

Comments on latest version of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN) – 3 June 2020

Costa Rica

Morning (section 1)

Good morning, distinguished colleagues

Thank you Chair, and thank you for your quick reply and support to our request on having the recorded sessions of this OEWG available online. Thanks also to the Secretariat for preparing the matrix; definitely it wasn't an easy task.

As you may be aware of, we abstained ourselves to submit more written comments to the draft document before this meeting, precisely because no further changes are envisaged until the in-person negotiations. We haven't taken note of the observation submitted by a number of stakeholders and are carefully following today's exchange in order to properly react, now or in the future. In principle, for example, Costa Rica can agree with the proposal of including the word "sustainable" in the Guidelines title, as well as with the suggestion to re-incorporate the definitions of food systems and sustainable food systems in paragraph 23, and the need to expand paragraph 9 in order to add text on Covid-19.

Specifically on paragraph 18, Mr Chair, we fully support the previous interventions made by the Philippines, Spain, the Dominican Republic and Hungary on the key role that this Guidelines will play in the implementation of the UN Decade of Farming; we won't repeat what they said, since they have been very clear, just say that it's important to keep in mind that the Decade's Action Plan is a living document that can and will be updated accordingly, and it's undeniable that they will feed up this future process.

Let us also remember that the Decade's inception was the result of an intergovernmental process in which all UN Member States unanimously adopted the resolution 72/239.

Finally, on the request of additions to references on other processes that were made by other stakeholders in this same paragraph, in principle we have no problem with that as long as they are the result of and agreed international processes that are also pertinent to this exercise.

Thank you very much

Afternoon (section 3)

Thank you Excellency, and good afternoon dear all

As indicated this morning, we're carefully following this discussion in order to properly react to the written contributions submitted by stakeholders to the last zero draft, but also to the new proposals that are being presented now.

On 3.1.1.c, we would still like to seed the Codex Alimentarius reference in the main paragraph and not as a footnote; beyond the fact that Codex is a Commission whose decisions are multilaterally

agreed, it's important to remember that it constitutes the most important global State driven instrument that deals with food safety standards; we also welcome the inclusion of IPPC in this para. On 3.1.2.a, we're also glad to see a proposal to link nutrition coordination platforms that contribute to sustainable food systems. On 3.2.4.a we welcome the mentions to cold chain, electricity and logistics as tools to reduce food losses and we would also include waste; on 3.5.3.c, we very much agree with the specific reference to pre-school kids.

Four paragraphs (3.2.3.f; 3.2.4.e; 3.3.2.d; 3.7.2.c) in this section refer to food fortification. This issue is very important for Costa Rica, as we have a experience of decades in rice fortification beyond populations that are food insecure, so we'd be pleased to start a dialogue with the interested stakeholders in order to find common ground on the different points of views that we have witnessed this afternoon.

Several paragraphs refer directly to trade issues (3.2.4.e; 3.3.1.d; 3.3.2.a; para. 41). Consistent with our longstanding position, once again, we should avoid wording such as taxing, pricing and subsidies since WTO is the natural space to address them. Brazil and a number of delegations have provided detailed explanations on this rational, so we will not repeat them. Nevertheless, we still believe that more general terms like "incentives" or "fiscal policies" could help out in solving this.

And last, but not least, thanks to the stakeholders that provided comments on section 3.6. While we still need to revise them carefully with our capital, in principle, we find them very positive.