

## **HLPE Consultation on V0 Draft “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”**

**Contribution of the Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism (Agroecology Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Global Alliance for the Future of Food)**

Dear HLPE Steering Committee and the Project Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the V0 Draft “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”.

Previously while reviewing the report scope, we: i) praised the ambition of the team in addressing the drivers of power asymmetries and structural inequities, ii) suggested that the report could present clear definitions of governance that influence structural inequities, iii) recommended the report to set a clear agenda on data collection in inequalities, and iv) suggested that the report could comparatively explore how different food systems (i.e., industrial agriculture, agroecological systems) impact inequalities.

In this contribution below, we try to both answer the nine questions suggested in the consultation, and we review if further deepening would be needed from the points mentioned above.

### ***General comments***

We continue to congratulate the team on its ambition to produce a deep and comprehensive report that deals with structural sources of inequities. The structure and the chapters are appropriate, the framework in Chapter 1 is a good contribution to framing the debate (particularly the recognition/distribution/representation elements).

While keeping its depth, the report would benefit from being streamlined, as there repetitive sections, and extensive reviews of literature can be summarized. Parts of the report would benefit from what has been already published by HLPE in previous reports (particularly [#14 agroecological approaches and other innovations](#) and [#13 multi-stakeholder partnerships](#)), as well as other UN-system reports (among others, the [FAO-UNDP-UNEP Repurposing agricultural support](#), [IFAD’s work on inclusive rural financing](#), [UNFSS’ policy brief on governance](#), with implications for territorial approaches). Due to the intrinsic relevance of inequalities, discrimination and rights, explicit reference should be made to the [UN Declaration on Human Rights](#), the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women](#), the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People](#), and the [UN Declaration on Rights of Peasants and Peoples Working in Rural Areas](#). For reducing repetition, the team could review those and highlight more exclusively the aspects dealing directly with inequalities and inequities, thus reducing the need to reproduce an extensive literature review.

The main challenge will be to produce a synthetic text that suggests avenues for political prioritization, thus helping the CFS to identify its main value-added to the international community in the topic. The report can certainly be made more focused, while at the same time, political prioritization will require the engagement of delegations and sufficient time for policy negotiations in further steps of this workstream.

## Specific comments

- While social safety nets are highlighted in different parts of the text, the report could more extensively explore national or regional-level policies that were successful in reducing overall social inequalities (and potential set-backs in the past decade). Some examples could include: Latin America experience with direct cash transfer programmes and its impacts on FSN, home-grown school feeding policies in Latin America, West Africa, Eastern Africa, and Southern Africa (i.e., WFP P4P and its national incidences), and similar policies in North America and Europe with stronger focus on sustainable nutrition. While the HLPE addressed the role of [social protection for FSN in 2012](#), there is a good opportunity to revisit initiatives that were highlighted 10-years ago with more updated information and a specific focus on inequality reduction. Matthew Fisher's [concluding remarks during the Special Event on inequalities](#) presents some interesting thoughts on the role of social protection and social insurance nets in addressing income inequalities across different regions;
- In Chapter 5, the report could be sharper in indicating which actions and roles different actors could pursue, being more precise in defining what would be the role for public policies (government-led initiatives), associative/organizational actions (farmers/workers/civil society and engagement), public and private investments, etc. Focused exploration on the role of social movements - those that represent the communities too frequently marginalized in many of our food systems and capable of mobilizing their constituencies for food system transformation - is highly recommended. The philanthropic sector, in particular, would welcome a description of different actors' roles, in order to more easily consider aligning its investments with other actors in addressing inequalities;
- One gap of the report is how inequities influence social vulnerability to shocks and crises. Besides the current food crisis we are experiencing, the international community has been warning of further environmental, climate change and social shocks in the near-to-medium terms. The literature on resilience, social vulnerability in humanitarian crises, and disaster risk reduction can highlight some elements on how inequalities and inequities interact with these crises, and which actions are needed to address them;
- While in Chapter 3, the report explores many factors (land, trade, gender, etc) of agri-food systems influence inequalities, the text would benefit from more comparison between different food systems types and their distributive performance. Which food systems generate benefits that are more equally distributed remains an unanswered question. As this is an emergent field of study, the report could point to a research agenda for this data in inequalities, exploring the links between this topic and the recently concluded [HLPE #17 Report on Data](#) and its ongoing policy negotiations. There is also a need to discuss how methodologies that assesses the true costs and benefits of food systems, including their externalities, can better elucidate trends in inequalities;
- Finally, believing in the power of inspiration and hope that successful examples can bring to policy design and implementation, we reviewed some of our studies on positive food system transformation with a specific focus on inequalities. We suggest the team to explore the following cases:

- On inclusive financing for food system transformation, inclusive value-chains and inclusive trade: *Educe Cooperativa: Fair Trade certification and values help Mexican beekeeping cooperative thrive*, *Northern Co-operative Development Bank (NCDB): A regional approach to support local cooperatives in Sri Lanka's Northern Province* and *Sylva Food Solutions: The Zambian entrepreneur popularizing traditional food by partnering with over 25,000 smallholder farmers* in [GA and TIFS \(2022\)](#). [Mobilizing Money & Movements: Creative finance for food systems transformation](#);
- On resilience-building, shocks and crisis responses: *Going beyond "Build Back Better": Gardens of Health International* and *Beyond Yield and Quantity: the Common Market and Lagos Food Bank Initiative* in [GA \(2021\)](#). [Beacons of Hope: Stories of food system transformation during Covid-19](#);
- On climate change mitigation & adaptation and inequalities: *Building sustainable communities and climate-positive agriculture in the Egyptian desert*, *Achieving Kenya's "climate-smart" agriculture goals through agroecology and organic farming*, and *Addressing the links between childhood food security, dietary inequality, and climate action in the United Kingdom* in [GA \(2022\)](#). [Confronting the Climate Crisis with Food Systems Transformation: Stories of action from 14 countries](#).

We thank again for the opportunity to comment on this report and we remain at your disposal for any further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Agroecology Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Global Alliance for the Future of Food