

Committee on World Food Security, CFS 51

25 October 2023, Rome, Italy

Iran room 13:30 – 14:45

Side event 20: Nature based Solutions for decent rural employment in agrifood systems

Summary of side event:

Radhika Murti, Global Director for society and governance from IUCN opened the floor, highlighting the major role of agriculture for employment, and the opportunity through NbS to shift from a sector that is a major driver of biodiversity loss, to a sector that conserves biodiversity. She also highlighted the crucial role of youth in this process, and more globally the capacity of NbS to promote policy convergence.

During the opening statements, **Ludovic Larbodière, IUCN Senior agriculture and environment advisor**, presented the concept of NbS, the global recognition reached to date, and the limited application to agriculture until so far. . IUCN is currently working to fill this gap, preparing new tools and publications: the *Global Standard for NbS*, soon to be completed by an agriculture sectoral guidance and a new report on *NbS and agriculture* to be issued soon. **Jessie Fagan, FAO programme officer**, highlighted the importance of decent employment and livelihood considerations for environmental conservation efforts to be effective. This includes the consideration of vulnerable groups who live in biodiversity rich areas. A short video was displayed on the kind of green jobs promoted by agriculture, through the example of bee-keeping, as an example to promote NbS through employment strategies.

During the panel session, **Irish Baguilat, coordinator for sustainable agriculture and women farmers' agenda** explained how the Asian Farmers Association, representing more than 10 million farmers in Asia, has managed to promote NbS among its membership through developing market opportunities, farmers field schools, extension services and strengthened cooperatives. For example, related the promotion of agroforestry and leguminous crops, to restore fertility after rice and corn cultivation, and manage pests. **Foday Kamara, young farmer** who is part of the FAO green jobs project in Sierra Leone, shared his experience in rearing black soldier flies, fed on organic waste, as an affordable protein-rich feed alternative to poultry, fish and piggery.. **Marie-Aude Even, IFAD, global senior biodiversity specialist** insisted on the importance of NbS and job creation for youth as part of IFAD strategic priorities. She highlighted that several projects around the world link ecosystem restoration with quality food production and nutrition, and the creation of specific incentives for people to adopt NbS, including by supporting bioentrepreneurs. **Alex Madzikiova, Director of Sable Green Trust**, a fertilizer company in Zimbabwe has moved from inorganic to organic fertilizers to address soil degradation issues, through vermicomposting. Alex showcased the role of the private sector in supporting a transition to green input products and how these initiatives can also create jobs for young people. Finally, **Lorine Azoulai, advocacy officer from CCFD Terre Solidaire**, speaking on behalf on French civil society organisations, raised some concerns about Nature-based solutions. This includes the broad definition, the concept use amongst various organization and the limited ability to address the power imbalances within the food system, and the risk for the concept to be misused for green-washing by agri-food corporations.

The roundtable was followed by an interactive Q&A session led by **Clara Park**,

senior gender officer and moderator of the event. This enabled a discussion on the specific place of indigenous people in the debate, on the NbS concept as a way to harness Nature to replace grey solutions, on the challenge to access land, including through land reform, on the incentive and efficient strategies to facilitate the adoption of Nbs by small-scale farmers especially women and youth and on the link to gender mainstreaming.

The conclusion by **Lauren Phillips, FAO ESP Deputy Director**, highlighted the important for Nature conservation action, including agroecology and NbS, to be implemented in such a way that they can contribute to productivity, livelihoods employment and gender mainstreaming. She highlighted that both public and private investments will be crucial to ensure the transition to sustainable and inclusive agrifood systems. Finally, she congratulated the facilitator, panellists and organisers for the rich and lively discussion.