards (e.g. Marine Stewardship Council-type organizations) (38). The report should distinguish the way MSPs work in humanitarian vs. development settings (56).

The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (55) and the SFS Programme of the UN10YFP (41) are important references for this report. SFS Programme is composed of five stakeholders clusters: government agencies, civil society organizations, scientific and technical organizations, UN agencies and other international organizations, and private sector (7, 22, 24).

Beyond Foreign Direct Investment or philanthropy oriented financial resources, many **funding mechanisms** coexist with different related impacts and limitations, ranging from discounts on agricultural loan rates to payments for ecosystem services, from corporate funding of R&D to subsidies to farmers (38).

3) Objectives / Functions / Impacts of MSPs related to FSN:

Objectives:

The overarching objective of those MSPs is to enhance global FSN – and fair prices (49) - in a sustainable way (14). The challenge in developing MSPs will be to find common ground between stakeholders who recognise the need for far-reaching changes in the Western diet and those, including large corporate interests, who wish to see the spread of this diet to other parts of the world (21).

MSPs will be key in sharing experiences, technologies and (diverse forms of) knowledge (42, 46, 52). The best way to implement the SDGs and achieve FSN is by giving **education** and **awareness** to stakeholders involved (2, 43, 52, 54). **Extension** and **capacity building** (3) will be key to ensure small-scale farmers have access to adapted **knowledge, information** and **technologies** (3, 5). Capacity building and access to micro-credit will be key for improving FSN of rural and indigenous people: community-based organisations and women empowerment are powerful tools to progress towards this objective (10).

Improve **access** of smallholders in rural areas to inputs, (micro-)credit, markets and information for a better FSN by investing in (physical and communication) **infrastructures** (5).

Assessment / impacts:

The report should have two main objectives: to do an assessment and to suggest changes and improvements (27). The report should not assume from the outset that MSPs are desirable or needed but engage a critical discussion on the MSP paradigm, on the potential benefits or risks of different types of such collaborations (23, 27, 53, 56). The report should examine the **limits**, and identify the conditions of success **and failure** of MSPs (6, 25, 41, 54), including PPPs before advocating for their use (45). Among the conditions of success, the report should reflect the importance of **transparency** and **accountability** (29, 34, 42, 46, 47, 55, 56), but also of: law enforcement, good **governance, capacity building, scalability, institutional infrastructure**, and **sharing of good practices** (29).

The report should distinguish assessment of MSP performance on one hand, and monitoring, evaluation and learning approaches on the other hand (27). There is a lack of shared measurement system (monitoring and impact evaluation) (42). Defined metrics regarding improving FSN would be useful to determine effectiveness of MSP programs (26). MSPs should develop and use theories of change to define, monitor and report on their expected impact pathways (56); The report should define the comparative advantages of MSPs and measure how they are assessed by partners (56).

The report should analyze separately: governance, effectiveness, efficiency, responsibilities and liabilities, financial contributions, political-economic context of MSPs by sector, relation of FAO to each MSP and vice versa, downside risk factors and MSP accountability to beneficiaries (38). The report should also assess relevance, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of MSPs, as well as the extent to which they incorporate and respect UN norms and principles, gender and equity concerns, and specific concerns of affected populations (56).

How to translate (international) MSPs recommendations into national policies and concrete actions: “top-down” vs. “bottom up” approaches (7, 24, 34)?

How to avoid plethora of existing (competing) initiatives that hinders legitimacy and efficiency of MSPs (24)? The SUN initiative, the main MSP related to FSN, has little to show-for in terms of impact after many years (6).

4) How to improve MSPs? Governance, legal and financial tools

Different tools will help achieve sustainable development and FSN: policies, regulations, economic incentives, education and training (52). Those tools must be effective and efficient but also “equitable” (56).

Rather than looking “what should be?”, the report should examine where and how individual stakeholders can most efficiently realize mutual advantages and synergies through their contributions to MSPs for FSN (27).

The central challenge seems to revolve around the nurturing of a working relationship based on trust, mutual respect, open communication, and understanding among stakeholders about each other’s strengths and weaknesses (42, 46). The issue is about the appropriate roles of each category of stakeholders (45) and about the definition of these roles from legal, financial and technical perspectives (52).

Unbalanced power and representation (in contribution, decision-making, finance...) should be covered as it is a potentially controversial topic (41, 42, 47, 53). “**Fair**” **representation** of stakeholders (7, 11), or “full and equal participation of all stakeholders” (56), particularly of food insecure people (47), as well as “sincere” **leadership** (11) are needed in MSPs, as well as geographic representation in order not to be biased towards developed countries (7). People centred modalities for representation and promotion of gender balance should be privileged in order to ensure a fair representation of all stakeholders (34).

Foreign aid reinforces the existing **power imbalances** between Northern and emerging (BRIC) countries (6).

Potential benefits of “vertical” and “horizontal” funding models should be combined at different levels and locally-controlled finance mechanisms should be supported where appropriate and feasible as global goals and targets may require local actions (42).