## *TOPIC: Preserving, strengthening and promoting Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems and traditional practices for sustainable food systems - HLPE-FSN consultation on the scope of the report*

***Dear HLPE-FSN members***,

To begin with, based on my teaching and managerial experience in the field of natural resources and their connection with food security and safety, in terms of the new concept of building "*nations resistant to climate change"*, I want to congratulate you for initiating an analysis topic, as vast as it is important, my critical conviction being that the biocultural heritage of the peoples of the 3rd Millennium can also contribute to shaping some vital aspects of a future food system that to have sustainability as its central element. This, however, subject to the fact that the Global Food System is a follower of standardized and over-processed food, still turns to waste, and the principles of the notion of "*food security*" have moved away from the original FAO-UN creed, in many geographical areas of the world.

However, indigenous peoples, along with old local communities, are in dire need of assistance through popularization, agro-tourism, organized food markets, fiscal protection, conservation and practical maintenance of their food systems, both from the point of view of value their intrinsic value as well as a spiritual value for humanity, and humanity, the new food production systems, need landmarks of a new orientation and attitude towards the need for food security, sustainability and durability.

*With your consent, I pass on some personal ideas:*

***1. Do you agree with the guiding principles indicated above ?***

Yes, I agree with the guiding principles. I believe that the indigenous peoples, together with the old local communities, resilient in time, can generate good knowledge, necessary for a future Food System, based on the real management of natural and human resources, rethinking the production of food as well as their valorization.

***2.Should the goals include the integration of indigenous peoples' food and knowledge systems and the lessons learned from them, for the benefit of all or only for the benefit of indigenous peoples as rights holders ?***

Indigenous civilizations and ancient local communities, with a few exceptions, do not think of their food systems as their own, secret, untouchable good. For them, it represents, in most cases, a chance for survival over the course of millennia. Of course, food systems and knowledge of these human entities will be distributed to the global community and applied for the benefit of all, where necessary and possible, and representatives of the global community have a duty to recognize innovative and proprietary rights material and intellectual belonging to these peoples, ensuring their full and effective participation in decision-making.

In addition, indigenous civilizations and ancient local communities must benefit from knowledge exchanges with other similar entities, thereby multiplying the stock of technical and technological ideas and increasing the scope for innovation.

***3. What are the challenges to free, prior and informed consent and access and benefit sharing when promoting and/or mainstreaming indigenous peoples' food and knowledge systems ?***

As it appears from the title of the forum, the general action involves "*conserving, consolidating, promoting some food systems, from the point of view of traditional knowledge and practices, known and applied for millennia by different indigenous peoples",* eliminating the distrust of indigenous peoples.From my point of view, a meritorious outcome of this very complex endeavor and the reduction of inherent challenges may lie in the manner and timing of the application of the action. Thus, it is important to respect the free consent of data provision for all actors involved, to create mechanisms to recognize, guarantee and respect the cultural paternity of the traditional food system, as well as to create a fair mechanism for distributing potential benefits, eliminating biopiracy .

It must be recognized that some information and practical techniques may not be fully disclosed and made available to all, due to the sacred factor and related cult practices.

***4. How can the Report ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups, sustainability and protection from the risks of commercialization of indigenous peoples' food and knowledge systems ?***

The report has the role of:

- to facilitate the publication of data on the existence, role and value of traditional knowledge and practices, in order to be well understood and correctly applied;

- to encourage and facilitate the development of elements of production and trade within indigenous communities, both to prove the viability of traditional practices and to record the geographical and human paternity of those practices;

- facilitate the physical participation of indigenous populations in food systems policy-making processes.

In addition, we must accept that much of the traditional knowledge is owned and transmitted by women, who ensure the daily food security of the family, a fact that requires special attention to the *"gender*" factor.

***5. How should oral knowledge and traditions be documented and referenced in the preparation of the report ?***

As with any legal, professional and constructive documentation, it is necessary to know the cultural practices of indigenous peoples, so that the data collected has the free consent of those interviewed, filmed or recorded.

After this step, modern techniques of retrieving and storing data of this kind can be applied, namely audio recordings, interviews, photographs, leaflets, documentary films, geo-ethnographic maps, etc.

And in this case, the sensitive element regarding the sacred factor and related cult practices must be specified, which is why a careful management of documentation techniques is required.

It is essential to follow the protocols on the cultural practices of indigenous peoples, so that good information management is initiated, guaranteeing, where necessary, the confidentiality of certain practices, traditional knowledge or cultural preferences.

***6. What dimensions related to the agency of indigenous peoples, for example in matters of governance, could be addressed ?***

In order to foster the involvement of indigenous peoples' agency in matters of governance, it is vitally necessary that these peoples own the geographical territories inherited from the past and their natural resources, benefiting from the recognition and protection of their inalienable rights. Associated with this fact, local and national government institutions and systems can be strengthened, through which any misunderstandings and conflicts regarding the management of territories and resources can be resolved and, last but not least, to store and process own data related to the systems traditional foods, ensuring that they are consistent with their priorities, forming part of what is called the "national dowry".

***7. Are there important/relevant policy papers and instruments missing from the foundational documents list ?***

I think the presentation is enough. Maybe I would just add The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) or Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Nagoya Protocol. 8.Could you indicate relevant references that should be considered? In my personal documentation practice, I have come across sufficiently valuable and relevant references with reference to the topic addressed. In this sense, I allow myself to quote FAO-UN sources, such as the "*White Book/Wiphala*" or the "*Action Guide for the Promotion of Biodiversity and Indigenous Food Systems*", including "*HLPE-FSN, Agroecology and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems (2019-2020)*", but valuable documents from specialists from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia or Latin America can also be added, s.a. Such documents address defining policy elements and perspectives for recognizing the existential circumstances of indigenous peoples, describe threats to indigenous and local knowledge systems, while also identifying measures for the good governance of food systems of this profile.

***9. What good practices, ethical standards and strategies for addressing climate change should be highlighted in the report?***

Good practices, ethical standards and strategies adopted in response to what we call today "climate change" depend, in my opinion, not so much on the ability of various human groups to react and adapt to these changes, but above all on the ability to anticipation and preventive action of these groups, the so-called pro-active actions.

Climate change and in particular the phenomenon of global warming have a direct effect on the conduct of human actions in a complex employment environment, and mankind has already been involved in the struggle to secure basic needs such as water, food, fuel and the shelter, simultaneously with the fight against diseases.

What remains to be done, I believe, is the identification of resilient agro-ecological practices of indigenous peoples and the analysis of the possibilities and the proportion of assimilation and use of these traditional production systems resistant to climate change.

These steps, sufficiently extensive and expensive, must be carried out in full consultation with the real holders of the respective practices, and this must be recognized in the documentation of all projects.

***10. What good practices or strategies for promoting intercultural understanding should be highlighted in the report?***

I believe that the report should contain elements that refer to mutual respect, inclusive education, the promotion of gender equality, etc., but above all elements to identify and recognize traditional knowledge, to promote common culinary experiences and to consolidate of forms of indigenous agrotourism. Such approaches can lead to the establishment of forums, necessary for the promotion/reception of practical traditional knowledge, which can compare or coexist with scientific knowledge related to modern food systems.

The final success of such efforts would mean finding indigenous foods, originating from traditional systems, on the shelves of large profile stores.

***11. Are previous legal documents such as Free, Prior and Informed Consent sufficient in light of this evolution in thinking about Indigenous knowledge, or do they need to be revised?***

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), as it is known, is a fundamental, well-established principle, but national governments should create their own flexible methodologies for regulating and implementing FPIC, embedded in their own regional and national development policies , which respects the rights and cultural diversity of indigenous peoples.

In conclusion, the preservation and promotion of indigenous peoples' food and knowledge systems will be instrumental in defining and operating sustainable food systems and resilience. In addition, considering the increasing annual number of meteorological and hydrological disasters, which affect the food of millions of people, it is imperative to develop with priority some interdisciplinary models of evolution and prediction of such manifestations.

Thank you for the opportunity to address such an important topic.