CFS contribution to the 
2018 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development global review

“Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”

In depth-review of SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 17

The Committee on World Food Security

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS)’s vision is to be the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner in support of country led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings. The CFS will strive for a world free from hunger where countries implement the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. The unique features of the reformed CFS include expanded participation rules and a specific science-policy interface. CFS’ inclusive policy making processes ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders, particularly those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, are heard in the food and agriculture\(^1\) policy dialogue. The High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) on Food Security and Nutrition provides independent evidence-based reports to inform and support policy discussions.

\(^1\)The term “agriculture” includes crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.
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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Key messages

**CFS is alarmed by the evidence showing that the world is not on track to achieve the food security and nutrition targets of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.** Driven by conflict, climate change and protracted crises, global hunger and food insecurity have recently worsened, and in 2016, an estimated 815 million people were undernourished, compared to 777 million in 2015, while rates of overweight and obesity are continuing to rise.

The pursuit of food security and nutrition (SDG2) is undermined by alarming gaps in access to natural resources, such as land and forests (SDG15), water and sanitation (SDG6) and energy (SDG7) among small-scale food producers and other vulnerable groups, while conversely, food secure and well-nourished communities are essential pillars of sustainable food systems (SDG12) and resilient societies (SDG11). Structural causes of hunger and malnutrition relate to governance, economic and production issues, demographic and social issues, climate and environmental issues. The use and application of CFS integrated policy instruments is conducive to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and to advance progress on these issues in the context of Agenda 2030.

1. **Inequalities in access to land, water, sanitation and energy, unsustainable management of natural resources, and limited economic opportunities in rural areas exacerbate tensions within societies, undermine global food security, and therefore stability, sustainability and resilience, and contribute to the underlying causes of protracted crises.** Policies and investments to tackle these inequalities are essential, with a specific focus on social groups tending to be left behind: rural and farming communities, women, youth and indigenous peoples.

2. **Sustainable management and use of natural resources – including terrestrial biodiversity and water – is central to building resilience, adapting to the effects and mitigating the drivers of climate change.** Smallholders manage a significant share of these resources globally, while being among those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss. An enabling institutional and policy environment is needed for these actors to effectively participate in policy design and support their livelihoods. This will enhance the broader sustainability of societies. It is also essential to promote the sustainability and improvement of all systems of production so as to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems and minimize environmental degradation.

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2 CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, rev 2016, Chapter II, A “Structural causes of hunger and malnutrition”

3 Smallholders are understood here to include small-scale producers and processors, pastoralists, artisans, fishers, communities closely dependant on forests, indigenous peoples, and agricultural workers (CFS-RAI, paragraph 4)
3. Integrated and inclusive development strategies should lead to mutually beneficial links between urban and rural areas. Political commitment is called for to ensure that healthy and sustainable diets for all trigger the positive transformation needed towards sustainable societies.

3- The challenge of transforming towards sustainable and resilient societies can only be addressed by articulating the complementary opportunities and challenges facing urban and rural communities through integrated policies. Approaches that work towards sustainable food systems and healthy diets for all offer win-win solutions, especially for the rural and urban poor.

(a) Are we on track toward sustainable and resilient societies in 2030, in which no one is left behind?

At its Plenary session in October 2017, the Committee on World Food Security expressed concern with recent trends and warned that the world is not on track to achieve SDG2 and other targets of the 2030 Agenda related to food security and nutrition. Recognizing that conflict, climate change and protracted crises are among the main causes, it called on all stakeholders, including all governments and the UN system, to accelerate efforts to address the root causes of such devastation and contribute to the recovery, sustainability, and resilience of societies, including building and strengthening food systems.

We are moving backwards against the Zero-Hunger Challenge.

The latest reports on global food security and nutrition indicate that the world is not only not on track to achieve the SDG targets related to food security and nutrition. The two indicators of SDG 2.1. (Prevalence of Undernourishment and Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity, based on FIES) both showed a deterioration in 2016 compared to 2015. This could signal a reversal of a long-term trend of gradually improving global food security. In terms of nutrition indicators, global progress in stunting and wasting is too slow, while rising rates of anaemia among women of reproductive age, as well as of overweight and obesity in the world add to the concerns. At a regional level, the number of children who are stunted is increasing in Africa, and wasting is still high in South Asia. Africa also has the highest levels of severe food insecurity in the world (27.4% of the population), and –along with Latin America- it is one of the regions in the world where food insecurity is on the rise.

Conflicts are among the main drivers contributing to the reversal in trends.

Conflict is a key driver of situations of severe food crisis and recently re-emerged famines, while hunger and undernutrition are significantly worse where conflicts are prolonged and institutional
capacities weak. Nowadays the majority of hungry people live in countries affected by conflict – 489 million out of the 815 million people, and almost 75 percent of the world’s stunted under-five year olds live in countries affected by conflict – 122 million out of the 155 million children.

**Uneven progress across the three dimensions of sustainable development can be an important driver of tensions and conflict.**

Until recently, there has been gradual global progress in reducing the numbers of the poor and hungry. Underlying causes of conflict and crises are multiple. However, the global economic growth that contributed to this progress has not been evenly distributed and was not always accompanied by similar gains in the other two dimensions of sustainable development, with social and environmental progress too often lagging behind. Loss and degradation of natural resources has continued, creating tensions around increasing competition for scarce resources – including, but not limited to, land and water. In 2015, 33 percent of land was moderately to highly degraded due to the erosion, salinization, compaction, nutrient imbalance, acidification and chemical pollution of soils, mostly driven by population growth and economic growth. While the global net forest loss has slowed over the past two decades, rates of ongoing deforestation remain relatively high, particularly in the tropics. Often driven by agricultural expansion and the increase in demand for wood and bioenergy, deforestation and forest degradation threaten livelihoods, ecosystem services essential to food security and nutrition, and can make competition over remaining resources more acute among different users. Competition for natural resources is also increasing as countries search for alternatives to fossil fuels. Among two-thirds of the bioenergy used worldwide involves the traditional burning of wood and other biomass for cooking and heating in low-income countries. Much of this traditional wood energy is unsustainably produced and inefficiently burned, affecting both poor population’s health and environmental degradation. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of the world’s rural population lives in river basins that are classified as water scarce. Competition for water is expected to increase between agriculture (currently accounting for 70 percent of water withdrawals) and growing urbanized areas, thus further slowing the rate of expansion of land under irrigation.

Unsustainable natural resource management can severely affect food security and send millions into hunger and poverty, increasing tensions within and between communities, thus further undermining societies’ resilience and ability to reach sustainable development.

**Given ongoing structural transformations, it is urgent to connect communities, urban and rural, around sustainable food systems.**

Against this background of unprecedented natural resource constraints and climate change, urbanization, population increases, migration and income growth are driving important structural and rural transformations. These transformations bring both opportunities and challenges.

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9. FAO. 2011. The state of the world’s land and water resources for food and agriculture (SOLAW)
The continued exclusion of vulnerable groups – for example, small-scale food producers, urban slum dwellers, informal workers, women and unemployed youth – from the benefits of growth and from political processes in general has contributed to their increased vulnerability and limited their ability to continue investing in strengthening the resilience of their livelihoods. This failure to achieve a balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development – specially called for under Agenda 2030 – has contributed to creating the conditions for the instability and conflicts which today risk reversing recent improvements in food security and nutrition globally. For structural transformations not to leave anyone behind, integrated policies connecting urban and rural societies around the common objective of achieving sustainable food systems and sustainably managing natural resources and ecosystems are needed, to strike that balance and to benefit vulnerable groups.

(b) Concrete recommendations arising from CFS

Achieving a world free from hunger is further away than in the past decade. Urgent action to empower farmers, achieve social equity, and improve sustainable use of natural resources through better policy convergence and coordination is essential. CFS has several concrete, holistic policy guidelines and evidence-based recommendations which can help to achieve various SDGs in an integrated way (see annex 1 for a full list). These have been developed and agreed through an inclusive, participatory process. Implementation by member states and all non-state actors of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT), the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI), and the Framework for Action for food security and nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA), among others, could significantly advance the achievement of all SDGs. Guidance is needed from the HLPF to draw governments’ attention on the urgent need for country-level uptake of CFS policy products, as befits their national context.

Key Message 1: Enhanced access to natural resources by small-scale food producers and other vulnerable groups will contribute to food security, improved nutrition, stability and resilience

- Inadequate and insecure tenure rights increase vulnerability, hunger, malnutrition and poverty, and can lead to conflict and environmental degradation when competing users fight for control of these resources.

In addition to being directly relevant to the achievement of a number of targets under SDG 15 related to the restoration of degraded land and its sustainable management and the use of natural resources, responsible governance of tenure promotes sustainable social and economic development that can help eradicate poverty and food insecurity, and encourages responsible investment. The Voluntary Guidelines for the Responsible Governance of tenure of land, forestry, fishery and other natural resources (VGGTs), endorsed by the CFS in 2012, seek to improve governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests. They seek to do so for the benefit of all, with an emphasis on small-scale food producers and vulnerable and marginalized people, with the goals of food security and progressive realization of
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the right to adequate food, poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, rural development, environmental protection and sustainable social and economic development.

- **Conflict and protracted crises** call for specially designed and targeted assistance, combining immediate actions to alleviate hunger and suffering with medium to long-term actions to build resilient livelihoods and food systems, avoid impoverishment, and address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. Such actions should focus on as through sustainable management and use of natural resources, disaster risk reduction, and other medium to longer term actions.

The CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA) was endorsed by CFS member countries and stakeholders in 2015, and provides guidance to governments and stakeholders on how to improve food security and nutrition in protracted crises while addressing the underlying causes, towards sustainable and resilient societies by 2030. To rebuild livelihoods and strengthen resilience of populations in protracted crises, it calls for policies and actions to strengthen sustainable local food systems, foster access to productive resources and to markets that are remunerative and beneficial to smallholders; for inclusive non-discriminatory and sustained access to relevant basic services such as safe drinking water and sanitation; and to respect the existing rights and ability of members of affected or at risk populations to access and use their natural resources.

- **“Empower women and achieve gender equality”**

A world with zero hunger can only be achieved when everyone has equal opportunities, equal access to land (SDG15), water (SDG6), energy (SDG7) and other natural resources, and equal voice in the decisions that shape their own lives, households, communities and societies. Whether policies and programmes involve mainstreaming gender or targeting gender equality, they must address the aspirations and demands of women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable) - not solely their practical needs - so that gender relations shift towards equality and all persons can achieve enjoy food security and nutrition. The 2011 CFS “Gender, Food Security and Nutrition” policy recommendations aim to enhance gender equality, to improve the nutritional status of women, adolescent girls, and children in particular, and eliminate any form of discrimination and violence against women; and require systemic action across policies, plans and programmes, from emergency to development contexts.

- **Achieving both food security and energy security** can be an opportunity as well as a challenge. Addressing the interlinkage between SDG 7 “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” and SDG2 calls for carefully considering possible competition between biofuel crops and food crops, the multiple and complex links between biofuels and food security, including – in some cases - competition between biofuel crops and food crops. Assessments should be multi-faceted and contextualized, and an integrated, evidence-based, gender-sensitive and environmentally-sound approach is required in biofuel policy-making and investments.
To address possible trade-offs towards sustainable development, all relevant stakeholders in biofuel development should ensure that food security and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security are priority concerns, with a special focus on women and smallholder producers given their vulnerability. The CFS policy recommendations “Biofuels and food security and nutrition” offer a number of recommendations to Members and stakeholders to guide priority setting and integrated policy programming. Other CFS products, such as the VGGT, also provide guidance to ensure that biofuels policies are coherent with food security.

Key Message 2: Sustainable management of natural resources is central to building resilience and addressing climate change effects.

- Accelerate efforts for sustainable agricultural development, including livestock systems

The policy recommendations on “Sustainable Agricultural Development for Food Security and Nutrition: What role for livestock?” (CFS 43, 2016) recognize the livelihoods and environmental challenges confronted by different agricultural production systems, with special emphasis on the livestock sector, and calls for their sustainable transformation. They particularly recognize pastoral systems and call for their protection and support, as well as for the enhancement of the role of grazing systems, leveraging the potential of livestock as a means for sustainable livelihoods for smallholders, and promoting the sustainability of intensive systems. These recommendations are particularly important to help achieve SDG 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns” and its targets related to the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, the reduction of chemical waste released into air, water and soils, and the promotion of sustainable practices and lifestyles.

- Water availability will become an increasing challenge for global food security and nutrition, as irrigated agriculture is the largest user globally, totalling up to 70 percent global use (with significant difference between countries), some from non-renewable sources\(^ \text{10} \). However, ecosystems and landscapes sustain water resources, and forests play a major role in the water cycle, ensuring quantity, quality and stability of water for human use.

Promoting sustainable management and conservation of ecosystems for the continued availability, quality and reliability of water for food security and nutrition is essential, and is key to the achievement of SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. The CFS Policy recommendations “Water for food security and nutrition" endorsed in 2015 offer members and stakeholders guidance on how policies can successfully address the water-food security and nutrition nexus, and they emphasize linkages between the right to safe drinking water and sanitation and the

progressive realization of the right to adequate food, and leverage high-lights synergies with other goals which national policies can build upon to achieve the SDGs in an integrated manner.

• Sustainable agriculture, food security and improved nutrition cannot be achieved at the expense of and without forests.

Forests contribute to dietary quality and diversity, serving as a safety net in times of scarcity, shocks and crises, generating income for local communities. Forests also provide ecosystem services that are essential for sustainable agriculture by regulating water flows, stabilizing soils, maintaining soil fertility, regulating the climate and providing habitat for wild pollinators and predators of agricultural pests. However, land use conversion for agriculture remains the main cause of deforestation, accounting for 70-80 percent of total forest loss, with adverse impact on the environment and livelihoods of millions of indigenous peoples, local communities and smallholders.

Better coordination of land use policies is needed, so that sustainable agriculture continues to benefit from healthy, sustainable and productive forest and tree ecosystems. The CFS policy recommendations “Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition” endorsed in 2017 call on countries to develop, implement and monitor policies that lead to integrated agriculture and forest management, in line with other central policy frameworks such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to adequate Food in the context of national food security (VG-RtF), the VGGT and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI).

Key Message 3: “Investing in sustainable food systems should be at the heart of rural and urban transformation”

• Investing responsibly in agriculture and food systems can produce multiplier effects for complementary sectors, such as service or manufacturing industries, thus further contributing to food security and nutrition and overall economic development.

The Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI), endorsed in 2014, provide elements for increasing investments in agriculture and food systems in a sustainable manner. They recognize the vital role of smallholders, providing the bulk of investment. They also call for strengthening and securing this investment with responsible investment by other stakeholders. By promoting an enabling policy, legal, regulatory, and institutional environment, states have a key role in fostering, supporting, and complementing investments by smallholders and other stakeholders, and empowering them to invest responsibly. These principles are relevant to the achievement of all SDGs under review.

and that states play a unique role in fostering an enabling environment for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems, in promoting an enabling policy, legal, regulatory, and institutional
The principles are relevant to the achievement of all SDGs under review. To strengthen and secure smallholders’ own investment, the Principles recognize that it is also necessary to engage with and promote responsible investment by other stakeholders. States have a key role in enabling, supporting, and complementing investments by these other stakeholders: smallholders and empowering them to invest responsibly.

- Promote integrated, mutually beneficial rural transformation and urbanization processes

A strong gap in the policy architecture relates to the need for policies and research that address inter-sectoral and inter-spatial linkages, to analyse interacting systems and the implications for both rural and urban areas. Such integrated policies are crucial to achieve SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. Their need will increase further in the near future considering the greater connectivity and interdependence across rural and urban areas, including in the agri-food sector.

Supported by its inclusive and evidence-based processes, CFS will continue working in 2018 on identifying issues calling for greater policy convergence and integration, towards transformations of food systems that link rural and urban areas for their mutual economic, social and environmental benefits.

- Sustainable food systems for healthy nutrition; healthy nutrition for sustainable food systems

Healthy, diverse diets are essential to achieving the SDGs, as good nutrition is both a maker and marker of sustainable development. Today, nearly one in three persons globally suffers from at least one form of malnutrition – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight or obesity – and a large part of the world’s population is affected by diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The impacts of malnutrition on development, society, health and well-being are serious and lasting, for individuals and their families, for communities and for countries. Different forms of malnutrition co-exist – within the same country, community, household or individual.

While, at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), countries have committed to stepping up efforts to combat all forms of malnutrition, global nutrition targets are yet to be fully achieved. Nutrition must become a stated objective in national sectoral policies or development plans, and efforts need to be scaled up, nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive investments increased, and greater policy coherence across sectors is required. Nutrition should be prioritized in national plans. The effects of economic growth, urbanization, and changes in relative prices of food influence changes in diets and food systems, and lead to an acceleration of the nutritional transition. Because the causes and factors leading to malnutrition in all its forms are complex and multidimensional, and require collective action across sectors and by a broad range of stakeholders, CFS decided to step up its contribution to global efforts under the framework of the UN Decade for Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, and has agreed
at its Forty-third Session to develop voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition in the next biennium. The Guidelines are expected to offer guidance to support countries develop policies to incentivize more sustainable and healthy diets for all, underpinned by sustainable food systems. The work undertaken by CFS is expected to link directly to most targets of SDG 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”.

- **Strengthen policies and investments targeting smallholders**

  The CFS policy recommendations on “Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security” (CFS 40: 2013) and “Connecting Smallholders to markets” (CFS 43, 2016) recognize that smallholders supply most of the overall food production and therefore play an essential role in ensuring food security and nutrition today and in the future. These recommendations, relevant to the achievement of a number of SDGs (including SDG 11 and 12 and 15) call for strengthening targeted policies and investments that address smallholders’ specific constraints and maximize potential for their beneficial access to reliable and remunerative markets. They also call for greater policy attention on local and domestic food markets where 80% of smallholders operate, as these markets, while performing multiple functions beyond commodity exchange, are often overlooked in policy making.

- **Reduce food loss and waste, towards sustainable food systems**

  Food Losses and Waste (FLW) impact the sustainability and resilience of agricultural and food systems and their ability to ensure food security and nutrition for all for this generation and for future generations. It is the focus of a direct target of SDG 12 (“By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses”). States and other stakeholders have differentiated roles, and should encourage sustainable patterns of production and consumption, in accordance with national and international human and animal health regulations. CFS policy recommendations on “Food loss and waste in the context of sustainable food systems”, endorsed in 2014, call on all concerned stakeholders to develop effective strategies and innovations, and take steps to reduce food loss and waste.

- **Create opportunities for rural youth**

  In many countries and regions with higher rates of poverty and hunger, more than half of the population is currently under 25, with the majority of these young people living in rural areas and settlements, even as migration to cities expands. Addressing constraints to engaging young women and men in farming, smallholder agriculture, agri-businesses and related non-farm rural sectors through targeted policy interventions is key to make sure that no one is left behind. Enhancing youth access to productive resources, innovation and new technologies, combined with traditional knowledge, as well as appropriate training (agricultural and financial), education and mentorship programmes will increase their opportunities for decent work and entrepreneurship and promote stable, sustainable and resilient societies in the long-term.”
## Annex 1: CFS Reference documents

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<td>- Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems (CFS 41, 2014)</td>
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<td>- Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42, 2015)</td>
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<td>- Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition (CFS 44, 2017)</td>
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3. Compilation of experiences resulting from thematic lessons learned events

- Developing the knowledge, skills and talent of youth to further food security and nutrition (CFS 42)
- Experiences and good practices in the use and application of the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGT) - Summary and key elements (CFS 43)
- Outcomes “From Agreement to Action: learning from the first voluntary national reviews in the HLPF” (CFS 43)