

Proposal for CFS engagement in advancing nutrition

Draft proposal to be finalized by OEWG for endorsement at CFS 43 in October 2016

1. This paper proposes a framework for CFS to step up its contribution to the global fight against malnutrition in all its forms, consistent with its mandate.

I- BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2. The increased recognition of the paramount importance of nutrition to human beings and the profound changes in the nutrition situation recently, as a result of rapidly evolving social, cultural, economic and political factors¹, have contributed to nutrition moving up on both the global political and development agendas. Nutrition is now considered as a powerful driver of sustainable development, essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)² of the 2030 Agenda.
3. Malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity, impacts not only on individual life opportunities by affecting people's health and wellbeing but has also social and economic negative consequences for communities and countries. The causes associated with malnutrition are complex and multidimensional, including poverty, underdevelopment and low socio-economic status, which often underlie the lack of stable access to healthy, balanced and diversified food and safe drinking water, inadequate infant and young child caring and feeding practices, poor sanitation and hygiene, insufficient access to education and health services.
4. Momentum for tackling malnutrition has grown among a great number and variety of actors, in different sectors and at all levels. In November 2014, FAO and WHO members committed to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), "reaffirming the right to everyone to have access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger"³. They also agreed on a set of voluntary policy options and strategies for consideration by governments, in cooperation with other stakeholders, to implement ICN2 commitments⁴.
5. The nutrition dimension is integral to the concept of food security and to the work of CFS and CFS is committed to further supporting on-going efforts of governments and other stakeholders

¹ Undernutrition continues to decline but remains at unacceptably high levels, while other forms of malnutrition especially overweight, obesity and diet related non communicable diseases are steadily rising: the latest estimates available indicate that about 800 million people were chronically undernourished in 2014-16 (FAO, State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2015); over 2 billion people were suffering from micronutrient deficiencies; and 1.9 billion adults were overweight, of which 600 million were obese (WHO, 2015).

² Nutrition is explicitly addressed in the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: "End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture", which includes an ambitious target of ending malnutrition in all its forms. Nutrition has also a fundamental role to play in achieving other goals of the 2030 Agenda, in particular the goals related to poverty, health, education, gender, work, growth, inequality and climate change.

³ ICN2, Conference Outcome Document: Rome Declaration on Nutrition, November 2014

⁴ ICN2, Conference Outcome Document: Framework for Action, November 2014

to address malnutrition, including in the context of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) which was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on 1 April 2016⁵ and endorsed ICN2 outcomes⁶.

6. Considering its mandate and as a global and multistakeholder forum, CFS is in a position to make a unique contribution by improving policy coherence at global level and promoting coordinated action of a large range of actors, thus contributing to the collective achievement of improved nutrition for all through a truly integrated approach. Country efforts will require coordinated support from the UN agencies and bodies with a mandate in nutrition⁷ and broad multisectoral partnerships between different actors, including civil society and the private sector, at all levels⁸.

II- VISION

7. CFS recognizes the need for a holistic, interdisciplinary and inclusive approach to nutrition that bridges all relevant sectors - in particular the food/agriculture⁹ and health sectors – in the context of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Consistent with the overall vision of CFS¹⁰, the vision for CFS work in advancing nutrition is:

A world free from malnutrition in all its forms, where all people at all stages of life and at all times have access to adequate food and enjoy diversified, balanced and healthy diets for an active and healthy life.

8. CFS will contribute by promoting effective evidence-based policies for reducing malnutrition, through inclusive multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral processes.

III- EARLY FOCUS ON FOOD SYSTEMS

9. CFS mandate and multistakeholder nature lend themselves to addressing food systems¹¹ as an early priority, which can be extended to other areas at a later stage as part of the long term

⁵ UNGA Resolution, A/70/L.42

⁶ UNGA called upon FAO and WHO to lead its implementation, in collaboration with WFP, IFAD and UNICEF, and to develop a work programme, using coordination mechanisms such as UNSCN and multi-stakeholder platforms such as CFS. Governments and other relevant stakeholders, including international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia, were invited to actively support the implementation of the Decade of Action on Nutrition.

⁷ As a UN dedicated platform, UNSCN plays an important role in coordinating UN policy, in line with its four strategic objectives: maximize UN policy coherence and advocacy on nutrition; support consistent and accountable delivery by the UN System; explore new and emerging nutrition-related issues; and promote knowledge sharing across the UN System (UNSCN Strategic Plan for 2016-20).

⁸ ICN2 Rome Declaration, paragraph 14 o) *“the United Nations system, including the Committee on World Food Security, and international and regional financial institutions should work more effectively together to support national and regional efforts, as appropriate, and enhance international cooperation and development assistance to accelerate progress in addressing malnutrition”*.

⁹ The term “agriculture” includes crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.

¹⁰ Since its reform in 2009, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) aims to be *“the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings. CFS will strive for a world free from hunger where countries implement the voluntary guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”* (Reform document, para.4 CFS:2009/2 rev.2). In *“Integrating the Right to Adequate Food in National Food and Nutrition Security - Practical Approaches to Policy and Programme Analysis”*, FAO, 2014, “adequate” is defined as: *“(i) sufficient in quantity and content for good nutrition linked to an active and health life; (ii) free from harmful substances; and (iii) culturally acceptable to the consumer”*.

¹¹ Food system is defined in the HLPE Report on *“Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems”* as follows: *“A food system gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the*

vision. By committing initially to food systems and food value chains, CFS will build on its previous work in a number of relevant areas, including past work of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE). It will draw on the technical expertise from the three Rome-based agencies, WHO and other UN bodies with a mandate in nutrition, and on the relationship between food systems and nutrition, an area that is of global interest and significance.

10. Food systems play an essential role in determining healthy diets. Food systems are influenced by political, environmental, cultural and socio-economic factors such as poverty, inequality, livelihoods, climate change and natural resource management and shaped by the objectives of a wide variety of actors, with the private sector playing a major role. Private sector includes a large range of actors from small scale producers and processors to large companies that operate at multinational level. Improved health and nutrition is only one of the objectives of the many actors that are involved in food systems, with tensions between sometimes conflicting objectives such as nutrition and profitability.
11. The importance of sustainable food systems for nutrition and the current challenges for food systems to contribute to diversified, balanced and healthy diets was emphasized in the ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition¹². A number of factors contribute to making current food systems globally unsustainable, including the high proportion of food losses and waste, with often dramatic negative consequences reaching beyond public health concerns, with economic, social and political implications.
12. CFS will build on existing work to connect nutrition and food systems. It will add value by providing opportunities to a wide-range of food security and nutrition stakeholders to work together on policy issues of global concern and agree on recommendations, coordinating their work. HLPE reports, including the forthcoming report on Nutrition and Food Systems, will play a key role by providing independent evidence-based information based on existing high quality research, data and technical studies.

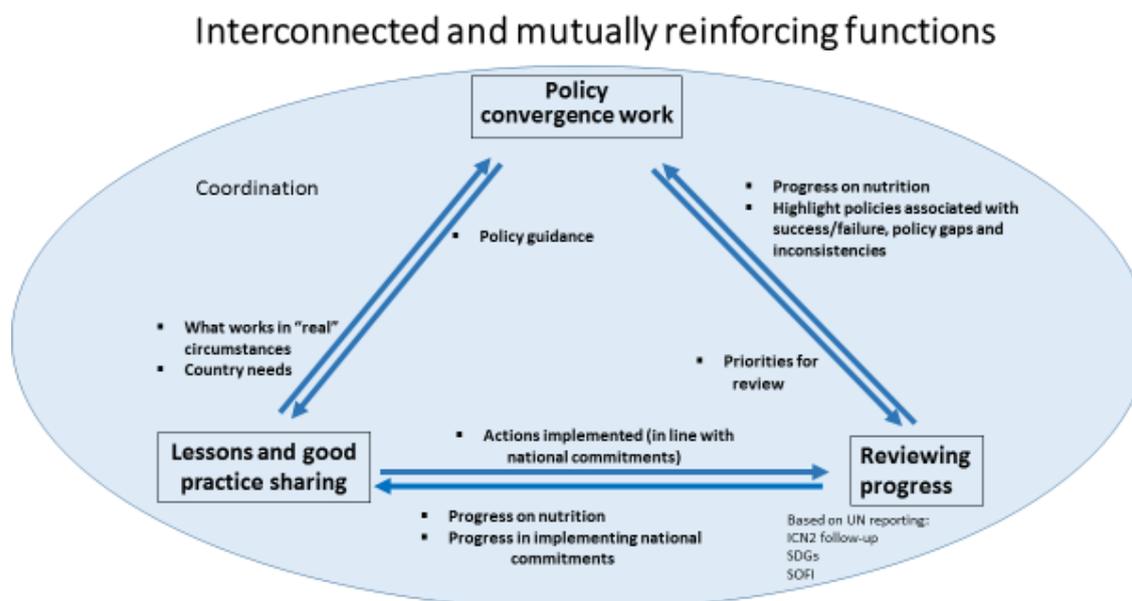
IV- FUNCTIONS OF CFS WORK ON NUTRITION

13. The CFS work in nutrition will be carried out through three interconnected and mutually reinforcing functions that fulfill CFS overall role of global coordination: policy convergence; lessons and good practice sharing; and using the CFS platform for reviewing progress (see chart below).
14. CFS policy convergence work will provide countries with policy guidance within and across the main relevant sectors. It will capitalize on the work carried out under the two other functions, ensuring that policy guidance is effective and relevant to countries - considering political, institutional, technical and capacity dimensions - and results in policy changes that positively impact on nutrition. Reviewing progress will inform CFS of achievements in addressing malnutrition and implementing national commitments, highlighting policies associated with success and failure, gaps and inconsistencies.

production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes."

¹² "Acknowledge that current food systems are being increasingly challenged to provide adequate, safe and diversified and nutrient rich food for all that contribute to healthy diets due to, inter alia, constraints posed by resource scarcity and environmental degradation, as well as by unsustainable production and consumption patterns, food losses and waste, and unbalanced distribution", ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition.

15. The functions and activities developed in the following sections for CFS work in nutrition will contribute to FAO and WHO led efforts to implement a work programme for the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025).



(i) Policy convergence

16. Policy convergence work will be central to CFS engagement in advancing nutrition. It will aim to improve the coordination and coherence of policies within a cross-sectoral approach that includes *inter alia* agriculture, health and sanitation, social protection, trade and education. It will build on independent evidence-based knowledge and policy work. It may lead to the formulation of policy recommendations, international strategies, voluntary guidelines, principles or other policy frameworks as appropriate. It will benefit from inputs from the national and regional levels, expert advice and opinions from the whole range of CFS stakeholders.
17. CFS policy convergence work will, in its early focus on food systems, identify policy changes needed for reshaping food systems to improve nutrition and enable healthy diets, building on and contributing to the operationalization, among others, of the ICN2 policy recommendations¹³. It is expected to address the key causes of vulnerability to all forms of malnutrition in different types of food systems in both rural and urban areas, across the life cycle and according to socio-economic determinants, with special attention to the poorest and most vulnerable groups.
18. CFS policy convergence work will recognize the essential roles of women in the nutrition and health of their families, including through their important contribution to food production, processing, marketing, retailing, preparation, consumption and other food systems activities. It will promote an enabling environment for both men and women to actively participate and

¹³ Different elements of the food systems are addressed in the set of "Recommended actions for sustainable food systems promoting healthy diets" for policy and programme options in the ICN2 Framework for Action (recommendations 8-16) and in other relevant sections of the document such as the section on "Recommended actions for nutrition education and information".

contribute to better nutrition at household and individual level. It will recognize the importance of mother and child nutrition, with a special focus on undernutrition. These will imply giving special attention, in the design and targeting of policies that shape both supply- and demand-oriented food systems interventions for good nutrition, including nutrition education, to promoting women's rights and empowerment.

19. The priorities for future policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems and the nature of policy outcomes (recommendations, guidelines, principles, etc.) will be identified based on the evidence in the HLPE forthcoming report on Nutrition and Food Systems that will be issued in October 2017. The priorities will also take into account actual experiences and approaches in implementing successful public policies and review of progress in achieving nutrition (based on UN reporting on SDGs - reshaped SOFI - and ICN2 implementation), both of which could start in Plenary in October 2017. The OEWG proposal on CFS work in nutrition will be reflected in the CFS Multiyear Program of Work for 2018-19.

20. CFS activities on nutrition during the intersessional period of 2016/17 are indicated in the table below.

Activities	Who	When	Outcome
Prepare an HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems to set the basis for a multistakeholder consensus-driven process	HLPE	Report to be launched during CFS 44 in October 2017	Information base and evidence to determine priorities and nature of policy outcomes
Organize several events to develop common understanding of issues and lay the basis for informed CFS policy convergence work ¹⁴	CFS Secretariat	Intersessional period 2016/2017	Shared understanding of issues relevant to nutrition and food systems, as a preparatory step to policy convergence work
Discuss the HLPE zero draft report on Nutrition and Food Systems	OEWG on nutrition	Intersessional period 2016/2017	Comments to HLPE submitted by OEWG participants, on an individual basis
Discuss the road map of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and agree on CFS contribution	OEWG on nutrition, Plenary	Intersessional period 2016/2017	Agreement on CFS contribution to the implementation of the Decade of Action on Nutrition
Identify priorities and policy outcomes for policy convergence work based on the HLPE report on nutrition and food systems, lessons and good practices, and	OEWG on nutrition, Bureau/AG, Plenary	Intersessional period 2017/2018 with approval	Terms of Reference agreed (with scope, timeframe and resourcing requirements)

¹⁴ These events may be based on technical and discussion briefs of UNSCN that potentially include issues related to investments for a healthy food system, global nutrition narrative and architecture, and climate change and nutrition.

progress in achieving nutrition outcomes		at CFS 45 in October 2018	
Develop policy products in priority areas (guidelines, principles, framework, etc.)	OEWG on nutrition, Plenary	Commencing after CFS 45	Global consensus on policy guidance, leading to increased policy convergence and coordinated action

(ii) Lessons and good practice sharing

21. Sharing successful lessons and practices about efforts to improve the nutrition outcomes in the context of CFS work is a powerful way to stimulate CFS stakeholders to adopt, adapt and scale up proven and effective practices that are country- and context- specific. The aim is to involve all countries, regardless of their level of income, the nature of malnutrition problems and the characteristics of their food systems. The results will feed into CFS policy convergence work, ensuring that this work is aligned to country needs.
22. Lessons and good practices will be shared by countries on a voluntary basis, including through south-south and triangular exchanges, during intersessional periods and during Plenary week starting in October 2017. It will be led by countries and focused on country-led experiences on specific themes, which will allow to more systematically identifying what works and what does not and knowledge gaps. The good practices will be consistent with the values promoted by CFS, indicated in the TORs developed by the OEWG on monitoring for sharing experiences and good practices¹⁵. Lessons learned and good practices will be synthesized in CFS outcome document and made available to CFS stakeholders.

Activities	Who	When	Outcomes
Countries to share their lessons and good practices on selected themes, including through south-south and triangular exchanges	Countries, in collaboration with existing mechanisms and platforms ¹⁶	Exchanges during intersessional periods and during Plenary week starting at CFS 44 in October 2017, at CFS 45 in October 2018 and then every two years	Improved understanding of what works at country level, to stimulate action and coordination, and guide scope and nature of policy convergence work

(iii) CFS Platform for reviewing progress

23. Under this function, CFS will provide a platform to the institutional actors responsible for reviewing progress on nutrition including in implementing ICN2 recommendations and nutrition-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This will inform countries and

¹⁵ The values referred to in the “*Terms of Reference to share experiences and good practices in applying CFS decisions and recommendations through organizing events at national, regional and global levels*” are: inclusiveness and participation; evidence-based analysis; environmental, economic and social sustainability; gender equality; focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups; multisectoral approach; and resilience of livelihoods.

¹⁶ Including with the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN) which has accumulated significant experience in country-led and multistakeholder approaches and is also aiming at capitalizing more on learning exchanges between countries.

the international community of progress in reducing malnutrition and in implementing national commitments. This will highlight policies, approaches and interventions associated with successes and failures, gaps and inconsistencies, and promote a CFS coordinated response among all actors at global, regional and national levels to improve nutrition.

24. Regarding ICN2 reporting, CFS will invite FAO and WHO to share during CFS Plenary the joint report on the overall progress towards the implementation of the ICN2 commitments on a biennial basis.
25. Communication will be established between CFS and WHO/FAO, with the CFS Chair providing updates to the governing bodies of both UN agencies (WHO World Health Assembly; FAO Conference) on the progress of CFS work on nutrition, as a contribution to ICN2 follow-up work. This will demonstrate active engagement into multisectoral collaboration on nutrition, by bringing agriculture, food security and health together for achieving improved nutritional outcomes. It will give a strong signal to countries and support their efforts of working across sectors for improved nutrition and health for all. CFS work on reviewing progress in nutrition is also expected to be part of the CFS contribution to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)¹⁷.

Activities	Who	When	Outcomes
Provide space and setting to forthcoming progress review mechanisms to discuss progress in implementing policies and actions that are relevant to CFS work in nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WHO/FAO on ICN2 - Reshaped SOFI on SDGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ICN2 reporting starting at CFS 44 Plenary in October 2017 and then every two years during the Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), alternately with the lessons and good practice - SOFI annual reporting starting in 2017 	CFS is informed of progress in reducing malnutrition and actions associated with successes and failures, gaps and inconsistencies, which feeds policy convergence work and promotes coordination
Brief governing bodies on CFS work on nutrition as a contribution to ICN2 follow-up (based on CFS plenary reports)	CFS Chair	FAO Conference and WHO World Health Assembly every two years, starting in 2017	Improved multisectoral coordination with key intergovernmental bodies
Provide inputs to the HLPF on progress in nutrition as part of CFS work on SDGs	Bureau/AG, Plenary, Secretariat	To be determined, according to HLPF calendar	CFS contribution on nutrition to the global thematic review under HLPF

¹⁷ See the Proposal on CFS engagement to advance 2030 Agenda which will be presented for endorsement at CFS 43.