



Response to consultation on ‘Preserving, strengthening and promoting  
Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems and traditional  
practices for sustainable food systems - HLPE-FSN consultation on  
the scope of the report’

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Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation. We note the proposed principles and the rationale for the Committee for Food Security (CFS) request to the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE).

We offer our expertise as academics and non-government organisation leaders on breastfeeding, including in Australia's indigenous populations.

Our response to the HLPE questions is appended below, after our commentary on the context for our response.

### **Who are we?**

**WBTi Australia** is a coalition of individuals and organisations established in September 2017. Its primary aim is to change the way breastfeeding is protected, promoted and supported in Australia by:

- assessing the status of, and benchmarking the progress in implementation of, the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding in Australia using the standardised tool of the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)
- engaging with relevant stakeholders in the process of assessment
- communicating the results of the assessment to key decision-makers and stakeholders

WBTiAUS has prepared two country assessments published in 2018 and 2023, and its assessment score is the international benchmark for the 2019 Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy.

**Ms Naomi Hull**, RN, IBCLC, MPH (Nutrition), PhD Candidate

Naomi Hull is a non-First Nations researcher, a Registered Nurse with a Master of Public Health (Nutrition). Currently, Ms Hull is undertaking a PhD at the University of Sydney that aims to Advance Global Food Security for Infants and Young Children. As well as being the National Coordinator for the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi), Australian team, Ms Hull is a peer breastfeeding counsellor, and International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). Her work strives to see women and babies supported to breastfeed and for the recognition of breastfeeding as a valuable strategy for public health and food security for infants and young children.

### **Dr Simone Sherriff**

Simone Sherriff is a Wotjobaluk woman and Research Fellow at the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at University of Sydney. She is a board director for Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation, Wurega Aboriginal Corporation and the Academy of Child and Adolescent Health. Dr Sherriff has extensive experience working in the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector on health research and the implementation of services around food security, breastfeeding, and child health.

### **Ms Caroline Deen**

Caroline Deen is a Kamilaroi woman and Research Fellow with the Healthy Environments And Lives (HEAL) network, the University of Sydney. Ms Deen has completed a Bachelor of Nutrition and Dietetics and Master of Public Health by research. Before joining the University she worked as a public health nutritionist/dietitian and researcher in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with a focus on improving food security. She is currently undertaking a PhD that aims to improve the way food security is measured for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### **Dr Karleen Gribble** PhD, BRurSc(Hons)

Karleen Gribble is non-First Nations researcher, an Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Western Sydney University, Australia. Her research interests focus on

breastfeeding in situations of adversity including in emergencies and in the context of intergenerational trauma, and child protection concerns. Karleen advocates for recognition of the importance of mothers to their infants and works to create environments that support breastfeeding and the mother-infant relationship.

**Dr Julie Smith, PhD, BEc(Hons)/BA (Asian Studies)**

Julie Smith is a non-First Nations researcher, an Honorary Associate Professor at the Australian National University, and Associate Professor at the Health Research Institute, University of Canberra. She is also an Honorary Associate Professor at the University of Sydney. Her research focuses on economic and environmental aspects of breastfeeding and markets in mothers' milk. Dr Smith recently led the development of the Mothers' Milk Tool and the Green Feeding Tool with Alive & Thrive East Asia & Pacific. She has conducted evidence reviews for WHO and the Australian Department of Health, and advised the US Surgeon-General Office and the World Health Organization (WHO). She has also worked extensively with civil society organisations such as the the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action and the International Baby Food Action Network, and the Australian Breastfeeding Association, and is a co-founder of WBTiAUS.

### **Background:**

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) requested the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition ([HLPE-FSN](#)) to produce a report on "Preserving, strengthening and promoting indigenous peoples' food and Knowledge Systems and traditional practices for sustainable food systems" to be presented at the 54th plenary session of the CFS in October 2026.

This document responds to the consultation document to raise the need to consider breastfeeding of infants and young children within scope as a traditional food and based on women's unique and valuable knowledge and skills, to prepare *a set of focused, action-oriented policy recommendations on "Preserving, strengthening and promoting Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems and traditional practices for sustainable food systems to achieve FSN" as a key means of achieving the CFS vision, SDG2, and an array of other SDGs, including SDGs 1, 10, 12, 13 and 15.*

## **Submission**

We submit that breastfeeding is a crucially important healthy and sustainable traditional food system that relies on women's unique knowledge and skills (1). It must be recognized and valued as a global Indigenous and traditional food system.

Breastfeeding is well recognized as important for women's and children's health (2). Traditional breastfeeding practices reduce many reproductive cancers in women (3) and contribute to postpartum recovery from childbirth (4).

Enabling breastfeeding is also acknowledged as supporting progress on multiple sustainable development goals (5). Breastfeeding is recognized as a human right for women and children because of its contribution to their health, nutrition and wellbeing (6).

Breastfeeding is also increasingly acknowledged as a foundational element of sustainable food systems (7, 8). When infants and young children are not breastfed they are often fed commercial milk formulas instead and the production, packaging, transport and use of these have known impacts on the environment (9) (10) (11).

While international research identifies wide variation in traditional practice regarding introduction of non-breastmilk fluids, ethnographic and demographic data gathered in non-industrial populations supports predominant breastfeeding for prolonged breastfeeding into early childhood as the usual practice (12). This fulfillment of children's rights to achieve optimal health through breastfeeding has been based on the knowledge and skills of indigenous women as providers of food, nutrition, health care and nurturing for their infants and young children (13).

Globally the prevalence of breastfeeding has collapsed over the past century due to a number of factors that have undermined the knowledge, skills and confidence of women and conditions that prevented them from practicing it, such as colonization, urbanization, industry marketing, inadequate maternity care, and lack of community support (14).

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander breastfeeding in Australia**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have been practicing breastfeeding for 65,000 years, and often continued well into early childhood. Breastfeeding is an important cultural practice passed down through generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women where mothers and aunties would share the responsibility of breastfeeding through feeding each other's children.

It is an important practice of cultural responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to care for nieces and nephews as if they were their own. Breastfeeding is foundational to healthy babies, mothers, communities and Country. It plays a vital role in traditional and contemporary food systems and sustainability. Relactation and induced lactation are traditional practices supporting children's breastfeeding rights in situations where they can't be breastfed by their mother for whatever reason.

Traditional practice has been that Indigenous children were breastfed for 2-3 years or longer, maintaining optimal health and nutrition in the unique and harsh Australian environment (15, 16). In many remote communities breastfeeding for two years or more remained the norm until quite recently (17).

However, reflecting the multiple factors advantaging non-indigenous populations, breastfeeding rates among Indigenous women have not recovered from the low levels of the 1960s, and have reduced the most where a traditional lifestyle is less practiced (16). In Western Australia in the early 1980s the prevalence of breast-feeding before the age of 9 months in remote tribal areas was 100%, however, among Aboriginals living near big country towns the prevalence was 66% at 6 months of age, and less than 50% at 6 months of age for those in the urbanized southwestern area of Western Australia (16).

Only in very remote areas of Australia do indigenous mothers now practice breastfeeding at higher rates than non-indigenous mothers (18).

Much of the unique knowledge and skill of indigenous women on successful breastfeeding and safe and adequate complementary feeding of infants and young children in Australia is undocumented and unacknowledged.

In Australia, there is a lack of culturally responsive breastfeeding supports available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. There is a need for the development of breastfeeding supports that are led by Indigenous peoples to ensure they are grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and doing and that they are acceptable and effective.

#### *Forced removal and separation of indigenous mothers and babies*

Colonization and the ongoing injustices faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia have greatly reduced breastfeeding prevalence. The Stolen Generations and the continuing alarming rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being forcibly removed from families today has deprived many women and children their right to breastfeed.

A study of indigenous breastfeeding in Victoria during the 1990s reported that;

“On the missions, every aspect of people's lives was tightly controlled, and families were disrupted. Practices promoted by doctors, nurses, mission managers and their wives undermined breast-feeding. After dispersal of Aborigines from the missions in the 1950s and 1960s, maternity ward practices and commercial and assimilation pressures combined to further undermine traditional breast-feeding practices” (17).

In Western Australia in 1981, 66 per cent of six-month old Aboriginal babies in large country towns and 50 per cent in the urban southwest were breast-fed (17). In a Melbourne Aboriginal community only 53 per cent of babies were breast-fed at birth, and only 38 per cent were breastfed for longer than one month.

It is a priority action of the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy that breastfeeding support be provided to the mothers of children in out-of-home care and to women who are incarcerated (19), yet such support remains lacking. Ongoing systems abuse within the child protection system contributes to intergenerational trauma and both increases the importance of and presents a barrier to breastfeeding (20) (21).

#### *Exploitative marketing of breastmilk substitutes undermines indigenous communities' traditional practices*

Despite these injustices, breastfeeding prevalence remains high in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In urbanized communities too, breastfeeding is still seen as a traditional practice.

However, bottle feeding is normalized, including by commercial marketing. A 2023 systematic review of qualitative studies of indigenous women's decisions on breastfeeding found that;

*“The pervasive marketing and promotion of breast milk substitutes, as well as availability of infant formula in some maternity hospitals was another factor that influenced infant feeding choices. Some mothers were influenced by the promotion of formula, demonstrating high levels of brand recognition and preferencing formula in place of breastfeeding” (22).*

A study of historical, cultural, political, and social influences on dietary patterns and nutrition in Australian Aboriginal children reported in 2000 that breast-feeding in Australia is less common in socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, and this was also the case for Aboriginal people (16).

As in other countries, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are targeted by industry marketing of breastmilk substitutes, consistent with global practices of targeting the social and economic vulnerabilities of women (23).

#### *Culturally appropriate maternity care and community responsibility*

Programs such as Birthing on Country have been shown to be successful in supporting good breastfeeding outcomes at birth among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

In Western societies, breastfeeding has become viewed as an individual and family responsibility, rather than a community responsibility. This is unlike within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where breastfeeding and first food systems are viewed through a holistic lens of everything being connected and a whole of community responsibility.

This highlights the invaluable evidence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food and knowledge systems can provide to improve contemporary food systems, including for infants and young children and their families.

#### *Human rights, the right to food, the right to health, and food security among indigenous infants and young children in Australia*

Breastfeeding has been an important source of food security for infants and young children historically and across populations, including in indigenous Australian populations.

The currently low proportion of breastfed babies particularly in many urbanized Indigenous communities in Australia and elsewhere must be considered within the larger cultural context of the loss of infant feeding traditions, and breaches of women's and children's human rights to be enabled to breastfeed, through protection from exploitative marketing, adequate maternity care, and suitable maternity protections and work environments (6).

Members of this team previously submitted to the CFS HLPE that breastfeeding should be better recognised and protected as a source of food security in populations of infants and young children (24). We argued that neglect of children's nutrition & breastfeeding as a food security issue was causing rising food insecurity, malnutrition, & ill health. Children, especially infants & young children are uniquely vulnerable to food insecurity and recent large-scale shifts to commercial milk formula (CMF) feeding have been disrupting optimal breastfeeding. The growing dependence on CMF is a disruption to the food system and to breastfeeding capacity, along with being a crucial global food security and nutrition issue with large economic costs.

We have previously called for an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to assert the importance of human rights in relation to children's nutrition, and to provide new impetus on addressing women's right to be enabled to breastfeed their child, including through strengthening of women's human rights in the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The 2023 Lancet Series on Breastfeeding expanded on this to request that the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Commission on the Status of Women, and other relevant bodies to monitor and report on member state activities that violate children's and women's rights in the WTO and Codex Alimentarius Commission (25).

#### *Assessing food security by market-based rather than indigenous food system values*

Food security definitions and assessment frameworks in research and policy predominantly stem from capitalist and colonial food system values. These fail to recognise Indigenous knowledge systems and the cultural practices that support food security, including for non-market actors such as infants and young children.

For example, existing household food security measurement tools such as the Household Food Security Measure (HFSSM) used in Australia, United States, Canada and on which the New Zealand tool is based, were designed around the Euro-American food system and experiences and are focused solely on economic access to food (26). Such market-oriented tools exclude consideration of the importance of enabling women's provisioning of infants and young children's needs through breastfeeding.

Given the complex nature of food insecurity and its multifaceted causes, relying solely on income-based measures does not adequately capture the nuanced experiences and challenges related to accessing sufficient and nutritious food, particularly for Indigenous people, including children.

To be effective Indigenous measures of food security must privilege Indigenous peoples' voices centering Indigenous values, knowledges and experiences. Any instrument should assess all culturally and contextually relevant domains recognizing that Indigenous food systems are inextricably connected to land, which in turn is interwoven with issues of self-determination, livelihoods, health, cultural and spiritual heritage (27).

#### *Culturally responsive, trauma-informed tools to measure indigenous food security*

Dr. Sherriff and Ms Deen are conducting research that focuses on addressing this gap to ensure Indigenous knowledge systems of food security are reflected, respected and privileged in the development of a culturally responsive, trauma-informed tool that measures experiences of food security for Indigenous people at the household level across Australia.

The tool will be comprehensive to capture the determinants of food security in addition to assessing the extent to which the household and all its members can access adequate nutritious food. Dr. Sherriff, Ms Deen and Maori researchers intend to develop a global Indigenous Household Food Security Definition and Framework to improve the way food security is measured for Indigenous peoples globally. Culturally responsive tools support policy decisions that will strengthen government and Indigenous-led efforts to create a healthier, more equitable and sustainable food system.

Forthcoming papers on supporting indigenous women with their infant care via breastfeeding support provide further evidence that can be provided on request.

#### **Conclusions**

Breastfeeding is a sustainable indigenous food and knowledge system that should be considered within the scope of the HLPE inquiry, and the need for breastfeeding protection, support and promotion is well recognised within a rights based policy framework. Addressing this issue is particularly relevant to progressing the human rights of indigenous women and children.

Policy recommendations which address the crucial importance of breastfeeding for food security, a healthy and sustainable food system, and for sustainable development goals should be included in the work of the HLPE.

Such recommendations must recognise and incorporate understanding of breastfeeding among the traditional knowledge and feeding practices of indigenous women that contribute to healthy and sustainable food systems for people and planet.

Redress for the destruction and displacement of breastfeeding as the indigenous food system for infants and young children must target the needs of indigenous women for culturally responsive birthing and breastfeeding support.

Governments that properly recognise and respect this traditional food and knowledge system will provide the funding and capacity building for women's breastfeeding support and maternity care



needs to be met, in line with governments obligations to apply maximum feasible resourcing towards fulfilment of human rights (28).

## KEY QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE E-CONSULTATION ON THE SCOPE OF THE HLPE-FSN REPORT

Response to questions

*Do you agree with the guiding principles indicated above?*

Yes

*Should the objectives include mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples food and knowledge systems, and lessons learned from them, for the benefit of all, or solely for the benefit of Indigenous Peoples as rights holders?*

No comment

*What are the challenges related to Free, Prior and Informed Consent and Access and Benefit Sharing when widely promoting and/or mainstreaming Indigenous Peoples food and knowledge systems?*

The use of Indigenous Peoples food and knowledges requires free, prior and informed consent (as per the [\(World Bank, 2016\)](#)) and fair and equitable benefit sharing with First Nations peoples (as per the Convention on Biological Diversity and its associated [Nagoya Protocol](#)).

For First Nations peoples to profit from their extensive knowledge of Country, food, and medicine, they first need adequate protection. We recommend putting in place legislative requirements such as the [Nagoya Protocol](#) that will protect Indigenous knowledges and enable communities to leverage this knowledge.

*How can the report ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups, sustainability, and protection against commercialization risks for Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems?*

A recent submission to the Australian Parliamentary inquiry into economic self-determination and opportunities for First National Australians considered the issue of protecting indigenous intellectual property rights regarding traditional foods, found here -

<https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=e9f66bda-d19f-4319-865e-746f590dc860&subId=757029>

This did not consider the issues regarding patents over human milk components by the commercial milk formula industry, which marginalizes breastfeeding women even while human milk products generate large profits and surpluses for market enterprises.

However, it pointed to traditional food and medicine practices as a source of opportunity as well as food security for indigenous communities and called for suitable infrastructure investments and intellectual property law reforms to protecting traditional knowledge in each State and Territory's biodiscovery legislation and support development of a native foods and medicines industry.

Comparable issues of basic infrastructure provision and recognition of the intrinsic value of women's traditional knowledge on infant and young child feeding could also be considered, alongside investments in birthing and breastfeeding support systems with high rates of return to health systems and communities.

*How should oral knowledge and traditions be documented and referenced in the development of the report?*



Oral knowledge and traditions should be documented in ways which respect and do not devalue or minimize indigenous knowledge, and protect indigenous knowledge from being appropriated or controlled by outsiders such as through inappropriate exploitation of copyright or patents (29). Suitable documentation and referencing systems have been developed and recommended, which we support <https://subjectguides.nsc.ca/apa-7-ed/CitingTraditionalKnowledge> . Sensitivities around sharing indigenous knowledge must also be recognised and the wishes of the indigenous owners heeded.

*What dimensions linked to Indigenous Peoples' agency, e.g., in governance issues, could be addressed?*

see Gall et al above.

*Are there important/relevant policy papers and instruments missing from the foundational documents list?*

no comment

*Could you please indicate relevant references that should be taken into account?*

See above

*What best practices, ethical standards, and strategies for addressing climate change should be highlighted in the report?*

It can be argued that investments in enabling breastfeeding are carbon offsets. A recent paper in the Bulletin of the WHO argued for better systems of measurement of productivity to include non-market production including breastfeeding and breastmilk (30).

As commercial milk formula has adverse environmental impacts, reduces adaptability and resilience and generates 10-14 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions for every kilogram of powder (31) (9) (11) (10), strategies for reparations should include funding for measures to increase breastfeeding as investment in carbon offsets (30).

Climate change presents an opportunity for redress and empowerment of Indigenous communities to lead climate action planning based on their intimate traditional and historical knowledges of Country. Best-practice principles to facilitate this are outlined in the [Climate Change and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Discussion paper](#), these include:

1. Building adaptive capacity of communities by restoring basic rights to adequate housing and access to Country and its resources;
2. Place-based adaptation and mitigation planning given the diversity of Indigenous cultures, as well as the diversity of climate impact.
3. Establishing equitable power relationships and co-governance arrangements at multiple levels to provide Indigenous communities more certainty and control in protecting Country;
4. Centering and leveraging the valuable biocultural knowledge of Indigenous people with appropriate intellectual and cultural property protection;
5. Building respectful, trusting partnerships to share and weave together Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to inform innovative adaptation and mitigation;
6. Providing sustainable resourcing and program flexibility to support innovation and long-term monitoring and evaluation; and
7. Establishing geographic and intersectoral networks for collaboration, sharing and learning about experiences to build sustainable effective climate action strategies.

*Which best practices or strategies to promote cross-cultural understanding should be highlighted in the report?*

Australia has been developing a number of strategies to remedy the harms to indigenous breastfeeding. This includes the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy, as well as specific programs relevant to the needs of indigenous women.

*Are the previous legal documents such as Prior and Informed Consent, enough in light of this evolution of thinking about Indigenous People's knowledge, or do they need to be revised?*

No comment

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## Appendix

### Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum)

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Preserving, strengthening and promoting Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems and traditional practices for sustainable food systems - HLPE-FSN consultation on the scope of the report

Focus area: Enhancing equity and inclusiveness in agriculture and food systems

During its 51st plenary session (23-27 October 2023), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopted its four-year Programme of Work ([MYPOW 2024-2027](#)), which includes a request to its High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition ([HLPE-FSN](#)) to produce a report on “Preserving, strengthening and promoting Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems and traditional practices for sustainable food systems” to be presented at the 54th plenary session of the CFS in October 2026.

The text of the CFS request, as included in the MYPOW 2024-2027, is as follows:

Rationale: Indigenous Peoples’ agricultural and food systems are intimately tied to nature and are capable of providing food and nutritional security whilst restoring ecosystems and maintaining biodiversity. This was recognized by the scientific group of the UN Food Systems Summit, which led to the creation of the Coalition on Indigenous Peoples’ food systems.

Traditional knowledge clearly contributes to the enhancement of the sustainability of agriculture and food systems. FAO’s Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) provide a good example of how to support traditional systems and demonstrate the wealth they can provide at social, economic and environmental levels. Since 2002, GIAHS has designated 62 systems in 22 countries as agricultural heritage sites. These represent diverse natural landscapes and agricultural practices that create sustainable livelihoods and food security in rural areas while combining biodiversity, resilient ecosystems, traditions and farmer innovations in a unique way.

The 2022 HLPE-FSN Note on Critical, Emerging and Enduring Issues for Food Security and Nutrition reports that Indigenous Peoples’ traditional knowledge systems are becoming more widely appreciated as methodologically, substantively and contextually strong and they address current contemporary agricultural and food system challenges through insights on socioecological mechanisms and interactions within food generation environments. Additionally, there is great value in acknowledging and striving to foster the connection between modern, scientific practices and traditional knowledge systems.

Despite their centrality, Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems, and traditional knowledge and practices are undervalued and under unprecedented risk of disappearance. One of the main challenges is that Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems, and traditional knowledge and practices are either misunderstood or unknown, which often result in incomplete or inadequate policy tools. To this end, it is critical to establish a political willingness and leadership to increase Indigenous People's participation in the policy making processes.

This thematic workstream will benefit from the comparative advantage of the CFS to offer an inclusive and intergovernmental platform for global coordination and policy convergence, which will bring together policy makers, scientific international communities, UN Agencies and Indigenous Peoples.

Objectives and expected outcomes: The objective of the workstream is to create a set of focused, action-oriented policy recommendations on “Preserving, strengthening and promoting Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems and traditional practices for sustainable food systems to achieve FSN” as a key means of achieving the CFS vision, SDG2, and an array of other SDGs, including SDGs 1, 10, 12, 13 and 15. The workstream will benefit from the findings and recommendations of an HLPE-FSN report on the topic.

## Overview

This scoping paper draft addresses Indigenous Peoples’ food and knowledge systems’ solutions to enhance food security and nutrition (FSN) and contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). The scope covers preserving, strengthening and promoting these systems and practices in a rights-based policy framework to develop and present a set of focused, action-oriented policy recommendations.

Indigenous Peoples have deep and enduring connections, along with inherent and granted roles and rights, related to food systems, knowledge systems and traditional practices. Unique and sophisticated food systems-related knowledge is possessed by Indigenous Peoples, much of which is undocumented and therefore un- or under-utilized. Even when it is documented, indigenous knowledge is often overlooked and rarely recognized as having scientific value, resulting in its exclusion from published literature.

The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition ([HLPE-FSN](#)) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has been analyzing issues related to Indigenous Peoples and indigenous knowledge in all its reports, and with increasing frequency in recent years. Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition (2017) makes ten recommendations specific to Indigenous Peoples. Integration of transdisciplinary science and indigenous knowledge in participatory innovation processes that transform food system is recommended in the 2019 HLPE-FSN Report, Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. In the 2022 HLPE-FSN Note on Critical, Emerging and Enduring Issues for Food Security and Nutrition, the need to build meaningful interfaces for diverse knowledge and practices is emphasized. It states that Indigenous Peoples' traditional knowledge systems are methodologically, substantively and contextually strong, and can contribute to evidence-based agricultural and food system policies and programmes, and deliver solutions, across important dimensions of FSN.

Much has been documented on the consequences for Indigenous Peoples when separated from their traditional food systems. Those consequences include food insecurity, malnutrition<sup>[1]</sup>, loss of food biodiversity, and opportunity-loss for transforming food systems to be more resilient and sustainable (Kuhnlein et al., 2009, 2013). The 2023 HLPE-FSN report on Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition, recommends that policy and legislation should be informed by indigenous knowledge and related data, to broaden the spectrum of evidence for FSN policy and action, and address the systemic inequalities disproportionately affecting Indigenous Peoples.

Reviewing, consolidating, and presenting FSN recommendations from relevant sectors and disciplines will bring much needed attention to policy imperatives for achieving the CFS vision and the SDGs; and for advancing progress on realizing the right to food and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Consultations on this scope and on the development of the full report will be held with a comprehensive range of rights-holders and stakeholders. Beneficiaries of the report will be Indigenous Peoples and the wider global community, through the CFS.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

While drafting the report, HLPE-FSN experts will adhere to the following guiding principles, in addition to the established HLPE-FSN working procedures, to ensure legitimacy among stakeholders and maintain a high degree of scientific quality:

1. The rights-based policy framework includes the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the right to food, and the rights of nature, along with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
2. Consistent with the wording of the CFS request, and in respect of the position of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and that of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples, the focus on 'food and knowledge systems' will be Indigenous Peoples exclusively (i.e., it will not include terms such as 'local communities')<sup>[2]</sup>.

3. The report will be focused on Indigenous Peoples' food and knowledge systems, as elaborated in the CFS MYPOW.
4. The report will also address traditional knowledge and practices covering those from cultures and communities with heritages and legacies of place (e.g., local communities), and those designated as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)).
5. A review of relevant policy recommendations from a range of scientific and intergovernmental processes will be conducted.
6. Relevant text and recommendations from previous HLPE-FSN reports will be reviewed, updated, and corrected as appropriate.
7. Current disparate, conflicting, contradictory, and controversial issues will be addressed, along with ramifications, repercussions and unintended consequences for Indigenous Peoples from unrelated, and/or well-meaning policies and processes.
8. Recommendations will be directed to CFS, UN agencies, private sector, civil society organizations, national and local governments, academia and research sector, and Indigenous Peoples' mechanisms and governing bodies as rights' holders.
9. All consultations, content of the report, and especially all recommendations, will respect Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), principles of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS, 2011), and sovereignty issues around food and information.