

Message from the Nutrition OEWG Chair

It is my pleasure to present the revised version of the draft Terms of Reference (TORs) for the preparation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. This new version responds to the guidance provided by OEWG members on the 28th of March. The revised TORs adopt a comprehensive and systemic approach to food systems building on the evidence provided in the HLPE report as the basis for this CFS policy convergence work. This approach looks at food systems holistically, with all their constituent components, namely food supply chains, food environments and consumer behavior, as policy entry points.

The meeting of March 28th called for such a broader and systemic approach also to address the existing policy fragmentation between the food and health sectors to establish stronger linkages between nutrition and production. It was also stressed by the OEWG that more importance is to be attributed to the quality and relevance of the product without excluding the possibility of an extension in time of the process being supported by most members. In consultation with the Technical Task Team (TTT), these elements, together with the written inputs subsequently submitted by many OEWG members, were all incorporated by the CFS Secretariat in this new version of the TORs.

You will note that in this version the sections on Objective and Purpose have been merged. The Background and Rationale have also been revised to reflect the consideration of food systems in their entirety, in all their three constituent elements. In line with this wider approach, the TORs now also make direct reference to the different drivers of change that impact food systems, as identified by the HLPE. The level of detail for each section of the Proposed Scope has been streamlined considering the nature of the proposed document and the need to allow adequate time for discussion during the policy convergence process. Finally, the last section includes additional indications concerning the process and a budget estimate.

The objective of the OEWG meeting on 30 April is to reach agreement on the structure, main elements of the draft TORs. I encourage all members of the OEWG to provide suggestions on amendments, additions and deletions to be considered in view of the final draft version that will be presented for finalization at the OEWG meeting on 15 June.

To facilitate the discussion, I would suggest the following guiding points:

- a) General comments on the revised version.
- b) Additional/other elements that need to be included in Section IV on the Proposed Scope of the Voluntary Guidelines.
- c) Suggestion concerning the other sections of the document
- d) Comments on the budget estimate and schedule.

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CFS Nutrition OEWG Chair

1. Draft Terms of Reference for the preparation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition

I. CFS Strategy on Nutrition

1. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) adopted in 2016 a strategy concerning its engagement in advancing nutrition¹. CFS recognizes the need for a holistic, interdisciplinary and inclusive approach to nutrition that bridges all relevant sectors – in particular food/agriculture and health sectors – in the context of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. 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”*.
2. The focus of the agreed strategy is on malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity as well as its multidimensional causes and consequences. Malnutrition in all its forms affects every country and requires integrated approaches that address a multiplicity of burdens and that target their causes across the entirety of food systems.
3. The strategy indicates that CFS work is expected to identify policy changes needed for reshaping food systems to improve nutrition and enable healthy diets. The purpose is to address the key causes of vulnerability to all forms of malnutrition in different types of food systems in both rural and urban areas with special attention to the poorest and the most nutritionally vulnerable.
4. The CFS Plenary at its 44th Session in October 2017 *“mandated the OEWG on Nutrition, in the context of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), to develop as per MYPoW 2018-19, using voluntary resources and re-prioritizing existing ones, terms of reference for the policy convergence process leading to voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition for submission to Plenary in CFS 45. These would be informed by the HLPE report and benefit from the outcomes of the CFS 2016-2017 intersessional activities and of nutrition-related discussions held at CFS 44”*².
5. CFS Plenary also *“recommended that subsequent policy convergence in CFS on nutrition is supported by the scientific evidence provided in the HLPE report”*³ and, in this regard, *“noted recommendation 9a of the report for CFS to consider elaborating voluntary guidelines on improved food environments for healthy diets”*⁴.

¹ CFS 2016/43/9 - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr186e.pdf>

² CFS 44 Final Report, paragraph 19.c - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv030e.pdf>

³ CFS 44 Final Report, paragraph 15.b - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv030e.pdf>

⁴ CFS 44 Final Report, paragraph 15.a.ii - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv030e.pdf>

II. CFS Policy Convergence Objective and Purpose

6. The Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition are intended to provide guidance, as a reference document, to governments, their partners and other stakeholders on appropriate policies, investments and institutional arrangements needed to address the key causes of malnutrition in all its forms for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and the achievement of SDG2.
7. The objective is to present a set of guidelines that contribute to improve food systems to ensure that the diets needed for optimal nutrition are available, affordable, acceptable, safe and of adequate quantity and quality.
8. The Voluntary Guidelines will focus on food systems and nutrition following a comprehensive and systemic approach with a view to countering the existing policy fragmentation between the food and health sectors, while also addressing livelihood and sustainability challenges. Policies that are intended to promote healthy and sustainable diets should also aim at enhancing the livelihood of the most vulnerable segments of the population and ensuring the environmental sustainability of food production as well as the protection of biodiversity.
9. The policies in question ultimately aim at contributing to make food systems nutrition-sensitive and promoting secure access to safe, diverse and high-quality diets for everyone. In this regard it is key to explore possible pathways and directions towards more sustainable food systems and identify possible areas where governments and other actors can intervene with a view to improving diets and nutrition outcomes.
10. They are intended to present a set of recommendations which are global in scope and will provide guidance to policy makers and relevant stakeholders for the design of context-specific policies and programmes. This exercise will be developed taking in due consideration country diversities, the different typologies of food systems as well as the many endogenous and exogenous drivers impacting their functionality.
11. The CFS work will also ensure adequate focus on the most vulnerable to malnutrition in all its forms that typically include those with increased nutrient requirements and those who have less control over their choice of diet. This implies particular attention to young and school aged children, adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, indigenous peoples and rural and urban poor also in consideration of the different types of food systems they live in. Attention will be devoted to women's empowerment and gender equality, considering the importance to *"create the conditions for women's strong engagement in shaping food systems that can ensure improved nutrition"*⁵.

⁵ CFS 44 Final Report, paragraph 18.d - <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mv030e.pdf>

12. The voluntary guidelines are expected to provide guidance to help countries operationalize the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Nutrition under the umbrella of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

13. Particular attention should be paid to the identification of policies and interventions that contribute to the achievement of the six Global Nutrition Targets (2025) endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2012 and the diet-related non-communicable disease targets.

III. Background and Rationale

14. In 2016, 815 million people are still undernourished, 155 million children under five years of age remain stunted, and 52 million are wasted. In addition, overweight and obesity are rising quickly and affect all countries. Worldwide obesity has more than doubled since 1980. A staggering 1.9 billion adults were overweight, of which 600 million were obese. The latter represents a key risk factor related to the rise of diet-related non-communicable diseases. An estimated 41 million children under five were overweight, a quarter living in Africa and almost half in Asia. Approximately 2 billion people has some type of micronutrient deficiency. Unhealthy diets are now one of the top risk factors globally for death and disability⁶.

15. In order to address and revert this negative trend, it is key to adopt a holistic approach that looks at the multidimensional causes of malnutrition, including the lack of stable access to healthy, balanced, diversified and safe diets and safe drinking water, inadequate infant and young child caring and feeding practices, poor sanitation and hygiene, insufficient access to education and health services, income poverty, inequalities in access to resources and limited economic opportunities.

16. “Food systems gather 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 output of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes” (HLPE, 2014a). In fact, they are shaped and moved by the people and institutions that initiate or inhibit changes in food systems. The HLPE identified three broad categories of food systems, namely traditional, mixed and modern food systems⁷.

17. In line with the HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems (HLPE, 2017b), three constituent elements of food systems have been identified to serve as policy entry points for nutrition: food supply chains, food environments and consumer behaviour.

18. **Food supply chains** encompass all the activities that move from production to consumption, including production, storage, distribution, processing, packaging, retailing and marketing. The decisions made by the actors at any stage of the chain have implications for the other stages. Food supply chains

⁶ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2017. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017. Building resilience for peace and food security. Rome, FAO.

⁷ HLPE. 2017. Nutrition and Food Systems. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.

can increase the nutritional value of food by increasing access to macronutrients and micronutrients or by reducing the levels of substances associated with diet-related non-communicable diseases. Interventions across food supply chains can improve the availability, affordability and acceptability of nutritious food.

19. **Food environments** consist of the physical, economic and, policy and socio-cultural conditions that shape people's dietary choices and nutritional status. It is in the food environments where consumers engage with the food system to make their decisions about acquiring, preparing and consuming food. They consist of food entry points, namely the physical spaces where food is made available and accessible for purchase and consumption and the infrastructures that allow access these spaces; the affordability and price of foods; the advertising, marketing, and positioning of foods; and the quality and safety of foods through branding and labeling. Food environments are the interface between food supply and demand, a space of convergence where all actors involved in food systems can bring together transformative changes towards greater availability and affordability of nutritious food and ultimately healthier food consumption for improved diets and nutrition.

20. **Consumer behaviour** reflects the choices made by consumers on what food to acquire, store, prepare and eat, and on the allocation of food within the household. Consumer behaviour is influenced by personal preferences determined by taste, convenience, values, traditions, culture and beliefs. However, consumer behaviour is also shaped by the existing food supply chains and food environments so that collective changes in consumer behaviour can open pathways to more sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition and health.

21. Different drivers of change that impact the functionality of food systems and their ability to deliver healthy and sustainable diets are important elements to contextualize the recommendations provided in the guidelines. They could also be considered as additional entry points for policy coherence. The five main categories and related drivers that were identified in the HLPE report will be taken into account, namely: biophysical and environmental (natural resource and ecosystem services, and climate change); innovation, technology and infrastructure; political and economic (leadership, globalization, foreign investment and trade, food policies, land tenure, food prices and volatility, conflicts and humanitarian crises); socio-cultural (culture, religion, rituals, social traditions and women's empowerment); and demographic drivers (population growth, changing age distribution, urbanization, migration and forced displacement). The impact of these drivers depends on the type of food systems, of actors involved, and of policies and interventions that are designed.

IV. Proposed Scope of the Voluntary Guidelines

22. The following section includes a proposed non-exhaustive scope of areas to be addressed in the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. In line with the conceptual framework introduced in the HLPE report, the voluntary guidelines will use the three constituent elements of food systems – food supply chains, food environments, and consumer behaviour – as policy entry points for food system transformation towards CFS vision on nutrition.

23. The Voluntary Guidelines, for each of the three constituent elements of food systems, will consider the different typologies of food systems, as defined by the HLPE, taking into account the challenges and opportunities that specific food systems face along with the actors engaged, with a view to assisting policy-makers in the design of policies and interventions which are adapted to a given context.

24. Annex 1 to these Terms of Reference present references to relevant international guidance that already exists in the field of food systems and nutrition, and with particular attention to the thematic areas addressed in this section, as a tool in support of the preparation of the voluntary guidelines.

a) Food supply chains

Production systems

Agriculture and food production systems affect food availability and affordability as well as dietary quality and diversity. Storage and distribution

The storage and distribution of perishable foods create many opportunities for contamination and food quality losses and waste with negative consequences for diets and health.

Processing and packaging

25. Food processing and packaging contribute to prevent food quality losses and waste and to extend shelf-life while at the same time the extent to which food is processed may influence the degree to which nutrients and other substances/agents enter or exit the supply chain.

Retail and markets

Retail and markets shape the food environment in which consumers make purchasing decisions, influencing consumer behaviour and food consumption patterns.

b) Food environments

Availability and physical access (proximity)

26. Unfavorable geographic conditions, lack of appropriate infrastructure, all forms of conflicts and humanitarian crises, migration and forced displacement can limit access to and distribution of diversified food, especially fresh and other perishable foods, with negative consequences on what can be purchased and consumed.

Economic access (affordability)

For the most vulnerable segments of the population, affording adequate diversity of nutrient-rich foods represents a significant challenge. Promotion, advertising and information

27. Promotion, advertising and information have a direct influence on consumer preferences, purchasing behaviors, consumption patterns, nutrition knowledge of the population.

Food quality and safety

28. Lack of food quality and safety negatively influence consumption patterns and consumer health through changes either in consumer preferences or in food affordability.

c) Consumer behaviour

Nutrition education

Nutrition education is intended to stimulate critical analysis of food choices and helps develop practical skills for a wide range of contexts. Food acceptability

29. The acceptability of food, or consumer preferences, influence consumer diets and can be influenced by the promotion of specific foods

Social norms, values and traditions

30. Food affordability, convenience and desirability are influenced not only by the quality of and the marketing around food but also by the social norms and the cultural values associated with food.

V. Type of Instrument

31. The guidelines will be voluntary and non-binding and should be interpreted and applied consistent with existing obligations under national and international law, and with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable regional and international instruments. These guidelines are to be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions. They should be endorsed by CFS.

32. The Voluntary Guidelines are complementary to and support national, regional and international initiatives which aim at addressing all forms of malnutrition by ensuring that the diets needed for optimal nutrition are available, affordable, acceptable, safe and of adequate quantity and quality, based on sustainable and diverse production. In particular, CFS guidance should build on and integrate existing instruments adopted on these topics within the context of the UN system.

VI. Intended Users of the Guidelines

33. The Voluntary Guidelines speak to all stakeholders that are involved in addressing, or are affected by, malnutrition in all its forms. The primary aim of this tool is to provide concrete instruments to build policy coherence between and across public sector policies at national level as well as between international and national public policies. They should therefore primarily address governments at all levels to help design public policies, although they will be used by all relevant actors in policy discussions and policy implementation processes. These stakeholders are:

- a) Governmental actors, including relevant ministries and national, sub-national, local institutions;
- b) Intergovernmental and regional organizations, including the specialized agencies of the United Nations;
- c) Civil society organizations;
- d) Private sector;
- e) Research organizations and universities;
- f) Development agencies, including international financial institutions;
- g) Foundations.

VII. Proposed process, tentative timeframe and budget estimate

34. The Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition will result from an inclusive consultative process open to all relevant and interested stakeholders. In addition to Member States, adequate participation should be ensured of participants from UN agencies and bodies with specific mandate in the field of food security and nutrition, civil society and non-governmental organizations, international agricultural research systems, international and regional financial institutions, private sector associations and philanthropic foundations.

35. The CFS Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Nutrition will provide the guidance for the consultation process which will be facilitated and implemented by the CFS Secretariat, which is tasked with drafting the different versions of the guidelines, with the assistance of the Technical Task Team (TTT) on Nutrition. Regular updates on the status of the consultation process will be provided to the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group.

36. The process foresees possible consultations at global and regional levels.⁸ OEWG meetings will be held regularly to provide input to advance with the preparation of the guidelines. Regional consultations are planned to get inputs, comments and suggestions on how to best align the guidelines with regional and national priorities and needs. Additional opportunities, such as e-consultations and calls for written inputs, will be given to interested stakeholders to contribute to this process. Intersessional events could take place to inform the ongoing CFS policy convergence process.

37. The various versions of the guidelines at the different stages of the process will be made available well in advance in the six official UN languages (English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian). Interpretation in those languages will be provided during the negotiation of the final version of the Voluntary Guidelines.

38. Adequate financial and human resources should be secured in advance to enable the policy convergence process.

39. The following tentative schedule and budget are proposed:

Task	Timeframe
Terms of Reference are endorsed at CFS 45	October 2018
OEWG meeting to discuss preliminary work on the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines (VG)	February/March 2019
OEWG meeting to discuss VG Zero Draft	May/June 2019

⁸ Depending on the availability of funding.

Regional multistakeholder consultations and e-consultations on VG Zero Draft	June-October 2019
Update on the status of the process at CFS Plenary	October 2019
OEWG meeting to discuss the VG Draft One	December 2019
Negotiation of final version of the voluntary guidelines	March/July 2020
Guidelines are submitted at CFS Plenary for endorsement	October 2020

Budget estimate (USD) -in addition to the estimated costs for CFS staff and technical resources (\$225,000 /year*):

	Planned costs 2019	Planned costs 2020	Total Costs With Regional Consultations	Total Costs Without Regional Consultations
Translation of background documents**	25,000	25,000	50,000	50,000
Translation/interpretation negotiation process***	0	80,000	80,000	80,000
E-consultation****	30,000	0	30,000	30,000
Possible regional multistakeholder consultations*****	500,000	0	500,000	0
TOTAL	555,000	105,000	660,000	160,000

* Staff time (50% and 70% respectively of 2 officers); **Translation of a document of approximately 10,000 words;

Interpretation of one-week negotiation; * 3 consultations through the FSN Forum; ***** Travel to five regional consultations and interpretation



Open Ended Working Group on Nutrition

Draft Terms of Reference - CFS OEWG-NUTRITION/2018/03/28/01_Rev.1

ANNEX 1 – References to relevance guidance informing CFS policy convergence process

[to be developed following OEWG discussion]