

BRIEFING NOTE 1 ON THE GOVERNANCE OF FOOD SYSTEMS

AN 'IPCC FOR FOOD'?

How the UN Food Systems Summit is being used to advance a problematic new science-policy agenda

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SUMMARY

This brief demonstrates that:

- The calls for a new 'IPCC for Food' originated from a small group of actors whose views have been amplified by a powerful network of organizations, many of which are closely aligned with business and industry. These groups are using the UN Food Systems Summit to promote their 'game-changing' proposal.
- Many of the functions of the proposed science-policy interface for food systems are already fulfilled by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition in its role vis-à-vis the UN Committee on World Food Security.
- Several of the roles envisaged for an 'IPCC for Food' – such as conducting new research with the goal of resolving controversies – could actually undermine a serious and fair consideration of complex issues that must be seen from multiple perspectives.
- Unlike the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, plans for a new science-policy interface do not appear to involve broad stakeholder consultation and incorporation of different forms of knowledge – elements that should be a fundamental part of good food systems science and are important for legitimacy.
- It is unclear to which intergovernmental body the new panel would provide policy advice. This raises important questions about the underlying political ambition of this proposal and its implications for food systems governance.
- The Scientific Group of the UN Food Systems Summit, which serves as an 'early experiment' for the new science-policy interface, falls short in several respects: it is non-transparent; is imbalanced in its composition and biased in its perspectives and sources of knowledge; is unreflexive about the relationships between food systems and society; and is pursuing a business-oriented 'technology and innovation' agenda.

1. INTRODUCTION

With its call for 'game-changing solutions', the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) is being seen by many as an unprecedented opportunity to advance new agendas and define the future of food systems. Already the stage is being used to promote a variety of plant breeding approaches, production pathways, supply chain models, and new ways of organizing food system governance through 'multi-stakeholderism'.¹ The UNFSS is also emerging as the launch pad for an 'IPCC for Food' – a new science-policy interface (SPI) which some are suggesting will be the most important 'game-changer' to come out of the

¹ See, for example, Fears, Robin, and Claudia Canales, "The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation for Transforming Food Systems Globally," (2021), at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FSS_Brief_IAP_Global.pdf and the agenda for the UNFSS Science Days agenda, at <http://www.fao.org/innovation/science-days/en/>.

Summit. But why is this proposal so significant, and is it what it claims to be? Whose knowledge and which science will guide policy under such a scenario?

Science-policy interfaces are important because they provide scientific assessment and advice to policymakers, and usually comprise a broad diversity of international scientists with complementary expertise. A key function of SPIs is to assess the state of the scientific literature and translate that knowledge into a format that helps to inform the decision-making process.² This function is of critical importance for food systems – a policy area characterized by complexity, dynamic change, uncertainty, and contested interpretations. Policy-relevant scientific assessment of food systems thus requires insights from multiple disciplines and perspectives. Several SPIs relevant to food systems already exist and will be discussed below, most prominently the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) that serves the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS).³

The idea of an 'IPCC for Food' first surfaced nearly a decade ago, and has subsequently been promoted in a range of regional and global fora. Calls for a new SPI have become more frequent and more explicit in recent months, as the UNFSS has moved towards its Science Days event in early July, the pre-Summit in late July, and the final Summit in the fall of 2021. The chair of the UNFSS Scientific Group – one of the earliest proponents of the new SPI⁴ – has helped to amplify the idea on the road to the Summit.⁵

Behind what sounds like a technocratic question is in fact a high-stakes battle over different visions of what constitutes legitimate science and relevant knowledge for food systems. This, in turn, is part of a broader battle over what food systems should look like and who should govern them.

As such, the proposal raises important questions: Do we need a new SPI on food systems? With which governance body should the new SPI interface, and how should it be governed? Which approach to science, and which arbiters of expertise, will guide our understanding of future food system challenges and how to resolve them?

This brief examines the current push for a new SPI for food systems in the context of the broader approach to science in the UNFSS. It explores the origins and context of the idea, what role the new SPI is envisioned to play vis-à-vis the current functions of the HLPE, what

² Clark, William C., Lorrae Van Kerkhoff, Louis Lebel, and Gilberto C. Gallopin, "Crafting usable knowledge for sustainable development," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113, no. 17 (2016): 4570-4578, at <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1601266113>.

³ See the HLPE's website at <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/about-the-hlpe/en/>.

⁴ See for example, Von Braun, Joachim, and Matthias Kalkuhl, "International science and policy interaction for improved food and nutrition security: Toward an International Panel on Food and Nutrition (IPFN)," No. 142. ZEF Working Paper Series, (2015), at <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/142725/1/837872839.pdf>.

⁵ Scientific Group for the UN Food Systems Summit, "Science and innovations for Food systems change: Opportunities for the UN Food Systems Summit," Draft Paper, July 5, 2021, at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/ScientificGroupStrategicPaper_draft_July5_2021.pdf.

this proposal reveals about the UNFSS' approach to science, and what the push for a new SPI means for food system governance moving forward.

2. ORIGINS AND CONTEXT OF PROPOSALS FOR AN 'IPCC FOR FOOD'

The idea of a new SPI for food systems has appeared in a number of papers and reports that have emerged from closely linked networks. One of the earliest and most detailed proposals is a 2015 working paper published by the Center for Development Research in Germany (ZEF), which calls for the establishment of an International Panel of Food and Nutrition Security (IPFN) inspired by the model of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).⁶ This paper links back to an earlier discussion paper, *The Role of Research in Global Food and Nutrition Security*, published by the EU Expo 2015 Scientific Steering Committee, that called for enhanced movement of "knowledge into use" but did not outline a specific institutional proposal.⁷

The idea has been reiterated in a number of subsequent contexts. In 2017, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published a report with the Government of the Netherlands on WEF's New Vision for Agriculture Transformation Leaders Network,⁸ which mentioned a "long term vision for an 'IPCC for Food'". Few additional details were included beyond the need for "a common language for a shift toward healthy diets". Around this time, the idea was further elaborated by its initial proponents in a number of scientific articles and policy papers,⁹ as well as being mentioned in the working papers of additional networks and organizations, such as a 2018 publication of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP)¹⁰ – arising from a project chaired by one of the initial proponents of an 'IPCC for Food'.¹¹ A number of individuals associated with government bodies and scientific organizations in the Netherlands have also reinforced the idea of an 'IPCC for Food', sometimes in connection with a proposal for a new international "food treaty".¹²

⁶ von Braun and Kalkuhl (2015).

⁷ European Union, "The Role of Research in Global Food and Nutrition Security," Expo 2015 EU Steering Committee Discussion Paper, (2015), at <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/role-research-global-food-nutrition-security.pdf>.

⁸ World Economic Forum and Government of the Netherlands, "New Vision for Agriculture Transformation Leaders Network", (2017), at https://aidstream.org/files/documents/NL-Global-Challenge_Second-Year-Report_2016-20180626090604.pdf.

⁹ von Braun, Joachim, and Regina Birner. "Designing global governance for agricultural development and food and nutrition security." *Review of development economics* 21, no. 2 (2017): 265-284, <https://doi.org/10.1111/rode.12261>. See also von Braun, Joachim. "Global institutions: Governance reform for food, nutrition, and agriculture." *IFPRI book chapters* (2018): 62-71, https://doi.org/10.2499/9780896292970_08; von Braun, Joachim, Ashok Gulati, and Homi Kharas. "Key policy actions for sustainable land and water use to serve people." *Economics* 11, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.5018/economics-ejournal.ja.2017-32>.

¹⁰ InterAcademy Partnership, "Opportunities for future research and innovation on food and nutrition security and agriculture: The InterAcademy Partnership's global perspective," (2018), at https://www.interacademies.org/sites/default/files/publication/iap_fnsa_global_web_complete_28nov.pdf.

¹¹ InterAcademy Partnership, "Global Food Systems are Failing Humanity and Speeding up Climate Change," (2018), at <https://www.interacademies.org/news/global-food-systems-are-failing-humanity-and-speeding-climate-change>.

¹² For example, comments in Speech delivered by Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands Ambassador to the UN Agencies in Rome), "Food (In) Security Facts", reported at <https://www.icco-cooperation.org/en/news/food-insecurity-facts/>; and Sikkema, Albert, "Fresco pleads for international food treaty and food panel," *Resource*, April 8, 2018, at <https://resource.wur.nl/en/show/Fresco-pleads-for-international-food-treaty-and-food-panel.htm>.

A recent paper¹³ by the Global Panel on Agriculture for Food Systems and Nutrition (GLOPAN) – an initiative closely linked to WEF, AGRA, and other powerful public and private actors¹⁴ – reiterated the calls for a new expert panel on food systems. As well as briefing high levels of the UNFSS leadership on the report in question, GLOPAN members have produced several 'Partner' papers for the Scientific Group of the Summit, one of which also promotes the idea of an 'IPCC for Food'.¹⁵

In the run-up to the UNFSS, the idea has received increased airtime. For example, the WEF hosted a panel on the theme of a new SPI for food at its Fall 2020 meetings, which featured the chair of the Scientific Group of the Summit and one of the earliest proponents of an 'IPCC for Food', Joachim von Braun.¹⁶ The proposal for a new SPI is also mentioned in a statement of the UNFSS Scientific Group made jointly with the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences following a joint workshop.¹⁷ These calls culminated in a UNFSS Scientific Group partner paper, *The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation for Transforming Food Systems Globally*, which makes a clear pitch for the idea to be an outcome of the Summit:

“ There are also opportunities to improve science-policy interfaces and integrate policy development at local, regional, and global levels. One game changer would be to constitute an international advisory Panel on Food and Nutrition Security with new emphasis on food systems to make better use of the best science to inform, motivate, and implement evidence-based policy making at all levels.¹⁸ ”

Although the idea has somewhat narrow origins, it has gained enough prominence that the European Commission constituted a High Level Expert Group (HLEG) to evaluate the proposal in the context of various options to strengthen a SPI for food security and nutrition as part of its contribution to the UNFSS. The mandate of the HLEG is "to assess the needs,

¹³ Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition (GLOPAN), "Foresight 2.0. Future Food Systems: For People, our Planet and Prosperity," (2020), at https://www.glopan.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Foresight-2.0_Future-Food-Systems_For-people-our-planet-and-prosperity.pdf.

¹⁴ GLOPAN is an independent non-governmental expert panel funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the UK Department for International Development. GLOPAN is not linked to any formal governance mechanisms, and its members include a number of current and former governments, international organizations, and multi-stakeholder initiative representatives, many with connections to the WEF. For example, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy who is chairing the UNFSS, Agnes Kalibata, is a member of the panel. She also serves as president of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and has deep ties to WEF. See, for example, Kalibata's profile at AGRA at https://agra.org/zt_team/dr-agnes-kalibata-2/; and at the World Economic Forum at <https://www.weforum.org/people/agnes-matilda-kalibata>.

¹⁵ See GLOPAN website listing engagements with the summit at <https://www.glopan.org/working-towards-the-united-nations-food-systems-summit/>; Webb, Patrick, Derek J. Flynn, Niamh M. Kelly, and Sandy M. Thomas. "The Transition Steps Needed to Transform Our Food Systems." Food Systems Summit Brief Prepared by Research Partners of the Scientific Group for the Food Systems Summit, April 26, 2021, at https://www.glopan.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FSS_Brief_Food_System_Transformation.pdf.

¹⁶ See <https://www.weforum.org/events/bold-actions-for-food-as-a-force-for-good-2020/sessions/from-science-to-policy-creating-the-enabling-environment-for-change>; see also <https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/news/latest-articles/2021/un-food-summit-whats-at-stake/>.

¹⁷ See the Final statement from the Workshop of the Scientific Group for the UN Food Systems Summit and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) on April 21-22, 2021, at http://www.pas.va/content/accademia/en/events/2021/foodsystems/final_statement.html.

¹⁸ Fears and Canales (2021), p.14.

options, impacts, and possible approach for an International Platform for Food Systems Science (IPFSS)".¹⁹ While the group is yet to deliver its conclusions, the case for a new SPI has been given a central role in its deliberations: in a keynote presentation at the kick-off meeting of the HLEG (February 2021), the chair of the UNFSS Scientific Group "[pointed] to problems in the current science-policy system, which needs to become more efficient and trustworthy, given the importance of [the] evidence-base".^{20,21}

Furthermore, the proposals for an 'IPCC for Food' have been advanced in a context where several intergovernmental SPIs relevant to food systems already exist, as outlined in Table 1. The HLPE – established in 2009 as part of wider reforms of the CFS – is the most prominent of these. It is an independent body that provides policy-relevant scientific assessments for consideration by the members of the CFS, an international governance body that provides recommendations on food security and nutrition for its members. The process whereby HLPE reports are developed and delivered is outlined in Box 1.

Box 1. What is the HLPE mandated to study and how does it develop its policy guidance?

The HLPE prepares independent peer-reviewed scientific assessments on key topics requested by the CFS. These reports assess the latest science and knowledge contributions on those topics and include policy recommendations that emerge from the assessments. The HLPE's reports inform CFS deliberations while not directly engaging in those negotiations, and its recommendations are often adopted by the CFS as policy guidance for its members. The HLPE also regularly undertakes exercises to identify 'critical and emerging issues' for consideration by policymakers.¹ Although its mandate is to focus on food security and nutrition issues, the HLPE adopts a food systems approach in formulating policy advice around these issues.² HLPE reports have addressed a wide variety of topics within food systems, ranging from the value of biofuels to food price volatility, to multi-stakeholder partnerships, to youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems.

¹ HLPE, "2nd Note on Critical and Emerging Issues: Prepared for the Committee on World Food Security," (2021), at http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/Critical-Emerging-Issues-2016/HLPE_Note-to-CFS_Critical-and-Emerging-Issues-2nd-Edition_27-April-2017.pdf.

² Food systems are defined and discussed, for example, in the following HLPE reports: HLPE, "Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems," (2014), at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3901e.pdf>; HLPE, "Nutrition and food systems," (2017), at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7846e.pdf>; and HLPE, "Food Security and Nutrition: Building a Global Narrative Towards 2030," (2021), at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca9731en/ca9731en.pdf>.

³ High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition, "About the HLPE," (2021), at <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/en/>.

¹⁹ European Commission, "New High Level Expert Group to assess need for an International Platform for Food Systems Science," February 17, 2021, at https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/new-high-level-expert-group-assess-need-international-platform-food-systems-science-2021-feb-17_en.

²⁰ EC High Level Expert Group, "Minutes of 17 February Meeting," February 18, 2021, at <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/core/api/front/document/49966/download>.

²¹ von Braun, Joachim, "High Level Expert Group to assess the needs, potential, feasibility and approach for an International Platform for Food Systems Science (IPFSS)," HLEG Official Kick off Meeting, February 17, 2021, at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Joachim_von_Braun_EU_IPFSS_17-Feb-2021.pdf.

The 2009 reforms also opened up the CFS – previously reserved for governments – to participation from both civil society and the private sector,²² paving the way for the CFS to become "the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all".²³

While not focused exclusively on food systems, a number of other intergovernmental SPIs are highly relevant for decision-making in this area. The IPCC, for example, serves the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and makes recommendations on the effects of climate change, which have a profound bearing on food systems. The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) serves the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and offers scientific advice on biodiversity, including agrobiodiversity and plant genetic diversity. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is an intergovernmental platform that provides advice to its members (and is highly relevant to the CBD) on biodiversity and ecosystem services, which connect with food and agriculture systems in important ways.

Table 1 - Existing intergovernmental SPIs relevant to food systems

SPI & year established	Governance body to which policy advice is directed	Main focus of work	Types of outputs	Review process / engagement with stakeholders
IPCC - 1988	UNFCCC member governments	Climate change	Assessments of existing knowledge	People interested in reviewing must register to do so
SBSTTA - 1995	CBD member governments	Biodiversity	Assessments of existing knowledge Identification of critical and emerging issues	Reports are peer reviewed
HLPE - 2010	Committee on World Food Security (includes governments, civil society and private sector members)	Food security, nutrition and food systems	Assessments of existing knowledge requested by the CFS Identification of critical and emerging issues Issues papers	Open e-consultations (by registration on an online platform or by email) on report topics and drafts Reports are peer reviewed
IPBES - 2013	Independent intergovernmental body	Biodiversity and ecosystem services	Assessments of existing knowledge	Open review of scope and reports by registered reviewers

²² The CFS includes representatives from 122 governments, civil society, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, other UN agencies, and international scientific groups.

²³ United Nations Committee on World Food Security, "About CFS," (2021), at <http://www.fao.org/cfs/en/>.

Several other SPIs exist to serve single governments or regions, but we are primarily concerned here with the intergovernmental SPIs. The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology (IAASTD, 2003-2008) was another intergovernmental SPI focused on food systems, but is not included in this table because it provided a single time-bound assessment.

3. THE HLPE AND THE 'IPCC FOR FOOD': SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Cash et al. outline that the success of any SPI depends on three key attributes: salience, credibility, and legitimacy.²⁴ These criteria are useful in evaluating the main similarities and differences between the HLPE and the proposed 'IPCC for Food'.

In the absence of a publicly available formal proposal for a new SPI for food systems, we must rely on papers that map out the concept to get a sense of precisely what is envisioned. These documents and presentations²⁵ converge on a number of key roles for the proposed 'IPCC for Food': (1) a mechanism for knowledge exchange between science and policy domains; (2) coordination of peer reviewed assessments on key topics related to food security and nutrition; (3) identification of data and knowledge priorities; and (4) conducting new research, including modelling and foresight.

As outlined in Box 1, the HLPE already performs the first three of these roles: it provides policy-relevant advice to the CFS membership; it coordinates peer-reviewed assessments on key topics requested by the CFS; and it identifies critical and emerging issues, including priority areas for data-gathering. In doing so, the HLPE responds well to Cash's criteria for an effective SPI: its articulation with the CFS guarantees its *salience* for the policy process; its scientific assessments are highly *credible* because they approach controversies in even-handed ways (see below); and its open consultation processes with stakeholders and engagement with a highly respected governance body for food policy – the CFS – gives it strong *legitimacy*.

The overlap between the HLPE and the new SPI – as planned – suggests that the latter, too, would score highly against some of these criteria. For example, the plans to provide policy relevant scientific assessments and advice would give it some *salience*.

However, there are also notable differences. The new SPI, as envisioned by its proponents, would undertake new research, including data modelling and foresight analysis, which

²⁴ Cash, David W., William C. Clark, Frank Alcock, Nancy M. Dickson, Noelle Eckley, David H. Guston, Jill Jäger, and Ronald B. Mitchell. "Knowledge systems for sustainable development," *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences* 100, no. 14 (2003): 8086-8091, at <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1231332100>; Cash, David W., and Patricio G. Belloy, "Salience, credibility and legitimacy in a rapidly shifting world of knowledge and action," *Sustainability* 12, no. 18 (2020): 7376.

²⁵ von Braun and Kalkuhl (2015); von Braun and Birner (2017); von Braun (2018); GLOPAN (2020); Fears, Robin, Volker ter Meulen, and Joachim von Braun, "Global Food and Nutrition Security Needs More and New Science," *Science Advances* 5, no. 12, (2019), at <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aba2946>; Von Braun (2021).

several documents note will enable it to play a key role in resolving controversial issues. There are several concerns with this approach.

Firstly, it is important to note that the HLPE and other intergovernmental SPIs (including the IPCC, IPBES, and SBT TA) explicitly do not engage in new research. Rather, their role is to provide assessments of the existing body of scientific research, and to do so without being wedded to any single approach to the topic in question.²⁶ The proposals for a new 'IPCC for Food' gloss over this important design issue, and do not provide a detailed rationale for why the proposed SPI for food systems must be different in this respect.

Secondly, the idea that new research can 'resolve' controversial issues assumes that there is a single scientific truth to be found, and an agreed method for finding it. While some policymakers may be swayed by this approach to food system science, it is unlikely to be widely accepted by the full range of food system stakeholders, especially if it prescribes high-tech approaches that are controversial and/or controlled by large agribusinesses as the resolution to controversial issues. Taking on such a role may in fact undermine the ability of an SPI to undertake its core work, i.e. assessing the state of scientific knowledge on a given question, and doing so with an outlook that encompasses different perspectives and disciplines.

Thirdly, any proposed modelling and foresight research undertaken by the new SPI would need to be undertaken with great care. While modelling can offer useful insights and help to manage uncertainty, it is fundamentally constrained by the quality and quantity of available data, and reliance on assumptions/simplifications of reality. It is also important to recognize that not all aspects of food systems can be reduced to numbers, and that such studies are only one kind of input into scientific inquiry.

The HLPE takes a very different approach to addressing controversies. It explicitly seeks to identify areas of contention in the existing literature by pointing to research that supports multiple perspectives on issues, much like the IPCC and other SPIs. This approach ensures that policymakers are apprised of various perspectives on controversial issues, allowing them to arrive at their own conclusions as to how to utilize scientific findings when formulating policy on contentious topics.²⁷ This process of handling controversies shows respect for different interpretations emerging from different worldviews, disciplines, and sources of knowledge (including Indigenous, local, and farmer knowledge) around key issues, as well as respect for the role of policymakers in handling issues with multiple and contested interpretations.

²⁶ Roodhof, Anna Minke, Jessica Duncan, Jeroen Candel, Esther Turnhout, and Timo Maas, "Reflections on the global science-policy interface for food systems," Draft paper, (2021), at <https://edepot.wur.nl/548783>.

²⁷ Gitz, Vincent and Alexandre Meybeck, "The establishment of the High Level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition (HLPE): Shared, independent and comprehensive knowledge for international policy coherence in food security and nutrition," (2011), at <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00866427/document>.

Moreover, many important functions fulfilled by the HLPE do not appear in the available proposals for the proposed 'IPCC for Food.' These include wide consultation with stakeholders and integration of different forms of knowledge and expertise into the scientific assessment process.²⁸ These functions are vital for the integrity and policy relevance of any SPI that supports democratic governance. The HLPE, for example, has open consultations on the scope and drafts of its assessment reports and the identification of critical and emerging issues. Such open consultation also ensures that the research serves the needs of its constituents, is policy relevant, and allows a wide set of perspectives on key questions to be heard and taken into account.

Proposals for a new 'IPCC for Food' seem to rule out consultation with stakeholders, possibly because such involvement is seen to be counterproductive and distracting from 'scientific' assessment. As one of the proposals notes: "Importantly, the Panel should include only the global scientific community in an organized fashion; the experience of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) has shown that inclusion of stakeholders and interest groups, such as NGOs and industry representatives, can impede assessments based on the best scientific evidence."²⁹ However, this idea that science itself is "objective" and devoid of special interests is unrealistic and has been widely discredited.³⁰ Science that engages with values and situated perspectives (such as peasant knowledge) can be more robust and lead to conclusions with greater buy-in from constituents, who see that their input has been incorporated.³¹ A prominent theme in current research on knowledge production is the necessity to go beyond stakeholder engagement to encourage co-production of knowledge, including close interaction between scientists and groups that are intended to benefit from or use knowledge.³²

Although the proposals for a new SPI do mention the importance of taking different disciplines into account, none of the proposals that we reviewed identifies other forms of knowledge and expertise – such as Indigenous, traditional, or farmer knowledge – as relevant to assessments of food security and nutrition issues. This exclusion reveals a

²⁸ HLPE, "Food Systems Science-Policy Interface: Don't Reinvent the Wheel - Strengthen It!" (2021), at http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2021/Documents/SPI_for_Food_Systems_-_No_need_to_reinvent_the_wheel_HLPE_Open_Letter_20_May_2021.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2el_qnbcxHsutjS0cRsV4UrhCarlpvdxj7qttmAAWpSzVJaKgJGDYlhrQ. Clapp, Jennifer, Marin Cole, and Thanawat Tiensen, "Why reinvent the wheel on food security and nutrition?" (2021), at <https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-why-reinvent-the-wheel-on-food-security-and-nutrition-99929>.

²⁹ von Braun (2018).

³⁰ Douglas, Heather, "Rejecting the ideal of value-free science," in *Value-Free Science: Ideals and Illusions*, eds. Harold Kincaid, John Dupré and Alison Wylie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp.120-142; Heilbroner, Robert L., "Economics as a value-free science," *Social Research* (1973): 129-143; Tsou, Jonathan Y., Alan Richardson, and Flavia Padovani, "Introduction: objectivity in science," in *Objectivity in Science* (New York: Springer, Cham, 2015), pp. 1-15.

³¹ Cash and Belloy (2020).

³² Moser, Susanne C. "Can science on transformation transform science? Lessons from co-design." *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 20 (2016): 106-115; Norström, Albert V., Christopher Cvitanovic, Marie F. Löf, Simon West, Carina Wyborn, Patricia Balvanera, Angela T. Bednarek et al., "Principles for knowledge co-production in sustainability research," *Nature Sustainability* 3, no. 3 (2020): 182-190; Wyborn, Carina, Amber Datta, Jasper Montana, Melanie Ryan, Peat Leith, Brian Chaffin, Clark Miller, and Lorrae Van Kerkhoff, "Co-producing sustainability: reordering the governance of science, policy, and practice," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 44 (2019): 319-346.

narrow view of science, as well as a lack of understanding of its broader socio-political context, and the benefits of co-design or co-production of knowledge.³³

In sum, although there is certainly room for the HLPE to be strengthened (see Recommendations), it has the key characteristics of an effective SPI. In contrast, the 'IPCC for Food' would not necessarily score highly against Cash's criteria: its *salience*, *credibility* and *legitimacy* could be undermined by plans for it to conduct new research with a view to resolving controversies, the apparent intention to exclude the input of different stakeholders, and the failure to account for different forms of knowledge. As we outline below, the legitimacy of the new SPI could be further undermined by question marks about the broader governance structures it would be part of.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR FOOD SYSTEMS GOVERNANCE

The existence of the HLPE and the CFS are sometimes acknowledged in passing in the proposals for a new SPI, but in other cases they are simply not mentioned. Those that do mention the HLPE sometimes note that it could partner in the effort to create a new SPI. One paper suggests that the "InterAcademy Partnership, CGIAR, and the CFS High Level Panel of Experts and their networks, together with many others in university and public research systems, could partner in establishing the Panel mechanism".³⁴ Most proposals simply note the need for a new and stronger SPI without specifying the weaknesses in existing bodies³⁵ or explaining why incremental changes will not suffice. For example, a recent UNFSS Scientific Group meeting concluded that "[t]here should not be a dogma that existing organizations only should be strengthened, as that would stifle institutional innovation, which food systems transformations need".³⁶

It is also unclear how the proposed 'IPCC for Food' would fit into broader food security governance structures. Thus far, the proposals have been exceptionally vague on the question of what formal governance body or mechanism, if any, the 'IPCC for Food' would serve. The earliest proposal states that the new SPI would "provide science-based information to national, regional and international bodies on means to achieve SDG2 in the context of related goals".³⁷ It suggests several options, the preferred one being an international panel that would be a "politically independent part of a network of academies of sciences". It also raises the option of an intergovernmental panel, while cautioning that its initiation and assessment processes would take longer due to "rigorous transparency

³³ Cornell, Sarah, Frans Berkhout, Willemijn Tuinstra, J. David Tàbara, Jill Jäger, Ilan Chabay, Bert de Wit et al., "Opening up knowledge systems for better responses to global environmental change," *Environmental science & policy* 28 (2013): 60-70; Tengö, Maria, Eduardo S. Brondizio, Thomas Elmqvist, Pernilla Malmer, and Marja Spiereburg, "Connecting diverse knowledge systems for enhanced ecosystem governance: the multiple evidence base approach," *Ambio* 43, no. 5 (2014): 579-591.

³⁴ von Braun (2018).

³⁵ See, for example, von Braun and Kalkuhl (2015); IAP (2018); GLOPAN (2020).

³⁶ See minutes of the 7th Scientific Group meeting, at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Minutes_7th_Scientific_Group_Meeting_17-5-2021.pdf.

³⁷ Von Braun and Kalkuhl (2015).

and review rules [that would] increase time and burden researchers have to spend for contributing to assessments".³⁸

More recent papers go further and imagine the new SPI as part of a newly constituted food security and nutrition "governance platform" with intergovernmental authority – a flat hierarchical structure involving civil society, private sector and government-to-government networks. This proposal sounds a lot like the CFS – and they note that it could be built on a "further strengthened CFS".³⁹ Beyond this, there is little explanation of how the new structures would differ from current arrangements, and how they would avoid redundancy. Although one paper insists that creating a new 'mega-organization' is not the goal, another report for the G20 suggests that new governance mechanisms could be layered on top of existing ones:

“ Existing organizations and mechanisms would form building blocks of such a strengthened food and agriculture governance system. Some re-design in the suggested direction was triggered by the food crisis of 2008, as indicated by the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) with its High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE), but more is needed. Moving forward, G20 may consider calling for a stakeholder forum that explores the organizational implications of such needed global governance redesign of agriculture and food.⁴⁰ ”

The lack of clarity on this front has fueled concerns that proposals for an 'IPCC for Food' are in fact an example of 'forum shopping', i.e. "the strategic selection and use of policy venues by actors in order to advance their policy goals".⁴¹

Attempts to replace democratic multilateral governance of food systems with control by a handful of powerful actors is nothing new. In the aftermath of the 2008 food crisis, the G8 proposed the creation of the Global Partnership on Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition (GPAFSN). This idea faltered when the G77 and civil society rallied around the proposal to reform the CFS,⁴² but this setback did not prevent the G8 from launching the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) in 2011 – and with it a new set of commitments, compacts, and pseudo-institutions.

³⁸ von Braun and Kalkuhl (2015).

³⁹ von Braun (2018); Von Braun and Birner (2017).

⁴⁰ von Braun et al. (2017).

⁴¹ Murphy, Hannah, and Aynsley Kellow, "Forum shopping in global governance: understanding states, business and NGOs in multiple arenas," *Global Policy* 4, no. 2 (2013): 139-149, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-5899.2012.00195.x>.

⁴² McKeon, Nora, *Food security governance: Empowering communities, regulating corporations* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2014).

5. THE SUMMIT'S SCIENTIFIC GROUP: A TEST RUN FOR THE NEW SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE

The Scientific Group of the Food Systems Summit has been positioned as an "early exercise" in developing an international panel for food.⁴³ Therefore, looking at the processes, focus, and outputs of the Scientific Group is instructive, as well as the agenda for the Summit's 'Science Days' (8-9 July 2021).

There are numerous issues in the make-up of the Scientific Group and how it operates. Firstly, how members of the Scientific Group were selected is opaque, beyond the Deputy Secretary-General's invitation to Joachim von Braun to chair the panel. Several of the members have worked together previously and appear to have been individually selected rather than through an application or nomination process.⁴⁴ Given its mandate to serve the transformation of food systems and help meet the SDGs – interdisciplinary if not transdisciplinary goals – it is remarkable that the group consists almost entirely of natural scientists, health professionals, nutritionists, food scientists, and economists (9 of the 28 members have backgrounds in economics).⁴⁵ From a review of the biographies of the Scientific Group members, almost none appears to have expertise in interactions of science, technology and society (STS), transition studies, legal studies, or human rights. The absence of social science expertise other than economics is striking. The lack of expertise in agroecology is also notable, given its prominence in calls for food system transformation, and the recent HLPE report which documented its ability to meet multiple transformational goals simultaneously.⁴⁶

The Scientific Group has published Discussion Papers for each of the Action Tracks of the Summit, definitional papers about food systems and healthy diets, and two additional papers: *The True Cost and True Price of Food*⁴⁷ and *Achieving Zero Hunger by 2030 – A Review of Quantitative Assessments of Synergies and Tradeoffs amongst the UN Sustainable Development Goals*.⁴⁸ The definitional papers largely overlook substantial previous work on these concepts by scholars and UN bodies, although some sources are referenced. The

⁴³ von Braun (2021).

⁴⁴ In contrast, the selection of members at the HLPE aims to ensure independence, scientific credibility, balanced and inclusive representation, and scientific diversity. The formal selection process occurs in three stages, through 1) nominations by member states and participants, 2) selection by an independent committee including a representative of civil society, and 3) approval by the CFS bureau. (Gitz, Vincent, and Alexandre Meybeck, "The establishment of the High Level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition (HLPE) - Shared, independent and comprehensive knowledge for international policy coherence in food security and nutrition," (2011).)

⁴⁵ See bios of Scientific Group members of the UN FSS at <https://sc-fss2021.org/about-us/bios-of-members/>.

⁴⁶ See Table 4 on page 63, of HLPE, "Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that Enhance Food Security and Nutrition", (2019), at <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5602en/ca5602en.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Hendriks, Sheryl, Adrian de Groot Ruiz, Mario Herrero Acosta, Hans Baumers, Pietro Galgani, Daniel Mason-D'Croz, Cecile Godde, Katharina Waha, Dimitra Kanidou, Joachim von Braun, Mauricio Benitez, Jennifer Blanke, Patrick Caron, Jessica Fanzo, Friederike Greb, Lawrence Haddad, Anna Herforth, Danie Jordaan, William Masters, Claudia Sadoff, Jean-François Soussana, Maria Cristina Tirado, Maximo Torero, Matthew Watkins, "The True Cost and True Price of Food," (2021), at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/UNFSS_true_cost_of_food.pdf.

⁴⁸ Valin, Hugo, Thomas Hertel, Benjamin Leon Bodirsky, Tomoko Hasegawa and Elke Stehfest, "Achieving Zero Hunger by 2030 – A Review of Quantitative Assessments of Synergies and Tradeoffs amongst the UN Sustainable Development Goals," (2021), https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SDG2_Synergies_and_tradeoffs.pdf.

paper on food systems⁴⁹ seems to be aimed largely at justifying the five action tracks selected by Summit organizers, but provides no explanation of how these tracks were chosen, and little analysis of food system dynamics and how they are shaped by power relationships. While the idea of transformation is mentioned throughout, there is little explanation of how transformation actually happens. The theory of change is implicit and only elaborated superficially: investing in science will lead to "innovation" which will transform food systems in the desired directions to achieve the SDGs. This theory of change ignores the power imbalances and path dependencies that 'lock in' current food system dynamics; furthermore, it simplifies the complex interactions of science and policy, and evades any analysis of undesirable consequences of innovations (see below).

In addition to the nine papers authored by the Scientific Group, a large number of papers by 'Partners of the Scientific Group' have been posted on the Summit website. Partnerships appear to be brokered by the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Scientific Group, who also decide which topics will be addressed. None of these reports are open to public feedback (in marked contrast to HLPE reports). The Scientific Group website also lists "publications and reports of relevance to the Food Systems Summit". However, it is unclear what criteria were used to select the publications, suggesting that the Scientific Group leadership is effectively the arbiter of what counts as 'science' for the Food Systems Summit.⁵⁰

As such, the Scientific Group has strayed from its Terms of Reference, which specify that it should:

“ [bring] to bear the foremost scientific evidence from around the world and [help] expand the base of shared knowledge about experience, approaches and tools for driving sustainable food systems... by [ensuring] the robustness and independence of the science underpinning dialogue of food systems policy and investment decisions.⁵¹ ”

The Scientific Group appears to be falling particularly short in terms of considering diverse forms of knowledge. As reflected in the choice of authors and topics for Partner papers, academic, public institution and private sector scientists are seen as valuable partners, while Indigenous and civil society scientists receive little attention. Furthermore, the Scientific Group is mandated to link with ongoing initiatives such as the HLPE of the CFS and other science-based institutions, yet the repeated calls for a new SPI appear to undermine the HLPE.

⁴⁹ von Braun, Joachim, Kaosar Afsana, Louise O. Fresco, Mohamed Hassan, and Maximo Torero, "Food systems – Definition, concept and application for the UN Food Systems Summit," (2021), at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Food_Systems_Definition.pdf. See Figure 2 on p.10.

⁵⁰ See also Montenegro, Maywa, Matthew Canfield and Alistair Iles, "Weaponizing Science in Global Food Policy," *IPS News*, June 25, 2021, at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2021/06/weaponizing-science-global-food-policy/>.

⁵¹ See terms of reference of the Scientific Group of the UN Food Systems Summit, at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Terms_of_Reference_web.pdf.

Notably, *innovation* and *technology* are absent from the Terms of Reference, as is the idea of a new SPI for food. Yet references to innovation and technology pervade the Scientific Group's outputs, its Partner papers, and the agenda of the FSS Science Days. The solutions envisioned in Scientific Group products are heavy on technology of a particular kind, e.g. functional foods, novel foods, and personalized nutrition profiles; gene editing of crops, livestock, and fish; and remote sensing enhanced by digitalization, big data, and artificial intelligence. This closely echoes the ideas promoted by WEF⁵² – a synergy that was surely envisioned in the strategic partnership agreement signed between UN Secretary-General António Guterres and WEF Founder and Executive Chairman Klaus Schwab in 2019.⁵³ In addressing these topics, the papers of the Scientific Group provide little assessment of the likely consequences of innovations on marginalized and poor people,⁵⁴ and ignore historical perspectives on how policies supposedly grounded in 'science' have damaged communities and the environment, and generated powerful lock-ins. These problems have in fact been well-documented in the large body of literature on the impacts of the Green Revolution. In particular, the risks associated with the unquestioning adoption of scientific innovations were highlighted by the European Environment Agency in its extensive case studies of "late lessons from early warnings".⁵⁵ Ignoring these aspects suggests a view of science as unified and inherently good; devoid of conflicts of interest; and unrequiring of accountability to the public. The absence of these reflexive elements of science is particularly striking in light of the SDG injunction to "leave no one behind".

Furthermore, while complexity is a characteristic of food systems, the Scientific Group outputs suggest that complexity can only be addressed adequately through modelling. Yet many other approaches to complexity exist, from post-normal science to transdisciplinary research.⁵⁶

The agenda of the Science Days also reveals the thinking of the Scientific Group and where its leaders would like a new SPI to go. The agenda is dominated by science, technology and

⁵² See World Economic Forum, "Innovation with a Purpose: The role of technology innovation in accelerating food systems transformation," (2018), at: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Innovation_with_a_Purpose_VF-reduced.pdf; and World Economic Forum, "Incentivizing Food Systems Transformation," (2018), at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Incentivizing_Food_Systems_Transformation.pdf.

⁵³ See World Economic Forum, "World Economic Forum and UN Sign Strategic Partnership Framework," Press release, 13 June, 2019, at <https://www.weforum.org/press/2019/06/world-economic-forum-and-un-sign-strategic-partnership-framework/>.

⁵⁴ "The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems," for example, addresses what Indigenous food systems can contribute, but does not assess the consequences of specific innovations on Indigenous people nor the history of exterminating Indigenous food systems knowledge. See <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb4932en>.

⁵⁵ European Environment Agency, "Late lessons from early warnings: The precautionary principle 1896-2000," *Environmental Issue Report* No.22/2001, (2001), at https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental_issue_report_2001_22; European Environment Agency, "Late lessons from early warnings II," *EEA Report* No.1/2013, (2013), at <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/late-lessons-2>.

⁵⁶ Anderson, Molly and Melissa Leach, "Transforming Food Systems: The Potential of Engaged Political Economy," in *The Political Economy of Food*, eds. Jody Harris, Molly Anderson, Chantal Clément and Nicolas Nisbett, *IDS Bulletin* Vol. 50.2, pp. 131-146; Cornell et al. (2013) (*op cit.*); Funtowicz, Silvio O., and Jerome R. Ravetz, "Uncertainty, complexity and post-normal science," *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry: An International Journal* 13, no. 12 (1994): 1881-1885; IPES-Food, "The new science of sustainable food systems: Overcoming barriers to food systems reform," (2015), at http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/NewScienceofSusFood.pdf; Tribaldos, T. and T. Kortetmäki, "Developing principles and criteria for just transition in food systems: a transdisciplinary endeavour," in *Justice and Food Security in a Changing Climate*, eds. Hanna Schübellvo and Wallimann-Helmer, (Fribourg: EurSafe, 2021), pp. 158-163.

innovation, and includes representatives from Bayer Crop Science and other agri-food tech companies. Women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples have some space on the agenda, but only as part of parallel sessions designed to "empower and engage key players in food system innovation". That is, the aim is not to learn from and build solutions around the knowledge of women, youth, farmers/peasants, and Indigenous Peoples, but rather to engage them in the pre-set technology and innovations agenda, and the global food system. Azam-Ali et al. (2019) make this approach clear in a Partners paper posted on the Scientific Group page:

“ To achieve sustainable livelihoods, indigenous people in marginal areas need game-changer technologies in which they are the agents of innovation...Indigenous communities need access to better knowledge systems, improved genetic material, integrated management practices and novel technologies across the whole value chain that provide routes to markets.⁵⁷ ”

The activities and products of the Scientific Group indicate that the proposed 'IPCC for Food' is likely to reinforce an agenda of technological innovations that serve corporate interests and large-scale producers, rather than meeting the needs of small-scale producers and enterprises or helping to fulfil the human rights obligations detailed in UN treaties and declarations such as UNDRIP and UNDROP. In sum, this 'experiment' in a new SPI is non-transparent, limited, biased in its perspective and sources of knowledge, unreflexive about the relationships between science and society, and pursuing what is clearly – despite being 'evidence-based' – a business-oriented agenda.

6. CONCLUSIONS

We draw the following conclusions from our analysis:

- An 'IPCC for Food' is likely to be proposed as an outcome of the UNFSS, even though no compelling arguments have been advanced as to why the HLPE and CFS need to be replaced, while the proposed structure and functions of the new body raise major concerns.
- This proposal stems from a small group of proponents but has been amplified by the networks and business interests which it would serve.

⁵⁷ Azam-Ali, Sayed, Hayatullah Ahmadzai, Dhruvad Choudhury, Ee Von Goh, Ebrahim Jahanshiri, Tafadzwanashe Mabhaudhi, Alessandro Meschinelli, Albert Thembinkosi Modi, Nhamo Nhamo, and Abidemi Olutayo, "Marginal areas and indigenous people – Priorities for research and action," (2021), p.6-7, at https://sc-fss2021.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FSS_Brief_Marginal_areas_indigenous_people.pdf.

- The Summit is being used to promote a narrow technocratic vision of food systems in a manner which is opaque, exclusionary, and ignores a diversity of knowledge systems and contributors to sustainable food systems.
- The proposals for a new SPI for food systems may be the leading edge of a broader strategy to replace the CFS and the HLPE with a governance structure that is more supportive of the kind of policy agenda that the proponents of an 'IPCC for Food' are advocating.
- The kinds of knowledge and science needed to meet current and future challenges go far beyond advancing a narrow version of technological innovation. They include dealing with uncertainty and complexity, consideration of the consequences to marginalized and vulnerable populations and the environment of any technology that is adopted, and addressing the unique challenges of adaptive management.
- The HLPE has the key characteristics of an effective SPI, but can be further strengthened, as identified by the HLPE itself.⁵⁸

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Formally expand the remit of the HLPE to encompass food systems more broadly (beyond food security and nutrition) and ensure further knowledge integration at CFS:** such measures must maintain and deepen the HLPE's consultative approach to scientific assessments that integrates different forms of knowledge and expertise, and considers a wide set of perspectives on key questions.
- **Build in a mechanism to allow the HLPE to take the initiative on reports that respond to new and emerging circumstances:** at present, the HLPE reports on topics requested by CFS on a schedule that is set several years in advance. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food systems illustrated clearly why such an approach can be problematic, and in this case the CFS requested the HLPE to prepare an issues paper on the topic, which the latter provided fairly quickly with analysis and policy recommendations.⁵⁹
- **Allow the HLPE to play a greater role in monitoring and data analysis:** the HLPE has signaled its intention to work more closely with the CFS and its stakeholders to improve the capacity for data collection and monitoring, enabling it and its partners to more precisely track changes in food systems as well as the impacts of CFS policy recommendations. The HLPE is currently preparing a report on data that will probe new ideas along these lines.

⁵⁸ HLPE, "Food systems science-policy interface: don't reinvent the wheel - strengthen it!" (2021), at http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2021/Documents/SPI_for_Food_Systems_-_No_need_to_reinvent_the_wheel_HLPE_Open_Letter_20_May_2021.pdf.

⁵⁹ HLPE, "Impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition: developing effective policy responses to address the hunger and malnutrition pandemic," (2020), at <http://www.fao.org/3/cb1000en/cb1000en.pdf>.

- **Increase the HLPE's resources:** the HLPE currently operates on a small budget, and improved budgetary support from governments would allow it to undertake the above initiatives as well as widen the circulation of its reports and expand its consultation processes to more languages.⁶⁰
- **Urgently review the approach to science and knowledge at the UNFSS:** we request the UN as an intergovernmental body to review the entire UNFSS and Scientific Group apparatus in terms of how it treats knowledge, science, technology, and the innovation agenda, and increase transparency vis-à-vis links with WEF and other business groups, with consideration of (inter alia) the UNFSS process, the Chief Executive Board (CEB) agenda on innovation, the GSDR Report 2019, and the STI work relating to Agenda 2030. These steps should be taken with regard to the Common Understanding on Rights-based Approaches and the UN Programme for Reform.⁶¹
- **Create a UN Office of Technological Assessment:** safeguard the public interest in science by launching a UN Office of Technological Assessment to thoroughly vet any proposals emerging from the UNFSS (immediately or in its wake) and creating a follow-up focus area on corporate power and conflicts of interest in science and across the UN system (as demanded by CSM); use this opportunity to examine new bilateral corporate-UN partnerships.

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⁶⁰ Clapp, Jennifer, Martin Cole, and Thanawat Tiensen, "Why reinvent the wheel on food security and nutrition?" (2021), at <https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-why-reinvent-the-wheel-on-food-security-and-nutrition-99929>.

⁶¹ The 'Common Understanding' was launched in 1997. Through it, the Secretary-General called on all entities of the UN system to mainstream human rights into their various activities and programs, specifying that "all programs of development co-operation, policies and technical assistance should further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments".

ABOUT IPES-FOOD

The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) seeks to inform debates on food systems reform through policy-oriented research and direct engagement with policy processes around the world. The expert panel brings together environmental scientists, development economists, nutritionists, agronomists, and sociologists, as well as experienced practitioners from civil society and social movements. The panel is co-chaired by Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, and Maryam Rahmanian, independent expert on agriculture and food systems.

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