

**FSS Pre-Summit
CFS VGFSyN**

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As the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, the Human Rights Council has authorized me to be the leading *independent* expert on questions of food security and nutrition.

I also hold a unique position as I am both a member of the Food System Summit Integrating Team and the CFS Advisory Group.

As a result, I have been privy to the main conversations and debates within and surrounding the FSS.

Today, I will situate the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition within the context of the Food Systems Summit and CFS processes.

While the Summit hasn't happened yet, it's clear that the Summit process has already elevated public discussion around food systems reform.

But the Summit process has also fallen short in many regards.

Unlike with UN food summits and conferences of the past, the Summit leadership was not able to provide an autonomous and meaningful human rights space for a significant number of communities and CSOs.

Moreover, human rights was brought in very late into the Summit process and remains at the margins.

The FSS has also not paid due attention to core issues like governance, trade, and people-centered knowledge.

Whereas if you look at the scope of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, it is quite comprehensive.

The Voluntary Guidelines' seven focus areas could have easily been the agenda for the Food Systems Summit.

Now I can offer a critical analysis on the details of the Voluntary Guidelines,

But what's important right now is that it comes out of the CFS process.

The CFS is built on principles of multilateralism and human rights.

Part of the CFS's vision includes a commitment to the progressive realization of the right to food.

Within the CFS, we often argue over the meaning of human rights. But through those debates everyone learns from each other.

Debates do not mean discord. The debates are structured and productive. They lead to outcomes.

In the end, at the CFS, there is a commitment to develop a shared normative framework.

What gives CFS policy instruments their authority is the fact that that they are negotiated amongst governments and stakeholders. The instruments may not be binding but they carry some political weight.

What gives the CFS its legitimacy is the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism – the CSM.

This is an autonomous space for rights-holders to organize themselves and play a critical role in the CFS.

Regardless of your particular views, you have to be impressed that hundreds of organizations from every region of the world are able to overcome their differences through the CSM.

Within food systems, Workers and Farmers and Pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples and Fishers don't all get along.

But at the CFS they find a way to cooperate and work together in solidarity.

Because the Food Systems Summit has marginalized human rights, it is understandable that the civil society and Indigenous peoples have used the CSM to organize its own Counter-Mobilization against the Summit that is happening right now.

After the Summit, the CFS has the right infrastructure to carry on the global food policy conversation in a productive way. It has an inclusive process. It is committed to the right to food. It has a score of policy instruments that cover all issues regarding food systems. It has a robust science-policy interface.

I also could talk about how the CFS could be better supported by Member States ...

Nevertheless, I strongly encourage everyone to come together and assess the Summit process and final outcomes through a conversation at the CFS. At the CFS this conversation would be based on human rights obligations and a commitment to advancing the progressive realization of the right to food.