

Rapporteur's Note: Agroecological and other innovative approaches.

Comments and Suggestions by PSM (February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020)

General Remarks

The PSM supports the structure of the Rapporteur's Note and that the five recommendations are in line with the HLPE report. The Introduction (paragraph 8) states there is no "one size fits all" solution but we would suggest to also include reference to the 'Ten Elements of Agroecology' and Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO (as presented and agreed at FAO Council and Conference respectively) that: 'Agroecology is one approach, among others, to contribute to feeding sustainably a growing population and support countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and coexists with a broad range of sustainable agricultural approaches that can contribute to meeting the challenges facing farmers and food systems'.

Recommendation 1

We would emphasize that fostering the transformation of food systems necessitate interactions, dialogues, partnerships and actions from all actors involved in increasingly globalized food systems with clear data metrics to measure impact and effect. The need for clear and relevant data metrics is particularly important when considering the role of the ecological footprint as an operational principle.

When promoting the role of (c) agricultural heritage and local knowledge it is recommended to use the agreed language of Principle 7 of the RAI which respects cultural heritage and traditional knowledge but also "supports diversity and innovation".

Recommendation 2

PSM would emphasize the role of incentives (e.g. tax incentives) to support transitions but also highlight the need for clear metrics to measure food quantity and environmental quality standards.

Regarding the regulations on the use of agrochemicals there are two points to make. Firstly, it is important to emphasize the importance of the enforcement of regulations, and their correct application, which are approved by national regulatory bodies. Secondly, it is important not simply to reduce the use of agrochemicals but 'optimize' their use.

Value chains, both short and long should be promoted to facilitate better marketing systems. It's important to note that certification schemes are one tool amongst many available to build sustainable value chains.

The reduction of food losses and waste is important and PSM would suggest these key points:

- Encourage more recycling;
- Develop alternate uses for byproducts such as wood chips;
- Develop training programs for farmers on effective utilization of manure and straw which are not wastes but are raw materials to crop and forage production;
- Encourage measures for resource use efficiency that demonstrate the value to the business if implemented effectively;
- Build local adequate storage for agricultural products with a focus on post-harvest losses;
- Increase efficiency of supply chains to avoid waste with associated rewards for farmers; and,
- Identify on national scale what products are actually wastes and develop alternatives that are either less or recyclable.

### Recommendation 3

The PSM supports the need for continued research and innovative knowledge generation. But in this regard the PSM finds the Rapporteur's Note somewhat reticent to highlight the role and need for innovative technology and knowledge.

This is in juxtaposition to the statement at FAO Conference (June 2019) which endorsed the Resolution 7/2019 "Further integration of sustainable agricultural approaches, including agroecology, in the future planning activities of FAO" which requested FAO to assist countries and regions towards sustainable agriculture and food systems by: "Encouraging innovation in agriculture, *inter alia*, through the utilization of relevant and context adapted technology and tools - including ICT and biotechnology". Similarly, the UNGA,(December 2017) recognized "the need to further enhance the linkages between agricultural technology and agroecological principles, such as recycling, resource use efficiency, reducing external inputs, diversification, integration, soil health and synergies....".

To be the leading body that convenes stakeholders to address FSN then CFS should consider to be more proactive in highlighting innovative, on-going, technology, practices and knowledge that include: resource-efficient, resilient, and high yielding

species, integrated land use planning, soil health, climate change adaptation and mitigation techniques, precision agriculture, water saving and water harvesting that are market focused and provide genuine efficiency savings at farm level.

#### Recommendation 4

Stakeholder engagement for sustainable agricultural food systems are complex and require a holistic and a coordinated approach from all stakeholders. Agroecology and other sustainable food systems applies to all types of farms, farm sizes and farming systems in all countries where all farmers have made, and continue to make, 'strategic life choices'. This necessitates interactions, dialogues and actions from all actors involved in increasingly globalized food systems. As such, when there is seen to be a need to address power imbalances and conflicts of interest it is necessary to ensure effective consultation mechanisms.

There is a need to improve agricultural extension and rural advisory services and improve skills of staff delivering those services to improve provision of technical support and training to both enable farmers and let them make informed decisions. This includes access to financial literacy and business management extension services, particularly for smallholders, to allow producers to become more responsive to consumer choice and marketing options.

#### Recommendation 5

Performance measurement is a key policy area and the HLPE Report rightly recommends to "develop practical, scientifically grounded and comprehensive performance metrics and indicators of agriculture and food systems". All farmers, large and small, are 'guardians of the soil' and need the metrics and indicators to do that. Farmers also need to improve yields and production, keep costs down, minimize risks, and continue to be economically viable while providing adequate returns to labour both individually and to the family and business as a whole.

Many agroecological systems have a high initial demand for labor and can be more labor intense in general, transaction costs can be high for market and processing opportunities. Agroecological systems can result in a reduction of yields that needs to be compensated by cost savings, higher product prices or other support measures in order to ensure the economic viability of the farms. Apart from basic production and efficiency indicators, in order to measure farm level contribution to sustainable practices, data (already being collected) can monitor:

- Minimal soil disturbance;
- Permanent soil cover;
- Crop rotations;
- Buffer strips to reduce soil erosion; and,
- Water and nutrient management.

