

Proposal for CFS engagement in advancing nutrition

Draft proposal to be finalized by OEWG for discussion by the Bureau in consultation with the Advisory Group, and presented for endorsement at CFS 43 in October 2016

1. The objective of this paper is to propose a framework to enable the Committee to step up its contribution to the global fight against malnutrition in all its forms, consistent with its mandate and in harmony with the work and mandate of other bodies.

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 in the last twenty years, 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 many 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, including through lost productivity. 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 sufficient 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 member states 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. A UN Decade of Action on Nutrition [is expected to be]⁴

¹Undernutrition 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; over 2 billion people were suffering from micronutrient deficiencies; and 1.9 billion adults were overweight, of which 600 million were obese.

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 role to play in achieving other goals of the 2030 Agenda, such as 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

⁴ Will be replaced by [has been] after adoption of the resolution

proclaimed by the UN General Assembly to sustain all commitments to eradicate malnutrition between 2016 and 2025.

5. In order to implement ICN2 recommendations, country efforts will require coordinated support from the United Nations System, its agencies and bodies, according to their respective mandates, and broad multisectoral partnerships between different actors, including **civil society organizations (CSOs)** and the private sector, at all levels⁵.
6. 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 to address malnutrition, including through the implementation of ICN2 outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in the context of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition. Considering CFS mandate and comparative advantages, CFS is in a position to make a unique contribution by improving policy coherence at global level and coordinated action of a large range of actors through inclusive multistakeholder cross-sectoral processes, thus contributing to the **collective achievement of improved nutrition** for all through a truly integrated approach.

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/agriculture and health sectors. Consistent with the overall vision of CFS⁶, 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 and consume adequate food⁷

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 comparative advantages lend themselves to addressing food systems⁸ and food value chains as an early priority, which **can be extended to other areas at a later stage.** By

⁵ 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”.*

⁶ 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).

⁷ “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, in *“Integrating the Right to Adequate Food in National Food and Nutrition Security - Practical Approaches to Policy and Programme Analysis”*, FAO, 2014.

⁸ 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 production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.”*

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 and on the relationship between food systems and nutrition, an area that is of global interest and significance.

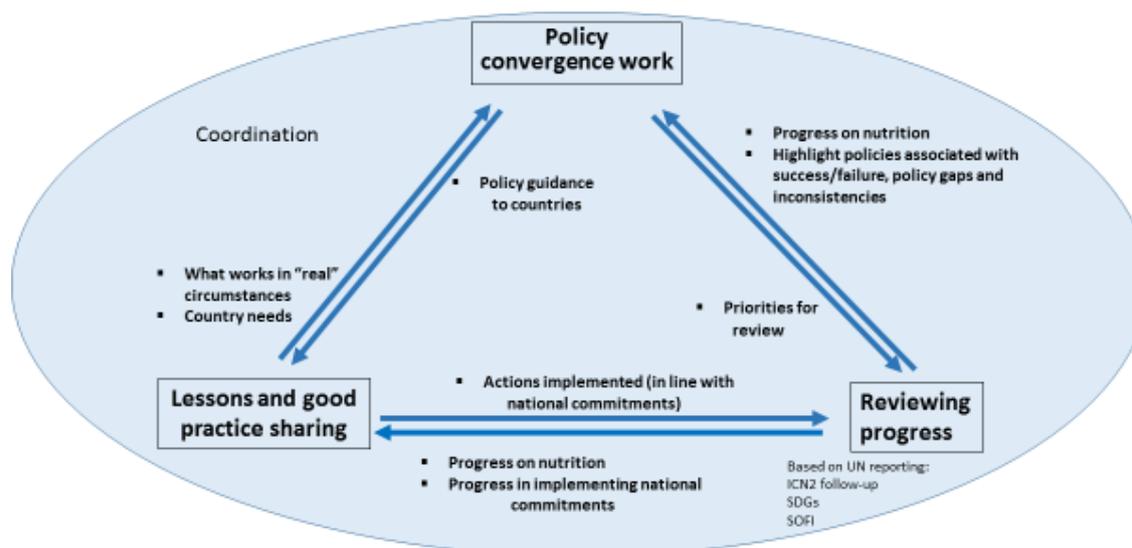
10. The importance of sustainable food systems for nutrition and the current challenges for food systems to contribute to diversified, balanced and healthy diets, was emphasized in the ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition⁹. A number of factors contribute to making current food systems globally unsustainable, with often dramatic negative consequences reaching beyond public health concerns, with economic, social and political implications.
11. Food systems are driven 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 in particular in large industrial food systems. Improved health and nutrition is only one of the objectives of food systems, with tensions between sometimes conflicting objectives such as nutrition, sustainability and profitability objectives.
12. CFS will build on existing work to connecting 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 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.
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).

⁹ "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.

Interconnected and mutually reinforcing functions



(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, 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 recommendations¹⁰. 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 contribute to nutrition at household level, promoting gender equality and women's rights and empowerment throughout sustainable food systems.

¹⁰ 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).

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 on the basis of the evidence in the HLPE forthcoming report on Nutrition and Food Systems which 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 include a discussion on the HLPE zero draft report on Nutrition and Food Systems, which will ensure that the report is aligned with CFS expectations that are expressed in the request submitted to HLPE for the preparation of the report. They also include the organization of a series of events to develop a common understanding among CFS members and participants of nutrition and food systems-related issues that are relevant to policy convergence work, as a preparatory step to developing policy guidance. 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 and nutrition.

Activities	Who	When	Outcome
Prepare an HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems to set the basis for a multistakeholder consensus-driven discussion	HLPE	Report to be launched during CFS 44 in October 2017	Information base and evidence to determine priorities and nature of policy convergence
Organize several events to improve understanding of issues and lay the basis for informed CFS policy convergence work	CFS Secretariat	Intersessional period 2016/2017	Shared understanding of issues relevant to nutrition and food systems, as a preparatory step to policy convergence based on HLPE report
Discuss the HLPE zero draft report on Nutrition and Food Systems	OEWG on nutrition	Intersessional period 2016/2017	Comments from OEWG provided to HLPE, in line with the request submitted for the HLPE report
Discuss the road map of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025 and agree on CFS contribution	OEWG on nutrition, Plenary	Intersessional period 2016/2017	CFS contribution to implementing the Decade of Action for Nutrition that would feed into the overall umbrella of the Decade of Action
Identify priorities and policy outcomes for policy convergence work based on the HLPE report, lessons and good practices, and	OEWG on nutrition, Bureau/AG, Plenary	Intersessional period 2017/2018 with approval	Terms of Reference (TORs) agreed (with scope, timeframe and

progress in achieving nutrition outcomes		at CFS 45 in October 2018	resourcing requirements)
Develop policy guidance in priority areas	OEWG on nutrition, Plenary	Commencing after CFS 45 for conclusion in line with TORs	Global consensus on policy guidance, leading to coordinated work

(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 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 specific Plenary sessions. It will be led by countries and focused on country-led experiences. 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 practices¹¹. Such exchanges could take place in Plenary starting in October 2017, in October 2018 and **then once every two years**. Lessons learned and good practices will be synthesized in CFS outcome document and communicated to food security and nutrition 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	Exchanges in Plenary 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 the international community of progress in reducing malnutrition and in implementing national commitments. This will highlight policies, approaches and interventions associated with

¹¹ The values referred to in the “*Terms of Reference to share experiences and good practices in applying CFS decisions and recommendations, including within CFS sessions and 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.

successes and failures, gaps and inconsistencies, and promote a CFS coordinated response among all actors at global, regional and national levels to improve the **nutritional outcomes of food systems**.

24. Regarding ICN2 reporting, CFS will invite FAO and WHO to share within 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, bringing agriculture, food security, nutrition and health together. It will give a strong signal to countries and support their efforts of working across sectors for improved nutrition and health for all.

Activities	Who	When	Outcomes
Provide space and setting to forthcoming progress review mechanisms to discuss progress in implementing policies and interventions 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, alternately with the lessons and good practice Plenary session - 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	Improved multisectoral coordination with key intergovernmental bodies
Provide inputs through CFS work on SDGs to the global follow up and review process on SDGs implementation under the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)	Bureau/AG, Plenary, Secretariat	To be determined, according to HLPF calendar	CFS contribution on nutrition to the global thematic review under HLPF