

CFS Open Meeting on Food Systems and Nutrition

- *How the HLPE Report is paving the way for the CFS Voluntary Guidelines* -

Wednesday 30 January 2019 – 9.30-12.30

Green Room, FAO

Chair's Summary

This meeting was organized to provide a space for an open and informal discussion among CFS stakeholders on the different elements of the HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems that are expected to inform the preparation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.

Dr Jessica Fanzo, HLPE Project Team Leader, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the food systems framework and typologies introduced in the HLPE report. Dr Fanzo i) focused on the centrality of food systems for healthy diets and nutrition, ii) provided an overview of the type of information that typologies provide to help assess how well food systems are delivering healthy diets, iii) provided indications on the type of information policy makers need to make decisions about food systems; and iv) highlighted the importance for CFS to develop concrete, context-specific and implementable Voluntary Guidelines.

CFS stakeholders were given the possibility to share their views and ask questions on the concepts and ideas introduced in the HLPE report, as highlighted in the presentation.

The event contributed to reaching a greater understanding of the different aspects to be taken into account in the course of the CFS policy convergence process. The comments submitted and the outcomes of the discussion are summarized in the following points:

- a) It was reiterated that malnutrition in all its forms represents a large scale and universal problem and that urgent actions are needed to address its negative impacts, including their hidden cost. Diets low in nutritious foods are a leading factor globally for death and disability so that it is crucial to promote actions aiming at reshaping food systems to enable the consumption of healthy diets;
- b) In this context, the centrality of environmental sustainability issues, including the relation with climate change, was stressed by several participants as a key element towards sustainable, resilient and efficient food systems that pay due attention to their environmental and health impacts;
- c) The need to promote policy coherence between different sectors was reiterated. This would represent the starting point towards the development of multisectoral nutrition-oriented approaches and holistic food system policies that seek coherence among health, agricultural, environmental, economic and social outcomes;

- d) The proposed categorization of food systems was acknowledged as a useful way to better understand the complexity of the system and to highlight similar patterns and to identify potential interventions. However, it was recognized that not all countries fit into just one category and the categorization could miss the variability within the same countries;
- e) It was reminded that the Framework for Action and the Rome Declaration on Nutrition of ICN2 represent key references for the development of the Voluntary Guidelines;
- f) It was also noted that the important number of reports that have been published in the last few years concerning food systems and nutrition – lastly the *EAT Lancet Commission Report on Food, Planet, Health*¹ - represents a signal of the importance and the high visibility of these issues in the global agenda as well as of the impact that food systems have on the planet.
- g) In this context, it was highlighted that the ongoing policy convergence process on food systems and nutrition, with the HLPE report and along with the CFS multistakeholder and multisectoral model, represent a promising step from the identification of potential policy areas and controversial issues behind each element of food systems towards proposing the right priorities and the appropriate interventions to contribute to improve food systems and make them more nutrition-sensitive and more sustainable;
- h) A wide number of relevant topics and thematic areas were suggested for potential consideration in the development of the Voluntary Guidelines, like the food affordability, the agricultural policies, subsidies and incentives, the data production and use, the use of chemicals for food production, among others. These issues can be considered and discussed during the preparation of the different versions of the document.

During the second part of the meeting, several participants have highlighted some concerns as well as areas of improvement which may further be considered in the process:

- Inequalities in accessing nutritious food as well as a reliable information on the relation between food and health;
- The need for more participation and equity towards decision-making related to food environment;
- Relying on a small number of crops and long value chains, both affecting sustainability and producers economic performance in a negative way as well as reducing the diversity of diets;
- The necessity to integrate nutrition outcomes in a wide range of public policies;
- The necessity to keep the CFS policy convergence process transparent, open and respectful of what Member States are already implementing to combat malnutrition.

The Chair of the CFS Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Food Systems and Nutrition closed the meeting by thanking Dr Fanzo for the great support provided and the participants for their presence and

¹ This report is not a UN document, which has not been discussed/approved/endorsed by any UN body



constructive attitude. Participants were reminded that the first CFS OEWG Meeting will take place on 8 March to discuss the preliminary version of the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines.