

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to address this session. My name is Susan Bragdon from the Quaker UN Office in Geneva. I am giving this statement on behalf of the Food & Agriculture Cluster of the NGO major group.

The Rome-based agencies together with UN DESA organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on SDG2 in June this year. The EGM produced a two-page summary report and Civil Society also produced a two-page summary where it felt there was a need to go further than the EGM summary could. You can find those on the HLPF website. I would ask that those summary documents and this statement be entered in the official record. This statement highlights some of the CSO key messages.

Ambassador Verberg began this session by noting SDG2 is a necessary foundation to all 17 SDGs. Mr. Caron said food systems are a lever for all the SDGs. SDG2 is a powerful driver of integration across the SDGs from health, employment, climate action, life on land; it touches upon all the SDGs and SDG2 role as a driver of integration must not be lost as the HLPF continues with thematic reviews in 2018 and beyond.

The EGM summary calls for “macroeconomic frameworks that pursue equitable development, interlinkages among conflict, natural disasters and population movement”. Civil society believes that these frameworks must be **human rights-focused** and enable more localized, place-based integrative and socially inclusive experiences. The voice of those the poor and the hungry must be heard directly at the table, and they must remain key actors in enabling participatory solutions. As Ms. Mpofu noted, farmers do not seem to be at the table here.

Transformative change of food systems is required to achieve SDG2. Mr Caron called for a revolution. Ms. Mpofu intervention called for the need for a true paradigm shift not working around the edges of the current system. Transformation requires more than incorporating social and environmental externalities in decision-making, important though this is. There is a need to reframe the **technological and market-based approaches** that continues to characterize much of agricultural development by governments, research organizations, philanthropic institutions and large scale agribusiness.

Civil Society does not believe the linear, top-down, individual input- output model with farmers as clients or customers can achieve resilient and sustainable food systems. As Ms Penunia noted the world’s 1.5 billion small-scale farmers produce upwards of 70% of the food consumed today yet are often poor and food insecure themselves. Yet as we heard from the panelists, small scale farmers are agents of change. Globally we heard the numbers of people who are malnourished, and 2 billion struggle with obesity. The evidence is clear: **we are subsidizing and supporting the wrong things in the food system** and as Ms Penunia and Ms. Mpofu note some of this is embedded in global trade rules. In some parts of the world, public money subsidizes producing unhealthy food, and public money subsidizes or pays for the health problems that result, exporting this system has in part been enabled by trade rules where power imbalances between and within countries is stark.

Civil Society does not believe in a dualistic model where industrial agriculture co-exists with agro-ecological approaches. As noted by Mr. Caron, the growth and expansion of the industrial food system directly correlates with global burden of disease now being primarily diet-related. It is also a major producer of greenhouse gas emissions, a driver of biodiversity loss, the largest user of freshwater resources. **The health of people and planet requires us to constrain industrial agriculture.**

It is agro-ecological approaches that need support. As Ms Penunia said rural life has to be attractive. Ambassador Verburg asks how to finance this? What if we took the subsidies and support that industrial agriculture benefits from and shifted it to agro-ecological approaches? Imagine what we could do. The agro-ecological approach has a relational, not a linear, top-down, frame. It recognizes the need to deal with the power imbalances in the system, it seeks to empower farmers, particularly women, and meet the food needs of all, enriching soil, maintaining and developing agricultural biodiversity, nutritional value and health of both producers and consumers, conserving water, and contributing to climate solutions.

Part of the transformative paradigm change required to achieve SDG2 involves a new model that includes cooperative and other collective forms of producer-consumer relations that involve a different and more inclusive model of food production and consumption based on solidarity economy.

In terms of process, Civil Society believes that the HLPF's success requires there be ongoing well-structured thematic reviews. The EGM was a start involving UN agencies from Rome, CSOs from all over the world, Member States. This needs to be built upon with deeper analysis, participation and with sufficient lead time.