**Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition - HLPE consultation on the report’s scope**

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**Collection of contributions received**

Table of Contents

Topic note 4

Contributions received 8

1. Haiquan Xu, Institute of food and nutrition development, Ministry of agriculture and rural affairs, China 8

2. Marcela Ballara, Red de EducacionPopular entre Mujeres REPEM LAC, Chile 8

3. Dr. Sazzala Jeevananda Reddy, Former Expert - FAO/UN, India 9

4. Paul Rigterink, Potomac Technical Advisors, United States of America 10

5. Eyongetta Njieassam, University of dschang, Cameroon 11

6. Kameswararao Chiruvolu, Private, India 12

7. Ana Puhac, FAO, France 13

8. Mirian Colindres, Alliance Bioversity-CIAT, Honduras 14

9. Brandon Eisler, Nutritional Diversity, Panama 14

10. Rodney Cooke, CGIAR, Italy 16

11. Manuel Moya, International Pediatric Association. TAG on Nutrition, Spain 19

12. Marie Durling, World Food Programme, Sweden 20

13. Claudia Brito, FAO UN, Chile 20

14. Maria Guadalupe Arizmendi, Comisión Federal para la Protección contra Riesgos Sanitarios, Mexico 25

15. Ken Giller, Wageningen University and N2Africa, Netherlands 26

16. Aliza Lauter, CARE, United States of America 27

17. Lissandra Santos, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 31

18. Claudia Tonnini, Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the UN Organizations in Rome, Germany 33

19. Lal Manavado, Independent analyst/synthesis, Norway 34

20. André Luzzi de Campos, Instituto Alimentação e Poder, Brazil 46

21. Alessandra Mora, UN Nutrition, Italy 49

22. Jacques Loyat, Equipe d'animation UTAA, France 50

23. Jacques Loyat, Equipe d'animation UTAA, France 50

24. Anne Brunel 51

25. Willow Battista, Environmental Defense Fund, United States of America 61

26. Kameswararao Chiruvolu, Private, India 69

27. Sara Elfstrand, SwedBio at Stockholm Resilience Centre, Sweden 70

28. Bronwen Powell, Center for International Forestry Research and the Pennsylvania State University, Canada 73

29. Pat Mc Mahon, Nutrition For All, Ireland 74

30. Claudio Schuftan, PHM, Viet Nam 82

31. Martin Wolpold-Bosien, Germany 90

32. Margaret Koyenikan, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, 93

33. Elizabeth Margolis, World Vision International, United States of America 94

34. Bill Jeffery, Centre for Health Science and Law, Canada 97

35. Marzella Wustefeld, World health Organization, Switzerland 102

36. Matheus Alves Zanella, Global Alliance for the Future of Food, Brazil 106

37. Ioannis Fermantzis, European Commission, Belgium 107

38. Wenche Barth Eide, Department of Nutrition, University of Oslo, Norway 121

# Topic note

During its 46th plenary session (14–18 October 2019), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopted its four-year Programme of Work ([MYPoW 2020-2023](https://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/NA703EN/)), which includes a request to its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) to produce a report on “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”, to be presented at the 51st plenary session of the CFS in October 2023.

The report, which will provide recommendations to the CFS workstream on inequalities, will:

* Analyse quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to how inequalities in access to assets (particularly land, other natural resources and finance), and incomes within the agri-food systems impede opportunities for many actors to overcome food insecurity and malnutrition. Relevant data on asset endowments in rural communities will be useful in this respect, along with the findings of latest SOFI reports. Given the focus on agri-food systems and the key role of family farmers within these systems, linkages and complementarities with the UN Decade of Family Farming will be examined, including as reference to decent employment issues in the agri-food sector;
* Analyse the **drivers of inequalities** and provide **recommendations** on entry points to address these;
* Identify **areas requiring further research and data collection**, also in view of the opportunities provided by the ongoing joint effort of the World Bank, FAO and IFAD within the 50 x 2030 Initiative.

The proposed thematic workstream on inequalities will contribute to the CFS vision and the overall objective of addressing the root causes of food insecurity with a focus on the people most affected by hunger and malnutrition. The focus will be on inequalities within agri-food systems. The workstream will provide an **analysis**, based on this HLPE report, on **drivers of socio-economic inequalities between actors within agri-food systems that influence food security and nutrition outcomes**. **Gender inequalities** and the need to create opportunities for **youth** would inform the analysis.

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**Please note that in parallel to this scoping consultation, the HLPE is calling for interested experts to candidate to the Project Team for this report. The call for candidature is open until April 19. Read more** [here](https://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/news-archive/detail/en/c/1479734/)**.**

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According to the HLPE 2nd Note on Critical and Emerging Issues (2017), increasing risks to food security and nutrition can be linked to high levels of income concentration, corporate concentration in food trade, transformation and distribution, as well as to uneven distribution of agricultural assets and access to natural resources (CFS MYPoW 2020-2023). In addition, unequal endowments in agricultural assets and access to natural resources (such as land) together with income inequality deeply affect food security and nutrition. Unequal access to food and adequate nutrition further deepen inequalities through lost opportunities in health, education and jobs. Sustained disparities between vulnerable and other social groups – reflecting inequalities between and within countries - can slow growth and lead to political instability and conflict, migration flows, with related adverse consequences on food security and nutrition (HLPE, 2017). Stark inequalities in access to basic services and assets, but also in terms of food security and nutrition, affect households' prospects for overcoming poverty, and ultimately perpetuate food insecurity and malnutrition (Ibidem). One of the starkest trends of recent years has been the growing concentration in food-related production, industries and services, which has affected power relations between different actors in food systems and fuelled inequalities (HLPE, 2020).

The HLPE (2017, 2020) has stressed the importance of addressing food security and nutrition through a food systems approach, highlighting the linkages between supply chains, food environments, consumers’ behaviour and the resource, economic, social and institutional systems that connect to food. Inequalities affecting food systems’ drivers can be transmitted to all components of food systems and ultimately affect food security and nutrition outcomes. Furthermore, HLPE (2021) stressed the importance of using an intersectionality[[1]](#footnote-1) lens in analyzing and addressing inequalities: different dimensions of inequalities, based on individual, household, community and country characteristics, intersect and are mutually reinforcing. Reducing inequalities requires addressing the different dimensions of inequality holistically and simultaneously, being aware of the complex power dynamics that generate and sustain inequalities.

COVID-19 has further exacerbated existing inequalities, as the brunt of the economic, social and health impact are being borne by the most vulnerable individuals, communities and countries. The estimated impact of the pandemic is an increase in the average Gini index for emerging and developing countries by 6 percent (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>). Human rights are at the core of the 2030 Agenda, which with the motto “No one left behind”, recognizes the severe consequences of inequalities on the attainment of sustainable development. Agenda 2030 has two goals specifically concerning inequalities (SDG 5 and SDG 10), in addition to including inequality reduction in a number of targets and indicators (<https://sdgs.un.org/>). To reduce inequalities, it is fundamental to ensure comprehensive legal frameworks and governance systems able to uphold human rights, including the right to food.

The report will focus both on (a) inequalities originating within food systems and concerning nutrition and (b) inequalities in the political, social, cultural and economic environment around food systems, which have a bearing on unequal outcomes regarding FSN.

The report will document the scale, the multidimensional, dynamic, intergenerational and intersectional aspects of inequality regarding food security and nutrition, how individuals are affected depending on their characteristics (age, gender, location, social group - class, ethnicity, race, migrant vs. native status), within households, communities, local and national levels, and between countries. Inequalities often depend on the priorities and choices of private and public investments, or legal status, and more generally, on the political balance between urban and rural areas or different regions, particularly if there are religious and/or ethnic differences within a country. Particular attention needs to be given to conflict areas and fragile States. The report will also deal with market power at different levels in food systems, driving inequality throughout supply chains from production to food processing, transport, distribution and trade.

The response to such multi-dimensional and multi-actor inequality calls for a holistic and integrated approach for fair and equitable development (HLPE, 2021). Broadening the definition of food security, as proposed by HLPE (2020) provides a framework to comprehend the nexus between inequalities and social, economic, and environmental sustainability in food systems. The report will explore how inequalities originating within food systems can be alleviated, learning from good practices in existing policies, legal frameworks, approaches and interventions. Support for agroecological practices, small scale agriculture, territorial/local market initiatives, as well as alternative educational methods including the use of digital tools and platforms accessible to all, are among the options that have been identified as promising development pathways for transforming food systems and promoting food security and nutrition for all (HLPE, 2020 and 2021).

These developments need to be put in context, taking into account the concentration of market power in global food systems. The report will develop the concept of “agency” as a lens to address the issue of structural barriers to obtaining economic resources and of inequalities in food security and nutrition, and define the right to food as a legal entitlement towards equality through upholding all relevant human rights, raising living standards, and eliminating intergenerational inequality for all.

***Questions to guide the e-Consultation on the scope of the report***

With this e-consultation, the HLPE Steering Committee is seeking your feedback. In particular, you are invited to:

1. **Share your comments and suggestions on the objectives and content of this report:**
2. Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition
3. What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective;
4. Trends within and between countries (data collection, measurement tools);
5. Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing;
6. Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs), efforts to improve measurement;
7. Relationship between inequality and inequity.
8. Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality
9. Concentration of economic, social, and political capital within the food systems;
10. Structural barriers to equality for historically disadvantaged and poor populations (women, people of colour, rural and urban poor, indigenous communities, peasants, migrants, refugees, etc.).
11. Paths toward equality
12. Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food;
13. Good governance to rebalance power and influence;
14. Legal and policy interventions to regulate the influence of corporate actors (and those with concentrated power), and remove structural barriers and increase capital (for those with diminished resources).
15. **Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:**
    * + 1. reducing inequality gap and its potential impact on food security and nutrition outcomes;
        2. ensuring the effective legal framework to guarantee equal rights to access land and other productive resources, basic services, and the right to food to reduce inequalities;
        3. enhancing food systems’ role in the reduction of inequalities (through income and livelihoods generation, while contributing to healthy diets and environment, among others);
        4. empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organizations in making food systems more equitable and accessible;
        5. addressing capacity gaps in generating and using data and other new technologies in policy-making processes, monitoring and reporting on inequalities for FSN.
16. **Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report.**
17. **Provide feedback on the following questions, to guide the development of the report:**
18. How do food systems drivers affect inequalities? And specifically what are the different impacts of trends in:
19. assets, land, other natural resources and finance
20. infrastructure and technology, including ICT
21. market structure in input provision, logistics, processing, transport, distribution of food
22. access to information and data
23. demographic trends including migration and urbanisation
24. socio-cultural factors around gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, language and their intersection
25. political and economic factors (presence/absence of a legal framework to ensure equal rights to key resources and services and the expression of agency)?
26. How can social inequalities impact FSN outcomes?
27. How can the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? Which different pathways should be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment?
28. How can the reduction of inequalities through sustainable food systems and better FSN contribute to conflict prevention and peace building?
29. How can gender and youth mainstreaming approaches, as well as adopting an intersectional lens on inequalities, taking multiple identities together in the analysis (including gender and youth) in food systems contribute to social justice and better FSN?
30. What are the main knowledge and data gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine FSN outcomes? What could be improved in data collection and analysis tools for FSN inequalities?
31. How can strengthened food systems’ governance contribute to the reduction of inequalities in FSN outcomes?
32. Which legal frameworks can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities?
33. What is the role of political economy in reducing inequalities in food systems and in reducing other inequalities that have an impact on FSN outcomes?

We thank in advance all the contributors for reading, commenting and providing inputs on this V0 draft of the report. We look forward to a rich and fruitful consultation!

*Évariste Nicolétis, HLPE Coordinator*

*Paola Termine, HLPE Project Officer*

# Contributions received

## Haiquan Xu, Institute of food and nutrition development, Ministry of agriculture and rural affairs, China

I think the education of nutrition knowledge for farmers, producers and consumers is also very important.

## Marcela Ballara, Red de EducacionPopular entre Mujeres REPEM LAC, Chile

Cómo afectan los factores que impulsan a los sistemas alimentarios a las desigualdades? Y de manera específica, ¿cuáles son los diferentes impactos de las tendencias en:

Promover el empoderamiento de las mujeres rurales, indígenas y afrodescendientes en la gestión y conservación sostenible de suelos implica que los indicadores críticos para garantizar sus derechos y seguridad a la tenencia a la tierra los países deben comprometerse a aplicar los ODS en su totalidad y en especial el Indicador 1.4.2. en derechos seguros de la tierra; objetivo 5.a. sobre los derechos sobre las tierras agrícolas, y el indicador 5.a.2 sobre los marcos legales, incluido el derecho consuetudinario, que garantiza la igualdad de derechos de las mujeres rurales, indígenas y afrodescendientes a la tierra y a su control.

Los datos que se levantes para el seguimiento y monitoreo de los indicadores arriba mencionados además de disgregarlos por sexo estos deben ser accesibles, oportunos, confiables y en lo posible estar desglosados por ingresos, sexo, edad, raza, etnia, situación migratoria, discapacidad y ubicación geográfica y otras características pertinentes en los contextos nacionales.

Los análisis intersecionales deben estar incluidos pues son herramientas para la justicia de género y la justicia económica Hay que considerar que las mujeres rurales ( y las urbanas tb) no son homogéneas y el análisis de la interseccionalidad ayuda a revelar las varias identidades, discriminación y desventajas como consecuencia de la combinación de identidades. Importante cuando se proponen planes de acción ya que hay diferencias entre países y en los mismos países.

¿Cómo pueden influir las desigualdades sociales en los resultados de la SAN?

Hay que incluir específicamente a los pueblos indígenas y sus sistemas alimentarios que además son los afectados frente al cambio climático y han generado un impacto en el medio ambiente. El cambio climático se muestra en sequías, inundaciones, incendios forestales; lo anterior produce destrucción de cultivos, desplazamientos forzados, afectaciones a la soberanía alimentaria. Hay que recordar que los pueblos indígenas han desarrollado conocimientos, prácticas y estrategias que deben ser reconocidas y tomadas en cuenta en el SAN y las las desigualdades sociales tiene resultados en la SAN. En este contexto, las la SAN debería integrar y entender los conocimientos, ciencias y prácticas ancestrales.

Contestando a la pregunta la SAN tendría que integrar las mujeres indígenas y afrodescendientes con sus propias características, necesidades La base de la vulnerabilidad de las mujeres, frente a una pobreza crónica encuentra su respuesta en mercados laborales discriminatorios y la exclusión social de las instituciones políticas y económicas. A esto hay que agregar que la división del trabajo remunerado y no remunerado aumenta su posición de inseguridad y de vulnerabilidad.

Compromisos para reducir la desigualdad (ODS), esfuerzos para mejorar la medición.

Promover el empoderamiento de las mujeres rurales, indígenas y afrodescendientes en la gestión y conservación sostenible de suelos implica que los indicadores críticos para garantizar sus derechos y seguridad a la tenencia a la tierra los países deben comprometerse a aplicar los ODS en su totalidad y en especial el Indicador 1.4.2. en derechos seguros de la tierra; objetivo 5.a. sobre los derechos sobre las tierras agrícolas, y el indicador 5.a.2 sobre los marcos legales, incluido el derecho consuetudinario, que garantiza la igualdad de derechos de las mujeres rurales, indígenas y afrodescendientes a la tierra y a su control.

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La datos desagregados en los países de la región deben permitir a las SAN planificar respuestas concretas e inclusivas bajo una perspectiva de interculturalidad, intergeneracionaldad, e interseccionalidad.

## Dr. Sazzala Jeevananda Reddy, Former Expert - FAO/UN, India

In India under food security bill of 2013 included Rice, Wheat and millets [Sorghum, Pearl Millet & Finger Millet]. Local governments rarely supply millets to ration dealers. North India primarily wheat and south India primarily rice is supplied to public distribution outlets. Millets are considered as healthy diet as grains are unpolluted. Rice and wheat are unhealthy diet as grains are polluted. In south India, in ration shops poor quality rice is sold. Ration card holders sell the rice to ration shop and they in turn rice millers who in turn polish sell to Food Corporation of India that supplied to ration shops. In voluntary food supply use brocken rice.

Children diet: milk products, oil products are adulterated. Governments knowing fully well, come forward to take any action on such outlets [except once in a while]. Majority of water supplied for drinking is not clean. The air they breathe is also not pure.

In India central and states fight on procurement based on the political rivalry. The main suffers are farmers and farm labourers. In the case of Telangana State, during 2021-22 crop seasons, central and state governments are fighting till to date on purchase of rice from farmers. This is unusual in India for the first time it so happens that to in Telangana State. This resulted state chief minister asked not to grow paddy in Rabi [post-rainy season]. In fact this state received good rains during 2021 and thus helped rise in groundwater availability. Farmers have no seed to go for alternate crops. So, the lands were kept fallow. This affected the farmers, labour, animal and thus milk. This is basically because, in Kharif [rainy season] too much power was consumed for lifting water from ground water and canal water with poor planning. Also, they indiscriminately produced hydropower even far below the dead storage level. This affected Andhra Pradesh in terms of water availability for irrigation and drinking. This helped to cover up wasteful use of power in irrigation. Mishandling of irrigation projects with political agenda. Also, with regional political parties’ culture, wasting fertile agriculture lands for real estate ventures that create rural to urban migration and as a result they live under filthy-unhygienic conditions.

What I wanted to say here is, theoretical exercises are far from reality. They varied from country to country; and state to state within the country. FAO/FSN must work at ground realities. NGOs may give poor quality feedback as their interest is to get funds.

Dr. Sazzala Jeevananda Reddy

Formerly Chief Technical Advisor-WMO/UN & Expert-FAO/UN

Fellow, Andhra Pradesh Akademy of Sciences

Fellow, Telangana Academy of Sciences

Convenor, Forum for a Sustainable Environment

Hyderabad, TS, India

## Paul Rigterink, Potomac Technical Advisors, United States of America

hope to use the Three Sisters Companion Gardening Technology to increase the income and food security of families working in the Ugandan rock quarries. The Three Sisters Gardening technique requires that participants understand the Three Sisters Gardening planting strategy as well as corn and squash "hand pollination" procedures. It is my understanding that a lack of pollinators is causing a lot of agriculture productivity problems for small Ugandan farmers. You can look at their corn or watermelons and in 5 seconds determine if the corn or watermelon is being pollinated properly. Hand pollination procedures can help solve the pollination problems. Hand pollination may be "new technology" to extremely poor Ugandan farmers.

It took me awhile, but I now understand why I can't get the seed supplies I need to help small farmers stop starvation in Uganda. Initially I noted that most African countries have a very limited number of seed suppliers and that these seed suppliers sold a very limited number of products. I also was told by Ugandan personnel that they wanted to use only non-GMO seeds.

After a little investigation I determined that African countries sell most of their vegetables in the European market and Europeans wanted to buy only non-GMO products. They noted that it is very difficult to distinguish between a GMO seed product and a non-GMO seed product. Most African countries limit the number of seed companies in their country and limit the import of seeds into their country to ensure that they are selling only non-GMO products.

It also is very difficult and expensive to get an Import Permit to import seeds into an African country even when you are importing seeds that have been declared to be non-GMO by a US grower such as those at Seed Saver Exchange. I must use only the seeds that are available in Uganda unless I want to spend more than two years to get the proper Import Permit and Phytosanitary certification. I may need to wait a few years to obtain non-GMO, non-Hybrid green pole bean seeds or non-GMO, non-Hybrid corn seeds with strong stalks in Uganda if I am lucky. These seeds are very common in other parts of the world including Europe.

To counter this lack of seed availability I am focusing on methods for increasing production of small Ugandan farmers that do not rely on improved seeds. I am focusing on the use of "Hand Pollination" of corn, squash, and watermelons. Hand pollination can significantly improve the small farmer production of corn, squash, and watermelons in regions that lack insect pollinators (bees) including parts of Uganda.

Ugandan women and children working in the Kampala rock quarries do not have the food security and income that they could have. Ugandan officials are implementing a seed policy that goes well beyond what European and International personnel are recommending. European and International personnel do not want to see Ugandan women and children suffer due to an over-the-top application of a seed policy that the international community has advocated.

I hope that the Uganda State Trade Association officials will work with Ugandan Government and Ugandan university personnel to solve this problem before poor Ugandan women and children suffer additional unnecessary food shortages

Here is an argument for not using GMO seeds

<https://grain.org/article/entries/427-twelve-reasons-for-africa-to-reject-gm-crops>

Here is an argument for using GMO seeds

<https://allianceforscience.cornell.edu/10-things-everyone-should-know-about-gmos-in-africa/>

Here is my understanding of why African nations are reluctant to use GMO seeds

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/07/why-is-africa-reluctant-to-use-gmo-crops/>

## Eyongetta Njieassam, University of dschang, Cameroon

**Inequalities**

Women and youths in this region have the following challenges as inequality:

- inaccessibility to land

- lack of finance

- lack of agricultural support tools from government agencies

- no place in decision making

- lack of access to information and training

- cultural barriers

**Best practices**

My recommendation for best practices so far include:

Most lands in our communities should be shared equally with women given the right to access and own lands. With this, women and youths who constitutes the main labour force working tirelessly to produce food will be able to cultivate and increase production due to access to land.

Women like men should be given access to loans. This can be done through the creation of cooperatives by bringing together women in rural communities to come as one under a single plateform to manage their own finance and resources and create institituitions where they can be able to take loan and credits with little or no collateral.

Government agencies should assist rural women and youths in supplying them with agricultural tools, such as hoes, machets, improved seeds and even organic fertilisers, lives birds, ruminants and feed and vaccines. This will boost production in the agricultural sector thereby increasing resilience and food availability and security.

Women and youths, especially girl children, should be given an oppurtunity to play a role in community leadership and decision making especially on issues of agriculture and environmental management. Women are natural managers and thus if given a role they are going to take credible decisions that will build trust and confidence amongst them.

Women and youths should be offered free informal training courses to assist them in gaining modern knowledge on agricultural practices. This is a great stem in helping the local women and youths to understand the environmental effects of conventional agriculture and thereby being encouraged or motivated to be more involved in sustainable agriculture practices.

Generally, our African culture affects and limits women in aspects of land ownership, decision making and ownership of natural resources. I think working with community leaders to uplift some of these barries can go a long way to reduce inequality and give women the opportunity to take charge in their activities and communities.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33502362/>

Thank you.

Eyongetta Njieassam

## Kameswararao Chiruvolu, Private, India

Protein is an important part of a healthy diet, but an estimated one billion people worldwide suffer from protein deficiency. The problem is most severe in Central Africa and South Asia, where about 30 percent of children consume too little protein. Protein deficiency leads to malnutrition. Availability and accessibility of quality protein are two key factors in achieving ‘zero hunger’ in the world. In the WHO recommended healthy diet there are no guidelines on quality and quantity of protein. Many countries are yet to prepare their own guidelines. Statistics reveal that 93% of Indian population are unaware of ideal protein requirement per day with pregnant ladies on the top (97%), followed by lactating mothers (96%) and adolescents (95%). Situation in other countries is not much different.

Food security and nutrition plays a key role in Sustainable Development Goal1(SDG1) of UN: ‘zero hunger’ and elimination of all forms of malnutrition. Supplementing diet with Meal Maker Protein Powder (MMPP) is a cost- effective pathway to achieve zero hunger by 2030.

Meal maker is a by-product of soya bean oil extraction and refining process. Pulp remaining after extracting the oil from soya beans is converted into small chunks looking like small meat pieces and are often referred as vegetable meat. Meal maker is rich in proteins, 100 grams of meal maker has about 52 grams proteins, four times that of a boiled egg costing much less than four eggs.

Soya bean is one of the major crops cultivated across the world. It is grown under several weather conditions. In 2019 global production of soya bean is 334million tonnes. Approximately 85% of the world's soybean crop is processed into soya bean oil and soya bean meal. More than 95% of soya bean meal is used as animal feed. That is, about 284 million tonnes soya meal is produced in 2019, and about 270 million tonnes is used as animal feed. Increasing human consumption of meal maker is a sustainable approach to reduce protein deficiency. A small fraction of produced soya meal, that is less than10 million tonnes can provide 25 grams soya meal per day per person to 1 billion undernourished people in the world for one year.

Soya meal has a long shelf life, it can be transported from anywhere in the world to remote regions through inexpensive transport. There is no need for cold storage and rapid transport. It costs much less than other animal-based protein requiring rapid transport and cold storage facilities.

MMPP is ready to use in combination with several other food items. For example, MMPP can be added to butter or jam and used as spread, can be added to porridge ,mixed with idli/dosa batter in making protein rich breakfast, can be added to wheat flour in making protein rich bread. MMPP can be made to suit local food habits and culture of the region. MMPP can be included in various Public Distribution System (PDS) schemes including school lunch programs.

MMPP is made by powdering soya meal maker first and then dry roasting the powder. It is necssary to remove residual chemical (Hexane) used in the soyabean oil extraction process. Removal of Hexane residue from different sizes meal maker chunks requires extensive cooking. Powdering before dry roasting ensures uniform heating of meal maker.

Currently, soya meal maker is not popular amongst the house holds for two reasons. 1) Preparation of food items using meal maker are time consuming, not suitable for working days. 2) Removal of residual chemicals in the meal maker production requires extensive cooking process.

The proposed idea is tried as proof-of-concept with limited number of volunteers. Availability, accessibility and sustainability are considered in idea formation but scalability needs to be evaluated. FAO team review and FSN forum members feedback will be used in refining the idea.

Dr. C V Kameswara Rao, M. Tech, Ph.D

Information Practitioner (voluntary), 70+age group Electronics engineer with systems engineering specialisation.

Attachment:

<https://assets.fsnforum.fao.org/public/discussions/contributions/Meal%20Maker%20Protein%20Powderapr.docx>

## Ana Puhac, FAO, France

As a FAO-ESN team, we would like to contribute to the report with a reference to our first-hand data collection on 60 territorial markets in 8 countries, carried out over the past year. The initiative was done using [FAO methodology](https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5217en/) for mapping of territorial markets, which was developed **as a direct response to 2016 CFS policy recommendations "Connecting Smallholders to Markets"**, referring to the need to collect comprehensive data on formal and informal markets, rural and urban and linked to local, national and regional food systems.

The initiative produced a valuable set of data on both retailers and consumers who attend these local, territorial markets, and the data can be disaggregated by gender, age, different food groups (and more). Gender inclusion is a key aspect in the methodology, because it also offers an interpretive tool - a synthetic indicator on Gender Inclusion. This indicator measures how inclusive a market is to women compared to men, by taking into consideration the gender income gap of the market retailers, and the gap between men and women retailers who do not have access to financial services.

The whole methodology is designed to inform policy-making processes that seek strategic entry points in the food systems for improving local diets and nutrition. We strongly believe that territorial markets represent this crucial entry point for working on the systemic change for increasing availability, access and desirability of healthy and diversified foods for low-income consumers.

In the attachment we are sharing a draft of a thematic brief titled “Territorial markets for women’s economic inclusion” (to be published soon by FAO) with gender-focused data analysis from the mapped markets in 3 countries. We do have more gender-specific data and can develop a more elaborative report if you consider this initiative as a valuable reference for the report.

Attachment:

<https://assets.fsnforum.fao.org/public/discussions/contributions/TMs%20and%20gender%20(11-4)%20(DRAFT).pdf>

## Mirian Colindres, Alliance Bioversity-CIAT, Honduras

Las desigualdades para la seguridad alimentaria y la nutrición se pueden reducir en función del acceso al manejo de los recursos naturales, ejemplo: en comunidades que viven en áreas de amortiguamiento de las áreas protegidas no siempre son tomados en cuenta los pobladores para conocer las necesidades de tenencia de tierra para cultivar y del acceso a otros recursos del bosque (animales y plantas) para su alimentación, la veda de las especies no siempre están alineadas con las prácticas culturales de las personas ó no toma en cuenta los cambios en la disponibilidad de alimentos causados por el cambio climático.

Otro aspecto que podría ayudar a reducir las desigualdades es la participación social, cultural, político y económico que los pobladores tienen en organizaciones locales, regionales y nacionales, no siempre participan en estructuras organizativas en puestos de decisión y al no participar no tienen el acceso a defender su participación en el acceso de los recursos para mejorar su seguridad alimentaria y nutrición. Otro aspecto para tomar en cuenta es el escaso conocimiento de los pobladores en relación al valor nutritivo de los alimentos y a la conservación de los mismos, hay grandes carencias de infraestructura para el almacenamiento de productos y cuando hay cosecha a veces se desperdician los alimentos.

## Brandon Eisler, Nutritional Diversity, Panama

The number one [1] best change to make in reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition is agriculturally integrated 'permaculture' method and start converting mono-culture lands to multi-crop and multi-use species to produce the lumber the farm will need each decade, the straw the farm will need each decade, and the feed each animal there will need, the flowers that the bees need, etc. A functioning ecosystem as nature gives it to us; in an extensive, rich diversity.

Mud bricks were something we used to a lot of and now we don't use, however going back to natural easy to make yourself structures could prove immensely beneficial to the bank account of the farmer, the material and industrial demand and supply chain, and the environment.

Supporting companies, cooperatives, and persons who make these types of changes gives us a great stock both in health for ourselves and our loved ones and the health of our ecosystem as a whole.

Like with boxing, ju-jitsu, painting, drawing, sculpting, music-making, or any art; it is little changes, almost hair-line that make all the difference.

Like mud bricks garbage and waste from the "previous area of ill consciousness" into the "era of coherent cohesive harmonious conscience," such as tires and bottles can be used as filament for structure - the 'Earthship' movement of New Mexico and the Permaculture movement worldwide has done a lot with this.

Where nature shows us combinations, modern science takes us in the 'direction of dissection" breaking down and isolating elements. This can be a good study but the curious absence of the direction of the connection is now prying at the door of destabilization.

Small changes can be made with global education and pronouncement to enhance the ecology to surpass all fears and all hopes to create an incredibly rich and vital atmosphere for all. It is totally doable.

Farmers are often shocked to hear of metaphysical templates for extreme production, however today we have many tested verifications of Rudolph Steiner's Biodynamic Agriculture - which is just a starting place for highly-productive earth culturing. Another area that modern science is unable to enter for whatever reason.

Regardless of current stigmas and proceeding with results-based navigation towards success it is time to start getting behind some of the people who are already doing this to spread the culture.

I have some recommendations on this.

Xprize has launched a Carbon Conversion Competition (which is still open for registry <https://www.xprize.org/prizes/elonmusk>), and several teams have won milestone prizes of 1 million dollars already such as the Climate Foundation (<https://www.climatefoundation.org/xprize.html>) doing a marine permaculture model which is surely going to be very important, and the University of Iowa who is doing a land soil-based enhancement much like our Bio-Tribe Team here in Panama (<https://nutritionaldiversity.com/>, <https://gangmaker.org/A1/xprize-carbon-removal/>). The XPrize group and community has become a fantastic group of environmentalists, and conscious scientists who are attacking things from every angle! There are groups on the Xprize site that are reforesting corrals in the oceans, and working cutting edge waste conversion technologies, and with the help of the masses, they can really get things going everywhere quickly.

After being a student of alternative agriculture for a decade this is the most promising splash on the radar I have seen.

So today I pray (and it is a special day for many reasons) that we each take five minutes and find one of these grassroots doing it for the love and the karma communities of actual down to Earth scientists to get us back on track!

Here in the mountains here, a river called the Cxxxxa should be full of fish to the point where you can't cross it without being pelted. This river has no fish. This is because of monoculture coffee farms that cover the mountain. The chemical runoff is so toxic no fish exit in the big Cxxxxa river. Such a gorgeous volcanic "black gold" soil area, a total shame.

This world is a food production machine, the problem is that we came up with "I know better than nature" model and ran that thing to ridiculous.

The good news is we can use most of the equipment and labor still we just need to change up our methods a bit. This turnaround prioritization will answer to climate change fears and enhance greatly our quality of life and happiness across the globe as well as that of all the living things here.

The second thing [2] to emphasize in reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition is the business opportunity and model that exists where new diverse small agricultures can produce for consumers non-toxic diverse nutrition. As they educate their community on the benefits of their product versus the grocery, the little man on the short end of this inequality can regain the income of agricultural labor and do much better than the previous working wage.

For example; My cows get a Nutritional Diversity diet of a richness that other feeding areas do not have - not even close. My customer base is very solid. I have diverse vegetables of higher quality and growing strength and products the store does not have. I can almost immediately start putting this Nutritional Diversity diet (<https://nutritionaldiversity.com/>) together finding small farmers already doing 'permaculture' small organic farming and offering a full or half pantry of better quality goods to clients from several. I have educated them on something helpful that really does benefit their life and loved ones' lives. So this is a great business model all around that anyone can get into.

Wherever I go I help a few gardens even ones on urban balconies and rooftops and they are always happy to throw a bag of veggies at me when I swing through. I find these kinds of excellent qualities all over participation in a natural uplifting role like this. It is not a millionaire life every time but being in this groove of the record plays nicely. Being on the same positive, interesting learning "bio-page" (the great thing also about biological nature is no one person will ever get close to learning it all), with others is helpful and nurturing to social connections as well - arguably the thing we live for the most.

Humbly,

Brandon E., Nutritional Diversity Diet Science, Panama

## Rodney Cooke, CGIAR, Italy

The first two questions to guide this e consultation describe a very broad framework embracing the many societal factors that are associated with inequality (and on which many libraries of information exist):

**Qu1. a. Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition:** What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective; Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs), efforts to improve measurement; Relationship between inequality and inequity….

**Qu 1. b Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality**

**Qu 1. c Paths toward equality**

**Qu 2. Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:** reducing inequality gap and its potential impact on food security and nutrition outcomes; ensuring the effective legal framework to guarantee equal rights …; empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organizations in making food systems more equitable and accessible; addressing capacity gaps ….

The risk of such a broad opening framework is that the scope of this HLPE report would be too diffuse, inadequately focused on FSN, and re-invent some of the wheels developed by other organisations. I outline below key reference sources that cover much of the FSN ground of questions 1 & 2, and respond to question 3 on recent references that should be considered in this report.  And my brief summaries below of those sources (which in turn include many associated references pertinent to question 3) respond to some of the items in question 4.

I. Much of that Qu 1&2 context was investigated leading up to the **UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028** which highlights the important role family farmers play in eradicating hunger and shaping our future of food. Family farming offers a unique opportunity to ensure food security, improve livelihoods, better manage natural resources, protect the environment and achieve sustainable development, particularly in rural areas.

The Global Action Plan of the UN Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028 aims at accelerating actions undertaken in a collective, coherent and comprehensive manner to support family farmers, who are key agents of sustainable development. That Action Plan comprises 7 pillars:

Pillar 1. Develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming

Pillar 2–Transversal. Support youth and ensure the generational sustainability of family farming

Pillar 3–Transversal. Promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women

Pillar 4. Strengthen family farmers’ organizations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and provide inclusive services in the  
urban-rural continuum

Pillar 5. Improve socio-economic inclusion, resilience and well-being of family farmers, rural households and communities

Pillar 6. Promote sustainability of family farming for climate-resilient food systems

Pillar 7. Strengthen the multidimensionality of family farming to promote social innovations contributing to territorial development and food systems that safeguard biodiversity, the environment and culture

Pillars 1, 4, 5 and 7 are directly relevant to this e consultation.

II. **The CERES 2030 report** (deriving from a partnership between Cornell University, IISD and IFPRI) was discussed at the CFS AG/B meeting on 18 March (cited also by IFAD and GDPRD at that meeting). This studied sustainable solutions to end hunger, and developed ten recommendations of which the first three focused on “ Empower the Excluded”:

1. Enable participation in farmers’ organizations.

2. Invest in vocational programs for rural youth that offer integrated training in multiple skills.

3. Scale up social protection programs to help create a bridge for people living in poverty to find productive jobs.

**III. The IFAD RURAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT (2021), titled Transforming food systems for rural prosperity.**

This report underlined that food systems need to be changed dramatically so that a new food system may deliver available, accessible, adequate, and nutritious food for all in a sustainable manner. The new food systems must aspire to become fair, inclusive and sustainable.

The overall goals of a food system’s transformation are to ensure that people are able to consume diets that are healthy, to produce food within planetary boundaries and to earn a decent living from their work in the food system. Livelihoods, nutrition and environmental goals are interlinked. Central to these desired outcomes is the need to ensure that food systems are resilient to shocks from weather extremes, pest and disease outbreaks, climate change and market anomalies.

The key recommendations of this Report of particular relevance to this consultation included ‘What can governments do?’ That section is re-stated here:

A failure of food systems is a failure of governance. National governments play a central role as drivers and implementers of change, yet global markets and geopolitical considerations also play a crucial role. Policymakers, governments and stakeholders can support this transition by:

**Providing incentives** that reward responsible investments, nature-based solutions and agroecological strategies, and low carbon and climate-resilient techniques. Investments in food markets need to be fair: food markets need to be accessible to rural people and farm/ non-farm small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on fair terms. Increasing investments in infrastructure can help with this.

**Building and strengthening responsible investment principles and practices** related to labour conditions, gender equality, the environment and climate.

**Ensuring opportunities for large numbers of smaller-scale producers**, supporting the marketing of their products and developing the entrepreneurial skills of rural people, particularly youth.

**Spurring scalable innovation among local, small, food system actors**by investing in digital technologies and in production techniques that, once tested, are also suitable for scaling up, such as those related to nature-based solutions and agroecology.

**Developing pricing systems** that reflect the true cost of production, including the benefits of nature-based solutions and environmental costs.

**Overcoming market constraints**and constraints related to missing markets by having clear regulations, incentives and innovation programmes to support poor people’s food purchasing power and women’s bargaining power – and enable them to make better-informed food choices through training, labelling, and communication that reduces transaction costs and reflects fair pricing.

**Building partnerships:** governments, civil society, the private sector, academia and representatives of rural people need to come together with innovative governance mechanisms that give a real voice and influence to poor rural people.

This 2021 RDR also identified three key ways to ensure rural people benefit from a food systems transformation:

**Create new employment opportunities and invest in local midstream food businesses.**Local SMEs provide new ways to access both markets and non-farm employment opportunities, while supplying healthier foods to meet consumer demand.

**Invest in agricultural systems by helping small farms become more productive and profitable**

**Focus on social protection measures that encourage better diets and livelihood opportunities.**

The next three sources were cited in my mail of 29 March to the CFS Bureau/AG, regarding ‘Possible themes for the HLPE report to be presented to CFS in 2024’. I recommended in that mail including in the title and in the leading questions the issue of equity: 1. Building resilient and equitable supply chains for FSN.

**IV. SOFI 21 included in the conclusion: WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO TRANSFORM FOOD SYSTEMS FOR FOOD SECURITY, IMPROVED NUTRITION AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHY DIETS. Six pathways were stated to address major drivers behind recent food security and nutrition trends. Pathways 3-6 have a direct bearing on poverty reduction/inequality and FSN.**

The six recommended pathways described were: 1) integrating humanitarian, development and peace building policies in conflict-affected areas; 2) scaling up climate resilience across food systems; 3) strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable to economic adversity; 4) intervening along the food supply chains to lower the cost of nutritious foods; 5) tackling poverty and structural inequalities, ensuring interventions are pro-poor and inclusive; and 6) strengthening food environments and changing consumer behaviour to promote dietary patterns with positive impacts on human health and the environment.

**V. The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition – still foremost in the memory of CFS B/AG colleagues- are structured around seven focus areas encapsulating cross-cutting factors that are relevant for improving diets and nutrition.**

The first three focus areas and the associated text are directly relevant to this consultation: 1. Transparent, democratic and accountable governance; 2. Sustainable Food Supply Chains to Achieve Healthy Diets in the Context of Economic, Social and Environmental Sustainability, and Climate Change; 3. Equal and equitable access to healthy diets through sustainable food systems.

**VI. HLPE Report – Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs – HLPE 13, 2018).** A key MSP mechanism described and also discussed in the follow-up meetings (mediated in 2019 by CFS Bureau members Germany and China) is the value chain (from farmer to consumer and all the stakeholders and links in between) to deliver on FSN. The term value chain and supply chain are often used interchangeably in the literature. The challenge is to ensure that these interventions and MSP developments benefit the poor farmers and smallholders. This discussion was informed by documents cited from CGIAR and IFAD, including a then recent book and associated articles from the CGIAR Centres CIP and IFPRI “Innovation for inclusive value-chain development: successes and challenges”: Andre Devaux, Maximo Torero, Jason Donovan, Douglas Horton, (2018). This book preceded Maximo coming to FAO as Chief Economist. IFAD had produced reports on the ‘Sustainable inclusion of smallholders in agricultural value chains’, and ‘ Public-Private-Producer Partnerships in Agricultural Value Chains’ (Mylene Kherallah, Marco Camagni, Philipp   Baumgartner, 2015 & 2016). Much of that is revisited in IFAD’s current Rural Development Report, 2021 ‘Transforming food systems for rural prosperity’, cited in III above.

VII. Finally I draw your attention to a cautionary note on the challenges and probabilities of inequality reduction, cited in an ILRI e mail of 1 April 2022. This referred to Susan Macmillan’s ‘ Tiny Letter’ and the provocative article: 'Taking Stock: Justice Creep, Scott Alexander. . . justice is eating the world’.

I quote an excerpt below, noting that you have Iain Wright, DDG, ILRI in the HLPE SC ( copied here), who will doubtless have his views on this.

“Below are just two of the hundreds of reader responses to this issue '. , , There's an inherent underlying assumption that we would have equality of outcomes in a just world. There is absolutely no reason to believe this.

'It's basically pitting "justice" in a state of perpetual war against bad luck, uneven genetics, uneven geography, human self-interest, the natural tendency toward centralisation and hierarchy in both the economic and political domain, and basically every other force that creates unequal outcomes in human societies- not least of which is personal choice.

'Unfairness is baked into the world at so many levels or emerges so rapidly from organic human processes that expecting a mere absence of malice or even-handedness in dispute-resolution to produce equity is laughable, so in practice this vision of 'justice' has to become totalitarian and all-encompassing. Every variable- including personal choice- has to be coerced into irrelevancy.”

## Manuel Moya, International Pediatric Association. TAG on Nutrition, Spain

FSN FORUM. Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition ( U 15 04 22)

Taking into account the CFS workstream on inequalities on food security and nutrition, the present contribution will focus on the following points, linked to my medical nutrition background:

1. Despite well-established food supply chains in HIC, food insecurity does exist, especially in urban low socioeconomic areas with demonstrated negative nutritional issues, being the most relevant overweight an obesity (Report A. iii)
2. Solving food insecurity does not require only the necessary adequate physical and finance resources, for ensuring success equally requires education. This point should be evaluated under two circumstances, a) the greater required time and b) the setting up of an action for early prevention starting in pediatric ages (Report 1. B. ii). Concerning nutritional education, last stage for food security, it is advisable to change the classical concept of nutrient diets for this of food diets, considerably easier to apply (Report C.). Supporting agroecological practices at small scale agriculture (Report Introduction, penultimate para) it will be helpful because implies also education.
3. References (If required more specific references can be supplied):
   * Warnick J, Cardel M, Jones L, Gonzalez-Louis R, Janicke D. Impact of mothers' distress and emotional eating on calories served to themselves and their young children: an experimental study. Pediatric Obesity 2022 Jan 05. doi: 10.1111/ijpo.12886
   * Daniels L, Taylor RW, Williams SM, Gibson RS, Fleming EA, Wheelet BJ. Impact of a modified version of baby-led weaning on iron intake and status: a randomised controlled trial. BMJ Open. 2018; 8: e019036.
   * Crofts SJC, Lam J, Scurrah K, Dite GS. Association of Adult Socioeconomic Status with Body Mass Index: A Within- and Between- Twin Study. Twin Res Hum Genet 2021; 24(2): 123-129; doi: 10.1017/thg.2021.14.Epub2021Apr14
   * CDC. Age at first solid foods has no effect on childhood obesity. UPI.com. Published: 11 May 2016.
   * Tester JM, Phan TLP, Tacker JM, Leung CW, Dreyer Gillete ML, Sweeney BR, et al. Characteristics of children 2 to 5 years of age with severe obesity. Pediatrics. 2018; 141: e20173228.
   * Hilpert M, Brockmeier K, Dordel S, Koch B, Weiss V, Ferrari N. Sociocultural influence on obesity and lifestyle in children: A study of daily activities, leisure time behavior, motor skills and weight status. Obes Facts. 2017; 10: 168-78.
   * Zou X, Wang L, Xiao L, Xu Z, Yao T, Shen M. Deciphering the Irregular Risk of Stroke Increased by Obesity Classes: A stratified Mendelian Randomization Study. Front Endocrinol (Lausasanne) 2021; 12: 750999; doi: 10.3389/fendo.2021.750999.

## Marie Durling, World Food Programme, Sweden

Feedback from WFP Nutrition division:

Under point 4 (feedback on report development), the following key points are missing:

*- A focus on inequalities and barriers presents within food-processing systems, which are essential to transform agricultural products safely, hygienically, and according to international and national standards/guidelines. Most food loss among smallholder farmers occurs between the production and the processing phases in LMICs due to a lack of technology, equipment, and processing facilities.*

*- A focus on women throughout the entire food system, as they are not just experiencing inequalities in the food production systems (inequalities in land rights, access to resources, credit, or inputs, and higher value lands) but also in primary and secondary food processing, and local food distribution (often as street vendors) and consumption (principal caregiver, last to eat, heavy workloads, etc).*

The current outline seems very focused on food security vs nutrition. It would be interesting to frame equality around nutrition when nutrient needs are not equal.

Missing points around c.ii. because human rights are not the same as legal rights, so good governance should be expanded to explicitly include shifting norms to create the enabling environment needed to claim rights. (e.g. just because the government says that pregnant and lactating women have higher needs and should get more/better quality food, doesn’t mean that it will trickle down to practice in the community or household if there are other social structures or taboos that drive practice).

## Claudia Brito, FAO UN, Chile

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to share the RLC's contributions to the HLPE consultation, please find the document attached.

I hope it is useful.

Kind regards,

Claudia Brito Bruno

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**FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean**

With this e-consultation, the HLPE Steering Committee is seeking your feedback. In particular, you are invited to:

**1. Share your comments and suggestions on the objectives and content of this report:**

**a. Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition**

Gaps related to the full exercise of the right to adequate food, including discriminations and differences based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, territory and or other socioeconomic position.

**i. What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective;**

An underprivileged or discriminatory access to food safety and nutrition.

**ii. Trends within and between countries (data collection, measurement tools);**

The FIES is important to measure the food security and nutrition gaps among women and men headed households

(<https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/es/c/1236494/>)

Another relevant trend in Latin America and the Caribbean is the use of FAO´s Gender sensitive value chains methodology, which reviews the gender gaps that women face along a particular value chain (<https://www.fao.org/policy-support/tools-and-publications/resources-details/es/c/1140290/>) and allows developing a path for their reduction.

**iii. Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing;**

**iv. Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs), efforts to improve measurement;**

SDGs indicators related to women´s participation in food systems, such as indicator 5.a.2 women’s legal rights to land ownership and/or control (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/I8486EN/>).

**a. Relationship between inequality and inequity.**

Inequality, the non-recognition of the rights of a particular group, affects negatively the chances that the group has to access to decent work, markets, capacity building, financing, social protection, perpetuating food insecurity and malnutrition. Starting from the recognition and protection of the human rights, as societies we must work on equity, ensuring the closure of the gender, ethnic, territorial and age related gaps.

**b. Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality**

* Lack of co-responsibility in relation to care giving tasks in the families, communities and the States. Favoring to understand women as the main, and in some cases only, responsible for this duties, and difficulting their social and economic empowerment.
* Legislations and policies that do not recognize women as producers and relevant food systems workers.
* Women´s reduced access to economic assets, among which land tenure is particularly relevant.
* Social protection policies selection criteria, communicational strategies, procedures and conditionalities that affect negatively women´s and indigenous people’s possibilities to have access to them.
* Among indigenous peoples women´s reduced proficiency in the official country language, affecting their access to capacity building, governmental programmes, and access to markets and to better-paid works.
* Unequal ways of understanding the exercise of power and decision-making, that systematically difficult women access to power and the consideration of their needs, knowledge and capacities.
* Women and indigenous populations face difficulties to access markets, due to the reduced mobility infrastructure and services, and cultural norms that affect women´s autonomy.
* Violence, based on gender and/or interethnic conflicts, affects women and indigenous people’s access to productive resources and decent work, reducing their chances to have access to a diverse diet and safe water.

**i. Concentration of economic, social, and political capital within the food systems;**

Agro-industrial development and the global integration of food markets have not guaranteed equal access to healthy food at affordable prices to a significant percentage of the world's population. The deregulation of the markets, the omnipresent presence of a food supply of low nutritional quality that is sold at low prices, the increasing pressure on natural resources, and unregulated advertising , have reduced the capacities of small producers to produce and offer food on equal terms. Moreover, these practices have pushed consumers to opt for highly processed products, rich in critical nutrients, such as sugar, saturated fat and sodium. Affecting people´s health and contributing to global warming.

**ii. Structural barriers to equality for historically disadvantaged and poor populations (women, people of colour, rural and urban poor, indigenous communities, peasants, migrants, refugees, etc.).**

Understanding women as the main, and sometimes only, caregivers, lays at the base of several gender gaps that reduce their access to decent work and to productive assets. Investing on social protection, especially in relation to care, contributes to women´s social, political and economic empowerment. Achievement that directly contribute to their visibility and recognition by the governments, private sector, civil society, academia and their own communities as food producers, agricultural workers and consumers, affecting positively their food security and nutrition.

**c. Paths toward equality**

**i. Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food;**

The right to food is at the base of the human rights approach, every individual and community should be able to access to food in a safe an equal way. Sustainable development cannot be achieved if as humanity we don´t understand an act recognizing that the right to food is inseparable to the reduction of poverty, social protection and a healthy relation with our environment, that would lead us to mitigate and reduce climate change effects.

**ii. Good governance to rebalance power and influence;**

Good governance requires equality in terms of participation and decision-making. This in terms of the food systems is not easy to achieve, since there are relevant power imbalances in them. Therefore, it is central to develop and implement methodologies that would allow reducing the effects of those power imbalances. Another relevant good practice is the conflict of interest declaration of all the parties involved in the decision making process in order to advance transparency.

**iii. Legal and policy interventions to regulate the influence of corporate actors (and those with concentrated power), and remove structural barriers and increase capital (for those with diminished resources).**

Making visible, recognizing and transforming the gaps experienced by women, indigenous peoples and other groups in the exercise of their rights requires, on the one hand, understanding the intricate nature of these gaps. On the other hand, it involves designing and implementing policies, strategies, programmes and projects aimed at dealing in a differentiated manner with the requirements of the vulnerable population through diagnoses that observe the scenario as a set of gaps that are mutually reinforcing and on which it is necessary to act in a strategic and coordinated manner. All adults may need care and must be able to care for others, without this hindering their access to income and decent living conditions. Therefore, we recommend:

* Adopting comprehensive approaches that recognize the productive, reproductive and community roles of women, understanding that the solution must not reduce the female subject to care work, or the role of mother. Consequently, there is an urgent need to review and redesign social protection systems so that they favor women’s access to decent jobs and to resources that are crucial to their productive work (land, water, financing, tools, livestock, training, etc.) by favoring co-responsibility in relation to care work.
* Guarantee the realization of diagnoses and social characterizations of vulnerable populations, considering factors such as sex, ethnicity, geographical location, employment modality and age condition (intersectionality approaches).
* Remove possible entry barriers based on gender biases in policies, programmes and procedures, favoring the exercise of human rights. For example, it is necessary to review the requirements to access conditional transfer programmes, so as not to overburden women.
* Increase the coverage of programmes and projects related to food security and nutrition. Some initiatives to guarantee the right to adequate food for families are outstanding, such as the development of public procurement programmes and short supply circuits, which favor the economic reactivation and the empowerment of rural women producers.
* Give priority to care, education and school feeding systems for socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable groups.
* Strengthen systems and programmes for the prevention and care of victims of gender-based violence, as well as the protection of the identity of complainants, with special emphasis on those operating in rural areas.
* Protect the population’s access to a varied food supply, including fruit, vegetables and legumes (among others). To this end, supply circuits must be strengthened, promoting the reopening of supply markets and the development of health measures to protect those who visit or work in them. Make visible and value the productive and commercial work carried out by women in these spaces.
* Abandon the notion that the development of public policies with gender perspective is costly and that, although they have positive effects, we can do without them for the time being. Investment in policies and actions in favor of equal rights between women and men is central to the achievement of sustainable development, since the weaknesses of our economies will be perpetuated as long as half of our population experiences difficulties in accessing decent jobs, social protection and decent living conditions.
* Activate the role of the private sector in the development of programmes to ensure decent employment for women and men. (Recommendations based on: Brito, C. Franch, C. Ivanovic, C. y Rodríguez-Osiac, L. Series The agrifood system and the challenges of COVID-19 Differential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and its connection to the pillars of the agrifood system. No. 8. Santiago, FAO) <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb2115en>)

**2. Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:**

a. reducing inequality gap and its potential impact on food security and nutrition outcomes;

Please review the Gender Strategy for the FNS CELAC Plan, available in: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/es/c/7fc87c26-5cf4-4e5c-acdb-613ed829be2e/>

**b. ensuring the effective legal framework to guarantee equal rights to access land and other productive resources, basic services, and the right to food to reduce inequalities;**

SDG Indicator 5.a.2 - Ensuring women’s legal rights to land ownership and/or control. <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/es/c/I8486EN/>

Plan Nacional de Género en las Políticas Agropecuarias, Uruguay

<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ganaderia-agricultura-pesca/comunicacion/publicaciones/plan-nacional-genero-politicas-agropecuarias>

c. enhancing food systems’ role in the reduction of inequalities (through income and livelihoods generation, while contributing to healthy diets and environment, among others);

d. empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organizations in making food systems more equitable and accessible;

e. addressing capacity gaps in generating and using data and other new technologies in policy-making processes, monitoring and reporting on inequalities for FSN.

**3. Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report.**

Brito, C y Ivanovic, C (2019). Mujeres rurales, protección social y seguridad alimentaria en ALC. <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5092es/ca5092es.pdf>

Brito, C. Franch, C. Ivanovic, C. y Rodríguez-Osiac, L (2020). Series The agrifood system and the challenges of COVID-19 Differential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and its connection to the pillars of the agrifood system. No. 8. Santiago, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb2115en>

Brito, C; Ivanovic, C; and Enríquez, V (2021). Women without land: the persistence of inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean. <https://www.fundacionmicrofinanzasbbva.org/revistaprogreso/en/women-without-land-the-persistence-of-inequality-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

FAO, PAHO, WFP and UNICEF. 2021. Latin America and the Caribbean – Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: Statistics and trends. Santiago, FAO. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7497en>

**4. Provide feedback on the following questions, to guide the development of the report:**

**a. How do food systems drivers affect inequalities? And specifically what are the different impacts of trends in:**

**Please see answer iv. b**

i. assets, land, other natural resources and finance

ii. infrastructure and technology, including ICT

iii. market structure in input provision, logistics, processing, transport, distribution of food

iv. access to information and data

v. demographic trends including migration and urbanisation

vi. socio-cultural factors around gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, language and their intersection

vii. political and economic factors (presence/absence of a legal framework to ensure equal rights to key resources and services and the expression of agency)?

b. How can social inequalities impact FSN outcomes?

c. How can the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? Which different pathways should be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment?

d. How can the reduction of inequalities through sustainable food systems and better FSN contribute to conflict prevention and peace building?

e. How can gender and youth mainstreaming approaches, as well as adopting an intersectional lens on inequalities, taking multiple identities together in the analysis (including gender and youth) in food systems contribute to social justice and better FSN?

**f. What are the main knowledge and data gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine FSN outcomes? What could be improved in data collection and analysis tools for FSN inequalities?**

It is central to favor the development of data and information disaggregated by sex, and analyzed with a gender approach. This implies integrating the gender approach in FSN surveys and diagnoses, and avoiding making the gender situation invisible in measurements based solely on households. Especial attention deserves the analysis of the gender patterns that affect the ways in which women and men roles affect their participation in food systems, showing relevant differences at household, community and national levels.

In addition, it is relevant to generate sex, ethnicity and age disaggregated data, able to offer a comprehensive understanding of the way in which inequalities are reproduced along the food systems. This requires a close review of markets, value chains, working conditions and social protection.

**g. How can strengthened food systems’ governance contribute to the reduction of inequalities in FSN outcomes?**

**Please see answer 2.b**

**h. Which legal frameworks can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities?**

**i. What is the role of political economy in reducing inequalities in food systems and in reducing other inequalities that have an impact on FSN outcomes?**

For contact:

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## Maria Guadalupe Arizmendi, Comisión Federal para la Protección contra Riesgos Sanitarios, Mexico

La Comisión Federal para la Protección contra Riesgos Sanitarios, COFEPRIS, de es un órgano desconcentrado de la Secretaría de Salud (SSA), con autonomía técnica, administrativa y operativa y tiene como Misión el proteger a la población contra riesgos a la salud provocados por el uso y consumo de bienes y servicios, insumos para la salud, así como por su exposición a factores ambientales y laborales, la ocurrencia de emergencias sanitarias y la prestación de servicios de salud mediante la regulación, control y prevención de riesgos sanitarios.

Como se plantea en esta encuesta, la respuesta a esta desigualdad es multidimensional y que involucra a múltiples actores, lo que exige un enfoque holístico e integrado para un desarrollo justo y equitativo.

Una de las acciones que se pueden explorar es sobre el marco jurídico, que pueda garantizar la igualdad de derechos a la tierra y a los servicios básicos, pero también el derecho a la alimentación, y contribuyen de alguna forma a reducir las desigualdades, (Pregunta h del Apartado 4)

En el contexto del derecho a la alimentación incluyente, es necesario el aporte de la cantidad suficiente de nutrimentos para favorecer una vida sana. En este sentido, la adición o la restitución obligatoria de vitaminas y de minerales fungen como medidas regulatorias con el fin de atenuar el problema de la anemia en la población y de evitar carencias nutrimentales.

Por ejemplo, en México se tiene la NORMA Oficial Mexicana NOM-247-SSA1-2008, Productos y servicios. Cereales y sus productos. Cereales, harinas de cereales, sémolas o semolinas. Alimentos a base de: cereales, semillas comestibles, de harinas, sémolas o semolinas o sus mezclas. Productos de panificación. Disposiciones y especificaciones sanitarias y nutrimentales. Métodos de prueba, en donde establece la obligatoriedad de adicionar y restituir nutrimentos en harinas de trigo y de maíz nixtamalizado:

<http://www.dof.gob.mx/normasOficiales/3770/SALUD2a/SALUD2a.htm>

Asimismo, el derecho a la alimentación incluyente precisa ejercer la regulación, el control, la vigilancia y el fomento sanitarios en materia de alimentos para favorecer la inocuidad alimentaria.

## Ken Giller, Wageningen University and N2Africa, Netherlands

Inequality and inequity in agricultural development - From Ken Giller and Eva Thuijsman

Our team at Plant Production Systems, Wageningen University has a focus on understanding how we can reach poorer and disadvantaged rural households to support them to improve their food and nutrition security through farming. Our primary focus is Africa, but we have also conducted a comparative global analysis which is relevant and highlights differences between sub-Saharan Africa and Asia (Giller et al., 2021a).

In sub-Saharan Africa we see huge diversity among locations and within any single location across the continent (Giller et al., 2021b). Small farm size is a critical constraint to farmers achieving food self-sufficiency and food and nutrition security. This is true in annual mixed crop livestock systems (Giller et al., 2021b; Marinus et al., 2022) as well as in cocoa (van Vliet et al. 2021). This leads to what we have termed “The Food Security Conundrum” of sub-Saharan Africa (Giller, 2020). We critically reviewed how farming technology evaluation studies assess differentiated impacts in smallholder farming communities (Thuijsman et al., forthcoming, abstract attached).

Relevant publications are below – and we would be pleased to engage further with the HLPE team.

Giller, K. E. (2020). The Food Security Conundrum of sub-Saharan Africa. Global Food Security, 26, 100431 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2020.100431>

Giller, K. E., Delaune, T., Silva, J. V., Descheemaeker, K., van de Ven, G., Schut, A. G. T., van Wijk, M., Hammond, J., Hochman, Z., Taulya, G., Chikowo, R., Narayanan, S., Kishore, A., Bresciani, F., Teixeira, H. M., Andersson, J., & Van Ittersum, M. K. (2021a). The future of farming: Who will produce our food? Food Security 13: 1073–1099. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-021-01184-6>

Giller, K. E., Delaune, T., Silva, J. V., Descheemaeker, K., van de Ven, G., Schut, A. G. T., van Wijk, M., Hammond, J., Taulya, G., Chikowo, R., & Andersson, J. (2021b). Small farms and development in sub-Saharan Africa: Farming for food, for income or for lack of better options? Food Security, 13: 1431–1454 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12571-021-01209-0>

van Vliet, J.A., Slingerland, M.A., Waarts, Y.R., Giller, K.E., 2021. A Living Income for cocoa producers in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana? Front. Sust. Food Syst. 5, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2021.732831>

Marinus, W., Thuijsman, E.S., van Wijk, M.T., Descheemaeker, K., van de Ven, G.W.J., Vanlauwe, B., Giller, K.E., 2022. What farm size sustains a living? Exploring future options to attain a living income from smallholder farming in the East African Highlands. Front. Sust. Food Syst. 5, 759105. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2021.759105>

Thuijsman, E.S., Den Braber, H.J., Andersson, J.A., Descheemaeker, K., Baudron, F., López-Ridaura, S., Vanlauwe, B., Giller, K.E., (forthcoming). Indifferent to difference? Understanding the unequal impacts of farming technologies among smallholders. A review. Agronomy for Sustainable Development. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13593-022-00768-6>

Abstract

With many of the world’s poor engaged in agriculture, agricultural development programmes often aim to improve livelihoods through improved farming practices. Research on the impacts of agricultural technology interventions is dominated by comparisons of adopters and non-adopters. By contrast, in this literature study we critically review how technology evaluation studies assess differentiated impacts in smallholder farming communities. We searched systematically for studies which present agricultural technology impacts disaggregated for poor and relatively better-off users (adopters). The major findings of our systematic review are as follows: (1) the number of studies that assessed impact differentiation was startlingly small: we were able to identify only 85, among which only 24 presented empirical findings. (2) These studies confirm an expected trend: absolute benefits are larger for the better-off, and large relative benefits among the poor are mostly due to meagre baseline performance. (3) Households are primarily considered as independent entities, rather than as connected with others directly or indirectly, via markets or common resource pools. (4) Explanations for impact differentiation are mainly sought in existing distributions of structural household characteristics. We collated the explanations provided in the selected studies across a nested hierarchy: the field, the farm or household, and households interacting at the farming system level. We also consider impact differentiation over time. With this we provide a structured overview of potential drivers of differentiation, to guide future research for development towards explicitly recognizing the poor among the poor, acknowledging unequal impacts, aiming to avoid negative consequences, and mitigating them where they occur.

## Aliza Lauter, CARE, United States of America

Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition - HLPE consultation on the report’s scope

**Response and recommendations from CARE - April 2022**

**Inequity in Food Systems**

The issue of equity has recently become a focus among the international development community, culminating in targeted efforts to establish fair and just access to opportunities, resources, and distribution of benefits under the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. This effort is consistent with the long-standing recognition that [development is a human right](https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/righttodevelopment.aspx), one which is individually owed to every human person and one in which all peoples are collectively entitled to participate, contribute to, and enjoy. First set forth in the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted in 1986 (54 State Parties) and since reiterated in international human rights instruments (e.g. [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf), [UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1650694?ln=en)), **the right to development includes “equity” as an essential element. It is also inextricably linked to all other human rights in food systems,**[**including the right to health**](https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/factsheet31.pdf)**, freedom from slavery and forced labour and the**[**right to adequate food**](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet34en.pdf)**.**

Despite efforts to adapt food systems and [development goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals) to address the needs of those most marginalized first, certain groups are continuously being left out and left behind. Women, small-scale  farmers, peasants, fisher folk, Indigenous Peoples, and racial and ethnic minorities continue to face disproportionately high rates of hunger and malnutrition and associated health complications. **Food insecurity and malnutrition are not randomized conditions, but rather are the results of social and economic systemic inequalities from local to global levels**. Unequal relationships and power dynamics in markets, in households, and in policy processes, determine who has access to resources and who does not, shaping who is hungry and malnourished and who is not. T**his unequal access to food is rooted in inequalities of income, inequalities of political and economic power, and gender and social inequalities – leading to inequitable distribution of outcomes.**And these [inequities in our food system](https://www.unscn.org/uploads/web/news/UNSCN-News43-WEB.pdf) exist across both vertical and horizontal lines with vertical inequalities based on measured outcomes at household level (such as income) and horizontal inequalities affecting certain groups of people who are marginalized due to social exclusion. Often individuals and groups face an intersection of multiple disadvantages which can result in some of the most extreme forms of marginalization. For example, a person’s gender, ethnic identity, and spatial location can all intersect in a manner that excludes them from a country’s economy, political system, and food system.

Transforming food systems therefore requires addressing these underlying inequalities and restoring fair, or equitable, access to and ownership of resources, including water, land, and seeds, as well as access to information, technology, and justice. **Adopting a**[**human rights-based approach**](https://unsdg.un.org/resources/human-rights-based-approach-development-cooperation-towards-common-understanding-among-un)**to this transformation will help to reveal the inequalities, discriminatory practices, and unjust power relations that are often undermining sustainable development efforts. Mainstreaming human rights will further reinforce that all food system actors are entitled to decent work, livelihoods, and safe and adequate food.**

Many forms of inequity exist in food systems, however gender-based discrimination is one of the biggest sources of inequity. **Women frequently face intersectional challenges**– they face time poverty, low (or no) pay, denial of access to resources – and all the while shouldering reproductive and care responsibilities. Women and women farmers are key actors in every aspect of food systems. They have extensive skills and capacities and their roles are critical to global food production, natural resource management , household and community resilience, and to the way families eat. They have been key architects of community solutions to the pandemic. However they are undervalued, unpaid or underpaid, and constrained by systemic limitations on their access to natural and productive resources and labor market opportunities. Women are exposed to higher risks of famine, gender-based violence, and other forms of exploitations and abuse, in peacetime and in conflict, and they often eat last when food is scarce. CARE studies have shown that women are eating less frequently and less nutrition food than men, especially in areas of heightened conflict. In Afghanistan, men reported eating fewer meals three days a week, while women are eating fewer meals four days a week.

Evidence shows that land tenure and other natural resource rights are strongly associated with [higher levels of investment and productivity in agriculture](https://www.fao.org/3/I8796EN/i8796en.pdf) – and therefore with higher incomes and greater economic well-being. Land rights for women are correlated with better outcomes for both them and their families, giving women greater bargaining power at household and community levels, improving child nutrition, and lowering levels of gender-based violence. Yet, while rural women produce up to 80 percent of food consumed in households in developing countries, they make up fewer than [15 percent of all smallholder landowners](https://www.fao.org/3/I8796EN/i8796en.pdf). Women struggle to not only secure land titles but also to obtain credit and insurance, purchase seeds and equipment, and access agricultural training. Women are often excluded from decision making spaces, comprise a large percentage of seasonal, part-time, and low-wage work, and are primarily employed in the informal sector. On a household level, women’s food security and nutritional needs are neglected in countries and regions where discriminatory cultural and social norms exist. The culminating effect of all these barriers is a systemic gap between what women can contribute to food systems and what they are able to do today. This gap is only widening due to the pandemic, which is rolling back 50 years of progress in gender equality —both in the workforce and at home. Gaps in women’s leadership and in supporting women’s unpaid care burdens mean that the pandemic and the proposed solutions are furthering inequality.

Gender inequity harms not only women and girls but entire households. **Countries where women lack land ownership rights have an average of 60% more malnourished children.** **When women are empowered , entire communities are lifted out of poverty.** Research shows that if women had equal access to rights such as land and labor rights, their yields would increase [20-30%](https://www.csis.org/analysis/power-smallholder-land-rights-combat-climate-change) and an additional 150 million people annually could be fed. Tackling gender inequities will help dismantle the barriers women face —boosting productivity, promoting good nutrition, and leading to better outcomes not only for women, but for everyone in the food system.

**Inequity across gendered lines** plays out at the international level, too—global solutions consistently ignore women, their rights, and the critical role women play in food systems. Furthermore, reports and policies on hunger itself leave women behind. Of 84 global policies and plans designed to address hunger released between September 2020 and December 2021, only 4% refer to women as leaders who should be part of the solution or provide funding to support them. 39% overlook women entirely. CARE’s review confirms that, despite women’s and girls’ significant roles in food systems, global responses to hunger crises are still either ignoring them or treating them as victims who have no role in addressing the problems they face. Women aren’t just left out of creating solutions to end hunger; the organizations tasked with supporting them actually make them invisible. This makes it nearly impossible to determine the full scope of the problem. Of all available global datasets and dashboards on hunger or gender equality – only one—from UN Women—provided sex-disaggregated data, and that is only for 2019.

To make food systems more equitable, all actors—including governments, as well as development and humanitarian organizations—should prioritize responding to the needs and impact areas that women themselves have prioritized as critical: livelihoods, food security, mental health support, and health services. Immediate and medium-term livelihood recovery and food assistance is critical at all levels. There also must be increased efforts to create partnerships and work with women leaders and local Women’s Rights Organizations to ensure inclusive and gender-responsive policies and decision-making at all levels. All actors should also work with women’s groups, listen to women, and ensure they are targeted in recovery programs and funding. It is critical to create accountability mechanisms that guarantee women’s voices in any COVID-19, conflict, or food security related response. Global solutions are not keeping pace with the magnitude of the problem because they continue to overlook the importance of gender equality. Global policies must work towards equality if we ever hope to end hunger, not just this year, but into the future. That requires investing money, time, and training in women leaders; listening to their voices; and honoring their right to be at all tables where decisions are made.

For equitable and just food system transformation we must adopt transdisciplinary, inclusive, and rights-based approaches. This implies that we should ensure**integrated, participatory, rights-based approaches to governance and policymaking**at all levels to address the structural inequities and power imbalances in food systems. This includes building processes and policy platforms on democratic principles, transparency, accountability, and inclusive participation to ensure that policies are both evidence- and rights-based.

**Successful Programs and Policy Initiatives**

Successful initiatives to reduce the inequality gaps are ones that strengthen the capacities, skills, and confidence of women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples in food systems so they can collectivity challenge social norms; increase ownership and control of resources and assets, increase access to markets and services; and strengthen their voice to promote equitable power relations in households and communities.

Successful response strategies:

- Have a cross-sectoral response and clear indicators and targets that promote women and marginalized groups rights to food, decent work, reliable markets, and healthy environments.

- To combat gender inequity strategies must include tools and models to engage men and boys in all relevant protocols and interventions in food systems to enhance male responsibility in sharing production and reproduction burdens and to advance the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence.

- Provide non-conditional financial and capacity-building support to women’s organizations, social movements, networks, and women’s collective action, including legal and negotiation training skills. This could be done through farmer/pastoralist/fisher schools and other social learning models.

There must be a demand for policies that place gender justice at the center for transformative change and increase investments into understanding, implementing, and strengthening equitable livelihoods in food systems.

- Affirmative action at organizational, policy, and legislative levels to promote women’s leadership, is critical to ensure equal participation and representation, and to allow women’s voices to be heard at local, national, and international levels within food systems discourse and decision-making processes.

- Policies that support women’s access and ownership over productive resources, and guarantee access to public goods and services (such as biodiversity, water and sanitation, and public health) to advance food security and nutrition are successful at enhancing food systems’ role in the reduction of inequalities.

- An adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach is also critical by ensuring health, education, climate and environment, social development, local government, and other relevant ministry budgets are planning for, and in coherence with, gender and indigenous people’s equality investments and plans in food systems.

- Ensuring national and global accountability mechanisms and processes for all duty bearers in food systems are functioning and transparent.

**Most recent references to be considered in this report.**

* She Told Us So (Again) – CARE | March 2022  
  Rapid Gender Analysis: Women’s Voices, Needs, and Leadership  
  <https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CARE-SheToldUsSo_3.2022-Rapid-Gender-Analysis.pdf>
* Recipe for Response: What We Know About the Next Global Food Crisis, and How to Fight It – CARE | April 2022  
  <https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Recipe-for-Response-What-we-know-about-Global-Food-Insecurity.pdf>
* Data as a Force for Good – CARE | March 2022  
  Women Respond: Quarter 3 Briefing  
  <https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Data-as-a-Force-for-Good-Women-Respond-Quarter-3-Briefing-March-2022-1.pdf>
* Don’t Leave Them Behind: Global Food Policies Continue to Fail Women – CARE | December 2021  
  <https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Hunger-Policy-review-update-December-2021.pdf>
* Sometimes We Don’t Even Eat – CARE | November 2020  
  How Conflict and Covid-19 Are Pushing Millions of People to the Brink  
  <https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Sometimes-We-Dont-Even-Eat-How-Conflict-and-COVID-19-Are-Pushing-Millions-of-People-to-the-Brink.pdf>
* She Told Us So – CARE | September 2020  
  Rapid Gender Analysis: Filling the Data Gap to Build Back Equal  
  <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/RGA_SheToldUsSo_9_18_20.pdf>
* Left Out and Left Behind – CARE | August 2020  
  Ignoring Women Will Prevent Us From Solving the Hunger Crisis  
  <https://www.care.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Left-Out-and-Left-Behind.pdf>

## Lissandra Santos, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Hi all,

I attached a document with some successful actions in Brazil. I hope they are useful.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Best,

Lissandra Amorim Santos

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**Contribution - Draft V0 “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”**

I am a PhD student in Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and I have been working with nationally representative data sets from Brazil on my dissertation. The aim is show how gender and race/skin intersects increasing vulnerability of households headed by black or brown women to FI. From the historic perspective of Food and Nutritional Security policies, I would like to share some successful experiences in Brazil until 2016.

**Historic of Food and Nutrition Security policies in Brazil**

The National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) was created in 2006, as part of the National System for Food and Nutritional Security, established by the Organic Law on Food and Nutrition Security, along with the National Food and Nutritional Security Policy.

The CONSEA was composed of one third of government representatives, comprising ministers of state and special secretaries, and two thirds of civil society representatives, chosen based on criteria approved by the National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security. The decisions were taken collectively and were sent to the Presidency of the Republic and government agencies, through recommendations, explanatory statements and resolutions. The recommendations contain propositions addressed to a specific public agency (Moraes et al, 2021).

In 2004, it was the first year that the Brazilian Household Food Insecurity Measurement Scale (EBIA) was used to measure FI in a national survey. On that year, the prevalence of food security (FS) in Brazilian population was 65% (IBGE, 2006) while in 2013, with the investments on Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) policies, the proportion of FS reached 77% of the population (IBGE, 2014). These results show that CONSEA it was effective, even facing limitations and resistances. It should be also noted that the majority composition of civil society representatives and the holding of the presidency by a member of this segment gave CONSEA a peculiarity as a possible space for contestation, in addition to formulating proposals and monitoring the policy. This means that civil society was valued, and their claims had visibility to the government (Moraes et al, 2021).

In 2016, the National System for Food and Nutritional Security started to be dismantled with the reduction of resources and coverage of structuring programs of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy in Brazil and, in 2019, the CONSEA was extinguished after changing the federal government (Ribeiro-Silva et al 2020; Moraes et al, 2021). This process led to the deepening of the situation of poverty exacerbating the social vulnerability experienced by many Brazilian families. The prevalence of FS in Brazilian families reached lower rates than in 2004 (63%), which may have contributed to the worsening of gender and racial inequalities in the country.

**Sucessful experiences in Food Security and Nutrition in Brazil**

In Brazil, between 2006-2016, we had some sucessful experiences to improve Food Security and Nutrition.

1. “Food Acquisition Program” (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos* - PAA) :

Created by the article 19 of Law No. 10,696, of July 2, 2003, has two basic purposes: to promote access to food and to encourage family farming. In order to achieve these two objectives, the program buys food produced by family farming, with no bidding process, and allocates it to people in situations of food and nutritional insecurity and to those served by the social assistance network, by public food and nutrition security equipment and by the public and philanthropic education network.

The PAA also contributes to the establishment of public stocks of food produced by family farmers and to the formation of stocks by family farming organizations. In addition, the program promotes food supply through government food purchases; strengthens local and regional circuits and marketing networks; values ​​biodiversity and organic and agroecological food production; encourages healthy eating habits and encourages cooperativism and associativism.

2. National Program for Strengthening Family Agriculture Women (*Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura Familiar* – PRONAF Mulher):

Due to the relevant participation of women in the activities of the family group and in the society to which they belong, and questioning the image of a rural woman only helping and supporting, it was created the Pronaf Women in 2003. The programmee has the aim of allowing women access to credit, so that they can invest in the activity they desire, a specific line of financing. As a result, credit is seen as an important ally to ease the differences between men and women in terms of managing and working on family properties (Spanevello et al 2016).

3. National School Feeding Program (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar* - PNAE):

The Law No. 11,947, of June 16, 2009, determines that, at least 30% of the amount transferred to states, municipalities and the Federal District by the National Education Development Fund (FNDE) for the PNAE must be used in the purchase of food directly from family farming and from rural family entrepreneurs or their organizations, prioritizing agrarian reform settlements, traditional indigenous communities and quilombola communities. The integration between family farming and school meals and family farming – has promoted an important transformation in school meals, by allowing healthy foods with a regional link, produced directly by family farming, to be consumed daily by public school students throughout Brazil.

**Conclusions**

From the successful experiences from Brazil, we can highlight three main topics:

* Support and empowering historical disadvantaged and poor populations, such as women, black and brown people, rural and urban poor, indigenous communities, etc, with specific benefits for this population.
* Encourage expressive civil society participation in decision-making for the formulation of public policies.
* Provide investments in family farming.

**Suggested references**

1. Ribeiro-Silva RC, Pereira M, Aragão É, Guimarães J, Ferreira A, Rocha A et al. COVID-19, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition: A Multiple Burden for Brazil. Frontiers in nutrition. 2021; 8. DOI: 10.3389/fnut.2021.751715.
2. Moraes VD, Machado CV, Magalhães R. The National Council for Food and Nutrition Security: dynamics and agenda (2006-2016). Ciência & Saúde Coletiva, 26(12):6175-6187, 2021. DOI: 10.1590/1413-812320212612.33262020.
3. Spanevello RM**,** Matte A, Boscardin M. Rural credit on the perspective of rural women workers of family agriculture: an analysis of the National Program to Strengthen Family Agriculture (PRONAF). Polis [En línea], 44, 2016. Acessed in April, 29, 2022. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/polis/11963.
4. IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios: Segurança Alimentar 2004. Rio de Janeiro, IBGE: 2006.
5. IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics). Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios: Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional 2013.Rio de Janeiro, IBGE: 2014.
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7. Maluf, R. S. (2021). Decentralized food systems and eating in localities: a multi-scale approach. Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural, 59(4), e238782. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-9479.2021.238782>.

## Claudia Tonnini, Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the UN Organizations in Rome, Germany

Germany's (GER) position on the HLPE consultation

GER thanks the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) for preparing and sharing the Topic Note regarding upcoming CFS workstream on inequalities. We highly welcome the opportunity to contribute at an early stage through the online consultation.

We welcome that the workstream addresses the important issue of reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition. Among other things, high inequality limits development opportunities and the realization of human rights like the right to adequate food. Reducing inequality is therefore one of the key tasks we face in the future.

In this context and with regard to the questions of the consultation process, we emphasize that meaningful gender and youth mainstreaming approaches can contribute to social justice. Moreover, we highlight the importance of giving representation to youth and women representatives in all their diversity, meaning that particularly representatives from all geographic, social and ethnic groups are represented, most importantly the most marginalized. Hereby, forms of intersectional discrimination and exclusion need to be considered and sufficient enabling and preparatory information opportunities need to be given to achieve meaningful gender and youth participation. One key factor hereby is the use of forms of feedback loops with previous participants, in order to assess the success and satisfaction of the way their participation was managed and to continually improve the processes. Furthermore, especially the process to choose who will represent gender and youth diversity from an entire society should be conducted transparently.

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Reducing Inequalities in Food Security and Nutrition

Before we can make a reasonable comment on the subject, a correction is required on the use of an English preposition, then we will proceed to discuss what may justifiably constitute ‘inequalities in food security and nutrition, how to ameliorate them and their relationship to inequity.’ The first has already been done, so let us continue to the next. As it is implied in the descriptive note, those inequalities are seen in terms of quality and quantity. However, the difficulty here is that no attempt has been made to integrate quality and quantity of food as indicators of inequality either in food security or nutrition.

This obviously requires a reasonable description of what would constitute the opposite of inequality here; avoiding the morass of jargon, we cannot see how food security may be understood without having a clear grasp of what would represent adequate nutrition. We hasten to add that we cannot see any scientifically or culturally justifiable reason to accept the so-called world-wide calorie and nutrient standards recommended by the WHO. Based on openly reductive reasoning, such standards may be applied to machines made to certain specifications, but not to live human beings whose nutritional needs are governed by climatic, cultural and physical factors that vary widely.

Moreover, such reductive standards are oblivious to human culinary enjoyment. Most cultures have long culinary traditions which are a part of their cultural patrimony.  This stems from the simple fact that in addition to nutrition, people derive pleasure from their meals as well as using them to cement social relationships. This is the reason for the emergence of our culinary traditions and valuing them as social goods. Thus, adequate nutrition and culinary enjoyment represent a crucial indicator of quality of life.

So far, we have spoken of the output of food systems. Its qualitative and quantitative adequacy may be positively or negatively influenced by the attributes of a food system or how appropriately it is used by its operators and its end-users i.e., all of us. After air and water, food is essential to sustain life, hence its value. Therefore, appropriate use of a food system involves producing for the use of end-users food having the attributes discussed below.

Section 1: Attributes of adequate nutrition.

Other things being equal, the necessary conditions for adequate nutrition are as follows:

* Availability of a quantity of food a population requires for a balanced diet commensurable with each individual’s nutritional needs. This latter integrates the quality and quantity of food with reference to nutrients.
* Such a food supply should be sufficiently varied and of adequate quality with respect to its colour, flavour etc., in order to ensure culinary enjoyment which is an important indicator of quality of life. This variety and quality represents the culinary quality of food
* The available food is wholesome and free of known orpotentially injurious substances which is another qualitative necessity.

We all are end-users of food systems of varying sophistication. Most of us have to purchase our food from the last sub-system of a food system viz., its trade sub-system. Therefore, the availability of a sufficient quantity of food of adequate quality does not guarantee either food security or acceptable nutrition to everybody in a given area unless wholesome food they need for a varied and balanced diet is affordable to everybody.

Even if the previous four criteria are met, viz. the availability of of food of sufficient quality and quantity, adequacy of its culinary quality , its wholesomeness and affordability, we cannot envisage universal food security and adequate nutrition unless people are willing and able to  make use of it. The fact that this willingness cannot be taken for granted is shown by obesity, diabetes and other nutrition related diseases prevalent among the middle class in affluent countries where the food needed for a varied and balanced diet is often affordable to a majority.

Frequently, people’s willingness to partake a varied and balanced diet is undermined by targeted promotion of industrial comestibles and deficient or the lack of dietary education. Such an education would impart to one the knowledge and skill required to procure, prepare and partake a wholesome and varied balanced diet. This knowledge and skill constitutes one’s dietary competence. However, craving for ease is also a potent factor that compel some to use industrial comestibles even when they could afford an appropriate diet.

Section 2: Negative external influences on end-users.

Sometimes, even when possessing sufficient funds and dietary competence, end-users may find it difficult to procure the required food owing to its lack of physical availability. Often, this is due to the flaws in a country’s infra-structure. However, unemployment and under-employment happen to be the most important reasons which prevent them from procuring food necessary for adequate nutrition and culinary enjoyment.

We may now outline the origins of some external influences that reduces many end-users’ ability to procure food. Inappropriateness of the following policies would be responsible for this state of affairs:

* Industry and development.
* Employment; automation and emphasis on capital-intensive or non-creative employment.
* Education with emphasis on reductive white-collar professions and neglect of dietary competence.
* Health care; either inadequate or theory-based rather than on real national health needs.
* Internal affairs; expenditure on international air ports, conference centra and luxury hotels while national waterways, railways and roads are neglected.
* Defence; countries where hunger and minimal food security obtain, allocate an inordinate portion of their governmental income on armament. It would repay those contries to invest those resources in the areas noted above.
* Progressive environmental degradation owing to insufficient measures to counter it.

Although the above list of policy domains is not exhaustive, the perspicacious reader would have noticed at once while the first and last of the above would result in a serious loss of eco-system services owing to environmental degradation, soil salination and/or pollution, inappropriateness in the others would reduce the ability of an ever-increasing population’s ability to earn a decent income. Collectively, those will increase the inequalities both in food security and nutrition.

Thus far, we have assumed the existence of adequate food systems and their output and focused our attention on end-users. Under those conditions, the possibility of adequate nutrition and culinary enjoyment depend on the following:

1. End-users have a decent income.
2. An output of a food system is qualitatively and quantitatively sufficient to enable its end-users to procure a wholesome, varied and balanced diet that would afford them culinary enjoyment.
3. Such an output is physically available to the end-users involved.
4. End-users are willing to consume a wholesome, varied and balanced diet, experience culinary enjoyment and possess the requisite dietary competence. Targeted promotion of industrial comestibles and desire for ease may undermine this willingness.

Section 3: What is food security?

When the foregoing specifications concerning the produce of its food systems, end-user willingness and dietary competence obtain in an area, food security exists there if its food systems are capable of a sustained output of such food. Like all biological events, food production is subject to unavoidable variations. Moreover, its operators and end-users may suffer from ill health to a degree that would adversely affect the operation and end-use of food systems as is the case in present Corona pandemic.

At this point, we must take into account lowering of food security and impairment of nutrition owing to natural and man-made disasters. Under such circumstances, allowances would have to be made as to the extent of the possible dietary diversity, quality and quantity of food available to the people. This pragmatic sanction of lowered standards should be seen as a temporary measure that is to be revoked as soon as circumstances permit.

Making allowances for the adverse effects on food security by the phenomena outlined above, we can now identify the necessary conditions for food security when the operation of food systems and use of their output are appropriate:

1. Their output is sustainable.
2. They are robust enough to withstand a certain amount of climatic variation, microbial and parasitic attacks.
3. They are resilient enough to recover from 2 within a reasonably short time.
4. Food systems contain a built-in appropriate food reserves needed to ensure their sustained output when they are subjected to environmental or some other stress.

In view of the foregoing, we do not advocate considering inequalities in food security and nutrition an object of research and/or data collection, for FAO already possesses enough information on the subject to show that they exist beyond any reasonable doubt. Meanwhile, understanding their origin does not require further studies; what is needed is the willingness and ability boldly to look at the obvious facts with a view to designing a pro-active plan of action to ameliorate the problem.

Section 4: Inequity and inequality.

Before proceeding to the practical side of the issue, we may now examine the connection between social inequity and inequalities in general. Existence of inequity in a social group is indicated by a significant number of its members being unable to enjoy the same quality of life as the others in it. This is ascertained relative to the cultural norms of social group involved. Such a group may constitute a nation, province, district etc. Here, we run into a fresh challenge viz., what may be justifiably considered to be essential to experience an adequate quality of life.  
More than once, we have stated on this forum that the quality of our lives depends on our ability adequately to satisfy the six fundamental human needs necessary to sustain a life of sufficient quality with reference to the cultural norms of the society involved. Recall that we loudly proclaim that each individual has a right to one’s own culture. Irrespective of one’s culture, all of us have the following fundamental needs:

* Nutrition; after air and water, food is crucial to life, everything else becomes relevant only if we are alive.
* Education; we are not born with a prior knowledge and skills needed to live as humans. We have to learn them from walking, speaking and developing our innate abilities through learning, which is not limited to a narrow ‘higher education’ as it is commonly believed.
* Good health; freedom from pain, discomfort, dysfunction and even death from disease.
* Security; safety from adverse climate (clothing and housing), various forms of discrimination, threats to one’s possessions including life and limb.
* Procreation; although it is now a matter of choice in some societies, this biological need has not been met in line with the modern advances in medicine, nutrition etc. As result, global population growth has become a universal threat to our quality of life.
* Non-material need set; so-called because their satisfaction does not involve any physical gain, for instance, aesthetic enjoyments (literature, music, art and sculpture, etc.), engaging in games and sports and entertainment. It is important to note that engaging in those pursuits for money is not what is meant here. While professional players play a game for money, some spectators watch it for the sake of enjoyment. It is the latter we are talking about here.

However, most of us are compelled by the current ecomomy to spend money in order to satisfy our fundamental needs. To complicate matters further, advances in human civilisation has made it necessary for us to meet a variety of secondary needs in order to meet our fundamental needs. Consider now nutrition; often one has to travel to a shop and back to purchase food before one could prepare and consume it. This transport and preparation often require consumption of energy.

Thus, one needs to satisfy the secondary needs of transport and energy before one could meet one’s nutritional needs. The reader would perceive that this applies to the satisfaction of all fundamental needs. Since the advent of commercialisation of our means of meeting our fundamental and secondary needs, a tertiary need has emerged viz., need for money. A pseudo-scientific veil of jargon has been used to obscure the true nature of current economy which is a mere tertiary need, but its logical status remains an artificial value token system open to exploitation.

We have already outlined some of the policy domains whose flaws would result in a lowered quality of life for some members of a society. As they promote under- and unemployment, they would adversely influence people’s ability to meet the ever-growing number of secondary needs we now have to satisfy before we are able to meet our fundamental needs. Progress as it is believed by the majority, represents an increase in the number of a few justifiable secondary needs and a vast array of trivial ones intended to raise profits through the promotion of competitive trade and consumerism.

To sum up then, inequity is present when some members of a social group are deprived of the opportunity to acquire or to use the competence necessary to gain the ways and means required to satisfy one or more of our fundamental needs. While the former  brings about unemployment, the latter is responsible for under-employment. This would obviously result in qualitative and quantitative inequalities in the adequacy with which those deprived people may satisfy their fundamental needs including nutrition.

As we have become dependent on money to meet the secondary needs subsumed by our fundamental needs, the possibility of earning a decent living has become a necessary condition for an adequate quality of life. The flaws in the policy domains noted earlier reduce opportunities open to one to acquire or use such competence. Policies are the responsibility of political authorities; when inequity and inequalities are present, political authorities involved display one or more of the following attributes regardless of the political ‘ism’ they claim to profess:

* General incompetence in policy formulation and implementation.
* Corruption and nepotism.
* Desire to retain power at any cost.
* Active discrimination against certain groups in education, employment, social and health care and general security etc., which is not permitted by the cultural norms of the country.
* Indifference to public welfare.

Therefore, it would be reasonable to suggest the the amelioration of the present inequities and their corollary would require a two-pronged approach; as its causes can be easily traced into multiple policy domains, its solution calls for an integrated distributed policy approach we have often advocated on this forum. The principles on which it is based and how they may be implemented at a super-ordinate level have been already outlined, hence not repeated here.

Section 5: Inequity and inequalities in food security and nutrition.

Understanding the origins of inequity and inequalities in food security and nutrition requires one to have a sound knowledge of what may justifiably constitute a food system. First of all, our food systems are not something new; man as we know him, appeared into it. In order of its emergence into the real world, a food system consists of the following sub-systems:

1. The yielder sub-system; when man appeared on earth, this was simply his environment as it is for other living things. Invention of agriculture and/or animal husbandry represent using a part of our environment to produce one or more of selected species. Such a part may vary in size and the types of food produced therein.
2. Harvester sub-system; beginning with hunting and gathering, this sub-system has technically advanced to combined harvesters etc. However, the original mode of hunting and gathering may be still seen among the fishermen and nut gatherers in Amazonas.
3. Culinary sub-system; it involves the preparation and consumption of harvested food. At first, harvested food was consumed on the spot as all the other primates do, and gradually sophisticated food preparation prior to consumption evolved giving birth to culinary traditions.
4. Transport sub-system; its emergence as a component of a food system seems to be contemporaneous with the formation of family groups and dawning of cooking. Greater security and improved taste of food are the motivators of its appearance. One should not overlook the fact that food carried on somebody’s back and in a refrigerated aeroplane are merely technically different but generically identical instances of transport sub-system.
5. Storage sub-system; Even at the hunter-gatherer stage of our evolution, it is conceivable that man occasionally managed to procure more food than could b consumed at once. This enabled our ancestors to store the surplus in some makeshift manner. Soon, humans developed early methods of food preservation like smoking meat and drying seeds, which raised the importance of its storage. Thus, food storage in a hollow of a tree and in a modern refrigerated facility serve the same basic function.
6. Preservation sub-system; this emerged before the invention of agriculture as has been described by many anthropologists. When food was available in abundance, smoking and preserving it in wild honey has been observe in Neolithic cultures. Later on, more advanced methods like salting, converting raw food into other commestables like cheese or preserving it under refrigeration were developed.
7. Supplementation sub-system; need for this appeared after the invention of agriculture, for using a limited part of our environment to cultivate a few species of food plants rapidly depleted the eco-system services in that area as it seriously disturbed the qualitative and and the quantitative equilibria among the living species there. These equilibria are essential for the maintenance of the availability of those services. Their artificial supplementation includes crop rotation, irrigation, use of fertilisers, bio-cides etc. Later on, it was directed at increased food yield by selective breeding, research etc. Thus, the purpose of this sub-system is to increase the food yield by supplementing the available eco-system services ordeveloping improved species or both.
8. Trade sub-system; the last sub-system of our food systems to appear, it represents three distinct orders. The first order food trade emerged with the advent of division of labour in human societies. At first, it consisted of exchanging food for other goods, but when value tokens were invented, food trade involved producers selling their produce for money. The second order food trade appeared when an intermediary purchased food from a producer in order to sell it to an end-user or another intermediary for profit. An intermediary may sell food in any form, for instance, raw preserved or ready-to-eat food. The third order food trade involves a first intermediary purchasing a future harvest at a low price to sell it to a second intermediary at a higher price. Then the latter may sell it to a third intermediary either as a future harvest or as actual produce to be sold. At first limited to the output of yielder sub-systems, trade has now encroached into every sub-system of our food systems with grave consequences for food security and nutrition which will be discussed later on.

We now have the pragmatic conceptual tools needed to identify the causes of inequity in food security and nutrition as well as inequalities in them. However, what may seem a very complex set of causes will appear clear and simple if we do not allow us to be mislead by redundant jargon and irrelevant rhetoric. Let us look at the forest as a whole, and not at each bush and shrub that has taken someone’s fancy.

At the end of the section 4, we have outlined the source of social inequity and inequalities. It deprives one from earning a decent income. An adequate quality of life depends onsufficiently satisfying our fundamental needs including nutrition. Today, such an income is necessary to satisfy   those. Thus, political deficiencies may be said to cause first order inequity and inequalities across the board which filter down a society whose effect is felt unevenly depending on one’s wealth, power, contacts etc.

Readers may consider this state of affairs to be wholely unacceptable; but their response to it is often academic and reactive. Unless our response to it is pragmatic and pro-active,  its victims would continue to endure the inequity of being thwarted in acquiring or using an appropriate competence required to earn a decent income sufficient to satisfy their fundamental needs. Even if the output of food systems in such an area should meet all its qualitative, quantitative and culinary requirements and is physically available to all, it would not enhance universal food security and nutrition there until the question of a decent income is answered.

Further, the attempts to mitigate the first order inequity and inequalities by concentrating on the deprivations of a single social group may be fashionable or serve the self-interest of some, but it would inevitably result in undesirable social disruptions that would only exacerbate the sufferings of the remaining majority. Moreover, it would create unpleasant divisions among the deprived, hence, a non-reductive holistic solution that includes all the disadvantaged it to be preferred.

It is difficult to envisage how food and agriculture authorities could deal with first order inequity and inequalities unless they and the heads of other relevant policy domains are willing and able to undertake a set of appropriate coordinated actions. Put briefly, each policy should embody in it an element that would facilitate the success of the others. For instance, a trade policy that promotes food export from a country where malnutrition obtains, does not facilitate either food security and nutrition or health of the people.

Section 6: Isolation of inequity and inequalities in food security and nutrition.

While the first order inequity and inequalities seep down into all domains from the top, their second order counterpart arises from structural flaws in tools used in a domain or how appropriately they or their output is used. A food system is the tool used in the domain of food and agriculture, and this domain in a country may involved more than one food system, linked or otherwise. Thus, our problem of inequity and inequalities in food security and nutrition may arise from any one or more of the following:

1. First order causes directly or indirectly adversely affecting them. Neglect of agriculture and national infra-structure are respective examples of this.
2. Structural flaws in food systems in use, for example, in a country where malnutrition is prevalent, yielder sub-system is geared to output cash crops.
3. Food system operators run it inappropriately or incompetently and the end-users are either lack sufficient dietary competence or cannot afford an appropriate diet. The reader would have noticed that the first, third and fourth of these arise from the first order causes and have already been discussed. Meanwhile, the second is more complicated for two reasons. The first causes, neglect of agriculture and inappropriate education may bring this about, but even when those first causes are absent as in developed nations, youth with sufficient ability to acquire agricultural competence are seldom willing to engage in this field owing to its perceived lack of prestige, indifference etc. As a result, food production is left to less talented hands, farms are abandoned or are sold to industrial farms devoted to monoculture. This social problem has grown with the years and has not received the attention it deserves.

So, we are faced with three basic challenges:

1. How to deal with the first order causes of the problem? A generic approach to its resolution has already been suggested.
2. Re-structuring of inappropriate food systems with reference to  the nutritional requirements of the area it serves with a view to incorporating a suitable food reserve in it. Sometimes, it may be necessary to link up with another food system to establish the latter.
3. Enhancing the competence of the operators of food systems, their end-users’ dietary competence and income. Often, this last universal necessity is ignored and emphasis is laid only on the income of the operators of yielder sub-systems i.e., farmers, fishermen etc. Although fully justified, it fails to understand that unless the end-users can afford the food they need, the food producers cannot earn a decent living by agriculture.

At this point, it is necessary to deal with two distractive point, the first of which repays attention while the second has no practical relevance whatsoever to the hungry and malnourished, nor yet to the poor farmers and fishermen. Food waste occurs in every sub-system of most food systems and it seriously reduces the quality, quantity and culinary variety of what ought to be available for consumption.

However, it is reasonable to suggest that food waste arises from structural defects in food systems or their incompetent operation  and dietary incompetence of end-users. Sometimes, first order causes like inadequate infra-structure would result in food waste due to lack of transport, while structural faults like poor storage brings about significant food losses. Therefore, we can subsume food losses under the already described generic causes of inequity and inequalities in food security and nutrition without creatin an independent field for it.

We have frequently expressed our disquiet about the so-called ‘right to food’ in this forum. It would be difficult for a person to survive without food for much longer than a month even if one lives in a country where one has a ‘right to food.’ The question then is, how does one make use of this right? We cannot envisage any other possibilities than those listed below:

1. The unemployed hungry reports to the nearest ‘right to food office’ and is given some suitable employment and an advance on his salary so that he may purchase food, have a job and live happily ever after.
2. He reports as before, gets a food allowance either in cash or kind; this will be repeated as necessity arises.
3. He is offered ‘carrier guidance,’ offered a follow-up of how he gets on with his search for work, encouraged with printed and audio-visual success stories etc., but still remains hungry.

As far as we know, III seems to be the limit to which ‘right to food implementers’ could go. Meanwhile, it provides academics and ‘researchers’ ample scope for publication, conferences, seminars etc. These may be fruitful for those already employed and have no difficulty in purchasing food, but to the hungry and ill-nourished, ‘right to food’ seems to add insult to a long-endured injury. Let us act to mitigate an injustice that has lasted long rather than pontificate on a nebulous right.

Section 7: Effect of first order causes on food systems.

Their adverse effects on a food system fall into two categories; first, they may force an inappropriate design of one or more of them, and secondly override the proper functioning of them. Some examples from real life may help to illustrate these. In a South Asian country that shall remain nameless, output from the local food systems has remained insufficient for decades. In its attempt to increase agricultural production, emphasis was given to an undue production of low-land tea in order to increase personal and national income.

This inappropriate re-design of its yielder system led to an actual reduction of arable land previously used for food crops as well as to a reduction of land potentially available to an increased food production. Meanwhile, some cultivators became affluent, but hunger and malnutrition in the country increased in spite of a higher GDP. It is easy to see that this is due to the defects in development, trade, food and agriculture policies as well as its legal policy that was guided by them.

We have to go back a little while for an example of how a flawed development policy required by the World Bank and IMF overrode the appropriate use of a food system output resulting in protein malnutrition in West Africa. In two countries there, pea nuts were a part of daily diet, especially liked by the children. It was the principal source of protein particularly among the less affluent. On ‘expert’ advice, a large portion of the pea nuts was exported to Europe in order to increase their GDP’s. As those wisemen predicted it did, but many children began to suffer from serious protein malnutrition, because now they could not afford to buy pea nuts.

We have touched upon the unwise allocation of funds to ‘defence, and various prestige projects, which exacerbates the difficulties food and agriculture policy faces in making suitable arrangements to promote optimisation of the national food systems. Such a flawed finance policy would also have a deleterious influence on country’s transport which is often a serious cause of food spoilage. Military conflict is a major threat to food security and nutrition. However, it is difficult to see how food and agriculture authorities may fruitfully intervene here, especially as it is the domain of skilful diplomacy which seems to be a vanishing art.

By far the greatest inequity and inequalities in food security and nutrition stem from its trade sub-system which is an integral part of a national trade system. Moreover, national trade systems are all too often internationally linked. Therefore, unless international and national trade is rigourously revised, such inequity and inequalities would have to be content with a few cosmetic remedies. Although fully aware of the resistance our views would meet, we shall nevertheless outline how trade could revert to performing a useful social function rather than binding the gullible in their supply and value chains.

Section 8: Revision of trade.

We consider the following theses to be indubitably fair and reasonable:

* Farmers, fishermen, other food gatherers and their helpers are entitled to a reward fully commensurable with their absolutely essential work. Today, this is hardly the case. In affluent countries, they are subsidised by the authorities while in others, most of them live in poverty.
* Lower echelon workers in harvesting, transport, storage, preservation and trade sub-systems are frequently under paid.
* Owners/top echelon of the industrialised farms and other sub-system of food systems earn an inordinately high income.
* Inequity and inequalities in nutrition and food security has become a serious problem among end-users. Although it is universal, its degree varies from country to country. Unemployment, under-employment, insufficient food systems output, dietary incompetence and physical lack of availability are the major causes of this.

Leaving aside for the moment the problems end-users face, it is self-evident that a more equitable distribution of rewards among the actual workers in food systems is necessary. It is difficult to envisage a fairer means of achieving this objective than empowering those low income workers by giving themfull control of how food is disposed through their food systems in a manner equitable to them and the end-users. Cooperative food systems free of third order trade seems to be an eminently just solution to this problem.

Let us now examine the impact of current trade sub-systems on the attributes of the output of food systems that are necessary for food security and nutrition. None who is aware of economic reality would deny that the trade sub-system is motivated by a desire for maximum profit. Two simple strategies are used to achieve this objective viz., cut production costs then increase output and sales.

Cutting cost is implemented by any one or more of the following ways:

* Replacing labour-intensive yielder systems by intensive mechanisation; even though this is called modernisation and praised, a word is seldom said about those who are made redundant by it and rendered unemployed and unemployable.
* Use of monoculture using few species highly dependent on supplementation with fertilisers, biocides, etc. While it increases the vulnerability of food systems by lowering their robustness and resilience, they also reduce output’s variety making it difficult for one to procure a varied diet needed for culinary enjoyment.
* Excessive use of supplementation monoculture requires often results in soil salination and fertiliser and biocide spills cause severe environmental damage.
* Such monocultures are often the input raw material for industrial comestibles whose impact on health, nutrition and culinary enjoyment is questionable.
* Sometimes, trade regulations permit the establishment of foreign industrial farms in countries where inadequate food security and nutrition obtain in order to export their produce. This reduces the arable land available to local food producers as well as bringing about environmental damage.
* With the connivance of local authorities, local or foreign trade is permitted to import or manufacture industrial comestibles and promote their sale claiming it is necessary for ‘globalisation’ as though it is decreed by fate. This as rational as believing that astrology demands globalisation, therefore, globalise. Globalisation of food systems undermines the most environmentally benign local food culture, diminishes culinary enjoyment and is an undesirable cultural imposition from without
* We have already mentioned two kinds of misdirected development policy which respectively interferes with yielder and trade sub-systems by stressing foreign trade at the expense of a country’s nutrition.
* In affluent countries, the supply of seeds and animal germoplasm is monopolised by a few concerns which limits them to a few species. Unfortunately, less affluent countries have begun to use the same species as they are advised to do so in order to increase yields and to be ‘modern.’ This trade results in an increased vulnerability of world food systems, soil salination, environmental damage, loss of culinary variation, and farmers’ loss of independence as to what to cultivate.
* Flawed development, trade and food and agriculture policies permit agro-industry to take over family farms and small holdings which are converted to ‘more profitable’ monoculture. Their consequences for their previous owners, culinary variation and the environment need no elaboration.

In its constant search for cost cutting and maximising the profits for the top tier of the trade sub-system, end-users throughout the world have noticed the following alarming trends:

* Increase in the reduction of variety in fruits, fresh vegetables, fish, meat etc. Loss of biodiversity in food production is responsible for this.
* Ever-growing volume of a limited number of ready-to-eat industrial comestibles. This has now begun to make considerable inroads into the diet of less affluent countries.
* Fast disappearance of independent food shops while those owned by a limited number of ‘chains’ proliferate. This is prevalent in industrial democracies and it is spreading. However regardless of their ownership, these ‘supply chains’ are remarkably identical in the choice of wares they offer. Reader would have noticed that this has become very common in chains that sell ready-to-eat food. Thus, the end-user has been made dependent on a few monopolies for nutrition and food security. This travesty of dietary choice requires urgent global action.

Section 9: Trade sub-system and sustainability of food supply.

We have discussed the consequences to the end-user of food systems placed under the control of its trade sub-system. Maximising profit leads to loss of agricultural bio-diversity, hence to increased vulnerability of yielder sub-system and loss of culinary diversity. As world population grows, the need for food increases, and the trade dominated food systems respond to it by offering relatively cheap industrial comestibles whose production only requires a limited number of food species. Thus, population growth is accompanied by a proportionate growth in monoculture.

Available evidence indicates that reduced bio-diversity in agriculture makes yielder sub-systems more and more dependent on irrigation, fertilisers and biocides. Currently, it is estimated that at least 2 billion people are not adequately nourished. Already, vast tracts of formerly arable land have been rendered useless owing to such industrial scale monoculture. If this food production method were to expand in order to meet the needs of those 2 billions, the resulting loss of soil fertility would be nothing short of catastrophic as was shown by Aral Sea disaster.

Sustainable yielder sub-systems depend on the availability of adequate eco-system services. Use of agriculture for millennia, great global deforestation, loss of bio-diversity and great increase in human population has vastly reduced the availability of those services. However in spite of our scientific advances, we have adopted a profit-driven use of excessive supplementation to make up their loss which has resulted in a further loss of eco-system services and loss of arable land owing to soil salination.

It must be underlined that we do not deprecate rational supplementation when necessary. Even now, when food systems are put into their appropriate use i.e., as a tool to meet our nutritional needs providing a decent income to all its workers and food at an affordable cost to its end-users, its rational supplementation would suffice to ensure food security and nutrition. This is a very different objective from maximising profits and clanking of value chains that bind the hungry to its tyranny.

Section 10: The unholy bovine.

In spite of the current terror of heavy metals, we shall bite the bullet and talk of this beast of the Apocalypse. In other words, human population increase. We cannot speak sensibly about the sustainability of anything without undertaking suitable action to ensure a continued availability of eco-system services. Let us mention some of the most important of them for our continued survival:

* A salubrious climate.
* Water supply.
* Soil fertility.

The reader will note that while the first two of those are essential for our immediate survival, all three are necessary for a sustainable supply of food. We shall not break up the above into fashionable global warming, emission of green-house gases etc., for a salubrious climate embraces them all. Nor shall we mention the minerals and hydrocarbons used in industry etc., because we are only concerned with renewable eco-system services, for they are vital for nutrition and food security.

Availability of the renewable eco-system services depends on the equilibrium between the rate at which they are used and are returned to earth for their re-use. This return is brought about by bio-degradation of organisms including man and certain physio-chemical phenomena like nitrogen and water cycles. Bio-degradation follows death and excretion. Death may be due to old age, disease or predation. Predation as used here may include feeding on living plants or animals. Saprophytism involves securing nutrition from the dead tissue.

This equilibrium between the use and the replenishment of eco-system services depends on the equilibrium between the types of organisms and their individual populations. There are no scientifically supportable exemptions to this requirement. Thus, we depend on both bio-diversity and a supportable population of each species for the continued availability of eco-system services.

A greater diversity among species permits a greater number of diverse interactions among them. Greater the number of such interactions, higher will be the number of pathways to replenish the eco-systems services. When the optimal population of these interacting species is maintained, optimal qualitative and quantitative replenishment of eco-system services is attained. Human population has not only exceeded its supportable limit, but has also made a huge number of species extinct.

Therefore, curbing the population growth is a necessary condition for global food security and nutrition. We know the proponents of scientism would claim that human ingenuity could easily solve the problem by inventing ‘novel foods.’ They seem to be oblivious to the obvious i.e., we are not talking about human machines to be fed with a certain amount of factory-made nutrients per diem, but about people with culinary traditions who should not be deprived ofthem.

In many countries, only the affluent could afford to prepare what was common daily food not long ago. Moreover, such meals cost a considerable amount in restaurants. Thus, advocates of novel foods seem to believe while the affluent may experience adequate nutrition, dietary variation and culinary enjoyment, the rest ought to be content with adequate nutrition from novel sources. Unless we promptly deal with the problem of population, scientism would turn most of humanity into a better sort of domestic beast on novel feed.

Section 11: The way forward.

We highly regret that FAO still continues to consider the inequalities in food security and nutrition to be solvable by an even greater expansion of the trade sub-system of food systems, insists on using a reactive and a reductive approach. Further, it seems to value what is known as an academic method, which by necessity, is at some distance from reality. It would repay FAO to look at food systems as a tool we use to achieve food security and nutrition for people and the value of food stems from its necessity for survival.

We will begin with the first order causes of inequity and inequalities in food security and nutrition. These require the following carefully coordinated and simultaneous global and national policy formulation and implementation:

* Curbing the population growth.
* Halt environmental degradation and initiate and continue its regeneration.
* Increase global agricultural bio-diversity.
* Promote employment with a decent income and deprecate the emphasis on capital-intensive industry. While the experts may complain about the ‘monotony’ of some work, many workers do not and do not wish to be academics.
* Devolution of the trade sub-system of food systems; none of its sub-systems should be owned by one and the same ‘legal entity.’ This is particularly important for seeds, animal breeding and outlets used by end-users.
* Care should be taken to abolish food monopolies through holding companies, hedge funds and other legal trickery.
* Encourage and support farm cooperatives, small holdings, family-run food outlets like shops and restaurants. Note that every sub-system of a food system may be run on a cooperative basis.
* Encourage and support the establishment of strategic food reserves.
* Improve and expand communications; priority should be given to water ways and railways as they are the most energy efficient.
* Universal increase of public dietary competence.
* Correct the public perception of agriculture and workers therein.
* Increased allocation of funds to agriculture and fiscal prudence in the superfluous areas we have discussed earlier.
* An education system aimed at developing one’s innate abilities rather than the ‘needs’ of trade and industry. The latter is a form of professional servitude into which one is compelled from childhood.

We have not mentioned increasing the agricultural competence of those who run yielder sub-systems. Although this is very important, in our view, this is a national concern with varying requirements hence, a generalisation here would be inadvisable. In increasing this competence, assistance may be sought from appropriate external sources. Moreover, many suggestions on this subject have been made by the others.

Section 12: Concluding remarks.

Much criticism has been directed at top-down approach. Most of it is based on two problems arising from its less than competent use. First, it is directed from the point of view of some authority or a group of experts, and secondly, it is based on some academic notion. Both of these are errors of usage. We find it hard to understand why the method is not applied to the real top of a food system viz. its justifiable purpose, i.e., its application as a tool to provide appropriate food to its end-users.

Instead, we are constantly regaled with highly inedible value chains and supply chains which seem firmly to anchor two billions to hunger and malnutrition. Value of food is intrinsic insofar as it is the third essential item to life. Its value has nothing to do with the enrichment of traders of any sort. Nor yet with the abstract notion of ‘national economy.’. We agree that food traders may serve a useful function as intermediaries between the operators of yielder systems and end-users, and their services should be commensurably rewarded.

But, this commensurability between their services and the reward does not obtain. Disparity of income between higher echelons of food systems and their workers as well as the plight of end-users bear ample testimony to this unfair state of affairs. Unless food has its independent value, food traders would not be able to create a demand for it. In spite of this obvious fact, economic jargon speaks of value chains and added values; we would rather believe in Father Zeus, Dionysus and their merry divine minions.

The trouble is, since that old reductivist Smith and his ‘Wealth of Nations’ people seem accept that economy has an independent existence. It does not; it is merely an artefact created by man to serve a purpose. Its purpose is equitably to direct the usage of a value token system required adequately to satisfy those secondary needs which is a necessary condition for the satisfaction of our fundamental needs.

Untrammelled desire for wealth thence power and influence has become institutionalised in most cultures. Instead of using it as a tool to meet our fundamental needs equitably, economy is now used to gain wealth and its corollaries. Competition in economy is an essential attribute of this state of affairs. Its obvious consequence is inequity and inequalities in the satisfaction of our fundamental needs. Unfortunately, our views represent a secular heresy even more violently opposed by the economists than the response of clergy when heliocentricity was propounded.

True, earth’s rotation around the sun was finally acknowledged even by the cloth. But the problem is that if the present secular faith in competitive economy should last as long as the old belief in the sun going around the earth, neither many of its present inhabitant species would survive nor would most humans find it possible to exist as sentient and civilised beings. Conditioned by competitive economy and nourished on novel feed, the majority would be transformed by formication i.e., , the process that turns humans into programmable, unthinking  forms living in high-rise concrete anthills.

Best wishes!

Lal Manavado.

## André Luzzi de Campos, Instituto Alimentação e Poder, Brazil

**Alimentación y prisiones: superando el ciclo de desigualdades y violaciones de derechos.**

Con respecto a las discusiones sobre la seguridad alimentaria y nutricional de grupos sociales vulnerables, el escenario carcelario exige una enorme atención en Brasil, país con la tercera mayor población carcelaria en el mundo, actualmente con más de 800.000 personas privadas de libertad. De estas personas, 67,5% son negras, 46,4% son jóvenes entre 18 y 29 años, 56% no tienen educación básica completa y 99,2% tampoco tienen educación superior.

La realidad que esta población enfrenta es la de la desnutrición, ya que está sometida a lo que la Defensoría Pública de São Paulo (DPE-SP) ha denominado "pena de hambre" en el informe elaborado por su Centro Especializado en Situación Penitenciaria (NESC), de la inspección de 27 unidades penitenciarias en el estado durante la pandemia de COVID-19 [1].

Mediante solicitudes formales de acceso a la información realizadas por el Instituto de la Defensa del Derecho de Defensa (IDDD) a las secretarías de administración penitenciaria en todos los estados del país, se ha podido identificar que **hubo negligencia por parte de las autoridades del gobierno en garantizar el suministro de agua y alimentación adecuada** durante el período de la pandemia de COVID-19 para las personas privadas de libertad [2].

Particularmente en 2020 y en la primera mitad de 2021, muchos estados declararon que la provisión de agua potable y para la higiene personal de las personas detenidas era limitada. Solo 6 de los 27 províncias brasileñas (Alagoas, Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, São Paulo y el Districto Federal) informaron que, al final de 2020, el suministro de agua potable estaba disponible 24 horas por día para las personas privadas de libertad. En la misma línea, el referido informe elaborado por la Defensoría Pública de São Paulo señala que la práctica ilegal e inhumana del racionamiento de agua fue constatada en el 70,4% de las unidades penitenciarias inspeccionadas durante la pandemia.

Si bien esta no es una realidad nueva en Brasil, durante la pandemia el escenario se agravó, ya que el Estado no proporciona lo mínimo necesario para la subsistencia de los presos, dejando sus familias a cargo de la mayor parte de estos artículos básicos a través de un kit de víveres. Sin embargo, con la pandemia se ha suspendido la entrega de estos kits sin que el poder público ampliara la oferta de subsidios, lo que ha significado una fuerte caída en la cantidad de alimentos disponibles para las personas detenidas.

Las solicitudes de acceso a la información del IDDD, a su vez, cuestionaron si los estados permitían la entrega de alimentos a las personas privadas de libertad por parte de sus familiares. En el segundo semestre de 2021, solo en 7 províncias (Amapá, Bahia, Minas Gerais, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, São Paulo, y el Districto Federal) . Este permiso ha sido otorgado por las unidades penitenciarias, ni siempre en todas las unidades del estado y muchas veces con restricciones sobre qué alimentos estaban permitidos. Si bien toda esta drástica realidad existe en todo Brasil, destacamos, como ejemplo, el contexto del Estado de São Paulo, el más rico de la federación y que concentra 179 unidades penitenciarias, así como 24,5% de la población carcelaria del país, alcanzando hoy la marca de más de 200 mil personas detenidas.

Las condiciones de alimentación de los reclusos en el estado son descritas por la DPE-SP de la siguiente manera:

**“i) poca cantidad de alimentos;**

**ii) comidas poco nutritivas y desequilibradas, compuestas principalmente de carbohidratos;**

**iii) ausencia de frutas y verduras;**

**iv) baja cantidad de proteína animal;**

**v) no hay variedad durante todo el año;**

**vi) impurezas en los alimentos, tales como insectos, cabellos, etc.”.**

Con el regreso de las visitas presenciales, a fines de 2020, después de varios meses de visitas únicamente virtuales, los relatos de los familiares han dicho de que **los detenidos estaban mucho más delgados que antes, con aspecto de enfermos**.

Además de **la insuficiente cantidad de alimentos**, denunciada por las personas privadas de libertad en 85,2% de las unidades inspeccionadas, se ha señalado **insuficiencia en cuanto a la calidad de los alimentos** por **falta de variedad**en 92% de las unidades. En 30,79% **no había proteína suficiente para componer la dieta** y en el 68% de las unidades hubo reporte de **impurezas en los alimentos.**

Para empeorar este escenario, se ha observado el ayuno obligatorio en todas las prisiones. Entre las prisiones inspeccionadas:

* en **51,9% el intervalo entre la última comida del día y la primera del día siguiente es de 14 a 15 horas**;
* en 25,9% es de 13:00 a 14:00 horas;
* en 14,8% es de 15 a 16h;
* en 3,7% es de 16 a 17 horas;
* en 3,7% es de 12 a 13 h.

Frente esta grave violación del derecho humano a la alimentación adecuada, IDDD, en conjunto con el despacho de abogados TozziniFreire, ha interpuesto una Acción Civil Pública[3] , a través de la cual llevó a juicio información sobre alimentación en unidades penitenciarias específicas, con datos que han señalado, por ejemplo, la insuficiencia en la compra de alimentos frente a las indicaciones oficiales de lo que se debe brindar a las personas privadas de libertad, la falta de variedad entre las comidas, la casi nula oferta de verduras y frutas, entre otros graves problemas que ocasionan la desnutrición.

Como ejemplo, vale mencionar el caso de la Prisión de Florínea (SP), en la que, en julio de 2020, se proporcionó la **cantidad diaria irrisoria de solo 20 gramos de carne de res por persona**. En el mismo sentido, la demanda señala que, en el caso de la Penitenciaría III de Hortolândia (SP), “en toda una semana en que se tomaron fotografías de las comidas, la única fruta ofrecida fue en el almuerzo del miércoles, cuando era sirvió un plátano por persona”.

Además, “la única diferencia entre los siete días de la semana es que el miércoles los internos tendrán derecho a pan y queso en lugar de pan y margarina”. Si bien en el ámbito normativo, Brasil tiene determinaciones y recomendaciones en torno al derecho de las personas privadas de libertad a la alimentación saludable, existen profundas violaciones de sus disposiciones, como ya se demostró. Cabe mencionar aquí la Ley 11.346/06 [4], que consagra el derecho a la alimentación como derecho fundamental, la Resolución 3/2017 del Consejo Nacional de Política Penal y Penitenciaria[5] y la Resolución 27/2020 del Consejo Nacional Consejo de Derechos Humanos[6]. También es un incumplimiento flagrante de las disposiciones de las Reglas Mínimas para el Tratamiento de los Reclusos (Reglas de Nelson Mandela) de la ONU[7] , que afirma la necesidad de que el Estado proporcione alimentos y agua adecuados, como se especifica en la Regla 22:

"1. Todo recluso recibirá de la administración del establecimiento penitenciario, a las horas acostumbradas, una alimentación de buena calidad, bien preparada y servida, cuyo valor nutritivo sea suficiente para el mantenimiento de su salud y de sus fuerzas.

2. Todo recluso tendrá la posibilidad de proveerse de agua potable cuando la necesite”.

Como grave ejemplo de incumplimiento de estas normas, mientras que la Resolución 3/2017 del CNPCP – órgano vinculado al Ministerio de Justicia y Seguridad Pública y potestad legal para dictaminar sobre política penitenciaria – prevé la obligación de cinco meriendas diarias para las personas detenidas, **en prácticamente todas las unidades penitenciarias del estado de São Paulo se les proporciona sólo tres meriendas por día.**

Lo que hace aún más grave este escenario es la información de que n**o hay indicios de que el poder público esté priorizando poner fin a esta situación de calamidad**. Así lo indican los datos recogidos por el vehículo de comunicación Brasil de Fato[8] sobre el presupuesto del sistema penitenciario de São Paulo, según el cual, de 2021 a 2022, “la previsión de inversión en 'previsión de necesidades básicas para la prisión población', que incluye alimentación, higiene y alojamiento, aumentó un 15,75%. La inversión en ampliación de vacantes y cárceles saltó un 345,21%”. A los efectos de una visión global de la estructura alimentaria de las cárceles brasileñas, también se debe señalar que el sistema penitenciario brasileño tiene el 58% de su servicio de alimentación tercerizado.

Este contexto fue más allá de todos los límites en el Estado de Piauí, donde seis presos murieron, en 2020, en la Cárcel Pública de Altos, en el norte de Piauí, después de un brote de beriberi, una enfermedad causada por la falta de vitamina B1 y relacionada con una dieta inadecuada y pobre en nutrientes[9].

 Ante todo este escenario, es evidente que, si bien Brasil cuenta con normas que determinan una alimentación saludable, con garantía de nutrición adecuada para la población carcelaria, existe una profunda negligencia por parte de las autoridades públicas en el cumplimiento de estos derechos, lo que genera una violación sistémica de los derechos humanos de una población en situación extrema de vulnerabilidad y demuestra que este es un tema que llama la atención internacional.

Las desigualdades, marcas profundas del proceso histórico de colonización, esclavización y racismo, constituyen grandes obstáculos para la realización de los derechos y la libertad de grandes sectores de la población afectados por el encarcelamiento masivo, la sed y el hambre. Materiales completos recomendados:

**Materiales completos recomendados:**

[1]“Inspeções em presídios durante a pandemia da COVID-19”. DPE-SP. NESC. Disponible en: <https://www.defensoria.sp.def.br/dpesp/Repositorio/30/Documentos/Relat%C3> %B3rio%20do%20NESC%20em%20rela%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20%C3%A0s%20in spe%C3%A7%C3%B5es%20realizadas%20na%20pandemia%20da%20Covid19\_compressed.pdf;

[2] “Dados sobre a COVID-19 no sistema prisional no 1º e 2º quadrimestres de 2020”. IDDD. Disponible en: <http://www.iddd.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/iddd-dados-sobre-a>covid-19-no-sistema-prisional-no-1o-e-2o-quadrimestres-2.pdf;

[3] Ação Civil Pública nº 1039521-72.2020.8.26.0053;

[4] Lei 11.346/06. Disponible en: <http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2004-> 2006/2006/lei/l11346.htm;

[5] Resolução 3/2017 do CNPC. Disponible en: <https://www.gov.br/depen/pt>br/composicao/cnpcp/resolucoes/2017/resolucao-no-3-de-05-de-outubro-de2017.pdf/view;

[6] Resolução 27/2020 do CNDH. Disponible en: <https://www.in.gov.br/en/web/dou/-/resolucao-n-27-de-9-de-julho-de-2020-> 282714010;

[7] ONU. Reglas Mínimas de las Naciones Unidas para el Tratamiento de los Reclusos (Reglas de Nelson Mandela);

[8] “Estado de SP aplica "pena de fome" em seus presídios, com média de jejum de 15 horas por dia”. MONCAO, Gabriela. Brasil de Fato. 2022. Disponible en: <https://www.brasildefato.com.br/2022/03/02/estado-de-sp-aplica-pena-de-fome>em-seus-presidios-com-media-de-jejum-de-15-horas-por-dia [9] “Presos morreram por má alimentação em cadeia no Piauí, aponta relatório do Ministério da Saúde”. COSTA, Catarina. Disponible en: <https://g1.globo.com/pi/piaui/noticia/2021/04/03/presos-morreram-por-ma>alimentacao-em-cadeia-no-piaui-aponta-relatorio-do-ministerio-dasaude.ghtml

\* LabGepen/UNB. Nota Técnica de 16 de abril de 2018. Prestação de Serviço de Nutrição e Alimentação para as pessoas presas que se encontram em trânsito no Estado de São Paulo. Disponible: labgepen.org/publicações.

## Alessandra Mora, UN Nutrition, Italy

Inherent barriers exist in food systems that prevent people from overcoming persistent and intergenerational malnutrition. To overcome these barriers and ensure that no one is left behind, we need systematic analysis of food system dynamics, including how they interact and perpetuate the various causes of malnutrition.

Inputs for consideration:

* The interdependence of equality and good nutrition should be central to the analysis. Inequalities impact and are impacted by the nutritional status of an individual.
* Disaggregated data, including at household level, is fundamental to assess levels of inequalities in countries. The report should be clear about the need for better data.
* When looking at the structural barriers for historically disadvantaged and poor populations, also consider the health related dimensions (e.g. disability) and the intergenerational nature of some of these drivers.
* The report should advocate for a human rights-based approach to programming that requires solutions to be developed in a participatory and inclusive way, with good governance and accountability at its centre.
* Shorter supply chains and more diverse and nourishing food supply could represent a first step towards more just, sustainable and resilient systems that support the realisation of the universal right to food.

Recent references that should be considered in the report:

[UNSCN News 43: Advancing equity, equality and non-discrimination in food systems: Pathways to reform](https://www.unscn.org/en/resource-center/Unscn-news?idnews=1838)

[Global Nutrition Report 2020](https://globalnutritionreport.org/reports/2020-global-nutrition-report/)

[Equity and the right to food: A systemic approach to tackling malnutrition](https://globalnutritionreport.org/blog/equity-and-right-food-systemic-approach-tackling-malnutrition/)

## Jacques Loyat, Equipe d'animation UTAA, France

Surl le point 4 VII : proposition d'introduire le débat autour politiques pour nune régulation des marchés.

Ci-joint, une note produite dans le cadre du lao UTAA.

A votre disposition.

Bien cordialement

Jacques

Attachment:

<https://assets.fsnforum.fao.org/public/discussions/contributions/utaa-nt4-reg-marches-prix-2.pdf>

## Jacques Loyat, Equipe d'animation UTAA, France

J'ai noté dans le commentaire de Rodney Cooke du CGIAR : "I propose on pillar 1 : Develop an enabling policy environment to strengthen family farming".

C'est bien le sens de la note sur une nécessaire politique de régulation des marchés que j'ai adressée sur le site.

Bien cordialement, Jacques

## Anne Brunel

Dear HLPE Secretariat,

Kindly find attached the contribution from the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' food systems.

Best, The Global-Hub's Secretariat

|  |
| --- |
| General comments: The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems welcomes that the HLPE foresees to write a report on “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition” to be presented at the 51st plenary session of the CFS in October 2023.  Reducing inequality for food and nutrition security is critical for Indigenous Peoples as a great proportion of them falls within the 768 million of people facing hunger globally. Despite that they make up 6.2% of the world’s population, Indigenous Peoples represent 18.7% of the extreme poor.  Overall, the objectives and foreseen content of the report offer the possibility of a good coverage of the issue of inequalities for food and nutrition security for Indigenous Peoples.  The Global-Hub would like to provide a few recommendation to enrich the report:   * **Important drivers of inequality faced by Indigenous Peoples are the lack of recognition of their rights as stated in the UN Declaration on the Rights for Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**, in particular the right to self-determination and associated self-determined cultural, social, cultural and economic development, rights to access to land and natural resources, right to food, as well as the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). It is important that the report adopts a human right based approach, and recognize the rights that pertain to Indigenous Peoples * **Another important driver of the inequality faced by Indigenous Peoples lies in the non-recognition of their traditional knowledge systems.** The Global-Hub would like to advice to take this aspect into consideration in the report. * **The Global-Hub would like to stress the need to recognize the role of Indigenous women and Indigenous youth** in Indigenous Peoples’ food systems and the inequality that they face, often within their Indigenous communities. Making visible the social and economic role of Indigenous women to achieve food security, and as custodians of Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge, guardians of native seeds and food producers, among others is essential. Indigenous women are agents of change for dignifies lives and keys allies in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.   Indigenous youth is guardian of valuable knowledge, agents of change in the youth mobilization agenda on the climate crisis, and holders of unique ability to combine innovations, modern technology, and traditional practices. Indigenous youth are key in achieving food security for all, ensuring the continuity of Indigenous Peoples´ food systems and biodiversity protection. Adding a policy recommendation section based on the information gathered in the report could be useful to guide the discussions to be held in the Committee on World Food Security. |

**1. Share your comments and suggestions on the objectives and content of this report:**

1. Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food and nutrition security
2. *What does ‘inequality’ mean from your food security and nutrition perspective?;*

This is a relevant section which will allow to picture different dimensions of inequality and how it can be experienced.

Indigenous Peoples continue to face discrimination, violence, marginalization and violation of their rights. All across the world, Indigenous Peoples have experienced colonization, forced displacement, acculturations and this legacy is perpetuated through non sensitive and intercultural policies that continue causing forced displacement.

Therefore, Indigenous Peoples experience several expression of inequality, some of them being linked to:

* **The violation of their rights as stated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**. It refers to the right to access to their ancestral customary lands, territories, and natural resources; the right to food, and the right to self-determination, including the right to self-determined economic, social and cultural development, and the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Despite these rights, Indigenous Peoples are subject to historic discrimination, marginalization, violence and forced displacement. Increased occurrence of violation of their rights was observed during the COVID-19 pandemic (FAO, 2021b).
* **Lack of interculturality in policy-making** is another way Indigenous Peoples experience inequality. For instance, important dietary changes have been observed in Indigenous Peoples’ populations as they experience rapid socio-economic, cultural, and ecological changes associated with globalisation and modernisation. In many places, commercial agriculture erodes Indigenous Peoples food systems, culture and traditional knowledge. High-yielding crops and monoculture agriculture continues to replace the important diversity of Indigenous Peoples’ seed and foods. In the context of COVID-19, governments responses have further curtailed Indigenous Peoples’ rights in introducing monetized transactions, where exchanges as traditionally based on barter and reciprocity.
* **Power imbalance** rooted in historic marginalization and discrimination of Indigenous Peoples is another importance driver of inequality. For instance, Indigenous Peoples often have limited bargaining power (FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, 2021; FAO, 2022-upcoming) when selling their food and products. These are not valued in a comprehensive way as they feature characteristics and values that are tied to intangible meanings such as culture, identity, and traditional knowledge. In many cases, when Indigenous Peoples sell their products, they must do it through third parties and intermediaries who capture most of the added value with little recognition of their property rights and traditional knowledge.

1. *Trends within and between countries (data collection, measurement tools);*

There are 476 million Indigenous persons living in 90 countries spread over seven socio-cultural regions and in approximately 5 000 groups. About 80% of Indigenous Peoples live in middle-income countries, while 16% reside in low-income countries and 2.7% live in high-income countries. Most (75%) Indigenous Peoples worldwide live outside of urban areas, mostly in Africa (82%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (73%), and Europe and Central Asia (66%). Indigenous Peoples live in forests, savannahs, tundra, mountains, deserts and costal lines. Despite that they make up 6.2% of the world’s population, Indigenous Peoples represent 18.7% of the extreme poor living in 23 countries representing 83% of the global indigenous population (ILO, 2020).

**An important issue is lack of disaggregated data on Indigenous Peoples and the issues they face.** This issue has been highlighted several times by Indigenous Peoples themselves[[2]](#footnote-2). In between and within countries, Indigenous peoples continue to be the poorest among the poor. Globally, Indigenous Peoples are earning 18.5% less than non-Indigenous people, and this is consistent across regions and income groups (ILO, 2020). To address the inequality issues Indigenous Peoples face, data need to be more precise than at country level. In addition, **disaggregated data based on gender** is also important. Lack of data contributes to the invisibility of Indigenous women, hampering dedicated broad research and thus, policies and programmes that can address the root causes of the various form of discrimination Indigenous women suffer (FAO, 2020a).

1. *Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing;*

This is also a relevant section when it comes to Indigenous Peoples’ issues. However, in Indigenous Peoples’ food systems, health and nutrition are rather linked to dimensions such as traditional knowledge and its inter-generational transmission, indigenous languages, territorial management practices, culture, spirituality and cosmogony.

Indeed, Indigenous Peoples portray their food systems with a wide-angle holistic view that encompasses spirituality, life and culture, with biotic and abiotic components in the ecosystem, as well as the interconnections between them. Indigenous Peoples’ food systems provide nourishment and healthy diets, making use of several hundred species of edible and nutritious flora and fauna, including traditionally cultivated crops, crop wild relatives and animal wildlife (including bushmeat, marine mammals, insects and fish) (FAO, 2021b).

In this context, health and nutrition are outcomes of sustainable territorial management practices carried out by Indigenous Peoples, and that are rooted in their traditional knowledge, culture, spirituality and cosmogony, and supported by their language. All these dimensions are interconnected.

Whether the links between health and nutrition inequalities and and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing are important to be explored, it is important to extend these links to the other dimensions that make up Indigenous Peoples’ food systems.

1. *Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs), efforts to improve measurement;*
2. *Relationship between inequality and inequity.*

This section is extremely relevant in the case of Indigenous Peoples as inequalities they face are often rooted in inequity and disrespect of their rights. The Free, Prior and Informed Consent is a right pertaining Indigenous Peoples that aims to safeguard them from historic injustice and discrimination.

1. Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality
2. *Concentration of economic, social, and political capital within the food systems;*

Conventionally, food systems are commodified in mainstream economic models. However, Indigenous Peoples’ food systems are grounded on values of reciprocity, solidarity and exchange where these other values are relevant beyond monetization. Understanding and addressing these other values would be important for mainstream policy makers to understand the complexity of Indigenous Peoples’ food systems and their relevance for the world.

1. *Structural barriers to equality for historically disadvantaged and poor populations (women, people of colour, rural and urban poor, indigenous communities, peasants, migrants, refugees, etc.).*

This section is extremely relevant in the case of Indigenous Peoples, but it should not be separated from the rest of the report. Historically population in situation of poverty and vulnerability should be at the center of the report since they are the ones experiencing inequality.

Indigenous women suffer from greater inequality within Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous women have experienced an historical lack of visibility and face triple discrimination because of being women, Indigenous and poor. Indigenous women number among the world’s most disadvantaged people (UN, 2015). Indigenous women face further inequality by being paid less than Indigenous men are, they can be subject to violence more than men are (ILO, 2020), and they are frequently excluded from decision-making at all levels. Even in those matrifocal societies where women were historically empowered, drastic changes in economic and governance structures in recent decades have eroded their power, broken the reciprocity ties in the community and caused greater political segregation. Thus, increasing the vulnerability of families and reducing their resilience to respond to climate or social crises (FAO, 2020b). However, recognizing and making their social and economic role visible is fundamental to achieve food security as Indigenous women are custodians of Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge, guardians of native seeds and food producers, among others. Indigenous women are agents of change for dignifies lives and keys allies in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

On the other hand, from the 476 million Indigenous Peoples around the world, approximately 214 million of them are Indigenous youth (Calculated from IWGIA, 2020; ILO, 2019). In addition to the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples in general, Indigenous youth experience challenges such as intergenerational effects of dominant cultures, migration to urban areas, malnutrition, lack of intercultural education, lack of legal protection and lacking space in decision making, all leading to a dramatic increase in self-inflicted harm and suicide. Although these immense barriers, they are guardians of valuable knowledge, agents of change in the youth mobilization agenda on the climate crisis, and holders of unique ability to combine innovations, modern technology and traditional practices. Indigenous youth are key in achieving food security for all, ensuring the continuity of Indigenous Peoples´ food systems and biodiversity protection.

1. Paths toward equality
2. *Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food;*

In this section, it is recommended that the human right based approach is only limited to the Right to Food. In the context of Indigenous Peoples, several other rights apply as stated in the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). They are the right to access customary lands and natural resources, the right to food and the right to self-determination including the rights to self-determined economic, social and cultural development. In this context, it is essential to recall the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).

1. *Good governance to rebalance power and influence;*

This section is relevant in the context of Indigenous Peoples’ issues. During the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit, Indigenous leaders strongly recalled the need to include Indigenous Peoples in policy discussions and policy-making that could affect them directly or indirectly, while following the principles of “Nothing about Indigenous Peoples without Indigenous Peoples” and respecting Free, Prior and Informed Consent.

As stated in the start of the document, there is a need to address the consistent lack of recognition of Indigenous Peoples, their food and knowledge systems, as well as improving interculturality in policy-making.

Additionally, it is highly recommended to make greater efforts to ensure the participation of Indigenous women in decision-making processes at all levels and to adopt effective measures to combat the obstacles they face. The under-representation of this collective group is usually due, not only to the discrimination they suffer because of their gender, but also to the existence of barriers to their economic, social, and cultural rights. Ensuring indigenous women’s participation, guarantees their traditional knowledge to be heard, which underpins Indigenous Peoples’ food and seeds systems.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to the need to incorporate Indigenous youth into all policy discussions at the national, regional and global levels in the spirit of leaving no one behind. Indigenous Youth represent the present and future of indigenous food systems, the Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge, and the innovation[[3]](#footnote-3).

1. *Legal and policy interventions to regulate the influence of corporate actors (and those with concentrated power), and remove structural barriers and increase capital (for those with diminished resources).*
2. *Recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge systems (suggestion to add a paragraph)*

We would like to bring to the attention of the HLPE the importance to recognize the validity of Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge, in particular in relation to food and nutrition security, sustainable food systems, biodiversity conservation and climate action.

The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems recently (2021) published an article on “[Rethinking hierarchy of evidence for sustainable food systems](https://www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00388-5)” addressing how, research and evidence plays a role in policy making. Thus, what counts as evidence or research should be rethought. The article highlights that, despite having been practiced by millions of people across the world for millennia, Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge systems continue to be marginalized in policy and practice.

As an example of the value of Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, they maintain 80 percent of the terrestrial biodiversity in 28 percent of the world’s land that they traditionally occupy. Their food systems can generate hundreds of food species, providing dietary energy, macro- and micronutrients all year round and/or at times of food crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some experiences showed that Indigenous Peoples’ food systems were instrumental to ensure the resilience of many Indigenous communities across the world (FAO, 2021b).

Nevertheless, there are still countless historical examples whereby dominant science and technologies have been privileged over traditional knowledge systems. Too often, this lack of interculturality results in the top-down implementation of irrelevant, contextually inappropriate and ineffective policy solutions that have exacerbated social disparities, social exclusion, and erosion of Indigenous Peoples’ food systems, traditional knowledge and culture. Today, several leading science–policy platforms, including the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), recognize Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge as valuable within their assessment processes (The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems, 2021). Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge is a valid way to ensure food security, sustainability and resilience and should be recognized as such, in particular in debates related to sustainable food systems, and food and nutrition security.

**2. Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:**

1. reducing inequality gap and its potential  impact on  food security and nutrition outcomes;

**Through interculturality**: Strengthening the use and sustainable management of biodiversity in Indigenous Peoples’ food systems can be important in tackling the nutrition transition. For example, the Diabetes Prevention Program of the Oneida nation strengthened support for traditional medicines, traditional foods and medicinal practices to help aid diabetes, and numbers have shown decline with these efforts. Supporting the consumption of wild edibles and indigenous resource management practices could contribute to sustainable food and nutrition security, whilst supporting ecological health and conservation efforts (example retrieved from FAO, 2021b).

* **Declaration of the indigenous territory as a cultural heritage for agrobiodiversity**

In Ecuador, as a strategy to defend collective economic, social and cultural rights of the Indigenous Peoples’ communities of Cotacachi, and to promote agrobiodiversity conservation related traditional knowledge and ancestral practices, the municipal government of Cotacachi canton initiated the declaration of the territory as a cultural heritage for agrobiodiversity. The idea of declaration started in 2010 and the following years of consultation and preparatory work with the Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas e Indígenas de Cotacachi (UNORCAC), an association of farmers’ and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations. In 2014, the Cotacachi canton was declared a cultural heritage. This declaration not only recognizes the biodiverse nature of the territory but, more importantly, it values the traditional knowledge of the communities as custodians of biodiversity and genetic resources, especially women, in their role in conserving and sustaining local agrobiodiversity. The declaration is accompanied by a safeguarding plan of the indigenous territory. The safeguard plan stipulates support for the Indigenous Peoples’ communities in the restitution of local seeds; training for seed producers and seed exchange fairs; marketing of agrobiodiversity products, valorization of traditional cuisine and gastronomic fairs; value addition to native crops; as well as awareness building and educational activities. Therefore, the recognition of the Indigenous Peoples’ communities through the declaration enables them to contribute to both food security and wellbeing, and conservation of the biodiversity and genetic resources. (Example retrieved from FAO, 2021b).

1. ensuring the effective  legal framework to guarantee equal rights to access land and other productive resources, basic services, and the right to food to reduce inequalities;

* **National regulatory framework Law No. 37 on Indigenous Peoples’ Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Panama**
* **A good example of involvement of Indigenous peoples is the new Food Policy for Canada,** which was formulated through extensive consultations with First Nations, Métis Nations and Inuit and affirms the unique rights and interests of the First Nations, Métis Nations and Inuit for their self-determination and their right to define their own food system. The policy includes commitment to develop food security with Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples that is based on respect and partnerships with communities that support food systems as defined by the peoples themselves. Also in Canada, efforts for mitigating lack of food access for urban Indigenous Peoples have focused on increasing food sovereignty through several community actions, including improving the indigenous neighborhood food availability and family food resilience (Provincial Health Services Authority, 2011; example retrieved from FAO, 2021b).

1. enhancing food systems’ role in the reduction of inequalities (through income and livelihoods generation, while contributing to healthy diets and environment, among others);

* **The Global Mountain Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) Network**

The Network represents another valid example of knowledge- sharing processes among mountain peoples, including Indigenous Peoples’ communities. Created in 2019 by 13 organizations of small-holder mountain producers from Bolivia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Panama, Peru and the Philippines, the Global Mountain PGS Network is the first international network of Participatory Guarantee Systems. The process was promoted and facilitated by the Mountain Partnership Secretariat through its Mountain Partnership Products (MPP) initiative. The Global Mountain PGS network is rooted in the Ranikhet Declaration, which represents a commitment of the MPP partners to start a transition towards a PGS that will certify their farming systems as ethical, fair and organic. PGS represent cost-effective and locally focused quality assurance systems, alternative or complementary to third-party certification schemes. The network links small-scale mountain cultovators around the globe, promotes horizontal knowledge sharing among partners and innovative south-south cooperation. Thanks to this network, mountain cultivators’ experiences can be shared, communicated and scaled up, maintaining the context-specific approach typical of PGS initiatives. (example retrieved from FAO, 2021b)

* **Other examples in the forthcoming publication**: FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 2022. *Labelling and certification schemes for Indigenous Peoples’ foods. Generating income while protecting and promoting Indigenous Peoples’ values.* Rome.

1. empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organizations in making food systems more equitable and accessible;

In **Latin America and Asia**, FAO undertook activities aimed at strengthening collective rights and territorial governance of Indigenous Peoples. For instance, in Chile, GEF Restoration Project has promoted the importance of including an Indigenous Peoples’ perspective through the direct participation of Indigenous Peoples living in the territories where the project will be executed. The project has designed a pilot including an Indigenous Peoples’ cosmovision (specifically the Mapuche people’s cosmovision) to assure their rights are protected and their culture are respected..

1. addressing capacity gaps in generating and using data and other new technologies in policy-making processes, monitoring and reporting on inequalities for FSN.

**3. Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report.**

FAO. 2020. *Indigenous women, daughters of Mother Earth.* Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0719en/CB0719EN.pdf>

FAO. 2020. *Territorial management in indigenous matrifocal societies – Case studies on the Khasi, Wayuu, Shipibo-Conibo and Moso peoples*. Rome, FAO and IWGIA. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca6887en>

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FAO. 2021. *The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4932en>

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FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 2022. *Labelling and certification schemes for Indigenous Peoples’ foods. Generating income while protecting and promoting Indigenous Peoples’ values.* Rome. (forthcoming)

ILO, 2020: Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal   Peoples Convention No 169: toward an inclusive, sustainable and just future. International Labour Organization. Geneva, Switzerland. URL <https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_735607/lang--en/index.htm>

The Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples’ Food Systems. Rethinking hierarchies of evidence for sustainable food systems. *Nat Food* **2,**843–845 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00388-5>

Van Uffelen, A., Tanganelli, E., Gerke, A., Bottigliero, F., Drieux, E., Fernández-de-Larrinoa, Y., Milbank, C., Sheibani, S., Strømsø, I., Way, M. and Bernoux, M. 2021. Indigenous youth as agents of change – Actions of Indigenous youth in local food systems during times of adversity. Rome, FAO. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb6895en/cb6895en.pdf>

**4. Provide feedback on the following questions, to guide the development of the report:**

1. How do food systems drivers affect inequalities? And specifically what are the different impacts of trends in:

All these aspects are relevant to take into account in the report. In particular:

1. *assets, land, other natural resources and finance*

The food security of Indigenous Peoples has traditionally exclusively depended on the natural resources available on the land where they lived, and accessed through hunting, fishing, foraging, herding, planting, harvesting. Traditionally, Indigenous Peoples’ food systems show important level of self-sufficiency. A recent FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International publication (2021) show levels of self-sufficiency between 50% and 80% in between eight Indigenous Peoples’ food systems profiled. Therefore, addressing Indigenous Peoples rights on land tenure means protecting Indigenous Peoples’ food systems.

Infringements on land rights is not gender neutral and Indigenous women’s rights interact with violations of collective land rights (UN, 2015). Usually, women are the lasts to access to land tenure. This is one of the situations that most severely impacts Indigenous women because they play a very important role in their communities as food providers, administrators of natural resources and transmitters of Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge.

1. *infrastructure and technology, including ICT*
2. *market structure in input provision, logistics, processing, transport, distribution of food*
3. *access to information and data*

Global databases on Indigenous Peoples’ food systems are extremely valuable, and their development should be continued and expanded to include biodiversity of food and its properties, as well as cultural diversity, and related conservation efforts (Kuhnlein, Eme and Fernandez de Larrinoa, 2019, in FAO, 2021b).

Nevertheless, Indigenous Peoples are often subject to knowledge extraction and exploitation. Efforts to document Indigenous Peoples’ food systems should thus be carried out in full respect of their self-determination and intellectual property rights through approaches and practices that ensure cultural security and Indigenous Peoples’ ownership of the information collected. (FAO, 2021b)

1. *demographic trends including migration and urbanization*

This is very relevant. Migration to urban areas is an important threat to the preservation of Indigenous Peoples’ food and traditional knowledge systems. Migration can be induced by climate change and forced displacement due to development projects. Insensitive development policies can transform Indigenous Peoples’ food systems though increased monetarization, creating new needs and dependence to markets, and therefore migration to urban areas to remunerative jobs. This leads to an interruption of the transmission of traditional knowledge between the elders and the youth and an erosion of the traditional food systems, hence increased food insecurity.

1. *socio-cultural factors around gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, language and their intersection*

This is very relevant because, although, the violation to the right to food affects Indigenous Peoples in general, the impact and damage is greater for Indigenous women because they are responsible for ensuring access to food and water in many of the Indigenous Peoples’ communities. Along the same lines, violations of the right to food affect Indigenous women directly and have a disproportionate impact on them because of these roles of food and water providers, caregivers and managers of resources. However, recognizing and making their social and economic role visible is fundamental to achieve food security.

1. *political and economic factors (presence/absence of a legal framework to ensure equal rights to key resources and services and the expression of agency)?*

As least 50 % of the world’s land is customarily claimed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. However, Indigenous Peoples legally own only 10 % of their land, and have formal rights to use or manage on an additional 8 %. (RRI, 2016)

1. How can social inequalities impact FSN outcomes?
2. How can the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? Which different pathways should be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment?
3. How can the reduction of inequalities through sustainable food systems and better FSN contribute to conflict prevention and peace building?
4. How can gender and youth mainstreaming approaches, as well as adopting an intersectional lens on inequalities, taking multiple identities together in the analysis (including gender and youth) in food systems contribute to social justice and better FSN?

On the one hand, recognizing and making Indigenous women’s social and economic role visible is fundamental to achieve food security as Indigenous women are custodians of Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge, guardians of native seeds and food producers, among others. Indigenous women are agents of change for dignifies lives and keys allies in the fight against hunger and malnutrition.

On the other hand, Indigenous youth is guardian of valuable knowledge, agents of change in the youth mobilization agenda on the climate crisis, and holders of unique ability to combine innovations, modern technology, and traditional practices. Indigenous youth are key in achieving food security for all, ensuring the continuity of Indigenous Peoples´ food systems and biodiversity protection.

1. What are the main knowledge and data gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine FSN outcomes? What could be improved in data collection and analysis tools for FSN inequalities?
2. How can strengthened food systems’ governance contribute to the reduction of inequalities in FSN outcomes?
3. Which legal frameworks can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities?
4. What is the role of political economy in reducing inequalities in food systems and in reducing other inequalities that have an impact on FSN outcomes?

**References**

FAO. 2020. *Territorial management in indigenous matrifocal societies – Case studies on the Khasi, Wayuu, Shipibo-Conibo and Moso peoples*. Rome, FAO and IWGIA. <https://doi.org/10.4060/ca6887en>

FAO. 2020. *Indigenous women, daughters of Mother Earth.* Rome. <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0719en/CB0719EN.pdf>

FAO. 2021a. *Policy Brief. Indigenous Youth: Innovation and Traditional Knowledge for Food Security*. Rome.<https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/faoweb/2018-New/POLICY_BRIEF_Indigenous_Youth._Innovation_and_Traditional_Knowledge_for_Food_Security_02.pdf>

FAO. 2021b *The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4932en>

FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 2021. *Indigenous Peoples’ food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience in the front line of climate change*. Rome. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb5131en>

FAO and Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT. 2022. *Labelling and certification schemes for Indigenous Peoples’ foods. Generating income while protecting and promoting Indigenous Peoples’ values.* Rome. (forthcoming)

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UN, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Victoria Tauli Corpuz, 2015; Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Indigenous Women and the United Nations System, Good Practices and Lessons Learned. Compiled by the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for the Task Force on Indigenous Women/Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, 2007.

## Willow Battista, Environmental Defense Fund, United States of America

Dear HLPE Secretariat and Experts,

Please find, attached, a set of responses and suggestions regarding this scope of report from Environmental Defense Fund.

Please contact Willow Battista for questions or follow-up.

Thank you for this opportunity to engage on this important topic.

-Willow Battista, Senior Manager of Climate Resilient Food Systems, EDF

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**Response and Suggestions from Environmental Defense Fund on the**

**HLPE consultation on the report’s scope: “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”**

May 2022

Please contact Willow Battista, Senior Manager of Climate Resilient Food Systems ([wbattista@edf.org](mailto:wbattista@edf.org)) for questions or follow-up

Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) recognizes and applauds the effort by the Committee on World Food Security’s High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition to tackle this important topic. This report will be timely and its content can be very valuable in guiding new and existing attempts to transform food systems in the wake of the UN Food System Summit last year. We appreciate this opportunity to weigh in on the scope of this report, and we hope our suggestions will be valuable.

We were especially impressed to see the **proposed focus on the drivers of power imbalance, and on structural barriers,** which are often neglected in favor of a focus on symptoms and superficial remedies (eg. aid programs), and an excessive focus on the role of individuals in undesirable food system outcomes can obscure structural features that incentivize or even “force” certain behavioral patterns that result in such outcomes. We suggest that the content **could be strengthened through the inclusion of material on political will and accountability**: once the drivers of inequity and their remedies are identified it will take considerable political will to put the remedies in place as they will represent a significant disruption of the status quo. If and when such remedies are implemented, strong accountability measures will be required to withstand strong incentives to reinstate the power imbalances and associated structures that result in inequitable distribution of wealth, food, and even in opportunities to produce one’s own food.

One high-level suggestion we have around the content and objectives of this report is that it is absolutely critical that **climate change** be included and centered in this discussion. We were surprised to see that climate change was not mentioned in the scope document. Climate change is inextricably interwoven with issues of equity, equality, and food and nutrition security and will have significant implications for efforts to address them. These interconnections can be summarized into three categories:

* *Climate change will increase food and nutrition insecurity, and will worsen existing inequities and inequalities.* There is a significant body of literature that shows that the impacts of climate change will be disproportionately borne by the most vulnerable groups - the groups who are the most food and nutrition insecure - at both local and global scales (e.g., Klinsky et al., 2017). Climate change is already making all kinds of food resources both harder to produce (directly reducing incomes for small-scale farmers, fishers, and the world’s rural poor) as well as more expensive (directly increasing food and nutrition insecurity for all vulnerable groups), and there is no question that these trends will continue.
* *Our food systems are a significant driver of climate change, and the drivers of climate change are themselves inequitable.* Agriculture alone is responsible for roughly ⅓ of global greenhouse gas emissions (Crippa et al., 2021). These emissions stem largely from land use and land conversion for agricultural production and from production techniques (e.g., farming practices that release NO2 and methane), as well as from transportation, processing and packaging, and post-consumer food waste. However, the drivers of these emissions are tied up in global differences in economic development and governance capacities that have been themselves driven by historically inequitable power dynamics and explicit exploitation of various groups of people. Tackling the climate crisis will thus involve addressing a variety of tradeoffs and interconnections with the food and nutrition security crisis. For example, policies that support transformation of food crops like corn into biofuels [can lead to increases in the cost of food to consumers and create pressures to further expand agricultural land](https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/food-and-farms/biofuels-are-accelerating-the-food-crisis-and-the-climate-crisis-too) in low-governance geographies.
* *Existing inequities reduce community and system capacity to adapt and transform in the face of climate change.* There is a large body of literature describing how greater equity results in more sustainable outcomes through multiple mechanisms. For example, interventions that are perceived as more equitable increase the buy-in of impacted actors (N. J. Bennett et al., 2020; Klinsky et al., 2017; Pascual et al., 2014; Turner et al., 2016); decision-making that is more inclusive and participatory results in more effective decisions based on a more complete understanding of the system (Klein et al., 2015); and efforts that seek to meet multiple goals, including both conservation and equity goals, are more likely to result in solutions that target the root causes of both of these challenges (Finkbeiner et al., 2017; Klein et al., 2015). On top of all of this, inequities create conflict and reduce social capital, thereby reducing a system’s inherent resilience and capacity for adaptation and transformation (Barnes et al., 2020; N. J. Bennett et al., 2014; Klinsky et al., 2017; Thomas & Twyman, 2005).

For all of these reasons, it is critical that we address food and nutrition insecurity and the climate crisis together through a systemic approach, and that we carefully explore and address the implications of interventions in one area on the other.

Secondly, we suggest using **greater intentionality with regard to the use of the words “inequality” and “inequity.”** These terms are not interchangeable and it’s important to understand how they relate and differ. In a nutshell, “equality” means that everyone gets the *same* opportunities and resources, while “equity” means that everyone gets the opportunities and resources that they *need.* This distinction has been well-articulated in various FAO documents aimed at achieving gender equity, for example, “[Gender equity in agricultural and rural development](https://www.fao.org/3/i1240e/i1240e.pdf).” The concept of “equity” can be thought of as an extension of the concept of “equality” in that it incorporates the ideas of fairness and justice, and takes current and historical contexts into account (Ikeme, 2003). For this reason, we suggest that *equity*, rather than equality be the central focus of your report, including in the report’s title. Some finer-scale comments and suggestions related to this distinction include:

* *The need to* ***recognize and address existing and historic inequities, and avoid erasing them*** *through efforts to achieve equality going forward.* Existing and historical inequities stem from long-term imbalances in power, resource access, and knowledge sharing; they are integrated into and reinforced by current systemic structures and relationships. These pre-existing conditions affect disadvantaged people’s capacity and agency to take transformative actions for their own lives and their communities, and they must therefore be taken into account in all efforts to improve human and environmental health and wellbeing. It is critical that we do not allow new initiatives and interventions to obscure or erase their effects or prevent the groups and individuals who are responsible from being held accountable.
  + For example, the FAO’s [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](https://www.fao.org/3/i2801e/i2801e.pdf) and other recent reports and documents elevate the need to recognize, register and regulate tenure rights for small-scale producers, and we support these calls. However, there is a risk that groups of people who depend on these resources but are not formally associated with any commercial producer groups, e.g., women, Indigenous people, and the elderly who may glean, forage, or gather food resources for subsistence use, will be left out of this recognition process and thus excluded from access to these resources on which they may be very dependent for food and nutrition security. It is necessary to expand tenure guidelines and frameworks to ensure that these systems are created through a lens that captures all the methods through which people are feeding themselves.
  + A similar concern relates to social safety net programs, such as unemployment and food stamps, which are designed to ensure food and nutrition security in times of need. But self-employed individuals, including many of the world’s small-scale food producers, do not generally have access to these systems. If their income or food sources are impacted by climate change, contamination, or over-use they will not be able to tap into these social safety nets. These programs should also be expanded through the application of a food and nutrition security lens.
* *The* ***needs and perspectives of marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including Indigenous people, women, and youth, must be* centered** *in our efforts to improve food and nutrition security, not simply “inform” them.* As we work to transform our global food systems it is critical that we do so in a way that elevates and honors the people who have been marginalized by these systems throughout history. Historically marginalized groups are the most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity, and they must therefore be directly engaged in the development and implementation of interventions that affect their livelihoods and wellbeing. They must be elevated to leadership and decision-making roles, not only because they are directly impacted by these decisions, but because their deep understanding of the challenges and flaws with the current system, as well as of their own needs and the challenges they face, make them the best experts on how to design and implement the best solutions.
  + *Women especially* have been marginalized throughout history in our food systems – they tend to do an outsized portion of the work in food production and processing while also carrying an outsized share of the burden of food provision for their households. Meanwhile they tend to hold only a tiny fraction of higher-level management positions, generally lack ownership rights, and are frequently excluded from policy decision-making (Gopal et al., 2020; Monfort, 2015). The FAO’s [Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fao.org%2Fdocuments%2Fcard%2Fen%2Fc%2FI4356EN&data=05%7C01%7Cwbattista%40edf.org%7C19ec3cefa29a4e05d52f08da22430be5%7Cfe4574edbcfd4bf0bde843713c3f434f%7C0%7C0%7C637859968606415461%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KmidmchjjqoHAGf9LDB2Rd72DB%2BcU68yOu3SoIfIc1M%3D&reserved=0) are a valuable resource to consult here, as they highlight the need to grant preferential access/rights to women, where necessary, to improve equity outcomes.
* Furthermore, women, youth, and Indigenous people are among the most well-equipped to design effective solutions to the challenges we face. For example, research shows that [women](https://unfccc.int/news/5-reasons-why-climate-action-needs-women) are more likely to design and implement effective climate change solutions for a variety of reasons. [Youth](https://foodtank.com/news/2021/10/harnessing-the-power-of-youth-for-agri-food-systems-transformations/) are often at the forefront of effective movements for change. And many of the food system interventions and solutions that are gaining global attention for their ability to benefit both people and the planet (e.g., agroecology/ agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, climate-smart agriculture) are derived from the knowledge and experiences of [Indigenous peoples](https://www.fao.org/3/cb5131en/cb5131en.pdf). It’s critical that these groups and individuals not just be recognized or acknowledged, but that have the ability and the autonomy to *lead* these initiatives, and that financing and investment for their implementation flow to them and their communities, not just to the NGOs and agencies who have historically held the power.
* ***Small-scale producers, who are responsible for more than ⅓ of food supply globally (and 90% of aquatic foods that are directly consumed),* are *the global poor****. We must center them in our efforts to transform food systems.* Efforts to address food and nutrition security often focus on “the global poor,” and on improving their access to food resources. However, a fact rarely discussed in these contexts is that 80% of people classified as living in “extreme poverty” live in rural areas, and 76% of these work in the agricultural sector (Davis et al., 2022). In other words, a significant percent of the people who produce the world’s food are the same people who are vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity. Interventions designed to target the latter *must* consider their implications for food producers in rural areas, where there are few alternative livelihood options. This holds true for the fisheries sector as well. Efforts to better value our food resources based on their true nutritional and environmental impacts would help to ensure that the people who produce these resources sustainably can make a sufficient living doing so.

We suggest that a **greater emphasis could be placed on *nutrition* security**, and that it would be valuable to separate this goal from that of food security, as the necessary interventions and solutions to achieve equality and equity in these two areas may be quite different. For example, a growing problem in our globalized world is the overconsumption of under-nutritious foods, leading to overweightness, obesity, and all of the health and wellbeing challenges that accompany them - in other words, there has been an increase of nutrition insecurity even as efforts reduced food insecurity.

* One way to help address nutrition insecurity is to revise global, regional, and local policies so that food resources are valued based on their nutritional content and the environmental impacts associated with their production. Doing so would highlight the importance of a variety of highly nutritious “forgotten foods” that are already being produced sustainably and providing food and nutrition for billions of people around the world.
  + For example, aquatic foods (fish, invertebrates, seaweed, and other aquatic species) are a key source of both protein and micronutrients for billions of people, and aquatic food systems are a cornerstone of the livelihoods, economies, and cultures of many coastal and riparian communities. They are especially important for coastal and rural communities throughout the Global South and the developing tropics, where vulnerability to malnutrition and food insecurity are especially high (A. Bennett et al., 2021). In addition, and often more importantly, fish are crucial sources of vital micronutrients, such as zinc, iron, A and B vitamins, and essential fatty acids (Golden et al., 2021). These micronutrients are generally more bioavailable in fish compared with plant-source foods, and fish is also often more affordable than other animal protein sources. If eaten locally, these resources have the added benefits of being accessible and affordable to the communities who need them most, and locally-caught species are likely to be familiar, culturally appropriate food sources that can provide necessary nutrients without requiring a dietary shift (Hicks et al., 2019). Additionally, fishing can be a critical food source for landless people, as well as an important safety net during political, economic, and/ or environmental shocks that disrupt land-based food production. And on top of all these food and nutrition benefits, fish, and especially wild-caught seafood, is a significantly more sustainable food source across multiple dimensions, including greenhouse gas emissions, nitrogen release, water use, and land use, when compared with a wide-variety of land-based foods, and especially when compared with other animal protein sources (Gephart et al., 2021). a recent paper suggests that, through improved management of wild fisheries and expansion of sustainable ocean aquaculture, aquatic foods can meet or exceed per capita seafood demand in nearly every country, under all but the worst case climate scenarios (Free et al., 2022). For all of these reasons it’s critical that aquatic foods be integrated throughout this report on inequalities in food system transformation.
  + Other food sources that are not part of a formal economic value chain, such as foods foraged from forests or intertidal zones, or that are grown in backyards or community gardens, have similarly been left out of the conversation about food security. These overlooked sources of food provide nutrition and livelihoods for billions of people, and are especially important for women, who are the primary laborers in this sector. Recognizing their knowledge and contributions to these 'forgotten foods' would support greater equity in the food system. Centering nutrition in our goals can help to ensure these resources are protected and that their access and distribution is equitable.

We appreciated the scope document’s focus on understanding *existing* good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives for food and nutrition security, as we have found that often there is an unnecessary push to develop “new and innovative solutions” where real progress could be made through the **implementation and scaling of existing interventions and solutions**. For example:

* One of the main drivers of food system inequality is the conventional food production process itself. This involves the application of fertilizers produced from natural gas, resulting in greenhouse gas emissions. Application rates are often excessive, resulting in harmful algal blooms, hypoxic zones, and greenhouse gas emissions. Crops are grown in monocultures, often to feed ruminants resulting in more greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture has also displaced forests or prairies that once sequestered atmospheric carbon dioxide, exacerbating climate change. Moreover, the crops are often sold into commodity markets. Hence conventional food production has become one of the largest drivers of climate change in the world (Crippa et al., 2021), resulting in gross injustices and inequities as climate change disproportionately affects countries that contributed least to climate change. Agroecology, agroforestry, and regenerative farming and aquaculture (which stem directly from traditional and Indigenous management practices, as discussed above) are proven antidotes. Instead of linear production systems that require large inputs of energy and chemicals and deplete land and aquatic ecosystems, such sustainable and regenerative food production systems are circular, using inputs efficiently and regenerating the natural ecosystems in which they are embedded. Many regenerative systems also promise to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.   
  + Terrestrial examples are relatively well known and include permaculture etc. In the ocean, regenerative aquaculture has a long history but fell out of favor as more intensive methods aimed at supplying commodity markets were introduced and socialized. Because intensive aquaculture has contributed significantly to marine habitat degradation and food inequity, and because it is now recognized that active removal of atmospheric carbon and accelerated reductions in greenhouse gas emissions will BOTH be necessary to meet climate stabilization goals, interest in regenerative aquaculture is increasing (Gephart & Golden, 2022). Examples include multitrophic integrated aquaculture (e.g., growing seaweed and shellfish together to create conditions conducive to food production like lower ocean acidity, low-to-zero nutrient pollution, high water clarity) as well as to potentially sequester atmospheric carbon; and microalgae cultivation using wastewater and industrial CO2-rich pollution as inputs to produce alternatives to fishmeal and fishoil in the production of aquafeeds and as ingredients for human food production, such as protein, with very low trophic efficiency loss.

Two key gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine food and nutrition security outcomes are the need for **data-limited impact assessment methods** and **the need to use previously unrecognized data sources**.

* There is a clear need to develop new methods to assess the nutritional, environmental, and social impacts of different food resources and food production methods *in data- and capacity-limited contexts*. For example, in systems dominated by small-scale producers it can be very difficult to quantify the water quality benefits stemming from one farmer’s reduction in fertilizer or pesticide use. Such data are desperately needed throughout the small-scale farms and fisheries of the world to enable more accurate and appropriate valuation of different food resources and to facilitate the creation of policies and management plans that incentivize more sustainable and regenerative practices. If we seek to make progress on the challenges of food system transformation in an equitable way, we must be able to account for farm-level differences in performance along a variety of metrics. Without this precision, policies and market incentives will favor larger-scale, industrialized operations that can afford to adopt expensive new technologies, and smaller-scale farmers and fishers will be left behind.
* Similarly, as referenced above, there is also a critical need to capture data on informal food production and consumption. For example, food resources that are foraged, gathered, or gleaned by individuals who are not members of the formal food production sector will not be considered or valued in policy or management decision-making, and will therefore not benefit from any efforts to protect or restore those resources, or to ensure access to them for all individuals in need. In some cases, new data streams are becoming available, such as the [Illuminating Hidden Harvests](https://www.worldfishcenter.org/project/illuminating-hidden-harvests) data on unassessed fisheries, which should definitely be captured in this report. In other cases, bespoke efforts will be needed to capture a comprehensive picture of food resource use in any given area.
* Building capacity in how to effectively manage fisheries and aquaculture in order to produce more food locally so as to reduce reliance on purchasing power or imports can also result in a more equitable distribution of benefits accruing from resource commons like nearshore waters or fish stocks. This includes capacity building in adaptive management and the formalization of management plans (Belize conch and lobster FMPs, Cuban FMPs; new multispecies FMP; Chile FMPs; Philippines FMPs; Lampung BSC FMP). It also includes capacity building in data limited stock assessment (common to all these cases) and the introduction of technologies such as AI-enabled cameras to enumerate fishing effort and feature-phone apps to collect landings data (Indonesian BSC fishery), as well as surveillance and enforcement technology (e.g., low cost radar systems in Belize).

Finally, here we provide some input on your fourth set of questions, addressing **the relationship between food systems and inequities**, to guide the development of your report:

* Different food systems drive inequitable distributions of wealth, food, and production opportunities in many different ways that are context specific, and opportunities for transformation to sustainable and equitable food production are very different for different types of food producers and food systems (Stringer et al., 2020). However, the lack of secure tenure to land, water, seed, fish stocks, and other assets necessary to produce food or generate wealth that could be used to increase food security and reduce inequity seems to be a common factor across many food systems. Many food systems may be subject to a vicious cycle wherein farmers or ranchers or pastoralists or fishers or aquaculturists lack secure access to such assets, and as a result have limited collateral to offer for financing required to purchase secure access. In many cases, such groups lack access to capital for other reasons, including lack of picture IDs or ways to transfer funds electronically.
* Inequitable access to markets can cause inequitable distributions of wealth and food as well. Major buyers of course prefer stable, large volume supplies of food or ingredients while small-scale producers often have difficulty aggregating supply to meet such demands. The adoption of sustainability criteria in buying protocols can also unintentionally disadvantage small-scale producers who lack capacity to finance expensive certification and monitoring schemes.
* Livelihood programs designed from the top-down have a mixed record of success at best. Micro-finance has been more successful at providing small-holders with access to capital, with generally low default rates.
* Social status and discrimination can also of course result in lack of access to assets necessary to produce or obtain food, resulting in inequity and constituting an injustice.
* The political economy plays an outsized role in either increasing or decreasing equitable food system outcomes. Over-reliance on market forces and a de-emphasis on government as a counter-balance necessary to prevent externalities and injustices that markets are blind to has been, in combination with discrimination and racism, arguably been the major driver of inequality in general. Capture of government (e.g., regulatory capture, lobbying, campaign contributions) by powerful entities that are uninterested in the equitable distribution of food or the opportunity to produce or buy food can also result in inequitable food system outcomes. This results in the exclusion of other voices and interests in the process of structuring markets and regulations, perpetuating the status quo of food system inequality.

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## Kameswararao Chiruvolu, Private, India

Request HLPE to consider the following feedback:

1. Animal studies indicates that “Maternal protein restriction leads to hyperresponsiveness to stress and salt-sensitive hypertension in male offspring”***1***. Further research on similar studies on PEM (protein energy malnutrition) in humans is required. It is necessary to study the possibility of PEM related malnutrition from pregnant ladies to male children. In the meantime, protein requirement guidelines of pregnant ladies should be prepared.

2. A holistic ‘people centric’ approach to food, health and nutrition is required to address issues beyond food systems. Data collection and reporting tools should be supplemented with causal analysis and monitoring tools. Best practices in the world (health care) should be considered to eliminate all forms of malnutrition. For example, two ultrasound examinations during pregnancy (normal cases) in Switzerland is one such measure to monitor the health of a pregnant lady and would be born baby. “Maternity: Pregnancy: Your basic insurance covers the cost of seven routine antenatal examinations carried out by a doctor or a midwife and two ultrasound examinations (one between the 11th and 14th weeks of pregnancy and one between the 20th and 23rd weeks). In high-risk pregnancies your insurance will cover as many examinations and ultrasound examinations as necessary.”***2***Low cost mobile scanners are available now (suitable for LMICS). With wide spread mobile connectivity telemedicine/ virtual consultation / video consultation with specialist is a call away.

3. In the WHO recommended healthy diet there are no guidelines on quality and quantity of protein***3***. Many countries are yet to prepare their own guidelines. Statistics reveal that 93% of Indian population are unaware of ideal protein requirement per day with pregnant ladies on the top (97%), followed by lactating mothers (96%) and adolescents (95%)**4.**Situation in other countries is not much different.

4. Food security and nutrition plays a key role in Sustainable Development Goal1(SDG1) of UN: ‘zero hunger’ and elimination of all forms of malnutrition. The difference between ‘food security’ and ‘protein adequacy’ is not clearly communicated. In many countries vulnerable groups consume more carbohydrates instead of protein to meet the dietary energy requirement. Cost of protein is much more than cost of carbohydrates. There are no protein foods being provided under most of the nutrition programmes– possibly due lack of availability, affordability and/or awareness on food groups and dietary adequacy and frequency**5,6**

5. Meal maker is a by-product of soya bean oil extraction and refining process. Pulp remaining after extracting the oil from soya beans is converted into small chunks  looking like small meat pieces and are often referred as vegetable meat. Meal maker is rich in proteins, 100 grams of meal maker has about 52 grams proteins, four times that of a boiled egg costing much less than four eggs.

Protein cost per gram in Indian Rupee (₹) Hyderabad, India,12 April 2022:  Meal maker- 0.23; Rice- 0.53; Wheat- 0.42; Milk- 1.62; Boiled egg- 0.38; Chicken meat- 1.78; Mutton- 2.5; Fish-1.3 to 3.0

6. Supplementing diet with Meal Maker Protein Powder (MMPP) is a cost- effective pathway to reduce PEM. Soya bean is one of the major crops cultivated across the world. It is grown under several weather conditions. In 2019 global production of soya bean is 334million tonnes. Approximately 85% of the world's soybean crop is processed into soya bean oil and soya bean meal. More than 95% of soya bean meal is used as animal feed. That is, about 284 million tonnes soya meal is produced in 2019, and about 270 million tonnes is used as animal feed. Increasing human consumption of meal maker is a sustainable approach to reduce protein deficiency. A small fraction of produced soya meal, that is less than10 million tonnes can provide 25 grams soya meal per day per person to reduce PEM of 1 billion undernourished people in the world for one year.

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Dr. C V Kameswara Rao, M. Tech, Ph.D, Information Practitioner (voluntary), Health, food, nutrition and climate change

## Sara Elfstrand, SwedBio at Stockholm Resilience Centre, Sweden

Dear HLPE Secretariat and Experts,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute reflections on the scope of the upcoming report on reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition. Please find attached a set of responses and recommendations from SwedBio, a programme on biodiversity and equitable development.

Kind regards, Sara Elfstrand on behalf of SwedBio

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**SwedBio contribution to the “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition - HLPE consultation on the report’s scope” -** *8 May 2022*

We welcome the report and the emphasis on a food systems approach, a broadened definition of food security, the use of an intersectionality lens, the focus on human rights, especially the focus on the right to food, on the important role of smallholder farmers, and on agroecology. All of them being aspects which we deem crucial related to the topic of inequalities in relation to food security and nutrition.

An overarching reflection however is that we lack the perspective of the intertwined relation between people and nature which is at the core of sustainable and equitable development. A systems approach implies considering social-ecological systems. Human well-being for all is dependent on biodiversity and ecosystems, and the wide range of benefits that they provide. Nature’s benefits to people, or ecosystem services, embrace the multiple values created by nature, many times in interaction with human cultures, such as the wide variety of crops that are sustaining livelihoods, nature providing protection and security during uncertain times, and nature as a source of identity and pride. Policy and decision makers at all levels need to be aware of the importance of biodiversity and nature’s benefits to people for a good quality of life, including the intimate links between human rights and biodiversity.

In addition, we would like to add/strengthen the following aspects:

On an overall level, we see that the report needs to consider the increasing inequalities globally, owing to multiple crises including the pandemic, more recently the war in Ukraine, as well as the ongoing biodiversity and climate crisis. As stressed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food in his talk at the UN Human Rights Council in March, balancing humanitarian relief with a long-term perspective is of immense relevance now. With global food crisis and conflict on the rise, the special rapporteur called for a multilateral, coordinated response to the food crisis and that when engaging in humanitarian relief we should not forget the recovery phase – the support to local farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities, agroecology, etc. As the special rapporteur put it, wars and conflicts do end, but without long-term thinking there will be permanent damage.

The following points relate to 1.a.i *“What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective”;* 1.b on *“Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality”* and1.c *“Paths toward equality”;* 2.d. *“empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organisations in making food systems more equitable and accessible”* and also to 4.c *“How can the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? Which different pathways should be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment?”*

* Clearly spell out the importance of integrating **a Human Rights Based Approach**. In this regard, we would like to highlight the importance of civil society organisations, community-based organisations and social movements. They play an absolute fundamental role to achieving sustainable and equitable food security and nutrition for all when they are able to have a full and effective participation. And groups such as smallholder farmers, small-scale fishers (SSF), pastoralists, indigenous peoples should be able to claim and exert their rights, as well as governments as duty bearers fulfil their obligations, in order to have healthy, culturally-appropriate, sustainable and equitable food production and food security. In addition, it would be appreciated if the report highlights *the importance of recognising, respecting and prioritising the legitimate tenure rights of indigenous peoples and local communities with customary tenure systems that exercise self-governance of land, fisheries and forests; their collective knowledge and practices, traditions, diets, nutrition and wellbeing with special attention to the provision of equitable access for women*, as observed in the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN, page 18, 3.2.2)
* Human Rights: The report should include the **human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** as an important human right, newly adopted as a resolution (October 8, 2021) by the UN Human Rights Council. The importance of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities customary tenure rights and right to self-determination should also be clearly stressed. For Small Scale Fishers, there are concerns regarding natural resource, tenure and access rights to aquatic and coastal systems. We are in support of and would like to highlight the conclusions made in the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Michael Fakhri: [Seeds, right to life and farmers’ rights](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G21/397/86/PDF/G2139786.pdf?OpenElement). Unless the inequalities of the seed systems and the lack of control by the farmers themselves is addressed it is unlikely that we will be able to avoid food crises related to climate change impacts and biodiversity loss.
* **Meaningful engagement of all constituencies:** It is important to engage all constituencies/groups of people valuable to an equitable food system and food security through full and effective participation and Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). It is important to integrate the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)** and the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP)** in considering *how* the constituencies are included, ensuring full and effective participation and usefulness for all involved. In particular it is crucial not to forget the small-scale fishers and fish workers, men and women, who play a significant role in food security and nutrition for many families. They also play an important role in many local and national economies, particularly in developing countries, where aquatic ecosystems are a key part of peoples’ food security, livelihoods, and human well-being. It is also highly likely that aquatic foods will play an even more crucial role to sustainably feed a growing population, in which the role of SSF will increase even further. In addition, SSF are one of the most vulnerable groups to climate change. SSF, particularly women, still lack recognition and decision-making power when it comes to ocean governance. Furthermore, sustainable fisheries are both linked and dependent on biodiversity in the oceans and lakes. We would like the report to give specific references and encouragement of implementation of **the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication**, which advocates for a strong Human Rights-Based Approach. The specific crucial role of women in the food systems should be increasingly recognized and supported. In addition, the report **must clearly recognise the role of small scale fishers and fish workers, with special emphasis on women.**
* **The role of IPLCs in food systems should be recognized.** The [Local Biodiversity Outlook](https://localbiodiversityoutlooks.net) reports could be referred to in the study demonstrating their crucial role in *“nurturing agricultural biodiversity for millennia, both for food and medicines and for deeper spiritual, cultural and community values, with women paying vital roles. Small-scale producers and family farmers still feed the majority of the world’s people, while using less than 25 percent of the world’s land, water and fossil fuel energy. Maintaining and expanding diversity in agriculture, landscapes and food systems will be critical in a transformation towards just, healthy and resilient food systems”* (Summary of [Local Biodiversity Outlook 2](https://localbiodiversityoutlooks.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Local-Biodiversity-Outlooks-2.pdf)). These reports may be used as a base for understanding the importance of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities’ crucial contribution to sustainable food systems and as inspiration for food system transformations.
* The **interconnectedness between biodiversity loss and climate change** impacts on food security and nutrition should be highlighted and not regarded in isolation, in line with a systems approach. Any solutions to transforming our food systems must consider this and not improve one on the expense of the other in order to be sustainable both for people and the planet.
* **The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) plays an important role in convening a democratic platform** for bridging between knowledge systems and supporting co-creation processes involving diverse actors. It is important to continue supporting this democratic and inclusive manner on working on issues related to food security, nutrition and food systems as a whole.

The following aspects relate mainly to 2.d *“empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organisations in making food systems more equitable and accessible”.*

* **Broaden the scope of the report to acknowledge food sovereignty in addition to food security.** We would like to refer to CFS's own [HLPE report on agroecology](https://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf), and the FAO report on [food security and sovereignty](https://www.fao.org/3/ax736e/ax736e.pdf). Thereto, we suggest the report adhere to the definition of food sovereignty as expressed in [the Nyeleni 2007 Declaration and synthesis report.](https://nyeleni.org/DOWNLOADS/Nyelni_EN.pdf) the small scale food producers social movements such as that of IPC, [the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty.](https://www.foodsovereignty.org) It brings together more than 6000 organisations and 300 millions of small-scale food producers.
* The agroecology movement is gaining momentum and agroecology is being increasingly recognized as a key approach to changing the food system, rebuilding communities’ resilience, adapting to climate change, regenerating landscapes, and promoting equity and human rights. There is broad support for it among small scale food producers and their organisations around the world, such as by the IPC and the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa. But **these movements and the approach needs further support and policy changes to realise its potential.**

Point related to *3 “Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report”*.

* In order to reduce inequalities of the food system, the food production must be made more sustainable, conserving and sustainably using biodiversity. The up-coming new **post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework being negotiated under the CBD can play an important role in this transition**, as long as it integrates a Human Rights-Based Approach. For reference, see this report that recognizes the importance of [Integrating a Human Rights Based Approach to Biodiversity Conservation](https://www.forestpeoples.org/en/report/2022/implementing-human-rights-BA), including the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework of the CBD. It is developed by a number of social movements, civil society organisations and environmental NGOs.

## Bronwen Powell, Center for International Forestry Research and the Pennsylvania State University, Canada

Firstly, congratulations to the HLPE for initiating this important and groundbreaking report. I think for some time, many of us in the FSN world have been troubled by inequality and unequal power relationships in FSN and it is so important to address it though a process such as HLPE. Thank you! I hope that this report will ensure attention to equality in diet quality and nutrition (including work on cost of quality diets (Herforth et al 2020). But also equality in all the aspects of food security, as recently expanded in the HLPE report “Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030” to include Agency and Sustainability. National scale FSN policy often do not adequality support the cultural food practices and preferences of Indigenous and other marginalized communities; Sophie Chao (2021) has called this “gatrocolonialism”. I hope this report will find recommendations for how to scrutinize all national level policies (both FSN and other policy) to make sure they uphold the autonomy and dignity of Indigenous food system needs. I hope that the report will work to bridge the gap between critical food and nutrition studies and the needs of mainstream FSN policy community (see Nichols, Kampman and ven den Bold 2021 for great summary and suggestions). The other aspect of inequality that is particularly troubling to me is the ways power imbalances that shape trade-relationships between countries and often act to give large food corporations under-regulated access to lower-income country markets. I think this area is very important and so I look forward to this reports contribution in this area. Thank you!

Chao, S. (2021). Gastrocolonialism: the intersections of race, food, and development in West Papua. The International Journal of Human Rights, 1-22.

Herforth, Anna, et al. Cost and affordability of healthy diets across and within countries: Background paper for The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. FAO Agricultural Development Economics Technical Study No. 9. Vol. 9. Food & Agriculture Org., 2020.

Nichols, C., Kampman, H., & van den Bold, M. (2021). Forging just dietary futures: bringing mainstream and critical nutrition into conversation. Agriculture and Human Values, 1-12.

## Pat Mc Mahon, Nutrition For All, Ireland

This contribution to this consultation will focus on reducing inequality, food security and nutrition in the context of fragility. We define inequality as the furthest behind in the food systems as people living in IPC 3- to IPC 5. We suggest Integrating data sources to categorise further and quantify the levels of inequality experienced by people with severe food insecurity. We link nutritional indicators as a modality to categorise the levels of food insecurity at an individual level. This modality helps us identify the who, where and what of interventions. We suggest that integrating a human rights-based narrative to nutritional indicators might help us develop a right-based care modality that prioritises the furthest behind people in our world.

This paper seeks not to be aspirational and so is cognisant of the field restrictions that have come to define how we work across the Humanitarian Development Peace nexus. This attached paper focuses on just two of the questions posed in this consultation.

1 What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective?

2 Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food;

Kind Regards,

Pat Mc Mahon

Mothers First

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**Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition – HLPE consultation on the report’s scope**

By Pat Mc Mahon, CEO of Mothers First

Date 8th May 2022

Overview of Comments:

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behind people in our world.

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1 What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective?

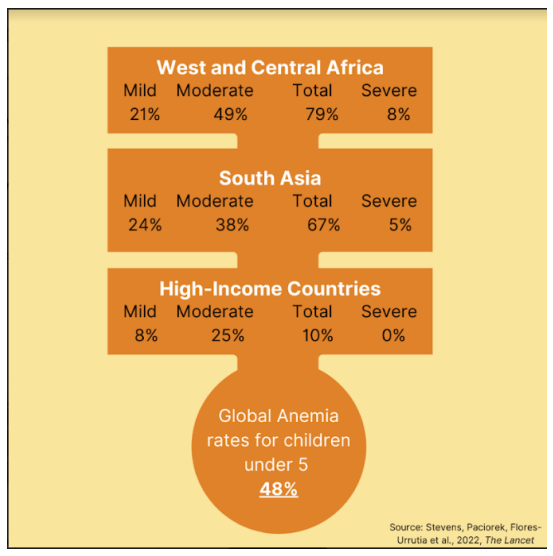
2 Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the

right to food;

**Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition.**

Q1 What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective?

From a human rights perspective, an equitable food system ensures that everyone's fundamental right to consume a healthy diet is adequate and meets all nutritional requirements.

For an equitable food system to function, the food needs to be available in markets and affordable to the poorest segments of society. The stand-alone indicator to monitor if people receive an equitable diet is their nutritional status. This is because nutrition status directly correlates to dietary intake. Defining inequality in food systems through the lens of nutrition indicators allows us to locate both to whom and where this inequality is most pronounced.

**Linking food security to nutritional inequity:**

The causal relationship between food security and nutritional inequities is clear from the biological impact of inadequate food consumption on nutritional markers.

To understand the depth of the inequity on a liner level we can compare nutritional status across groups, subgroups and regions. For simplicity, we use the example of anaemia in children across three geographical regions.

**What does this graph tell us?**

This graphic shows regional variations in the prevalence and severity of anaemia across three regions. Nutrition inequality cascades across all the other nutrition indicators. Not only does west and central Africa have the highest rates of child anaemia in the world, it has also the highest rates of stunting, wasting and maternal malnutrition and low birth weight. In turn, it has the highest rates of child and maternal mortality, the lowest life expectancy. West and Central Africa also has the lowest GDP per capita globally. Like a set of dominoes, the cascading inequalities linked to nutritional intake and nutrition status transmit to lifelong social disparities such as premature mortality, low education capacity and poor health.

**Where who and what**

1. Linking nutritional indicators as a measure of inequality across the food systems answers two fundamental questions. The first is where is this inequality the greatest on a regional level. It also defines who they are, which is fundamental to developing cost intervention packages.

2. We know that children in the first 1000 days and women are most affected by the compounding effects of food insecurity and malnutrition.

**Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality:**

Q2 Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the

right to food;

Linking food security and nutrition to human rights and finance:

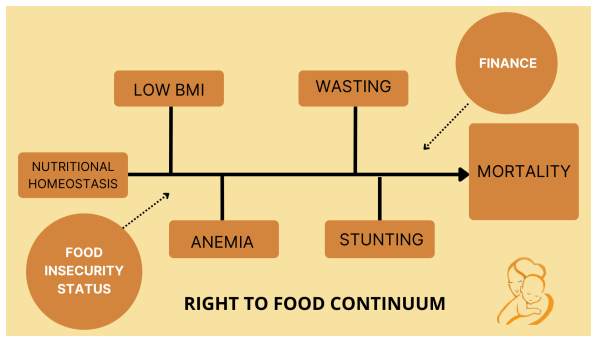
The major impediment to equitable access to food is household resources. Food as a commodity rather than a human right links access to market forces. Linking food security and nutrition to human rights requires an unequivocal resolve to finance social safety net programs as a priority to begin building the foundations of resilience, particularly in fragile settings.

In the first question, we defined and quantified inequality within the food system by identifying the interrelationship framework between equitable food systems and nutritional status. We identified the cascading impacts of food insecurity on nutritional status and human well being. We suggested the case be made for assessing food system inequality through the medium of nutritional outcome indicators.

We will now link equity through the lens of nutritional indicators within a right to food framework. We will then unpack what the right to food is and the legislative frameworks in place that shift equality and human rights from a moral obligation to a legally binding human rights obligation.

**Equity through a human rights-based framework:**

The degree to which the right to food is not met can directly be seen in people's nutritional status. This forms a quantifiable measure of the right to food. Nutritional Homeostasis exists when essential macro and micronutrient nutrition indicators remain within World Health Organization (WHO) parameters. Linking nutritional markers directly to the right to food is a physiological process that stems from the biological consequences of insufficient dietary intake.



The further away these indicators diverge from homeostasis directly correlates to people's right to food being impaired. The right to food continuum is not a static reality but occurs every hour of every day for food-insecure people. The right to food modality directly intersects with factors such as finance, humanitarian assistance and mortality.

**Who is the furthest behind in the right to food continuum?**

The need to individualise what the right to food means. Different groups of people experience food deprivation differently. The most affected are:

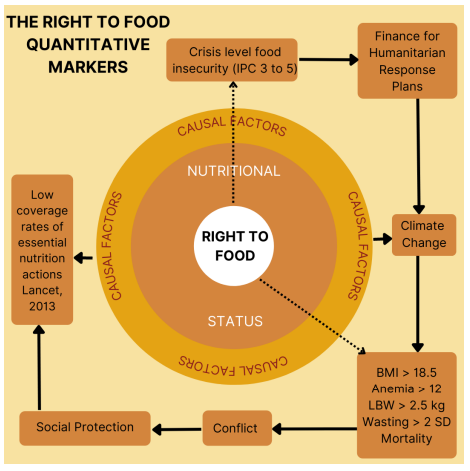
* Children in the first 1000 days
* Pregnant and lactating women
* Adolescent girls
* Individuals with disabilities

**Where are they located?**

The right to food marks perhaps the most fundamental of all human rights. In a rights-based modality of care, it is clear that people experiencing crisis to catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC 3, 4 and 5) are the furthest behind groups in terms of reaching their right to food.

**Why is it important to quantify the right to food?**

The right to food remains an aspirational reality because it lacks “in practice” any quantitative or qualitative markers of progress. Interlinking nutrition indicators and food insecurity directly with the right to food narrative will significantly broaden the right to food narrative.

**The narrative change from linking the right to food to nutrition and food insecurity indicators:**

Directly linking the right to food to nutrition indicators and food insecurity gives us a quantifiable way to measure how the right to food is being achieved equitably.

This allows us to link the right to food to direct factors that predispose people to malnutrition. It also allows a narrative to evolve around the right to food and the outcome modalities of malnutrition in all its forms.

Such a narrative change will help evolve the aspirational notion of the right to food into a quantifiable measure that can be intertwined within UN and Civil Society frameworks.

**Quantifying the right to food within a closed framework:**

Despite the clear interlinkages between nutrition indicators, food security status and the right to food, no framework exists within the development or humanitarian context that incorporates a rights-based framework. Such integration would also align the right to food agenda with the sustainable development goals SDG 2 & 3 and the 2025 World Health Assembly targets.

Incorporating the right to food narrative within a food-insecure setting sends a solid message to integrate a rights-based approach to food in fragile environments. It would also help align the right to food agenda directly to those most food-insecure people in the world.

**The international legislative framework that specifically looks at the right to food:**

While there is a comprehensive set of ratified legal frameworks that centre on human rights, there remains an important question around the level of responsibility donor countries have to ensure the right to adequate food for all. We will now outline the main treaties and supplementary guidance material which pertains to the right to food—having done that, we will observe the monitoring and evaluation process for these legal frameworks that have no substantial accountability mechanism.

The right to food is recognised in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as part of the right to an adequate standard of living and is enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It is also protected by regional treaties and national constitutions.

* [The Convention on the Rights of the Child](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf)
* [The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf)
* [The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf)

In 2004 FAO developed both voluntary guidelines on the realisation of the right to adequate food. It also developed a right to adequate food fact sheet. Both publications are comprehensive in the holistic approach to the right to food.

[VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES to support the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.](https://www.fao.org/3/y7937e/y7937e.pdf)

[The Right to Adequate Food](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FactSheet34en.pdf) Factsheet 34

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights deals more comprehensively than any other instrument with the right to food. The Covent has been ratified by 171 countries which makes it one of the most ratified conventions that we have. It is important to note that “Ratification assumes a legal obligation to implement the rights recognised in that treaty.''

Article 11.2 of the Covenant recognises the intrinsic right to adequate food for everyone through shared international cooperation. “The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognising the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international cooperation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:

Both Article 2.1 and Article 23 of the covenant recognise the need for international assistance and cooperation to realise the right to food for all.

Article 2.1. “Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and cooperation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of the rights recognised in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures”.

Article 23. “ The States Parties to the present Covenant agree that international action for the achievement of the rights recognised in the present Covenant includes such methods as the conclusion of conventions, the adoption of recommendations, the furnishing of technical assistance and the holding of regional meetings and technical meetings for the purpose of consultation and study organised in conjunction with the Governments concerned”.

General Comment 12 of the Covenant in 1999 aimed to identify some of the principal issues which the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights considers to be important in relation to the right to adequate food. Its preparation was triggered by the request of Member States during the 1996 World Food Summit, for a better definition of the rights relating to food in article 11 of the Covenant. The committee were also concerned that despite reporting guidelines being available relating to the right to adequate food, “only a few States parties have provided information sufficient and precise enough to enable the Committee to determine the prevailing situation in the countries concerned with respect to this right and to identify the obstacles to its realization”.

* [Substance Issues Arising in the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: General Comment 12](https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4538838c11.pdf)

General comment 12 offers considerable clarity on all stakeholders' operation roles and responsibilities to achieve the right to food for all. While it clearly highlights the role the state has to its people to uphold the right to food, it quantifies this statement by articulating that a volition on the right to food comes about from an unwillingness to implement a set of minimal actions rather than an inability to carry out such actions due to financial constraints. “The fundamental role of states to uphold the right to food. In determining which actions or omissions amount to a violation of the right to food, it is important to distinguish the inability from the unwillingness of a State to provide the minimum set of interventions to free people from hunger. An inability refers to a state party that argues that resource constraints make it impossible to provide access to food for those who are unable by themselves to secure such access”,

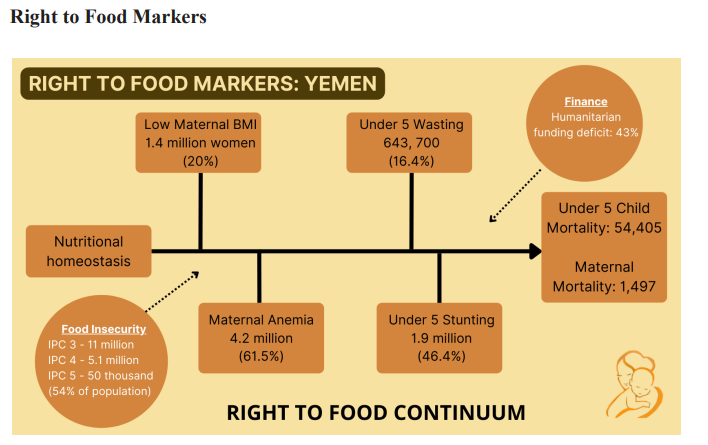
**It goes on to say**

“In such a case the state has to firstly prove that this is the case and secondly that it has unsuccessfully sought to obtain international support to ensure the availability and accessibility of necessary food”.

It is unclear where the responsibility to uphold the right to food lies when resource constraints make it impossible to provide a minimum set of interventions to free its people from hunger.

**Yemen as a case example of how Article 2.1 is interpreted in practice:**

In Yemen, 54% of the population is experiencing a crisis to catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Such levels of food insecurity directly correspond to people's right to food being met. The corresponding nutritional indicators quantify the impact of not achieving the right to food to the point where it intersects with the right to life.



Few would argue that Yemen is a failed state, meaning that the responsibilities of a sovereign government no longer function properly. Despite this, Humanitarian Response Plans in Yemen are underfunded by 62%. We often cite human rights violations when humanitarian aid is blocked. However, the single most significant factor in delivering assistance to people in need is underfunding. The impacts of such underfunding are catastrophic for many. As David Beasley, head of The World Food Program, has said, “we are taking food from the hungry to give to the starving '' In Yemen, emergency food interventions had to be cut by half for 8 million people due to financial constraints. The prospect of food being stopped entirely at the time of writing remains a distinct possibility. WFP forced to cut food assistance in Yemen, warns of impact as hunger rises | World Food Programme

"It is clear that any system with such a pervasive funding deficiency can not function. The extent to which the implementation of the nexus is successful depends on the extent to which the activities to achieve collective outcomes can be managed and funded adequately."

**Connecting the Pieces of the Puzzle. June of 2021, ecdpm**

Transcending finance from aid to one that upholds the basic principles of the right to food and life needs to our collective narrative. Please find our Member Input Document on the HDP Nexus Coalition, where we call for a needs-based modality of care that centres on a human rights-based modality framework. The 2022 Global Humanitarian Overview has projected a funding gap of 52% for the coming year.

Article 2.1 of the covenant clearly recognises the international dimension required to ensure the right to food for all. If we accept that Yemen is a failed state and, as such, cannot or will not provide food assistance to its people, does the legal accountability lay with the pen-holders of the Covenant in donor countries.

**Equality within the reporting procedures of the Human Rights Council:**

The reporting procedures established in the Covenant are there to ensure that state parties inform the committee on measures adopted, progress made, and problems encountered to ensure human rights are observed. Within the reporting procedure of countries, the Human Rights Committee has an important opportunity to outline concerns it has, and the state has an opportunity to respond. From our analysis, the committee has not highlighted the implication article 2.1 has on donor or recipient countries.

Please find the [Human Rights Committee List of issues prior to submission of the sixth periodic report of Yemen\*](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&DocTypeID=25&DocTypeCategoryID=1&DocTypeCategoryID=9&ctl00_PlaceHolderMain_radResultsGridChangePage=6) (April 2021)

Equally, countries that cannot ensure the right to adequate food for their people do not cite a lack of development assistants as a barrier to ensuring people's immediate need to receive food assistance. Please find [here](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fYEM%2f3&Lang=en) Yemen's last report to the Human Rights Council in 2014.

**How past special Reporters on the Right to Food have articulated responsibility:**

According to the first Special Rapporteur on the right to food, “to comply fully with their obligations under the right to food, States must also respect, protect and support the fulfilment of the right to food of people living in other territories”. FAO RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

In 2011 the Reportores Study of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on severe malnutrition and childhood diseases outlined that “The human rights framework also requires that the international assistance of wealthier States enables individuals to feed themselves and do”.

The examples we have outlined suggest that when a state actor can show their inability to provide an appropriate level of assistance to free their people from hunger, the obligation then rests with international assistance by pen-holders of the Covenant. As such, the duty of care and accountability to fulfil the Covenant rests with donor countries.

**Fiance and the legal framework on the right to food:**

Humanitarian Response plans are chronically underfunded. For the 20 most food-insecure countries this underfunding ranges from 40 to 60%. In a concrete example, ration has been cut by 50% for over 8 million people as a direct response to financing shortfall from the donner community to Yemen.

While we often cite human rights violations when humanitarian aid is blocked. We argue that when ai is not received due to insufficient donor funding, this constitutes a human rights volition as deemed in the Convenience. It brings coherence to the statement of the FAO that “Combating hunger and malnutrition is a legally binding human rights obligation”.

The narrative Gap of human rights: Despite the comprehensive legislative and formative frameworks on the right to food, it remains poorly articulated across the UN and Civil society space. None more so was that evident at the food systems summit, where despite human rights being 1 of the four levers of change, Many, including Micheal Farki ( The current Special Repotore on the right to food), have been deeply critical of the lack of a tangible link to human rights with the summit framework and discussions. We suggest that this link was absent because it does not tangible exist within the UN architecture for nutrition. Apart from the CFS Framework for Nutrition in Crisis, no major UN reports expressly link the right to food to either its mandate or structural framework. An example of these reports is as follows.

* The SOFI Report
* IPC analysis
* Global Nutrition report
* Global Humanitarian Overview

UN Organizations:

Equally, UN organisations have been slow to link their narrative frameworks around the Right to Food directly

* FAO
* UNICEF
* OCHA

United Nations Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. The position is voluntary, with each Raportury having a small budget. Linking the right to food to nutrition indicators helps us quantify the scale of the actual problem. Even if we look just at mortality related to hunger, it means that the deaths of over 6 million people every year have only one independent and recognised voice within the UN System. While that single voice may be independent, the titleholder has to compete with their paid job as a voluntary position. This, in our opinion, is a very real conflict of interest in how you prioritise your workload.

The second issue is that the current mandate holder's work centres around trade law, humanitarian law and agriculture. A blind spot that we have identified is in the absence of focus on meeting people's immediate needs.

**Conclusion and recommendation:**

In 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals agreed to end hunger by 2030. In the seven years that have passed, acute hunger levels have risen from 80 million people to 281 million people. The 2022 Food Crisis Report suggests that the crisis in Ukraine could push an additional 45 million into acute hunger.

This paper has attempted to quantify the right to food by directly linking the right to food to nutrition indicators. While far from being a new concept framework, we suggest that such a framework would integrate the right to food narrative across the broader nutrition community and directly into how we narrate global targets on nutrition. In the second question, we detailed the legislative framework around the right to food. In doing so, we outlined the ambiguity that exists around the duty international cooperation has to achieve the right to adequate food for all.

In 1999 the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights issued Comment 12 due as a response to the lack of sufficient information for the Committee to determine how the right to food is being achieved. We suggest that in the intervening 23 years, little narrative change has actually occurred. Given the disproportionate impact, the global crisis has on low and middle-income countries, we need a far more robust and accountable framework. This framework needs to categorically define the duty and legal framework that international cooperation plays to achieve the right to food for all.

A stronger, more robust narrative around accountability frameworks regarding the right to food will empower countries most affected by the food crisis to demand rather than hope for international cooperation that ensures the right to food for the people. It will help transcend the donor mindset from moral duty to a legal obligation. In turn, a legal obligation will make it easier for developed countries to find the finance required to fund interventions equitably across the humanitarian-development divide.

## Claudio Schuftan, PHM, Viet Nam

Dear friends at the HLPE,

Before the deadline expires, I wanted to share with you my gut reactions to the call and questions.

They may be unorthodox, but hope some could help.

In solidarity

Claudio in Ho Chi Minh City

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**Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition - HLPE consultation on the report’s scope**

The report will provide recommendations to the CFS workstream on inequalities, will:

* Analyse quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to how inequalities in access to assets (particularly land, other natural resources and finance), and incomes within the agri-food systems **impede opportunities** (very central point to focus on …identifying concrete actions!) for many actors to overcome food insecurity and malnutrition. Relevant data on asset endowments in rural communities will be useful in this respect, along with the findings of latest SOFI reports. Given the focus on agri-food systems and the key role of family farmers within these systems, linkages and complementarities with the UN Decade of Family Farming will be examined, including as reference to **decent employment** (also key point to focus-on …identifying concrete actions!) issues in the agri-food sector;
* Analyse the **drivers of inequalities** (HLPE has already done this 2017, 2020; see below) and provide **recommendations** on entry points to address these; (only on entry points?)
* Identify **areas requiring further research and data collection**, (only identify? Then who will f/u on it?) also in view of the opportunities provided by the ongoing joint effort of the World Bank, FAO and IFAD within the 50 x 2030 Initiative. (the involvement of free of CoI academics is a must, no?)

The proposed thematic workstream on inequalities will contribute to the **CFS vision** (at this point don’t we need more than a vision?) and the overall objective of **addressing the root causes** (yes, and how to do this bindingly…) of food insecurity with a focus on the **people most affected** (this is a key human rights requirement; say so) by hunger and malnutrition. The focus will be on inequalities within agri-food systems.(but also wider, no?) The workstream will provide an **analysis**, based on this HLPE report, on **drivers of socio-economic inequalities between actors within agri-food systems that influence food security and nutrition outcomes**.(beware of the risk of “paralysis in analysis”…) **Gender inequalities** and the need to create **opportunities for** **youth** would inform the analysis. (both very central)

According to the HLPE 2nd Note on Critical and Emerging Issues (2017), increasing risks to food security and nutrition **can be linked** (only can…?) to high levels of income concentration, corporate concentration in food trade, transformation and distribution, as well as to uneven distribution of agricultural assets and access to natural resources (CFS MYPoW 2020-2023) (all these well proven). In addition, unequal endowments in agricultural assets and access to natural resources (such as land) together with income inequality deeply affect food security and nutrition (also well proven). Unequal access to food and adequate nutrition further deepen inequalities through lost opportunities in health, education and jobs. (proven as well) Sustained disparities between vulnerable and other social groups – reflecting inequalities between and within countries - **can slow growth** (only can…?) and lead to political instability and conflict, migration flows, with related adverse consequences on food security and nutrition (well proven) (HLPE, 2017). Stark inequalities in access to basic services and assets, but also in terms of food security and nutrition, affect households' prospects for overcoming poverty, and ultimately perpetuate food insecurity and malnutrition (Ibidem). (all these well proven) One of the starkest trends of recent years has been the growing concentration in food-related production, industries and services, which has affected power relations between different actors in food systems and fueled inequalities (well proven AND all the above been documented by the HLPE) (HLPE, 2020). (So, if well proven, then what can/will a new HLPE document do/achieve BEYOND?)

The HLPE (2017, 2020) has stressed the importance of addressing food security and nutrition through a food systems approach, highlighting the linkages between supply chains, food environments, consumers’ behavior and the resource, economic, social and institutional systems that connect to food. Inequalities affecting food systems’ drivers can be transmitted (only can…?) to all components of food systems and ultimately do affect food security and nutrition outcomes. Furthermore, HLPE (2021) stressed the importance of using an intersectionality[1] lens in analyzing and addressing inequalities: different dimensions of inequalities, based on individual, household, community and country characteristics, intersect and are mutually reinforcing. (so it is not ‘can’ then…) Reducing inequalities requires addressing the different dimensions of inequality holistically and simultaneously, being aware of the complex power dynamics that generate and sustain inequalities.(yes, voila the crux)

COVID-19 has further exacerbated existing inequalities, as the brunt of the economic, social and health impact are being borne by the most vulnerable individuals, communities and countries. The estimated impact of the pandemic is an increase in the average Gini index for emerging and developing countries by 6 percent (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10>). Human rights are at the core of the 2030 Agenda, (not true: the right to food is not even mentioned! Vivero and I wrote a paper about it) which with the motto “No one left behind”, recognizes the severe consequences of inequalities on the attainment of sustainable development. (Does it?: Communities are not forgetfully left behind! It is the neoliberal policies that systematically exclude them). Agenda 2030 has two goals specifically concerning inequalities (SDG 5 and SDG 10), in addition to including inequality reduction in a number of targets and indicators (<https://sdgs.un.org/>). To reduce inequalities, it is fundamental to ensure comprehensive legal frameworks and governance systems (need to qualify what ‘ensure’ is, i.e., how?) able to uphold human rights, including the right to food (not mentioned in the SDGs).

The report will focus both on (a) inequalities originating within food systems and concerning nutrition and (b) inequalities in the political, social, cultural and economic environment around food systems, which have a bearing on unequal outcomes regarding FSN. (what will the ‘focus’ do? Just demonstrate inequalities affecting the FS? Create yet more awareness? Or mobilize claim holders and duty bearers as the HR-based framework really calls for to bring about changes?)

The report will document the scale, the multidimensional, dynamic, intergenerational and intersectional aspects of inequality (see what I mean? Just document …yet further?) regarding food security and nutrition, how individuals are affected depending on their characteristics (age, gender, location, social group - class, ethnicity, race, migrant vs. native status), within households, communities, local and national levels, and between countries. (don’t we already know quite a bit about this? When is time to act?) Inequalities often (??) depend on the priorities and choices of private and public investments, or legal status, and more generally, on the political balance between urban and rural areas or different regions, particularly if there are religious and/or ethnic differences within a country. (quite a bit more than often…) Particular attention needs to be given to (addressing flagrant inequalities in) conflict areas and fragile States. The report will also deal with market power at different levels in food systems, driving inequality throughout supply chains from production to food processing, transport, distribution and trade. (‘deal’ meaning what? this is the question!)

The response to such multi-dimensional and multi-actor inequality calls for a holistic and integrated political approach for fair and equitable development (HLPE, 2021). Broadening the definition of food security, as proposed by HLPE (2020) provides a framework to comprehend the nexus between inequalities and social, economic, and environmental sustainability in food systems. (a definition, even if better, stays a definition… is food sovereignty included?) The report will explore how inequalities originating within food systems can be alleviated, (‘explore’ to then do what?) learning from good practices in existing policies, legal frameworks, approaches and successful bottom-centered interventions (so as to adapt and apply them widely if pertinent). Support for agroecological practices, small scale agriculture, territorial/local market initiatives, as well as alternative educational methods including the use of digital tools and platforms accessible to all, (support will entail what?) are among the options that have been identified as promising development pathways for transforming food systems and promoting food security (and food sovereignty?) and nutrition for all (HLPE, 2020 and 2021).

These developments need to be put in context, (meaning what? To achieve or do what?) taking into account the concentration of market power in global food systems. (just taking into account?) The report will develop the concept of “agency” as a lens to address the issue of structural barriers to obtaining economic resources and [of] to address? inequalities in food security and nutrition, and define the right to food as a legal entitlement towards equality (what will defining then do?) through upholding all relevant human rights, raising living standards, and eliminating intergenerational inequality for all. (and developing this concept and lens will help how?)

**Questions to guide the e-Consultation on the scope of the report**

With this e-consultation, the HLPE Steering Committee is seeking your feedback. In particular, you are invited to:

**1. Share your comments and suggestions on the objectives and content of this report:** (done above already)

Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition (--Inequalities are much greater than just “differences”.

--People are essentially equal; differences arise secondarily.

--Doing more for disadvantaged people is not the same as addressing inequalities!

Inequality is an injustice in access, an exclusion from enjoyment, a disparity in the quality of life.

--A common misconception about ‘equality’ is the perception that just because equality can never fully be achieved it is not a useful concept in development planning and practice.

--Equality that is not defined by human rights is just another word. Equality, as a human right, must be respected, protected and fulfilled by all governments and UN agencies.

--Multiple inequalities actually overlap to create mutually reinforcing cycles of disadvantage that are transmitted across generations.

--Many of the disadvantages claim holders live under, come together and fall into self-sustaining patterns of inequality the world over.

--A caveat: Be aware that equality of opportunity is not what we are striving for; we are striving for equality of results!

--Inequality is what Jacques Chirac called ‘the social fracture’.

--Finally: It is not inequality what kills people; it is those responsible for these inequalities that kill people.

--So, inequalities will remain entrenched even if the SDGs are achieved by 2030.)

a.

1. *What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective;*
2. *Trends within and between countries (data collection, measurement tools);*
3. *Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing;*
4. *Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs) (by member states?), efforts to improve measurement;*
5. *Relationship between inequality and inequity.*

(--Inequity can be defined as unfairness of opportunities that result in inequalities.

--Inequity adds the moral dimension, i.e., the way in which wealth is unfairly distributed.

--Inequity implies unfair and avoidable differences.

--Inequity refers not only to injustice in distribution and access, but to processes which generate this injustice; inequity thus is about how the social structure determines social inequalities.

--Inequity arises from the appropriation of power and wealth, which leads to discrimination).

1. *Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality*

(--A broad knowledge of international human rights law within a society has the potential to protect citizens/claim holders from abuses of power or neglect of duties by lawmakers, police, military personnel, elected officials, bureaucrats or the judiciary --all as duty bearers.

--Any call must be coupled with human rights learning so as to help/contribute to empower claim holders to themselves demand needed changes. Otherwise, the call will become yet another aspirational letter to Santa Claus (who brings us toys ….batteries not included).

--Keep in mind: Should is where you hope for, must is where you are urging that it be so, shall is where you can mandate.

--A process of *empowerment of claim holders* to organize, mobilize and demand needed changes is key. Without this, we can anticipate little happening or just token steps 'to keep up with the Joneses' and save face in front of the international community.

--It is the claim holders suffering violations of their right to nutrition to lead in deciding priority actions.

--We must be highly skeptical about private sector actors becoming involved in allegedly 'empowering' claim holders: this is counterintuitive to them....

--Multidisciplinary approaches --as opposed to a dialectical approach-- simply most often take the social and political context (i.e., the individual and institutional power relations) as given; they therefore end up being conservative in their recommendations.

--Achieving nutrition equity requires social policies of empowerment and a redistribution of social wealth.

--Alliances will only work if activists come to the table from a position of power. Any alliances built from a position of weakness ultimately leads to subordinate the interest of claim holders to those of minority groups that hold the power.

--Beware: Data provide a linear conceptualization for data-driven decision making, overlooking that all policy making is based on particular values, interests, and power imbalances and that while evidence is important for policy making, ‘data’ is only one limited kind of evidence.

--In truth, the multistakeholder approach skillfully covers up long-standing injustices, power imbalances and abuses thus deepening inequality and injustice.

--Multistakeholderism in the current paradigm successfully conjures-up a persuasive, but false argument of equal footing. It hides the workings of power.

--Are claim holders right to feel that none of their messages reach the power structures….and the HLPE?

--Political will is not owned by politicians, who usually act only in response to consistent and compelling pressure from organized and mobilized claim holders from the left and (cronies from) the right. Therefore, it is not a lack of political will, but rather the accumulation-of-a-political-will-by-the-powerful to oppose or stall the implementation of progressive policies that tackle HR abuses.

--We cannot forget that ‘a political will’ must be pulled from those in power since it is not a lack of political will, but rather the accumulation-of-a-political-will-by-the-powerful to oppose or stall the implementation of progressive policies that tackle HR abuses.

--So, it becomes clear that there has never been a more urgent need for a powerful countermovement).

1. ).
2. *Concentration of economic, social, and political capital within the food systems;*

*Structural barriers to equality for historically disadvantaged and poor populations (women, people of colour, rural and urban poor, indigenous communities, peasants, migrants, refugees, etc.).*(

--Gender equality is not just a women’s issue, but a development and a human rights issue.

--Non-discrimination is an immediate obligation as considered in the UN Charter of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Action is needed now!

--Reducing gender inequalities indeed creates a fairer society.

-- Gender-specific barriers must be removed to ensure a more level playing field for males and females.

--Programs for women can and will only succeed if and when they address power relations.

--Forever, poverty worldwide has had a female face.

--The Sustainable Development Goals are an unrealistic distraction. Gender equality needs for a more integrated approach to implementation.

--We will not achieve any of the SDGs without achieving greater equality for women in all areas.

--Corporations not only do not pay taxes; they perpetuate gender inequalities.

--The discussions must move from designing *‘gender-aware-programs’* to *‘gender-transformative-programs’* that actively seek to correct gender inequalities in access, uptake and in results.

--The worse feeling for women is one of impotence, because it leads to passivity and indifference.

--Efforts to revert the violation of human rights in the world should start with the empowerment of women. Unfortunately, we never focus on it as a real prerequisite.

--Empowerment of women ultimately expands their 'political-space'.

--The empowerment of some, most of the time, entails the disempowerment of others --usually the current holders of power.

--Not all of us are, therefore, currently involved in work that really helps women to empower themselves.

--Sustained gender discrimination shackles any economy. Gender equality is a sensible goal also in business terms.

--Key elements to tackle in gender inequality are:

* disparities in educational and health outcomes, and
* disparities in the access to productive resources, to credit, to capital, to new technologies and to other social and legal services.

--To promote gender equality, policies need to address the voice and influence of women as claim-holders:

* In equality under the law (whether customary or statutory);
* in equal access to human capital investments and to equal chances to own property, control productive (and reproductive) resources and in equal access to markets;
* also, in equality to influence and contribute to the political discourse and the development process.

--Looking at where governments put their money is indeed a good way to judge the importance they attribute to gender equality.

--Women need equal access to land, at the same time that they need a more enabling legal environment.

--The challenge, then, is to foster the needed consciousness raising of women for them to effectively place claims in front of pertinent duty bearers. This becomes the basis for organizing women locally.

--If women’s groups do not yet exist, efforts will have to be made to organize them.

--States that are party to the Convention to End all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) undertake the solemn obligation to scrutinize their national laws accordingly and to inform the population (and its women) about it; unfortunately too many states are slow or lenient in doing so.

--There is no way women can exercise their rights if they do not know what these are. If this is the result of an intentional stance, one has to be clear: Imposed ignorance (or ignorance tolerated) is a human rights violation!

--The lack of a capacity to forcefully demand remedy (in the HR sense) entrenches the weakness of women’s groups.

--Gender inequality is the mother of all inequalities and of the violation of all women’s rights.

--In our land of Oz, hypocrisy is without shame. Patriarchy rules.

--Women are not ‘men of the feminine sex’: society can change the gender roles!

--Gender equality is not a woman’s issue, but must concern and engage men as well as women.

--What all the above means is that women-must-propose, society-must-respect and the-state-must-guarantee. But this is not going to come without a struggle: in-dignation must grow from dignity being denied.

--The path to equality must not be one that takes from men and gives to women.

--Too often, men think that the gains of women come at their expense. This is simply not true and such thinking is a real barrier to progress.

--Governments must protect women, certainly no less than what they protect corporations.).

1. Paths toward equality
2. *Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle* (see above under equality)*, relevance to the right to food;*
3. *Good governance to rebalance power and influence;*(

--The UN is clearly helping to establish ‘stakeholder capitalism’ as a governance model for the entire planet. This clearly lacks democratic legitimacy and focus.

--Challenging people to together examine the situation in which they live --and to challenge a whole new lax vocabulary, e.g., partnership, transparency, good governance, stakeholders, evidence-based…-- means examining the realities critically, asking not only how things are, but also how things should be.

--I’m afraid the CFS has never been the foremost policy platform. Food governance remains siloed and this limits the remits of the CFS. I suppose we have to deal with the contradiction that the CFS is relevant, but remains a political dwarf.

--Ponder the risks and governance issues raised by a mechanical use of distinct forms of data.

--Multistakeholderism gives the illusion that all stakeholders are equal in their rights, capacities, and responsibilities.

--In truth, the multistakeholder approach skillfully covers up long-standing injustices, power imbalances and abuses thus deepening inequality and injustice.

--Multistakeholderism follows the interests of ‘some’ in the domain of the global governance apparatus.

--Stakeholder cooperation without political accountability is only likely to push our shared human future further into the quagmire of governance failure.

--Multi-constituency networks, partnerships and collaborations cannot replace governance arrangements based on political legitimacy.

--Private sector dominance sells us a new 'compassionate governance' that is totally apolitical and that leaves fighting inequality out of the agenda).

*Legal and policy interventions to regulate the influence of corporate actors (and those with concentrated power), and remove structural barriers and increase capital (for those with diminished resources).* (

--When private companies talk about corporate social responsibility, it is usually a mere face-saving activity as what is given back to the community is usually very minute compared to the profit being exploited.

--Evidence suggests that **corporate social responsibility** strategies are intended to facilitate access to government, to co-opt nongovernmental organizations to corporate agendas, to build trust among the public and the political elite and to promote untested, voluntary solutions over binding regulation.

--What ultimately counts, I contend, is TNCs social and political accountability.

--Many of us in the public interest civil society space reject corporations’ ‘crocodile tears’ calls for corporate social responsibility and demand for civil society to monitor corporate social accountability based on the principles of human rights and their effect on the social and political determinants of a misguided development path.

--Corporations do use their outsized financial advantage to shape politics and policy robbing people of their ability to use local democratic channels to rein-in corporate-driven excess and harm).

**2. Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:**

1. reducing inequality gap and its potential impact on food security and nutrition outcomes; (a shift to food sovereignty is a prerequisite for this).
2. ensuring the effective legal framework to guarantee equal rights to access land and other productive resources, basic services, and the right to food to reduce inequalities; (see the comment on political will above)
3. enhancing food systems’ role in the reduction of inequalities (through income and livelihoods generation, (this points towards poverty reduction when the real challenge is income and wealth disparity reduction) while contributing to healthy diets and environment, among others);
4. empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organizations in making food systems more equitable and accessible; (see comments about claim holder challenges above)
5. addressing capacity gaps in generating and using data and other new technologies in policy-making processes, monitoring and reporting on inequalities for FSN. (not only data and technologies are necessary for more people-oriented policy making. Cannot keep pushing aside the politics of it all…)

**3. Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report.** (OK, but do not be too academic; there are key qualitative data needed in the final equation)

**4. Provide feedback on the following questions, to guide the development of the report:** (Feedback meaning exactly what? guiding the development of the report only? What about how and if the Report will be used thereafter?)

1. How do food systems drivers affect inequalities? And specifically what are the different impacts of trends in: (Corporate capture at all levels of the system is primarily what keeps the inequalities)
2. *assets, land, other natural resources and finance*
3. *infrastructure and technology, including ICT*
4. *market structure in input provision, logistics, processing, transport, distribution of food*
5. *access to information and data*
6. *demographic trends including migration and urbanisation*
7. *socio-cultural factors around gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, language and their intersection*
8. *political and economic factors (presence/absence of a legal framework to ensure equal rights to key resources and services and the expression of agency)?* (All of the above)
9. How [can?] do social inequalities impact FSN outcomes? (As said at the top the mechanisms are already known)
10. How [can] ought the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? (foster including what?) Which different pathways [should] ought to be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? (How to disseminate them for adaptation?)
11. Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment? (Cannot always generalize; context is key)
12. How can the reduction of inequalities through sustainable food systems and better FSN contribute to conflict prevention and peace building? (Moving towards food sovereignty, the only way to sustainably get there)
13. How [can] ought gender and youth mainstreaming approaches, as well as adopting an intersectional (see comment on multi-sectoral approaches above) lens on inequalities, taking multiple identities together in the analysis (including gender and youth) in food systems contribute to social justice and better FSN?
14. What are the main knowledge and data gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine FSN outcomes? (Probably not many, I contend. Much must be done with what we already know and what the HLPE has pointed out at least since 2017. It is not lack of data that hinder!!) What could be improved in data collection and analysis tools for FSN inequalities? (Improve for collection or for application to decision making?)
15. How [can] ought strengthened food systems’ governance contribute to the reduction of inequalities in FSN outcomes? (a real thorn on our side…)
16. Which legal frameworks can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities? (None can guarantee unless claim holders demand and succeed in having these rights fulfilled and protected sustainably)
17. What is the role of political economy in reducing inequalities in food systems and in reducing other inequalities that have an impact on FSN outcomes? (elemental Watson)

## Martin Wolpold-Bosien, Germany

Please find enclosed the CSIPM Comment to HLPE consultation on the scope of the upcoming report on “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”.

Kind regards,

Martin Wolpold-Bosien

CSIPM Secretariat

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CSIPM Comment to HLPE consultation on the scope of the upcoming report on “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”, 8 May 2022

Overcoming Inequalities for Food Justice and Healthy, Sustainable Food Systems

The Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSIPM) recognizes the relevance of producing the report “Reducing Inequalities for food security and nutrition”, and we welcome therefore the fact that the CFS will address this issue, being informed by an HLPE report on this topic. We also recognize that the general direction of the consultation and the draft framing of the scope of the report underline the centraly and urgency of persisting and even growing inequalities which directly and severly affect the living conditions and rights of our constituencies.

We believe that the description, topics and questions included in the e-consultation are a substantial and promising basis for the further deliberations, and would like to contribute here with some suggestions of aspects and topics that should be central, or could be more emphasized/nuanced, or still included into the scope of the upcoming HLPE report.

Inequalities and inequities are factors that contribute to the violation of rights, in particular the human right to food and nutrition, and create and feed into the vicious circles of unjust food systems, hunger, exclusion, ecological destruction and climate crises.

Discriminations and prejudices turn differences into obstacles and into rights violations. The most severe form of discrimination results in persecution, oppression and even physical violence and death of individuals and groups.

The strong emphasis on human rights legal protections and frameworks is an important part of not only reducing inequalities, but in preventing them in the first place. This report can play an important role in better understanding the different ways human rights policies both directly related to food and agriculture as well as others, can work to create more equitable conditions for marginalized groups globally.

Inequalities exist on many levels, starting with inequalities between countries and within them. This essential and complex interconnection should be applied throughout the report. The dimension of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, caste, class, country of origin and the intersectionality between these factors are often negatively mobilized to create relations of power and segregation, which are reflected in daily and political life, revealing themselves in a structural manner.

Environmental racism, based on the supposed supremacy of human beings over other creatures and natural resources, and even among themselves, results in people, particularly women, Indigenous Peoples and people of color, to be more affected by food and water insecurity, impoverishment, displacement and victims of extreme socio-environmental events. Likewise, climate change affects countries at different speeds and magnitudes, with some countries that contribute disproportionally to climate change less affected, and many others that have contributed less and are now among the most affected.

On the other hand, generational and gender discrimination place the responsibility of care work on women and girls, leading to greater inequality and inequity in women's access to education and professional qualification, inclusion and insertion in the labor market. These also produce disparities in income and in the quality of the jobs that women get.

The historical roots of these phenomena, sustained by colonialism and capitalism, should be included in the report, taking into account that neoliberalism has deepened inequalities of class, social status or caste within countries and has widened the gap among countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic makes it evident how current models of production and consumption are based on the concentration of wealth and income. While hunger and poverty are rampant and workers can take up to 20 years to recover the purchasing power of their wages, the wealthiest private sectors have made exorbitant profits. Since 1995, the top 1% have gained almost 20 times more of global wealth than the bottom 50% of humanity. Pandemic has worsened inequalities with wealth of 10 richest men has double while income of 99% of humanity are worse off. As a response, 73 countries face prospect of IMF backed austerity measures, risking worsening inequalities between countries and in countries.

Inequalities are the result of policy choices that have largely irgnored or even promoted the inequalities in our food system driven by corporate power and the prevalence of economic interests over others, affecting neatively particularly small scale food producers and incentivizing large-scale investments and land grabbing processes. The striking inequalities in land distribution and, in general, in access to productive resources provide a drastic example for the historical and ongoing corporate concentration in food systems in the current and historcal context.

Thus, it is essential to advance the discussion about the implementation of public policies in the perspective of the economic justice and social and solidarity economies that can effectivly regulate markets and investments from a public interest perspective, promote structural redistribution of land through genuine agrarian reforms, and ensure income distribution in a more immediate way, while promoting the redistribution of wealth.

In light of increased inequalities in and between countries, the report should include as a central areas redistribution measures and fiscal policies. Important proposals and practices in this regard are debt cancellation, progressive taxes on capital and wealth, tax evasion, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, windfall taxes on exceptional prthofits in times of crises, subsidies, Overseas Development Aid, as well as measures to redistribute power in decision-making and power in the economy.

In this regard, it should be emphasized that the issue of unequal access should not overshadow the issue of universal access to adequate food. Indeed, even in rich countries the majority of the population does not eat adequately. For instance in Europe, malnutrition, expressed in situations of overweight and obesity, affects more than 50% of the population. Only 15% of Europeans eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. In the northern and southern regions of the Americas, the obesity epidemic also shows alarming figures.

Thus, while inequalities exacerbate access to food, they should not obscure the fact that the industrial food system generates and provides a vast variety of edibles which not necessarily can be called food. By default, industrial food is unhealthy for people and unhealthy for the planet, and there is the tendency that eating well and healthy foods is more and more becoming a priviledge to those social classes that can afford them.

It is important to act systemically and considering intersectionality, with effective institutions capable of guaranteeing rights, particularly the human right to adequate food and nutrition, and of strengthening social protection, food reserves and other inclusive strategies. A comprehensive analysis of the institutional roles and responsibilities to ensure the realisation of human rights is required, from local authorities up to the global level, as well as between types of actors (executive, legislative and judiciary powers, rights holders), in which the strengthening the judiciary powers to protect rights has to be particularly considered.

Current production and financing models that impose the use of GMOs are also responsible for creating and accentuating inequality. They contribute to paradoxes of high prices and low food diversity, and low prices paid to farmers who then receive an inadequete compensation for their work. The responsibility then rests with food producers. The public sector, at different levels, has clear responsibilities to reduce inequality and must commit to the implementation of social protection policies, income and wealth redistribution.

It is necessary to consider the importance of formulating data and information based on adequate and inclusive methodologies that consider different social groups and realities in order to remove social, economic and political invisibility. There is a lack of reliable public information in countries and regions. Unfortunately, little is known about the realities of the most affected by hunger and malnutrition, especially indigenous peoples, women, LGBTQIA+, homeless, prisoners, migrants, refugees, internally dispaced persons and other people living under conflict, war and occupation or now severly affected by climate catastrophes.

Data is an important and powerful tool that can paint a picture of how a community, country, region, or even the global population stands vis-à-vis specific indicators. It can indicate progress, as well as failures in issues related to community and global development. However, numbers cannot tell the full story and cannot be separated from qualitative analysis and the lived experiences of people. Data on human rights violations are a good example for that. They are usually a complex, multidimensional documentation of evidence that is best known to the affected persons or communities. The report should therefor ask how to improve the documentation of human rights violations, especially of the right to food and nutrition, related to inequalities through more participatory methodologies that include the most affected people.

It is key to include the discussion about the obligations of the states to effectively regulate the private sectors in terms of preventing human rights abuses, discrimination and other outcomes of increased inequality. Why are these obligations not respected? Where is the accountability gap?

In the current context of rising food prices, public regulation is needed to prevent price volatility/shocks that deepen inequalities, through the effects of wars, lack of food stocks, food speculation, lack of market transparency, and pre-exiting dependencies on food and other prodcuts.

The particular atention of the HLPE report about “agency” is highly appreciated. For the CSIPM, this is primarily central to fully take into account the diversity of its constituencies and regions. In that sense, we suggest the HLPE report paying particular attention to each of the most affected constituencies and their particular regional contexts.

The agency concept could also be applied to the most affected countries. The countries and regions most affected by multiple inequalities, becoming highly indebted and fragile in relation to the implementation of social protection, food and natural resource management policies, need to be better heard and considered in policy and coordination decision making. This point is crucial in the current context of rising prices for food, fuel and inputs, essentially for import-dependent low-income and low-income countries, especially the indebted countries. Their realities should play a central role in the HLPE report. Furthermore, a leading and more powerful participation of these countries in global political responses to the intertwined crises will be fundamental for reducing inequalities among and within countries.

Tackling inequalities requires making political and ethical decisions now and in the future, and we strongly hope that the HLPE report by itself, and through the subsequent CFS Policy Convergence process, can significantly contribute to overcoming Inequalities for Food Justice and Healthy, Sustainable Food Systems.

## Margaret Koyenikan, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria,

E-Consultation on inequality in FSN

i. Inequality from food security and nutrition perspective means disparity in access to resources, opportunities and outcomes in agri-food system relative to socio-economic characteristics of an individual, community, nation or region.

ii. Trends within and between countries (data collection, measurement tools); World Inequality Report, 2022, World Inequality Database (WID)

iii. Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing;

Inequalities in health and nutrition impact negatively on the vulnerable individuals, communities, nations and regions consequently on labour productivity in agriculture and other sectors. Educational attainment is a common denominator that can significantly affect health and nutrition security, enhance productivity, economic growth and wellbeing at individual and all levels to facilitate equal and equitable access to resources and outcomes.

iv. Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs)- UN systems , EU, AU Organizations- FARA, AFAAS

Efforts to improve measurement-Professional bodies, including those I belong:

a. Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON),   
b. National Rural Sociological Association (NRSA)  
c.Organization of Women in Science for Developing World (OWSD);   
d. Nigerian Forum for Agriculture and Advisory Services (NIFAAS)  
e. AFAAS and GFRAS.  
f. Agriculture, Nutrition and Health (ANH) Academy

v. Relationship between inequality and inequity-

Inequity refers to unfairness which could arise from poor governance, corruption or cultural exclusion while inequality simply refers to the uneven distribution of resources and assets based on socio-cultural and economic variables age, gender. Inequality breeds inequity which perpetrates inequality.

2. Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:

a. reducing inequality gap and its potential impact on food security and nutrition outcomes- Some interventions in Agriculture in Nigeria e.g Fadama Programme, IFAD assited RTEP, Community-Based Natural Resourses Management Programme in Nigeria.

3. Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report.

<https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm>

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

## Elizabeth Margolis, World Vision International, United States of America

Hello, kindly find attached the inputs collected from food security, nutrition, gender, and livelihoods staff at World Vision International. Our comments focus mainly on identifying root causes of inequality and addressing these imbalances through meaningful shifts in power distribution. In order to contribute to the CFS vision and the overall objective of addressing the root causes of food insecurity, we must go deeper than simply talking about drivers.

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**Kindly find inputs from World Vision International in red below.**

**1. Share your comments and suggestions on the objectives and content of this report:**

1. Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition
2. *What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective;*

* *The definition of inequality must go beyond the dominant discourse on drivers to examine root causes of inequality, including neocolonialism, issues with governance and accountability, power dynamics, etc. Regarding food security and nutrition, we must consider inequality of access to nutritious foods and purchasing power, particularly for women/girls, diverse gender identities, and rural communities, and the implications for regulating corporations and the market for nutritional goals.*
* *We must look deeper at who has the power to decide, influence, or bargain on matters related to food security and nutrition. We must consider who has access and control over both public and private resources that are linked to food security and nutrition. We must look at deeply rooted norms and systemic barriers that influence individual and collective agency and decision making.*

*Ii. Trends within and between countries (data collection, measurement tools);*

1. *Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing;*
2. *Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs), efforts to improve measurement;*

* *Do the SDGs seek to address the root cause of inequality, or merely the symptoms? Frequently, humanitarian and development work is much more focused on responding to problems than on addressing root causes and shifting power. Further efforts to improve measurement could be better directed at root causes, as we have seen we are not making progress.*

1. *Relationship between inequality and inequity.*
2. Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality

* *This must be focused on root causes, not simply drivers. The discourse about drivers frequently distracts from a broader understanding of pernicious root causes. In order to contribute to the CFS vision and the overall objective of addressing the* ***root causes*** *of food insecurity we* ***must go deeper*** *than simply talking about drivers. For example – climate change and conflict are certainly driving food insecurity, but what is causing climate change? What is causing conflict? What is causing gender inequality? The report must look beyond drivers towards issues related to governance, accountability, and neocolonial global power and capital imbalances.*
* *The report must look at how systemic laws, policies, and resource allocations influence who can realize good nutrition and food security for themselves and their families and how socio-cultural norms, beliefs, and practices influence who has power and uphold values of patriarchy.*

1. *Concentration of economic, social, and political capital within the food systems;*

* *Same as the above point*

1. *Structural barriers to equality for historically disadvantaged and poor populations (women, people of colour, rural and urban poor, indigenous communities, peasants, migrants, refugees, etc.).*

* *This should be a major focus as it is an underlying cause of food insecurity.*
* *Including people with disabilities and those with diverse gender identities*

1. Paths toward equality
2. *Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food;*

* *Gender equality and women/girls’ empowerment are foundational to the realization of human rights. The disproportionate impact of food insecurity and malnutrition on women and girls demonstrate the need for a human rights based approach towards food and nutrition.*

*Good governance to rebalance power and influence;*

* *This pathway has the most potential to be transformative, through the shifting of power to formerly colonized nations, but also away from being concentrated in governments that have not been held accountable for widespread corruption and towards larger, more democratic bodies of civil society.*

1. *Legal and policy interventions to regulate the influence of corporate actors (and those with concentrated power), and remove structural barriers and increase capital (for those with diminished resources).*

* *Certainly corporations certainly need more regulation through policy (particularly in order to achieve nutrition goals), however, we already have a dynamic wherein corporations are creating these laws through corrupt means which lack transparency, in collusion with governments. This seems to imply that corporations are in need of regulation by governments, yet the use of policy to regulate corporations has already proven ineffective, due to corruption and lobbying. We must look deeper - how do we intend to hold governments accountable and to reduce corruption? For example, climate change would not be the issue it is today if government and policy were alone effective tools for regulation of corporations – we must invest in effective accountability mechanisms. This report should reimagine new ways of doing this.*

**2. Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:**

1. reducing inequality gap and its potential impact on food security and nutrition outcomes;
2. ensuring the effective legal framework to guarantee equal rights to access land and other productive resources, basic services, and the right to food to reduce inequalities;
3. enhancing food systems’ role in the reduction of inequalities (through income and livelihoods generation, while contributing to healthy diets and environment, among others);
4. empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organizations in making food systems more equitable and accessible;

* *The implication in the above (F and G) is that individuals can work harder to generate income and be food secure. This ignores structural, systemic inequalities that have pushed people into food insecurity in the first place. This report* ***must*** *seek to address structural and systemic inequalities in power distribution and* ***must not*** *place the burden onto individuals as if they can work their way out of an oppressive system.*

1. addressing capacity gaps in generating and using data and other new technologies in policy-making processes, monitoring and reporting on inequalities for FSN.

**3. Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report.**

*- Assessing Social Equity in Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) Interventions: Findings from Ghana* [*https://muse.jhu.edu/article/793661*](https://muse.jhu.edu/article/793661)

Opportunities and Constraints for Using Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration for Land Restoration in Sub-Saharan Africa [*https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/ffgc.2020.571679/full*](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/ffgc.2020.571679/full)

*- Gender Transformative Framework for Nutrition* [*https://www.gendernutritionframework.org/*](https://www.gendernutritionframework.org/)

**4. Provide feedback on the following questions, to guide the development of the report:**

1. How do food systems drivers affect inequalities? And specifically what are the different impacts of trends in:
2. *assets, land, other natural resources and finance*

* *Urgent need for policy work to enable access to land and other resources for women/girls, youth, peasants, historically dispossessed and disadvantaged peoples, etc.*
* *Including indigenous populations and their customary rights to land tenure*

1. *infrastructure and technology, including ICT*
2. *market structure in input provision, logistics, processing, transport, distribution of food*

* *Regarding nutrition, often times corporations have better logistics and transport than those selling nutritious foods, produce, etc. This dynamic must be reversed through policy work, accountability structures, and market improvements to prevent food loss.*

1. *access to information and data*
2. *demographic trends including migration and urbanisation*
3. *socio-cultural factors around gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, language and their intersection*

* *The report must use a gender-transformative lens, we must go beyond prioritizing gender in interventions to address root causes of gender bias, discrimination, and inequality in food and nutrition systems.*

1. *political and economic factors (presence/absence of a legal framework to ensure equal rights to key resources and services and the expression of agency)?*

* *Drivers cannot be properly understood without also looking at underlying causes. For example, socio-cultural, political, and economic factors, as well as market structure and land / resource access, are all significantly affected by the legacy of colonialism still present in power dynamics between wealthy and formerly-colonized countries. As food insecurity continues to increase, we cannot afford to waste any more time in addressing the legacy of colonialism.*

1. How can social inequalities impact FSN outcomes?
2. How can the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? Which different pathways should be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment?
3. How can the reduction of inequalities through sustainable food systems and better FSN contribute to conflict prevention and peace building?
4. How can gender and youth mainstreaming approaches, as well as adopting an intersectional lens on inequalities, taking multiple identities together in the analysis (including gender and youth) in food systems contribute to social justice and better FSN?
5. What are the main knowledge and data gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine FSN outcomes? What could be improved in data collection and analysis tools for FSN inequalities?

* *A major knowledge gap is in the definition and systematic mapping of power dynamics between the minority world (I.e. wealthy countries) and the majority world (I.e. formerly colonized countries). This should be measured in a holistic way (I.e. soft and hard power, rooted in history, etc). We cannot continue to separate food security and nutrition from the larger, underlying power dynamics.*

1. How can strengthened food systems’ governance contribute to the reduction of inequalities in FSN outcomes?
2. Which legal frameworks can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities?
3. What is the role of political economy in reducing inequalities in food systems and in reducing other inequalities that have an impact on FSN outcomes?

* *Through power mapping, the legacy of neocolonialism should be addressed, seeking to repair centuries of extractive and exploitative practices with financial reparations. This would have a major impact on the global political economy and food security, through alleviation of debt burdens, empowerment of communities to manage their own natural resources, etc.*

## Bill Jeffery, Centre for Health Science and Law, Canada

Please find the submission from the Centre for Health Science and Law attached.

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With this e-consultation, the HLPE Steering Committee is seeking your feedback. In particular, you are invited to:

**1. Share your comments and suggestions on the objectives and content of this report:**

a. Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition

i.What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective;

In many of the lowest income countries, people eat predominantly what they grow within their own national borders and to a large extent, what they grow in their own gardens. So, often, the solutions to improved nutrition can begin with producerconsumers. Government incentives to grow more fruits, vegetables, and protein-rich nuts and legumes (nutrition-sensitive agriculture) and expanding the reach of school meals programs are vital in all countries, but especially ones where economies remain largely agricultural. Well-nourished populations are more physically and cognitively fit and, by extension, more efficient workers and make fewer demands (whether fulfilled or not) on social security systems. Better management of water for drinking, cooking, sanitation, irrigation, and electric power generation are essential to develop as individuals, families, and populations. Governments tend to stovepipe many of these functions and, especially when competing for external funding from international development agencies, compete for funds rather than collaborate. Nutrition improvement efforts that are based on European or North American guidance that presumes access to an open-system type of food market based on cash transactions seem unsuited to many low-income countries. Dietary guidance should be closely linked to household annual planting and livestock plans. This is a public health approach of moving the curve and probably more effective at reducing population-level food insecurity structurally, instead of identifying at-risk populations that become ill and steering additional scarce resources to those after the system causes damage like parking ambulances at the bottom of a cliff instead of building a fence at the top.

ii.Trends within and between countries (data collection, measurement tools);

While many countries lack comprehensive, annual (or frequent) dietary surveys, FAO’s Statistical Yearbook provides important annual estimates of per capita consumption data to broadly inform policies. Likewise, data on “infant food” for countries that do not manufacture breastmilk substitutes can indicate the success of government efforts to promote breastfeeding and prohibit advertising and promotion of breastmilk substitutes.

iii.Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing;

Especially if effective household long-term food preservation systems are in place at the household level (possibly with national manufacturing of air-tight glass re-usable preservation containers), it takes approximately the same amount of resources to produce an abundance of grains as an adequately proportioned, diverse diet of grains, fruits, vegetables, protein, and polyunsaturated fats. While there are some dissenting views in the scientific literature—often based on self-serving perspectives of certain food industries and the pharmaceutical industries that treat diet-related disease—WHO guidance and copious systematic reviews of the scientific studies in the peer-reviewed scientific literature establish the connection between nutrition, health, educational attainment, and workforce productivity. Resources would be better spent ensuring that nutrition knowledge is reflected in planting practices than validating studies.

iv.Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs), efforts to improve measurement;

A 2021 Angus Reid poll of 28 countries revealed that nearly all countries rate combating poverty, and hunger, supporting health as the top three priorities of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.[[4]](#footnote-4)

v.Relationship between inequality and inequity.

a. Identifying drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality

i.Concentration of economic, social, and political capital within the food systems;

ii.Structural barriers to equality for historically disadvantaged and poor populations (women, people of colour, rural and urban poor, indigenous communities, peasants, migrants, refugees, etc.).

If development efforts focus too extensively on inequities in poor countries where the vast majority of people are surviving at subsistence levels, there may be too little emphasis on producing food nutritionally and efficiently enough to ensure that workers individually or collective have time to both feed themselves and produce other valuable products. Put bluntly, if there is not much income, there is too little to redistribute to ensure equity using internal, national resources. Using all able-bodied resources (including standing armies and crowd-sourcing) coordinated by army corps of engineers should make perfecting water purification and distribution a top priority development objective.

a. Paths toward equality

i.Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food;

The human rights-based approach is an essential step to improved nutrition security, however, as a partly social and economic right, it cannot be realized merely by asserting it in a constitutional or statutory clause. Hungry people and courts cannot be relegated to take legal recourse that Parliaments (through statures and public budgets) and government executive branches (through regulations) are not willing or able to take. To meaningfully give effect to the right to food, governments must ensure that the funding and establish mandates are in place to feed school children enough nutritious foods to contribute to their well-being during the school day, food labels and agricultural incentives promote good nutrition, and curricula support these ends.

ii.Good governance to rebalance power and influence;

iii.Legal and policy interventions to regulate the influence of corporate actors (and those with concentrated power), and remove structural barriers and increase capital (for those with diminished resources).

A rights-based approach means ensuring the duty-bearers which within national borders or abroad respect the rights of natural citizens to health and nutrition. Countries rich and poor, North and South should support the efforts of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s [Open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/wg-trans-corp/igwg-on-tnc) and support the efforts of the United Nations Human Rights Council’s [Working Group on the Right to Development](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrc-subsidiaries/iwg-on-development) efforts to negotiate encourage their efforts to negotiate a [Convention on the Right to Development and both recognize and stress the importance of nutrition, food security and disease prevention in the elaboration of legally binding instrument](http://healthscienceandlaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Prevention-right-to-development.Intervention.November23-2021.pdf).

**2. Share good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives that have proven successful at:**

a. reducing inequality gap and its potential impact on food security and nutrition outcomes;

b. ensuring the effective legal framework to guarantee equal rights to access land and other productive resources, basic services, and the right to food to reduce inequalities;

c. enhancing food systems’ role in the reduction of inequalities (through income and livelihoods generation, while contributing to healthy diets and environment, among others);

d. empowering the role of small farmers’, producers’ and workers’ organizations in making food systems more equitable and accessible;

While there is no justification for large faming operations undermining the livelihoods of small producers, improving the efficiency and fortunes of those small famers so that they are able to feed their families and have time to produce other things that their country needs at least as important as protecting equity in the distribution of woefully small amount of resources available to them presently, e.g., in Sub Saharan Africa.

e. addressing capacity gaps in generating and using data and other new technologies in policy-making processes, monitoring and reporting on inequalities for FSN.

Certainly, there are advantages to having more data and using Internal and smartphone (and satellite imaging) based technologies to acquire such data, so much can be done wisely based on the readily available data and information gathering should be viewed as a tool to refine methods, not a precondition for acting.

**3. Share the most recent references that should be considered in this report.**

**4. Provide feedback on the following questions, to guide the development of the report:**

a. How do food systems drivers affect inequalities? And specifically what are the different impacts of trends in:

i.assets, land, other natural resources and finance

ii.infrastructure and technology, including ICT

iii.market structure in input provision, logistics, processing, transport, distribution of food

iv.access to information and data v.demographic trends including migration and urbanisation

vi.socio-cultural factors around gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, language and their intersection

vii.political and economic factors (presence/absence of a legal framework to ensure equal rights to key resources and services and the expression of agency)?

a. How can social inequalities impact FSN outcomes?

b. How can the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? Which different pathways should be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment?

c. How can the reduction of inequalities through sustainable food systems and better FSN contribute to conflict prevention and peace building?

Perhaps, the mere realization that armed conflict leads indirectly—but with a certainty masked by the fog of war—to far more deaths of infants and young children that military actions directly might discourage more military. For instance, a systematic review of conflict areas in 181 countries worldwide between 2000 and 2019 found that they exhibited double the neonatal, infant, and under-5 rates of death leading to 3.2 million excess deaths of children under-5 and 300,000 excess maternal deaths during the survey period.[[5]](#footnote-5)

d. How can gender and youth mainstreaming approaches, as well as adopting an intersectional lens on inequalities, taking multiple identities together in the analysis (including gender and youth) in food systems contribute to social justice and better FSN?

In many Low-and Middle-Income Countries, partly because life expectancies are low (in some cases, 10-20 years shorter that High-Income Countries), children comprise nearly 50% of the population. In that sense, young people are not nearly the unique, minority group that High-Income Countries have come to consider where, as in Canada, children represent approximately 18% of the national population. Young people can best contribute to the well-being and prosperity of their countries by being well-nourished themselves (and avoiding tobacco and alcohol), and be continuing education throughout their childhood and, to the fullest extent possible, to advanced education. Access to the Internet could make access to education more equitable and appealing than it has ever been through digital libraries and learning opportunities not being constrained by physical distance or the finite barriers of bricks and mortar.

e. What are the main knowledge and data gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine FSN outcomes? What could be improved in data collection and analysis tools for FSN inequalities?

As indicated above, recognize the acquisition of knowledge as a method for measuring the effectiveness of interventions, not as a precursor to action.

f. How can strengthened food systems’ governance contribute to the reduction of inequalities in FSN outcomes?

g. Which legal frameworks can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities?

See above.

h. What is the role of political economy in reducing inequalities in food systems and in reducing other inequalities that have an impact on FSN outcomes?

Be wary of generating erudite analysis that is not actionable in meaningful ways such as through regulatory changes and spending decisions. However, conflict-of-interest safeguards in government regulatory decision-making, budgeting decisions, and program implementation are essential to make policies that serve people. Inviting parties with vested interests into roles where they can frame policy approaches and steer, or direct decisions afterwards risks putting their commercial needs ahead of the public interest.

## Marzella Wustefeld, World health Organization, Switzerland

Please find attached WHO's contribution to this e-consultation on the scope of the new HLPE report on Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition.

With kind regards,

Marzella

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**New HLPE Report on**

**Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition**

**HLPE eConsultation on the Report’s scope**

**10 May 2022**

**Comments provided by Dr Marzella Wüstefeld, on behalf of World Health Organization, Department Nutrition and Food Safety (WHO/NFS), Geneva**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide inputs into this e-consultation. It is my pleasure to share with you our written comments on the scope of the report “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition” as per below. We appreciate the timely focus on reducing inequalities, especially as we move into the second half of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025[[6]](#footnote-6).

This report is a timely piece fitting into a growing body of work focusing on inequalities which drive malnutrition.” Today, one in every nine people in the world is hungry, and one in every three is overweight or obese. More and more countries experience the double burden of malnutrition, where undernutrition coexists with overweight, obesity and other diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs)” [[7]](#footnote-7). However, these global and often even regional trends can mask inequalities that exist between countries or between demographics within countries [SOFI 2022]. Drivers of inequalities in food systems must be identified and addressed if we are to achieve the targets set out by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, especially SDG 2: to “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture" [[8]](#footnote-8).

We appreciate the current key questions, and would like to suggest some additional themes for consideration in this report including:

First, we believe it is important to ensure that the report emphasizes the impact of inequities on malnutrition **“in all its forms**.” Health equity is defined as “having the personal agency and fair access to resources and opportunities needed to achieve the best possible physical emotional and social well-being” [[9]](#footnote-9). Unequal nutrition and health outcomes are often rooted in deeper issues of inequities [[10]](#footnote-10). Consideration should also be given to the social determinants of food systems workers’ health[[11]](#footnote-11). With respect to nutrition, equity would mean having access to healthy and nutritious food that can support health and wellbeing [[12]](#footnote-12). Low socioeconomic status, including both poverty and a lack of educational attainment, is associated with lower food and health literacies, unhealthier food and urban environments, poorer nutrition during pregnancy and early life, and an individual inability to afford nutrient-rich foods across the life course [[13]](#footnote-13) [[14]](#footnote-14). As countries transition to higher rates of development and as a country’s gross national product increases, obesity shifts to economically disadvantaged groups. These trends are particularly evident among women [[15]](#footnote-15) [[16]](#footnote-16). This unequal distribution of malnutrition across socio-economic status also appears for undernutrition [[17]](#footnote-17). The relationship between poverty and all forms of malnutrition is also bidirectional [[18]](#footnote-18) [[19]](#footnote-19). Consideration should thus be given to the *factors that drive inequalities in* ***both*** *undernutrition and overweight and obesity, and NCD outcomes.*

WHO is currently supporting the development of the SHIFT Framework (together with the Karolinska Institutet and Uppsala Universitet in Sweden, and EAT) which seeks to mobilize high level commitment and promote coordinated multi-stakeholder processes to improve health and nutrition equity [[20]](#footnote-20).

Second, inequalities in malnutrition outcomes can have serious long-lasting impacts on individuals and economies. For example, stunting before the age of two years, predicts poorer cognitive and educational outcomes later in childhood and adolescence, [[21]](#footnote-21) and higher susceptibility to NCDs in adulthood [[22]](#footnote-22). Stunting is also associated with impaired education and economic development at the individual, household, and community levels [[23]](#footnote-23) [[24]](#footnote-24). The extent to which maternal obesity adversely affects early growth and development of offspring might be exacerbated if the mother was undernourished in early life, reinforcing the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition in its different forms [[25]](#footnote-25). On the other end of the spectrum, overweight and obesity are linked to more deaths worldwide than underweight. NCDs have typically been thought of as diseases of affluence, but they are now killing more people in the developing world than anywhere else, including in urban slums [[26]](#footnote-26). By 2030, diet-related health costs linked to NCDs, largely because of rapidly rising overweight and obesity levels, could amount to USD 1.3 trillion [[27]](#footnote-27). This report could therefore include an examination of the impact that malnutrition in all its forms can have in exacerbating economic and health inequalities.

Third, given that inequalities affecting food system’s drivers can be transmitted to all components of food systems, impacting food security and nutrition outcomes, we would like to suggest the report pay special attention to downstream elements of the food system including food environments and consumer behavior (diets). Physical access to diverse types of food in the food environment influences what consumers can purchase and subsequently consume. Nutritious food is not accessible in many low-income neighborhoods, even in High-Income countries. Food deserts and swamps are also an increasing problem in Low-Middle-Income countries, as these countries urbanize. These food deserts or swamps offer few options for affordable nutritious food. In addition, there is still inadequate understanding in relation to inequalities in dietary quality, affordability, and safety, especially at subnational level. Indicators and data collected are needed that allow for “meaningful disaggregation” by demographic to ensure adequate monitoring of inequalities in healthy diets and affordability [[28]](#footnote-28). We would be happy to contribute our expertise in these topics to this report.

Finally, we appreciate the consideration of the drivers of power asymmetry that perpetuate inequality. We would like to suggest extending the scope of focus to include the role of power in driving inequalities in food environments and consumer behavior (not just supply chains). Power struggles present challenges as transnational food corporations use their economic power to hinder political action to improve food systems and diets. Examples include food and beverage marketing in unhealthy food environments and advertising foods high in fat, sugar, and salt to children as well as biased industry funding for research. A recent WHO report outlines some evidence to suggest that social inequalities exist in marketing exposure whereby there appears to be a trend towards greater exposure to food advertisements, especially for less healthy foods, among less affluent communities [[29]](#footnote-29). To address these commercial determinants of health, and power imbalances, changes must be made to food system governance. This should be made more inclusive and transparent ensuring the participation of all stakeholders across local, regional, national and international levels, especially the most disadvantaged, while simultaneously avoiding conflicts of interest [[30]](#footnote-30).

With regard to recent references that should be considered in this report, we would like to propose the inclusion of the following WHO products:

* *Preventing and Managing Conflicts of Interest in Country-level Nutrition Programs: A Roadmap for Implementing the World Health Organization’s Draft Approach in the Americas. Washington DC: Pan American Health Organisation; 2021.* [*https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/55055*](https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/55055)
* *Action framework for developing and implementing public food procurement and service policies for a healthy diet. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.* [*https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240018341*](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240018341)
* *Food marketing exposure and power and their associations with food-related attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours: a narrative review. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.* [*https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240041783*](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240041783)
* *Implementing policies to restrict food marketing: a review of contextual factors. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.* [*https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240035041*](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240035041)
* *Report of the technical consultation on measuring healthy diets: concepts, methods, and metrics.* *Virtual meeting, 18–20 May 2021. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.* [*https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/351048/9789240040274-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y*](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/351048/9789240040274-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)
* World Health Organization. (2021). Food systems delivering better health: executive summary. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240031814>
* WHO 2021. Cooperation between health and agricultural sectors for occupational health, safety and services. Intersectoral action with the agricultural sector for strengthening primary health care. WHO webinar, 29 November 2021 <https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/social-determinants-of-health/cooperation-between-the-health-and-agricultural-sector-for-occupational-health-safety-and-services-ivan-ivanov.pdf?sfvrsn=37948826_5>

We hope that these suggestions are useful contributions to the development of this report and look forward to contributing further as needed.

## Matheus Alves Zanella, Global Alliance for the Future of Food, Brazil

**Contribution of the 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 report’s scope “Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition”.

This is certainly a timely topic in the context of the numerous crises and instabilities that food systems are currently facing. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how current models of production and consumption have tended to exacerbate the concentration of wealth and income with alarming consequences for food security and nutrition. The three organizations which subscribe to this comment are gathering analytical resources to jointly contribute to the different phases of the Report production. At this stage, we would like to point to three main issues that we consider of fundamental importance to be addressed in the Report:

1. We welcome the Report in ambitiously tackling both inequalities originating within food systems as well as the drivers of power asymmetry that cause and perpetuate inequality in the broader political, social, cultural and economic environments which affect food systems. This seems aligned with previous efforts of the HLPE to maintain a systemic approach and comprehensive overview of issues.

In this regard, we propose that the research team could be sharper in the definition of “good governance” and/or “strengthened governance” (as in c. ii. and g.). Governance and inequalities are intrinsically linked, and the qualification of which governance arrangements in food system governance leads to less unequal political processes featuring democratic decision-making among multiple stakeholders with clear mechanisms to include historically marginalized people, enshrining rights to participation through transparent consultations (abiding by the protocols of FPIC, fair distribution of resources, etc.) could illuminate insightful contributions and recommendations.

As references, the Global Alliance for the Future of Food calls for governance that addresses the structural inequities in food systems as “participatory, integrated, rights-based approaches…, building processes and policy platforms on principles of transparency, inclusive participation, and shared power. This ensures policies driven not only by evidence, but ethics and public interest” (GA, 2021). The UN Food System Summit Policy Brief on Governance of Food Systems Transformation also addressed ways to “Enhance equitable and inclusive multi-stakeholder processes (from engagement to collaboration)” (UNFSS, 2021) and the HLPE itself has advanced a number of proposals on how to build more equal food governance in numerous Reports (e.g., the HLPE Report on Multistakeholder partnerships). More specifically to the topic of multistakeholder governance, a recent study by the One Planet Network on Sustainable Food Systems analyzed 10 cases of national and sub-national partnerships, which also shed light on the qualifications of governance that generate less unequal policy processes (Biodiversity et al. 2021). In summary, the literature on governance, participation, inclusivity, power concentration, legal and policy interventions to regulate power asymmetries, conflicts of interests, and how all of these issues affect inequality is mushrooming and the Report would greatly contribute by reviewing it with a view to produce sharp policy recommendations.

2. We also welcome the report in reviewing the impact of different trends - e.g., assets, infrastructure and technology, market structure, access to information, demographic trends - and how these affect inequality (4. a.). Linked to those, a key objective question that the Report should try to address is “which kinds of income distribution dynamics are associated with which kinds of food system transformations, and where?”. A review of this fundamental question and its corollaries could form the basis of an opening Chapter that sets the existing evidence for the consecutive parts of the Report.

We observe a growing and needed interest of global institutions - from Rome and Geneva-based to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund - to tackle inequality. However, we believe that there is a need for a clear research agenda, data collection on the ground and harmonized research agendas and datasets. This alignment between the different global research agendas on inequality could lay the analytical groundwork for effective policy recommendations. We invite the Report Team to review the existing global datasets that could suggest important lessons on tackling inequality as a way to identify the gaps which would require this extra effort of alignment from the global community. While in some areas, for example land inequalities, there seems to be a years-long community of experts accumulating knowledge with these issues, we believe other areas (ex. Labor dynamics in food system transformation) there is still much potential to be explored.

3. We would welcome a comparative exploration of how industrial agriculture and agroecology (and other approaches as well) each approach inequalities. What does the evidence say about how each might exacerbate or diminish inequality and under what circumstances? A historical and political and socio-economic approach to this analysis is important since the emergence of a food system is based on the suite of laws, policies and programs that undergird it. A few case studies on specific food systems exploring who designed them with what intended and unintended outcomes could prove illuminating. A commitment in this report to true cost accounting would seem to be absolutely fundamental - if this is not used, for example, claims can be made that industrial agriculture reduces inequality by boosting yield and lowering prices without accounting for the socio and environmental costs of production borne by all.

We remain at your disposal for any further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

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

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## Ioannis Fermantzis, European Commission, Belgium

I would like to submit some comments from our side, as compiled by contributions made from colleagues, on the initial scope and building blocks for the planned HLPE Report.

In general we need to stress that:

This initiative is very much welcomed - and strongly aligned with the European Commission's prioritization of this agenda (along with a rights based approach) as evidenced by the publication last year of 3 volumes of Guidance on Addressing Inequality in Partner Countries as a follow up to the Staff Working Document and Council Conclusion on the same. These documents provide the basis for much of the response articulated in the attached.

There is some missing clarity about the real scope of the report: While the current title is reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition, it is explicitly stated that the intended focus is in fact on ‘inequalities within agri-food systems’. Hence, the report should either be on ‘Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition’ or on ‘Reducing inequalities within agri-food systems to contribute to food security and nutrition’. If the latter, then it must be explicitly acknowledged that while contributing to food security and nutrition outcomes, the transformation of food systems alone cannot bring about the end of food insecurity and malnutrition. If the focus is on addressing inequalities for food security and nutrition, then equality needs to be more comprehensively analysed with policy domains such as labour, housing and education recognised as key for FSN outcomes.

There are some concerns that the intersection of gender inequalities may not adequately integrated into the current thinking.

We need to better address the climate change - inequalities nexus.

We feel that these are quite pertinent comments and will contribute to the the scope and building blocks of the report.

Kind regards

Yannis

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**Response to initial HLPE Consultation on Reducing inequalities for food food security and nutrition. 25/04/22**

1. **Comments and suggestions on the objectives and content**

The initiative is very welcome – in particular the focus on a rights-based approach and the emphasis on ‘agency’ as a lens’ to address structural barriers. Equality is one of the foundations of the EU’s social model, which is one of the most equitable models in the world and one with a strong record of implementing progressive policies, from income redistribution to welfare state assistance. The reduction of inequality is therefore a clear EU priority: both internally, as enshrined in EU treaties and reflected in the European Pillar of Social Rights, and externally, as the new European Consensus on development makes it a priority of EU development policy to eradicate poverty, tackle discrimination and inequality, and leave no one behind.

While the current title of the proposed report purports to be concerned with reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition, it is explicitly stated that the intended focus is in fact on ‘inequalities within agri-food systems’. Yet socio-economic inequalities (including mutually reinforcing dimensions of multiple deprivation such as income, education, employment etc.) have always been strongly associated with food security and nutrition related outcomes. Given the fact that poverty is a primary driver of food insecurity (and that at least 3 billion people in the world are unable to afford a healthy diet) it is clear that the breadth required to explore multi-sectoral pathways driving food security and nutrition outcomes goes beyond a food systems analysis. Food insecurity and malnutrition are the results of social, political and economic inequalities at every level. Unequal relationships and power dynamics in markets, in households and in policy processes determine who has access to resources / who is hungry and malnourished. Hence, the report should either be on ‘Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition’ or on ‘Reducing inequalities within agri-food systems to contribute to food security and nutrition’. If the latter, then it must be explicitly acknowledged that while contributing to food security and nutrition outcomes, the transformation of food systems alone cannot alone bring about the end of food insecurity and malnutrition. If the focus is on addressing inequalities for food security and nutrition, then equality needs to be codified into a more comprehensive analysis of food security and nutrition, with policy domains such as labour, housing and education recognised as key for FSN outcomes. This is also crucial to ensure a more balanced analysis of food insecurity and malnutrition in the context of urban poverty, which underpins the food insecurity and malnutrition of billions of people.

**a. Defining inequality within the context of food systems and for food security and nutrition**

*What does ‘inequality’ mean through a food security and nutrition perspective?*

Typically, groups with the least social, economic, or political power suffer hunger or malnutrition - whether they are barely eking out a living in remote rural areas of poor countries or residing in marginalized communities in the big cities of wealthy states. This uneven distribution of hunger and malnutrition in all its forms is rooted in inequalities of social, political, and economic power. *‘The inability to access nutritious food due to poverty is the main reason people face food insecurity, an issue that affects people within the EU as well as in developing countries’* (Prof Johan Swinnen - Director of IFPRI[[31]](#footnote-31))

It should be made clear that while income inequality between countries has improved in the last 25 years, income inequality within countries has become worse. This shows that national average income levels are poor predictors of inequality. Today, 71% of the world’s population live in countries where inequality has grown. This is especially important because inequalities within countries are the inequalities people feel day to day, month to month, year to year.

It is stated in the Global Inequality Report that ‘Global wealth inequalities are even more pronounced than income inequalities. The poorest half of the global population barely owns any wealth at all, possessing just 2% of the total. In contrast, the richest 10% of the global population own 76% of all wealth.’

*Links between health and nutrition inequalities and labour productivity, educational attainment, economic growth and human wellbeing*

Disaggregated data serves to elucidate the large disparities in nutrition outcomes such as those between households of different income levels and between rural and urban households, as well as within urban populations (e.g. slum communities) and those arising from inequalities related to gender, race, age and disability among others. Income inequality has been found to be closely associated with other forms of inequality. Inequalities in stunting – the reduction of which the EU remains committed to supporting in partner countries – are declining only in a small number of countries and addressing the root causes of inequalities is crucial to its eradication. For instance, ending food poverty remains a significant challenge with at least three billion people globally – and the majority of the population in most low- and middle- income countries – unable to afford a nutritious diet.

The COVID-19 pandemic has served to amplify existing vulnerabilities to economic and gender inequalities, instability and conflict, climate change and biodiversity loss. For the first time in 30 years, there has been a global decline in human development. The pandemic has underscored the strong causal connection between poverty and malnutrition: the World Bank estimates that in 2020, COVID-19 induced a rise in the number of people living in extreme poverty of between 119 and 124 million. Reductions in household income have eroded people’s ability to meet their basic needs and threatened to reverse modest global gains in maternal and child nutrition. Vulnerable groups – particularly women, adolescents and young children – are disproportionately affected.

*Relationship between inequality and inequity*

For the European Commission, *‘equity means that individuals’ needs and requirements are taken into account and those individuals are treated accordingly. Equality refers to a situation in which every individual is granted the same rights and responsibilities, regardless of individual differences, in the absence of discrimination based on sex, age, ethnicity, disability, nationality, and so on. From this perspective, equity is a process and equality is an outcome: equity is the necessary condition to be fulfilled to achieve equality. In the Treaty on European Union, Article 21(1), equality is explicitly mentioned among the principles guiding the EU’s external action.’*

*Commitments to reduce inequality (SDGs), efforts to improve measurement?*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development1 is an opportunity for positive change. It includes a Sustainable Development Goal to ‘Reduce inequality within and among countries’ (SDG 10). In addition, the importance of tackling inequality is stressed throughout the entire 2030 Agenda, as it can accelerate progress towards many of the other Sustainable Development Goals and is essential to fulfil the commitment to leave no one behind.

**c. Path toward equality**

*Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food;*

Reducing inequality is also rooted in the EU’s commitments to promote and protect human rights as the principles of non-discrimination and equality are complementing principles of international human rights law.

1. **Response regarding good practices and successful experiences on policy, legislation, interventions and initiatives**

The EU, being the largest contributor to development cooperation, has a crucial role to play in the global commitment to reducing inequality. Recently EU has taken significant political steps towards integrating reducing inequalities into its approach to development cooperation.

* The Commission Staff Working Document ‘Implementation of the new European Consensus on Development – Addressing inequality in partner countries’ summarises the ways in which the EU supports the reduction of inequality in partner countries and presents a series of recommendations to further address inequality as a cross-cutting element necessary to achieve the objectives – and improve the impact – of EU development cooperation.
* The Council’s conclusions on the above Staff Working Document affirm that tackling inequality is an internal and external priority for the EU and that equality and solidarity are among the values and principles guiding the EU and its external action.
* Through the Commission Communication ‘Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation’, the EU emphasises the importance of universal access to social protection and asserts that social protection reduces inequality, contributes to inclusive and sustainable growth, can help to strengthen the compact between citizens and the state, and promotes social inclusion, cohesion and greater accountability.

1. **References**

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European Commission: Addressing income inequalities through development cooperation. Volume 3, Guidelines for mainstreaming the reduction of inequality in interventions*[[34]](#footnote-34)*

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*World Inequality Report* (2022) <https://wir2022.wid.world/>

(forthcoming in 2022) *Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Inequality and Womens and Girls Empowerment in the context of Food and Nutrition Security.*

1. **Feedback on specific questions**

How do food systems drivers affect inequalities? And specifically what are the different impacts of trends in:

* *assets, land, other natural resources and finance*
* *infrastructure and technology, including ICT*
* *market structure in input provision, logistics, processing, transport, distribution of food*
* *access to information and data*
* *demographic trends including migration and urbanisation*
* *socio-cultural factors around gender, ethnicity, religion, caste, race, language and their intersection*
* *political and economic factors (presence/absence of a legal framework to ensure equal rights to key resources and services and the expression of agency)?*

How can social inequalities impact FSN outcomes?

How can the reduction of inequalities in food systems’ drivers foster sustainable economic and social transformation and improve FSN? Which different pathways should be considered? Which policies and practices have proven to work in reducing inequalities in FSN outcomes? Are there livelihood systems that are more successful at reducing inequalities and enhancing empowerment?

Agroecology is an approach to growing food, which aims to address all of these problems within the food system. A holistic method, agroecology uses ecological principles to produce food, such as improving soil health, increasing biodiversity and building synergies between different parts of the food system. As an approach which arose in part from social movements concerned about rising inequity in food systems, agroecology also focuses on the social, economic and political aspects of the food system. Agroecological principles also include co-creating agricultural knowledge with food producers, reconnecting producers and consumers, ensuring that food systems are culturally appropriate, and fair. (see for example <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S221191242100050X>)

In particular, agroecology gives priority to the most marginalised and vulnerable sectors of society: rural women, youth, family farmers and indigenous peoples. Agroecology has the potential to address the inequality of the food system by providing locally–based solutions to specific contexts and territories. At the same time, Agroecology has the potential to advance women’s rights, self-determination and autonomy. Women have a central role in agroecology. They are often custodians of healthy and traditional diets and are key players in sustainable food systems, from the home, to the field, to the market and beyond. Crucially for food security and nutrition outcomes, Agroecology enhances diversification to achieve sustainable and healthy diets and food and nutrition security. Agroecological food systems have proven, in many local contexts, to be exemplary providers of high-quality nutritious, healthy and adequate diets, preserving and promoting local food traditions and traditional knowledge. By shortening value chains, agroecology contributes to the reduction of food losses and waste.

How can the reduction of inequalities through sustainable food systems and better FSN contribute to conflict prevention and peace building?

Please refer to the attached table (below): Macro policy areas relevant to tackling inequalities, as defined by DG INTPA taken from the European Commission *Addressing income inequalities through development cooperation. Volumes 1 – 3.*

As stated in the European Commission’s Staff Working Document on *Addressing Inequality in Partner Countries*, inequality is a threat to democracy, social cohesion, and peaceful and resilient societies. The concentration of wealth into ever smaller sections of society places a strain on democracy, undermining its legitimacy and distorting democratic outcomes. Inequality and weakened democracy can facilitate corruption, enable the abuse of power, and enable influence peddling, further eroding good governance. Moreover, evidence shows that horizontal inequality (between groups), whether political or socioeconomic in nature, is linked to conflict: inequality between groups, including gender inequality, increases the risk of violent conflict, while violence and conflict in turn can further worsen inequality. Perceptions of inequality and injustice also act as a trigger of mobilisation and conflict.

The climate change – inequalities nexus does not appear to be highlighted in the initial text and questions for consultation. This matters because global income and wealth inequalities are tightly connected to ecological inequalities and to inequalities in contributions to climate change.

This needs to be addressed – specifically:

* The world’s poorest and most vulnerable people, who have contributed the least to the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change, suffer the most from that change and have a low capacity to respond to it, leading to increased inequality.
* Climate justice considers an ethical response that reduces social and economic inequalities.
* Integrating social and economic concerns into responses can help to ensure climate change does not amplify pre-existing disadvantages.

Regarding digitalisation, digital technologies and services have the potential to improve living standards, life expectancy and quality of life. They have proved essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, making daily life possible and easier for those that could access digital technologies and connectivity and harder for those who could not. The digital divide – that is, the gap between those who have access and can use the internet and digital technologies and those who do not or cannot – has been recognised as a form of inequality in itself, affecting people’s opportunities politically, socially and economically. Because of the digital divide, the impact of digitalisation on income inequality remains ambiguous. On the one hand, digitalisation creates better opportunities to enhance the inclusion of disadvantaged groups – for example, by fostering formalisation of the economy, creating new jobs and improving participation in the labour market, and reducing barriers to participation and access to information. On the other hand, it can also exacerbate existing inequalities and introduce further challenges and new risks for the most vulnerable if certain conditions are not fulfilled.

Attention is required to financial inclusion. Those without access to financial services are less likely to be able to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Gender and rural–urban inequalities are clearly expressed in access to financial services. Key messages can therefore include:

* Financial inclusion, especially when targeted at the poor and women, can reduce socioeconomic and income inequalities.
* Financial services should be made available, together with other enabling policies: financial awareness and education, land titling and ownership, civil registration, gender equality, and digitalisation.
* Financial sector policies can be accompanied by targeted measures, such as expanding digital payments and providing credit and/or microcredit to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.

How can gender and youth mainstreaming approaches, as well as adopting an intersectional lens on inequalities, taking multiple identities together in the analysis (including gender and youth) in food systems contribute to social justice and better FSN?

It is vital and in keeping with the adoption of an intersectional lens, that the gender dimension of inequality is adequately mainstreamed throughout the report and not included as an ‘add on’. A person’s income and wealth, gender, ethnic, disability and other identities can all intersect in a manner that exacerbates exclusion and disadvantage. In this way gender based inequalities overlap with other forms of inequality and compound already existing negative outcomes. As stated in the European Commission’s Staff Working Document on *Addressing Inequality in Partner Countries*, inequality holds back women, girls, and other discriminated groups. Cultural and social norms lock girls and women into unequal power relations. This leaves them with little control over decisions that affect their lives, and limits their social, economic and political participation. Gender inequality is often greater when women and girls experience other forms of exclusion caused by factors such as disability, age, origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, geographical remoteness and religion. Empirical evidence also illustrates that income inequality has a negative impact on other sustainable-development outcomes, such as the sustainable management of natural resources (e.g. land, forest and water) and biodiversity protection- and vice versa. For instance, disadvantaged groups suffer disproportionately from the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, which results in even greater inequality. Economic inequality has negative impacts on food security and nutrition related outcomes.

Key messages should include:

* Gender is one of the main determinants of income inequality in all income groups, over time and across countries.
* In terms of employment prospects, women are still facing a triple disadvantage globally: exclusion from paid employment; employment that is mostly informal; and significantly lower wages compared with men, even if they are in the formal sector.
* Inequality of opportunity. Women have unequal access to education, health services, finance and political, public and private representation. They also face power differentials and discrimination, resulting in substantial inequality. This inequality of opportunity between men and women is strongly associated with a higher level of income inequality
* Increased gender equality is associated with a lower level of income inequality. Therefore it is by applying a rights-based approach to integrate gender mainstreaming into European Union (EU) development cooperation that the EU seeks to ensure that gender equality efforts in all sectors will be strengthened

Reference should also be made to the forthcoming Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Inequality and Women and Girls’ Empowerment in the context of Food and Nutrition Security.

What are the main knowledge and data gaps hindering the understanding of how inequalities determine FSN outcomes? What could be improved in data collection and analysis tools for FSN inequalities?

As stated in the World Inequality Report, we live in a data-abundant world and yet we lack basic information about inequality. Economic growth numbers are published every year by governments across the globe, but they do not tell us about how growth is distributed across the population – about who gains and who loses from economic policies. Accessing such data is critical for democracy. Beyond income and wealth, it is also critical to improve our collective capability to measure and monitor other dimensions of socio- economic disparities, including gender and environmental inequalities. Open-access, transparent, reliable inequality information is a global public good

Note – while it is not clear at this stage what the proposed structure for the report will be, the issue of data gaps / improved data should have a dedicated section.

Disaggregated data on inequalities and their connection with food insecurity and malnutrition outcomes within urban settings is a particularly important area where better data is required.

How can strengthened food systems’ governance contribute to the reduction of inequalities in FSN outcomes?

Governance for food security and nutrition tends to ignore upstream root causes, focusing instead on the downstream manifestations. This often means that policies addressing root causes are disconnected from policy dialogue and processes addressing more immediate challenges. Key messages regarding Governance and Rule of Law can include:

* Poor governance and a deficient rule of law are both the main drivers of inequality and shaped by inequality.
* Changes in governance and the rule of law to tackle inequality require addressing power asymmetries.
* Policy measures can help when carefully calibrated to shift incentives.
* Guiding principles are accountability, transparency, participative decision-making and access to information.

Inequality can only be effectively addressed by following the basic principles of good governance — participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability. The rule of law and administration of justice are central to any effective attempts to combat inequality. The rule of law itself can only be legitimised by inclusive and participatory decision making, and by effective, accountable institutions. In short, good governance, democracy and the rule of law are vital for combating inequality. Access to justice, legal protection and corruption-free public services is central to addressing social inequality, and can help to ensure the protection of rights to property or to communal assets. According to United Nations estimates, USD 1.26 trillion is lost each year by developing countries to corruption, bribery, theft and tax evasion. This is an amount equivalent to nine times global official development assistance.

The territorial aspect of inequalities should also not be neglected. Income inequality has a clear territorial dimension: individual inequalities often cluster into specific areas, thus appearing as territorial disparities characterised by unequal access to opportunities and less potential for a decent life. Income inequalities related to territory have high social, environmental and political costs, as they hamper a country’s ability to unleash the potential of its land. Spatial disparities manifest beyond income. They also materialise as imbalances in the provision of public goods and access to public services, and as substantial differences in job opportunities, pollution levels and housing. The discontinuous and uneven quality of public service provision across space means that populations in neglected areas are excluded from mainstream development cooperative efforts and actions. Spatial inequalities and the resulting uneven development tend to slow growth, with reduced economic development and more unemployment, informal markets and small trade-related conflicts, increasing income inequality. Territorial exclusion is an important and recurrent sign of governance deficits. Territorial development gaps are often the result of irrelevant or deficient policies in places that are being ‘left behind’, with public authorities unable or unwilling to respond equally to the needs of all citizens. Spatial inequality is also often associated with other dimensions of exclusion and related to political, social and ethnic tensions.

Which legal frameworks can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities?

Employment and labour-market policies and institutions are key for targeting unemployment, underemployment, wage gaps, low wages, and lack of decent working conditions, all of which are major drivers of primary income inequality. Income inequality is very closely associated with other forms of inequality.

The EU supports the Decent Work Agenda since its inception, and promotes employment that is secure; pays a fair wage; ensures safe working conditions; promotes equal opportunities for all; provides for social protection and social dialogue; and safeguards rights at work. The EU cooperates closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO), social partners at all levels, and other stakeholders to promote the ratification of ILO conventions and the effective implementation of labour standards around the world. The ILO is also an important partner in the implementation of EU cooperation programmes, such as programmes to strengthen labour-market actors and institutions; decent job creation and labour migration, among others. Overall, 152 million unemployed workers worldwide are unprotected, meaning that 78 per cent of unemployed workers are not covered by social protection. Informal workers (basically self-employed or casual workers) make up more than 60 per cent of the global workforce (approximately 2 billion people), yet they are often excluded from all forms of social protection. They neither benefit from employment-related protection, because they lack a standard employment relationship, nor have access to the social assistance packages for the most vulnerable.

Whether within the food systems, or beyond, the decent work agenda is crucial for ensuring progressive realisation of the right to food and improved nutrition. Labour markets in developing countries often face challenges related to poor-quality work, vulnerable employment and informality. Minimum wage policies can directly contribute to limiting wage inequality by establishing the starting wages at the end of the wage scale. However, this can happen only if they are combined with collective bargaining. Active labour market programmes (ALMPs) can facilitate people’s transition to employment and higher incomes, but choosing the right programme is fundamental, and it requires careful diagnostics and targeting. However, ALMPs cannot solve all problems on their own. They must be accompanied by structural reforms and complementary policies.

Social protection refers to a nationally defined system of policies and programmes that provide equitable access to all people and protect them throughout their lives against poverty and risks to their livelihoods and well-being. Social protection promotes social cohesion and reduces poverty, inequality and other deprivations (e.g. a lack of access to healthcare, education, hygiene, water and sanitation, nutrition, protection, shelter and a healthy environment). Social protection also facilitates human development and access to decent working and living conditions, and enhances people’s resilience in the face of shocks and structural transformations (USP2030, 2019). Social protection lies at the heart of inclusive development, as it is an efficient tool to reduce income inequality. It is a redistributive tool that aims to reallocate income across the life course and reinforce solidarity between and within generations. The successful design and delivery of social protection systems must be embedded in a nationally owned national social protection policy that brings together the main players who may decide and benefit from social protection measures. Policies have to be accompanied by a solid budget from different sources. There must be realistic implementation planning with results, main target groups, grievance systems, and so on.

What is the role of political economy in reducing inequalities in food systems and in reducing other inequalities that have an impact on FSN outcomes?

Fiscal Policy is a fundamental starting point. For a given level of primary income inequality, secondary income inequality is determined by net fiscal and social transfers. Their impact on income inequality depends on their size relative to national income and on their incidence. Developing countries have, in general, a limited ability to address inequalities through fiscal policies, as fiscal revenues represent only 15% to 20% of national income and in some cases even less. Moreover, developing countries usually have large informal sectors that largely escape direct taxation. Reducing exemptions, closing tax loopholes and avoiding/fighting tax evasion are therefore key to increase the tax to GDP ratio, increasing country’s redistributive capacity. Redistribution can also be promoted through progressive taxation, based on analysis of the equalising effects of taxes and subsidies.

Efficient, sustainable and equitable social protection systems are especially needed to guarantee basic income, prevent relapses into extreme poverty, and build resilience. The EU is strongly committed to supporting social protection systems, and allocates at least 20% of its official development assistance to social inclusion and human development. The EU supports several global and country programmes to strengthen social protection systems including floors. It is actively engaging with the ILO, the UN, the World Bank and other development partners as part of the universal social protection initiative (USP 2030) to advance universal social protection policies, paying particular attention to the poor and the vulnerable.

Trade and investment bring significant benefits to societies but can also have drawbacks if these benefits don’t reach all segments of society. Promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, and a focus on inclusiveness and poverty reduction, are thus crucial. Support for financial inclusion is also key to increasing people’s opportunities to: (i) participate in the economy through access to financial products including credit and insurance; (ii) start and grow businesses; (iii) invest in education and job skills; and (iv) protect themselves, their families and productive assets from shocks.

Social-sector spending generally has a positive impact on social equality, provided it aims at providing access to the poorer segments of the population. In particular, ensuring universal access to basic services such as education, health, housing, water and energy will reduce inequality. This is because the cost of this access represents a larger share of household income for households with lower levels of income. Supporting access to legal protection and corruption-free public services is also important for reducing tertiary income inequality. These categories of expenditure are small in developing countries — they are rarely greater than 15% of national income (the equivalent for OECD countries is 25%) and are often significantly less.

Strengthening land and natural resource governance, and securing access to and sustainable use of land and natural resources for people living in the most vulnerable situations are crucial for addressing inequality and exclusion, and improving the livelihood opportunities of these groups. Land plays a central role in all economies, as it provides food, a home, an income and influence. Land inequality is the difference in the quantity and value of land people have access to, the relative strengths of their land tenure rights, and the effective appropriation of the value derived from the land and its use (Wegerif and Guereña, 2020). More equally distributed land has been found to have contributed to the creation of more equal societies that foster sustained growth and development on more solid foundations (Binswanger-Mkhize, Bourguignon and van den Brink, 2009). Insecure land tenure has, on the contrary, been found to deepen inequalities, when the resilience of the most vulnerable is highly affected by their access to and use of natural resources. Key messages should therefore include the following:

* Global trends indicate greater land concentration in fewer hands.
* Inequality in rural areas leads to agricultural land expansion, which creates further inequality.
* A lower level of land inequality leads to higher levels of education.
* Land reform has significant effects on public services provided locally, political competition, and the distribution of status and power in society, among other things.

Urban inequalities should not be neglected - most of which can be seen in the sprawling, expanding slum areas in developing countries – areas that generally lack access to decent jobs and income. There are clear indications that these informal settlements, rather than constituting a temporary place to live while proper urban solutions are found, could become long-term shanty towns and the main way in which cities are expanding. The speedy pace of global urbanisation is mostly occurring in developing countries, principally in the world’s two poorest regions – south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa – suggesting that the number of slums and informal settlements in these regions will grow dramatically. According to the United Nations (UN) Human Settlements Programme, nearly 1 billion of the urban poor live in slums and informal settlements. The number of slum dwellers is projected to increase to 2 billion by 2030 and 3 billion by 2050 if existing trends persist (UN-Habitat, 2010).

Slums are the result of insufficient resources, low and unreliable wages, failed policies, a lack of affordable housing and poor urbanisation planning. The crucial issues of slums and other informal settlements stem mainly from a lack of urban planning, lack of infrastructure, weak social and economic services, and inadequate or non-existent sanitation and waste management. It is essential to acknowledge the political and social dimensions of these informal settlements, which extend not only to the lack of proper housing, but also to social segregation, social disparities and stigmatisation. Slum residents are excluded from the economic, social and political spheres of the urban area. Food insecurity and malnutrition can be alarmingly high among slum-based communities.

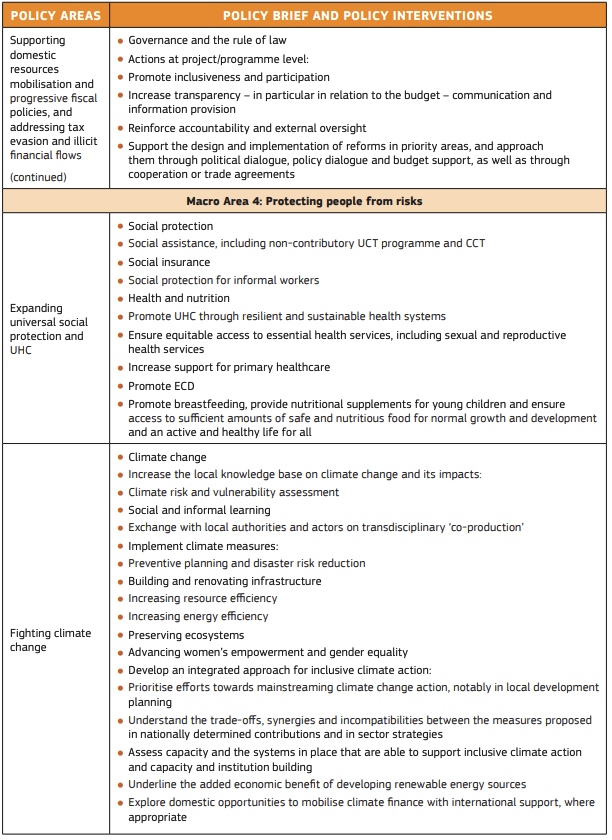
**Macro policy areas relevant to tackling inequalities, as defined by DG INTPA**

Table

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## Wenche Barth Eide, Department of Nutrition, University of Oslo, Norway

From: Wenche Barth Eide, University of Oslo/Department of Nutrition; former member of HLPE Project Team for HLPE 4 on Social Protection for Food Security (2012).

I am pleased to submit a few comments to the scoping proposal, even if late.  My comments are restricted to issues relating to human rights, which as usual receive somewhat limited feedback, although there are indeed some interesting commentaries regarding this among the responses to this proposal.

Mine relate to the elements of a human rights-based approach to analysing and mitigating inequalities in the agriculture and food systems and how this should be introduced in the report, in view of its assumed importance to mitigate inequalities. This remains open in the document, which limits itself to three concerns re. human rights:

1. A general statement in the body of the document: “To reduce inequalities, it is fundamental to ensure comprehensive legal frameworks and governance systems able to uphold human rights, including the right to food.”
2. A demand for feedback in ‘1.c. Paths towards equality: i. Human Rights Based approach - “equality” as a human right principle, relevance to the right to food’; and
3. (also for feedback) ‘4.h. Which legal framework can guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, but also the right to food, and do they contribute to reducing inequalities?’

At the end I have some suggestions in connection with the food security concept and the normative content on the right to adequate food.

On 1, it is satisfying to see such an explicit prior recognition of the necessity for the report to deal with legal frameworks as part of governance if one wants to assist in people’s realization of their rights towards reducing inequality, here first of all relevant economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) including the right to adequate food. Having said this, I have a concern with the wording used to reflect the purpose of it all – to ***uphold*** human rights. Very many vulnerable individuals and population groups will certainly have been far from ever enjoying their basic rights - all the way from birth, so there is very often little to ‘uphold’ (the way I understand this term) but rather much to realize in the first place - “leaving no on behind”.   It follows that the full spectre of what is meant with a human rights based approach must be briefly reflected and documented in the report; if necessary, expanded in an annex as a bit of “adult education” (to combat the widespread human rights illiteracy often observed in international debates, see HLPE 4, Annex (in e-version).

There is a direct line to point 2 here, where “equality” as pertaining to a human rights-based approach is singled out (deriving from the title of report) and the question asked about its relevance to the right to food. In the body of terms and interpretations that has been built up around the right to adequate food (but equally relevant to other economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR)), equality is one of several principles or “values” identified as essential in orienting policies and actions towards human rights.  Equality is however normally linked to another of these principles – that of non-discrimination and the two are usually being mentioned together [1]. These and the six other process values that have been proposed for analytical, advocacy and policy work on the right to adequate food, combine to form the acronym PANTHER - coined by FAO in the first decade of the millennium and familiar to many: Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination (and equality), Transparency, Human dignity, Empowerment and Respect or the Rule of Law [2].

Two other sets of concepts and their interpretations add to the full definition of a rights-based approach: on the one hand the normative basis of the right to adequate food and related rights, and on the other, the framework for interpreting and formulating state obligations, to be practiced on a select basis depending on the given right and issues in question. Both sets are expressed in the interpretation hitherto recognized as the most authoritative of the right to adequate food: General Comment no. 12 on the Right to adequate food from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1999. On obligations, the now popular ‘mantra’ of respect, protect and fulfil actions towards human rights will be known to many, with fulfil alternatively accommodating to facilitate and/or directly to provide food - or assets for food, depending on the situation.

Regarding point 3 - which legal framework to guarantee equal rights to land, basic services, and to food, and how do they contribute to reducing inequalities (if at all)?

First an observation on the relatively sloppy linguistics contained in “to guarantee” – surprisingly found in many legal texts, even if in the context of ESCR many rights can never be guaranteed. Legal approaches can, for example, guarantee certain means of social protection, but not necessarily guarantee that this will reduce inequality in general - although applying legal instruments can make it more likely that a certain right can be achieved. The report should be careful with this language and not repeat the over-optimism implied in the term guarantee.

In practice, concrete field experiences are needed to provide examples of legal frameworks tried out in various contexts and situations; it is hoped that the report can bring many examples of successes or the contrary, from real life situations to learn from. At the theoretical and guidance level, FAO’s Development Law Service issues a series of “Legal papers” several of which focusing on many of the issue areas important for inequalities in the agriculture/food sector, see <https://www.fao.org/legal-services/publications/legal-papers/en/>

Associated with the latter, reference must also be made to the large volume of educational and practical publications developed be FAOs Right to Food Unit (from shortly after the publication of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Adequate Food and onwards for several years). This has often surprisingly been overlooked/not referred to by HLPE reports, including the 2020 one. The Right to Food Methodological Toolbox in particular contains a wealth of material regarding all aspects of respecting/protecting/fulfilling and promoting the right to adequate food, further operationalized in handbooks and other material [3]. The report should find a way to expose this material as a must for anyone interested in operationalising human rights, besides surely another wealth of material increasingly available from civil society and field experiences.

Food security and the right to food

The important 2020 HLPE report with its narrative towards 2030, has done much to revitalize the discussion on food security, also committing explicitly to human rights. The addition of agency and sustainability to the four food security components is logical and timely and has been welcomed by many (including this author) but met with scepticism by others who are happy to leave the definition as it was. The one weakness both of the four-pillar model and the now expanded six-pillar model as proposed, is that neither include ‘adequacy’ which is basic to the right to food as expressed in international law. The new report may perhaps bring this up, since the parameters of adequacy of the (nutritionally, safety-wise and) are pertinent to inequalities in dietary patterns and consumption.

As regards the official normative basis of the right to food, adequacy is central, as is sustainability related to availability – both elaborated in GC12, besides accessibility: economic, physical and (added later) social. Since the human rights values or principles of conduct of duties and obligations were factored into the right to food concept some years later than GC12, participation represented part of the agency concept, but then in terms of peoples’ participation only. Thus, the right to food could well be further elaborated to encompass agency in terms of states’ and their institutions’ capacities and resources etc., for embarking on integral human rights-based approaches.

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[1] As also underscored by the response from EU to this consultation “as being rooted in the EU’s commitments to promote and protect human rights as the principles of non-discrimination and equality are complementing principles of international human rights law”.  
[2] Originally selected from “The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation. Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies, September 2003, UNSDG Working Group on Human Rights.  
[3] See: [www.fao.org/righttofood](https://www.fao.org/righttofood)

1. Intersectionality often refers to a person's multiple intersecting identities, including gender, class, caste, race, occupation, ethnicity, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See the [Indigenous Peoples Rome Declaration on the Arctic Region Fisheries and Environment](https://www.fao.org/uploads/media/FINAL_Rome_Arctic_Declaration_2019_.pdf), the [UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommendations database](https://esa.un.org/unpfiidata/UNPFII_Recommendations_Database_list.asp), the [Rome Statement on the contribution of Indigenous youth towards a world without hunger](https://www.fao.org/indigenous-peoples/our-pillars/focus-areas-youth/rome-statement/en/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Indigenous Youth Global Declaration on Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems. Rome, 2021. Available at : <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V1RdSTWdKonPAYv-ZMhCaChpfUyjUZsO/view> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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31. <https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/horizon-magazine/inequality-not-unavailability-main-driver-food-insecurity-prof-johan-swinnen> [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Presents the theoretical background to understanding inequality, including its trends. Offers a basic review of definitions and measurements. Explains the importance of addressing inequality from an economic perspective and the main determinants of trends towards both lower and higher inequality. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Presents 18 briefs on policies with a demonstrated impact on inequalities. The policy areas covered are health and nutrition, education, social protection, transport and mobility, energy, climate change, water and sanitation, land, urban development, territorial development, public finance (i.e. taxation), trade, growth, digitalisation, financial inclusion, labour and employment, governance and the rule of law, and gender. No particular priority is assigned to any of the policy areas covered, since all of them have effects on inequalities [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Presents guidelines and tools to support efforts to mainstream reduction of inequality across multi-sectoral policies and programmes. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)