**CFS POLICY PROCESS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON FOOD SYSTEMS AND NUTRITION**

**TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSIONS**

1. **Does Chapter 1 adequately reflect the current situation of malnutrition and its related causes and impacts, particularly in line with the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda? What are the underlying problems that currently hinder food systems to deliver healthy diets?**

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| The current situation of malnutrition and its causes are adequately covered. However, the section on drivers of malnutrition in some cases are too broad to be of practical relevance. For example, under biophysical factors, we need to see more being said about the diversity of germplasm, especially with increasing use of monocultures which are known to be the main drivers of simplified. Monotonous and nutritionally deficient diets.  The core causes is still not clearly outlined : poverty and inequalities   * + **Underlying causes of malnutrition: lack of access to food**   Most major food and nutrition crises do not occur because of a lack of food, but rather because people are too poor to obtain enough food. Non-availability of food in markets, difficult access to markets due to lack of transportation, and insufficient financial resources are all factors contributing to the food insecurity of the most vulnerable populations.   * + **Conflicts**   Conflicts have a direct impact on food security, drastically compromising access to food. Often forced to flee as violence escalates, people uprooted by conflict lose access to their farms and businesses, or other means of local food production and markets. Abandoned fields and farms no longer provide food to broader distribution circuits. As a result, food supplies to distributors may be cut off, and the many populations dependent on them may be unable to obtain sufficient food.   * + **Lack of safe drinking water**   Water is synonymous with life. Lack of potable water, poor sanitation, and dangerous hygiene practices increase vulnerability to infectious and water-borne diseases, which are direct causes of acute malnutrition   * + **Climate change**   The effects of climate change are often dramatic, devastating areas which are already vulnerable. Infrastructure is damaged or destroyed; diseases spread quickly; people can no longer grow crops or raise livestock. According to UN studies in over 40 developing countries, the decline in agricultural production caused either directly or indirectly by climate change could dramatically increase the number of people suffering from hunger in the coming years  The issue of consumer knowledge and education, while it was mentioned as a factor, is missing from the drivers of malnutrition. Perhaps this should be tackled as consumer empowerment in the food systems. |

1. **What should be the guiding principles to promote sustainable food systems that improve nutrition and enable healthy diets? What are your comments about the principles outlined in Chapter 2? Are they the most appropriate for your national/regional contexts?**

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| The guidelines rightly recognize that food systems cut-across a variety of sustainability imperatives, and in 36a it is stated that through food systems nations should ‘seek to simultaneously maximize outcomes across all sustainability dimensions’. It is important to recognize here that there is an important social (and environmental) justice aspect to food system development. Because of the multiple stakeholders and varied priorities for food systems agendas (e.g., animal welfare vs food prices vs smallholding farmer livelihoods vs fresh water), it is often inevitable that food system changes will bring winners and losers. The idea of maximizing benefits can sometimes mask the fact that it is often the most vulnerable or marginalized that lose (in even in situations that might be optimal from a utilitarian point of view). Considering how the benefits and costs of food systems are distributed should be part of food system planning and we would argue that social and environmental justice should be a key principle of sustainable food systems. See Whitfield et al., 2015  Food systems are inherently tied up with processes of climate change. Not only does agriculture represent the single most significant sector in terms of emissions contributions, but changing and variable climates are, and will continue to, significantly impact the viability of food production and supply. These impacts are most significant in the Tropics, where temperature and rainfall distribution changes are expected to be most pronounced and where agriculture is largely rainfed. The GCRF-AFRICAP project, working with food system stakeholders in Tanzania, Malawi, South Arica and Zambia as carried out food system scenarios mapping exercises, in which stakeholders recognized climate change as the single most significant ‘critical uncertainty’ that will shape future food systems in these countries ([www.africap.info](http://www.africap.info)). In considering principles of sustainable food systems, it is important to explicitly acknowledge climate change, and the importance of building resilience to climate change into food systems and reducing emissions contributions (in a socially just way) from food systems.  Ref. Whitfield, S., Benton, T.G., Dallimer, M., Firbank, L.G., Poppy, G.M., Sallu, S.M. and Stringer, L.C., 2015. Sustainability spaces for complex agri-food systems. *Food Security*, *7*(6), pp.1291-1297  For rural communities that derive most of the nutrient requirements from own production, it important that the principles highlight the need for producing and consuming diverse foods as opposed to a policy of promoting monocultures. This belongs to the principle “Healthy people, healthy planet” but may be lost when it comes to details.  There is need to include the following in Chapter 2;   1. **Improve processing, storage and preservation** to retain nutritional value, shelf-life, and food safety, to reduce seasonality of food insecurity and post-harvest losses, and to make healthy foods convenient to prepare 2. **Maintain or improve the natural resource base** (water, soil, air, climate, biodiversity), critical to the livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable farmers and to sustainable food and nutrition security for all. Manage water resources in particular to reduce vector-borne illness and to ensure sustainable, safe household water sources 3. **Knowledge of diets diversification** it is crucial for households to know how to improve their diets and how to make choices on the quality of food needed for improved healthy diets 4. **Sustainable environment for nutritious food production** |

1. **In consideration of the policy areas identified in Chapter 3 and the enabling factors suggested in paragraph 41 of the Zero Draft, what policy entry points should be covered in Chapter 3, taking into account the need to foster policy coherence and address policy fragmentation?**

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| Under production systems-related policy interventions, important that traditional or orphan crops and livestock be promoted, especially to make them commercially competitive with established but less nutritious commodity value chains such as maize and wheat. This would include several value chain development investments by Governments, including product development and support to viable input markets, e.g. improved seed.  All other suggested policy interventions under production are commendable and on-point.  Processing and packaging – this is a major area of improvement in the guidelines, especially when one considers the role played by large food corporations in producing and selling over-processed food. This needs stronger language and should go beyond non-binding guidelines but help countries formulate strong legislation to back up the policy guidelines.  Nutrition education and interventions within production systems should be included in agricultural extension programmes and be supported by policies. In most developing countries, agricultural extension workers are the most widespread at community-level and should be equipped to not only handle production issues but nutrition as well.  **Other things to consider when looking at** policy entry points should include:   * + Engagement of national or regional policy influencers and policy makers in the development of policies relating to food systems and food security   + Build an integrated understanding of how climate developments will impact Africa’s food and nutrition security   + Build the capacity of multi-sectoral actors to respond to nutrition and food security challenges   + Ensure an agriculture sector that is resilient in the face of the climate change challenge in order to produce sustainable nutritious food |

1. **Can you provide specific examples of new policies, interventions, initiatives, alliances and institutional arrangements which should be considered, as well as challenges, constraints, and trade-offs relevant to the three constituent elements of food systems presented in Chapter 3? In your view, what would the “ideal” food system look like, and what targets/metrics can help guide policy-making?**

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| An ‘ideal food system’ should be one in which there is distributional and procedural justice, i.e. that food systems are governed in a way that is inclusive and gives a meaningful voice to all stakeholders, particularly those who are otherwise marginalized. This should also include representation, and justice, for future generations and the environment. A just process of governance, does not always, in itself lead to just outcomes, so it is important to recognize that an ideal food system is not just governed justly but is also one in which the benefits and costs of food systems are distributed equitably and fairly.  The Food Environment guidelines should consider the fixation of most developing country governments with cereals when discussing food security and procuring food to address gaps in local production. Cereals are not synonymous with food security!  Also need to consider that most African countries are increasingly dependent on informal food markets which are difficult to set standards for and adhere to rules.  Build bridges to promote state and non-state actor collaboration for a joint effort in addressing nutrition food challenges  When these guidelines are upscaled and implemented by various stakeholders’ countries stands to improve malnutrition in all its forms at national and regional levels. |

1. **How would these Voluntary Guidelines be most useful for different stakeholders, especially at national and regional levels, once endorsed by CFS?**

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| Context is key – hence the guidelines should consider the food environments in different settings so that the guidelines resonate with local conditions, e.g. predominance of informal markets in most African countries, both under urban and rural settings; the role of culture and taboos which erode good practices; contrary to popular belief, the over-bearing influence of grandmothers in child-feeding practices, especially in rural (and urban) settings – this is a good example of “abuse” of power by older women in society. |