



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON FOOD SYSTEMS FOR NUTRITION

16 March 2020

It is my pleasure to present you with a revised version of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems for Nutrition (VGFSYN), which will serve as the basis for upcoming negotiation sessions planned for May and July 2020, respectively.

I would like to warmly thank all those CFS stakeholders for the comments provided during the last OEWG meeting and for the written inputs on Draft One that were used for the preparation of this revised version. We received 66 contributions with very accurate and detailed suggestions and comments. We did our best to incorporate them while trying to keep the document at a manageable length.

Please note that, to show more clearly that our objective is to present guidance on how food system transformations can promote improved nutrition, the title of the VGFSyN has been slightly modified (Food Systems *FOR* Nutrition).

The structure of the first two Parts was modified to ensure a more logical flow between the sections. In addition to the background and rationale where the problem statement is presented, Part One now includes a number of *key concepts* concerning food systems and nutrition. In this regard, definitions of healthy diets, sustainable healthy diets and nutritious foods were included to set the context for the policy convergence process and its key objectives. I firmly believe that CFS by its nature and its area of expertise is best positioned to be innovative in terms of food security and nutrition concepts.

In Part Two, the text was reviewed in particular to avoid inconsistencies and redundancies with language in Part One, while additional elements were incorporated based on inputs provided by CFS stakeholders. A pair of guiding principles were eliminated as they were considered to be actions, more than principles.

Part Three was substantially modified to incorporate the comments and suggestions that we received, trying to keep the length manageable. Additional paragraphs were added to respond to the expectation of many stakeholders about the *food system approach*, the nature of the evidence used for the design of the proposed Voluntary Guidelines and to highlight the need to analyze the potential transition costs, benefits, and trade-offs of actions taken across sectors.

Connections between the different focus areas are now better explained, and each sub-section is introduced by a more detailed paragraph highlighting the relevance of issues addressed therein.

Part Four was expanded to address requests to strengthen it and be more specific on actions related to uptake and use of the VGFSyN. It was also restructured around three main sub-sections which deal, respectively, with implementation, capacity building, and monitoring.

In line with the agreed timeline, the document will be made available and circulated in all six FAO languages by mid-April in order to give enough time for CFS stakeholders to prepare for negotiations. A separate note with instructions and details regarding the negotiation process will be circulated in coming weeks.

As we are getting closer to the final stages of this policy convergence process, I would like to again thank all CFS stakeholders that are actively participating and contributing to the preparation of the VGFSyN, ensuring a high level of interest, commitment, and engagement throughout the process.

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