

First CFS Intersessional Event on Nutrition

Following the last OEWG on Nutrition, the CFS Secretariat received several comments on the themes proposed for possible intersessional events on nutrition. In consideration of such comments, the Nutrition TTT decided to focus on two possible options for the theme of the first event, to be held, if the necessary additional resources were made available, on 19 September 2018.

For such two options/themes, the following two proposals were provided by the main proponents, to further inform a final decision of the OEWG. The first one has been presented by the CSM while the second one by SCN, WHO and PSM.

1. [Food Systems Framework and Typologies \(previously “HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems”\) – as proposed by CSM](#)

Rationale

The development and negotiation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, following the endorsement of the Terms of Reference by the CFS Plenary in October 2018, will be guided by two underlying conceptual frameworks, namely the articulation of the various components of the food systems and the categorization of the typologies of food systems. Both these frameworks have been articulated in the HLPE Report #12 on Food Systems and Nutrition. Indeed, the HLPE offered an intellectual articulation of the food system framework and the subsequent categorization of food systems that serve well the descriptive and analytical purposes of the Report. However, some CFS Members and Participants have pointed out that normative interventions, such as the Voluntary Guidelines, may require frameworks that might be less descriptive but better expose the entry points for policy interventions. For instance, rather than a macro categorization of food systems (traditional, mixed and modern) such as the HLPE portrays, it might be more adequate to the purpose of the Voluntary Guidelines to identify sub-systems that might exist within each of these macro-systems that may offer more suitable entry points for normative initiatives (laws, policies and programmes). It is the difference between describing a system and exposing the neuralgic points where interventions to change that system are possible.

Past CFS policy convergence processes, for instance the one on Sustainable Agricultural Development including Livestock, had to devote considerable amount of energy in redefining classifications offered by the HLPE and translate into an agreed CFS framework for the purpose of crystallizing policy recommendations. It would therefore be beneficial to allow the HLPE to better explain the rationale of its classifications while also generating a space for informal but substantive discussion among CFS members and participants on the adequacy of these classifications in view of the guidelines process. The informal settings of the intersessional event may contribute to building a stronger science-policy interface, offer the opportunity to CFS members and participants to expose the different angles they may have on the matter, and build common ground on possible ways forward.

Proposed programme outline

The intersessional event might be organized around the following outline programme:

- Opening Session
- Module 1 – Which Food System Framework better serve the elaboration of the Guidelines?
 - Presentation of HLPE Food System Framework
 - Open debate catalysed by 2-3 initial interventions
- Module 2 – Which Food System Typologies better serve the elaboration of the Guidelines?
 - Presentation of HLPE Food System Framework
 - Open debate catalysed by 2-3 initial interventions
- Closing Session

2. Food transformation as opportunity to enhance healthier food choices along the food value chain – SCN, WHO and PSM

Relevance to CFS nutrition policy convergence work

Large part of our diets consists of food that has been processed/transformed in one way or another. More and more, across all types of food systems, people are exposed to new food environments that increase choices and dependency on industrially transformed foods. Food product reformulation is one recommended approach to improving the quality of processed/transformed food for healthier options. An increasing number of private sector entities have started to produce and promote more food products consistent with a healthy diet. This includes reformulating products that follow relevant nutrient facts and labelling standards, such as on sugar, salts, fats and trans-fat content.

For reformulation strategies to be impactful, they need to be part of the wider food supply chain embedded in the overall food system, to ensure also the availability of food ingredients as well as consumer education. Price and availability of healthier dietary options, in particular the availability of fresh products, legumes, fruit and vegetables, are also needed in order to produce a substantial dietary change. This requires incentives for their production, better supply chains, price incentives and greater availability in public institutions.

The HLPE report reaffirms that unhealthy diets are now the number one risk factor globally for deaths and disability. As the HLPE report states, in some countries, food processing policies and programmes have targeted trans-fats and sodium to reduce the burden of NCDs, giving examples mainly from HICs. There is still a need for further expanding these efforts in LMIC, so that also poorer communities and the population in LMICs can benefit from healthier choices also of processed foods.

Expected role and added values of CFS

Malnutrition in all its forms can only be addressed effectively through better policy coherence across sectors and through innovative partnerships.

CFS added value is its multistakeholder platform that allows the interaction and engagement with all relevant stakeholders, which allows putting food product reformulation approaches into the wider food supply chain context. The expectation is that CFS provides the platform for discussion and engagement of all stakeholders including the PSM in this important topic.

Objectives:

- a) To provide platform for learning and discussion of success stories and challenges regarding food product reformulation measures (mandatory and voluntary) that are being implemented in countries (different world regions and food components);
- b) To provide platform for interested countries to come together and network;
- c) To enable dialogue with Private Sector actors about their role and approach.

Potential partners:

- a) Country representatives and the partners engaged in their national measures.
- b) PSM members, food and beverage industry, SME enterprises
- c) CSM members