

Swiss Statement – OEWG Meeting VGFSyN – 14th April 2020

Substantial progress has been made since October 2018 in the course of the elaboration of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. Switzerland highly appreciated the consultative process for the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition that has contributed to foster awareness and broad ownership among key parties and CFS stakeholders. Salient key concepts were discussed, and their inclusion in the guidelines was not disputed.

It is thus that we are all the more surprised that the Draft for Negotiation, which lies before us today, has substantially wandered away from the Draft One. Key concepts and recommendations that were not put into question during e-consultations and regional consultations have been eliminated.

Although the current Document for Negotiation has gained in terms of structure, content-wise, it has been severely weakened in several key conceptual areas, and in some respects it falls behind the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Let two be named:

- the importance of multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral partnerships for advancing and achieving sustainable development, food security and nutrition for all, and
- the need for systemic change that cannot be achieved through single-sector objectives and approaches [i.e. *by deleting all references to renewable energies and carbon foot print, by no longer listing responsible sectors and having substantially reduced the reference to sustainable production of food*]

Accordingly, in some respects we believe that Draft One was a better basis for the negotiation of the VGFSyN. Going forward, the final Guidelines will need to reinstate the following aspects in order to be instrumental and to really make a difference and add value:

- a. Key concepts of “food systems” and “sustainable food systems”:** The Voluntary Guidelines are Guidelines on Food Systems AND Nutrition. There can be no doubt that the concept of food systems and sustainable food systems need to be described, if not defined, in the Voluntary Guidelines. Food systems have received increased attention from the global community, including the UN and its Member States, and are recognised as an essential component of achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (as per para 18 /page 5 of the Draft for Negotiation). Moreover, the Secretary General of the UN called for a Food Systems Summit in 2021.
- b. The conceptual connection between sustainable production and healthy diets:** In order to be in line with the SDGs, nutrition should not only be healthy for humans but also healthy for the planet and therefore based on sustainable agricultural production. Sustainable food systems are at the heart there to improve nutrition, enable healthy diets and fight all forms of malnutrition. The VGFSyN need to conceptually connect healthy diets and sustainable food systems and take on a holistic and systemic food system approach.

We firmly believe that the CFS by its nature and its area of expertise is best positioned to be innovative in terms of new food security and nutrition concepts.

- c. Diversity of production systems:** There is ultimately no way round the need for governmental actors, donors, investors and other key stakeholder to maintain and strengthen diversified agriculture systems, not least in order to raise resilience levels for future shocks. Like others, this aspect was lost between Draft One and the Draft for Negotiation.
- d. The importance of multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral partnerships for advancing and achieving sustainable development, food security and nutrition:** In order to guarantee that the nutrition and food systems agenda is brought forward, the VGFSyN Guidelines need to prompt all relevant

actors/stakeholders to accept their responsibilities in contributing to the much needed crucial and inevitable transformation of food systems in an effort to end all form of malnutrition.

Switzerland will insist on the abovementioned points in the upcoming negotiations.

COVID-19. Finally, in light of the COVID-19 emergency and the challenging process ahead, we must labour the point that while recognising the need to be ready for Food Systems Summit 2021, negotiations must be postponed until such times as we can all meet face-to-face again.