

# Nourish Our People – Nurture Our Planet

## Recommendations from the High Level Roundtable on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture

---

In recognition of the urgent need for a change in agriculture and food systems, high level representatives from governments, the UN System, scientific and farming communities, civil society and the private sector gathered at the High Level Roundtable on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture on 15th and 16th March 2012 in New York. The Roundtable took place prior to the Third Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD preparing for the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012.

The following recommendations obtained broad support:

### **Change is needed**

---

**To address current and future challenges, a transformation of our entire agriculture and food systems is needed to ensure food and nutrition security, protect natural resources and support equitable development for all, with a particular focus on unleashing the potential of millions of small farmers and food producers, of whom the majority are women.**

The world is facing an unprecedented challenge of providing sufficient high quality food to nourish a global population that will peak at more than 9 billion by 2050. This is exacerbated by several factors, including climate change, resource depletion, loss of biological diversity, growing food insecurity, nutrition deficiency, marginalization of smallholder farmers, the diminishing area of agricultural land, desertification, land degradation and drought. Overwhelming evidence demonstrates that the majority of current agricultural and food systems are not sustainable, since they are over reliant on non-renewable external inputs, produce high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and have negative impacts on soils and biodiversity, farm animal welfare, nutrition and public health outcomes, cause high levels of waste, and exhibit a low level of resilience against external shocks. A transformation in agricultural and food policies and practices is needed, which results in holistic, people-centred systems, that ensure the right to food. Although such systems exist, current economic and policy conditions are restricting their potential to become mainstream.

### **Call for transformation**

---

**For this transformation to be enabled, a broad coalition of actors at all levels including, amongst others, governments, local authorities, private sector, farmers, pastoralists, and other food producers, research, and civil society, should be established.**

All actors should be involved in the development and implementation of transformational strategies and policies, building on existing knowledge at all levels, from local to global.

The key characteristics of such sustainable agriculture and food systems can be common to all future agriculture and food systems, both large and small. They include: the sustainable management of land, water and other natural resources, regenerative soil management, zero land degradation, responsible land tenure, increased resource use efficiency, minimized emissions and use of non-renewable inputs, high biodiversity and farm animal welfare, strengthened urban-rural linkages, access to markets and locally produced food of high nutritional quality, sustainable diets and consumption patterns, reduced waste and other unsustainable practices throughout the food chain, improved public health, empowerment of rural women, safeguarding the rights of agriculture and food systems workers, system resilience, social safety nets and disaster preparedness.

## **Enabling framework**

---

**Mechanisms which improve the economic environment for food producers adopting more sustainable and resilient methods and mechanisms which encourage sustainable consumption, should be introduced.**

These should include the application of enabling mechanisms and economic incentives, which reward ecosystem services, sustainable production and consumption, as well as internalizing the costs of practices that have damaging environmental and public health outcomes.

## **Science – policy interface**

---

**To provide timely and effective responses to emerging global challenges, the link between science and policy implementation should be strengthened, in particular taking into account local knowledge.**

A continuous assessment of agricultural knowledge, science, and technology, including research on enabling mechanisms, is needed, which should be intergovernmental, participatory, cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder and take into account pre-existing processes. It should include the rigorous study and evaluation of the various agricultural production and food systems in relation to their environmental and public health costs and other environmental, social and economic outcomes. This will enable the development of policy instruments that will ensure that scarce resources such as land, soil, energy, water, biodiversity and investments are used to support the food systems that are most effective in protecting public and environmental goods and beneficial for society as a whole.

## **Leadership**

---

**The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) should provide strategic leadership for an orderly and progressive transformation of agriculture and food systems at all levels. In addition, the CFS and its High-Level Panel of Experts should explore options for continuous assessment of agricultural knowledge, science, and technology, including research on enabling mechanisms, to encourage the transformation, as mentioned above.**

To fulfil this task the multi-stakeholder representation of the CFS should be further strengthened to include all those who play a key role in transforming the agriculture and food systems. The CFS should be given the appropriate and necessary financial means, authority and political support to carry out these tasks. In addition to cooperating with the appropriate local, regional, national and international implementing organizations and other sustainable development initiatives, communication channels should be established with the bodies addressing issues of sustainable development at the highest political level.

## **Monitoring performance**

---

**To ensure that the transformation results in truly sustainable agriculture and food systems it is essential to have rigorous definition of terms, clear outcome targets, and performance indicators against which the outcomes should be monitored. An independent monitoring system is a prerequisite for strengthening accountability.**

These targets and respective indicators should reflect each of the key characteristics of sustainable agriculture and food systems as listed above taking into account outcomes of the current and future negotiations around sustainable development. In addition, macroeconomic and policy indicators should include: the level of public and private investment in different types of agriculture, its environmental and social impacts, the quality of diets (undernutrition and overnutrition), as well as the outcomes and impacts of policy measures promoting sustainable food systems at country and subnational level.

*New York, 16th of March, 2012*