

PSM Submission to the HLPE e-consultation

(submitted 2 February 2022)

The Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) is pleased to participate in the e-consultation on the V0 draft of the HLPE report “Data collection and analysis tools for food security and nutrition.” The PSM believes to effectively address the current gaps and challenges in agriculture productivity and income that help perpetuate food insecurity, there needs to be a growing recognition of the need for sharing of available, accessible and usable data for agriculture and nutrition. This requires 1) an increase in investment in high quality agriculture; 2) the promotion of better, more actionable data; 3) through the use of new sources of data; 4) the creation of an enabling environment for increased data; and 5) the exchange of data for disaster risk reduction.

With this in mind, the PSM can share the following input on the VO report which comes from its wide membership across the entire value chain; from farmers, to input providers, to cooperatives, processors, SMEs, and food companies. To facilitate the HLPE work, please also accept the attached V0 draft converted into word which suggests additions and deletions, and where possible provides comments/rationale.

1. Firstly, we would like to note the overly negative tone in assessing the food system in the introduction. While there is a need to identify the failings of the food system in many areas, there have also been successes which were evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and could be cited. In a similar manner, a less than positive stance towards the private sector can be gleaned in some places, and its direct omission in many others.
2. The role of the private sector appears under-appreciated throughout the document, with very few positive mentions as an existing collaborator, source of technology or data. Where private sector is mentioned, often the perspective is risk management versus a more embracing sentiment. We encourage those aspects of the report to be improved, with the understanding that expanding data collection and analysis needs to be a collaborative effort between governments, international agencies, the private sector, civil society and academia. The openness of international agencies and governments to the inputs, ideas and advice from other sources is key. As such, an environment of inclusiveness to solving potential data issues and allowing for their questioning and eventual correction should also be welcomed (see § 3.3.1, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 4.4.1, among other areas).
3. The alignment of the document to the SDGs could be stronger, as harnessing the power of data is one of the most important tools for achieving the SDGs. The PSM notes the report clearly highlights the lack of resources; however, identifying the topics where high quality and actionable data does not currently exist could lead to more impactful investments. The PSM believes the primary focus of investment should be on the data necessary to track achievement towards the SDG indicators.
4. The role of the farmer in providing and not only consuming data, and the related needs/concerns could also be developed further. The PSM looks forward to providing this insight during the upcoming process from a wider perspective, encompassing farms of all sizes, and addressing their related challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to become involved.