



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-ninth Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

11-14 October 2021

FORUM ON UPTAKE OF THE CFS VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON FOOD SYSTEMS AND NUTRITION (VGFSYN) – CONCEPT NOTE

1. Malnutrition in all its forms – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity – are major challenges from which no country is immune. The number of undernourished people in the world, continues to rise. Between 720 and 821 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020 and the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic suggest that global hunger will decline slowly by 2030, revealing lasting effects of the pandemic on global food security. Currently, two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies. Overweight or obesity are on the rise increasing the risk for non-communicable diseases. In addition, more than 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet and more than 2.3 billion people (or 30 percent of the global population) lacked year-round access to adequate food (SOFI 2021).
2. To reverse these trends, countries need to develop policies and undertake actions aiming to transform their food systems to deliver healthy diets and improved nutrition while protecting biodiversity and addressing climate change.
3. As the UN's foremost and inclusive body for policy convergence on food security and nutrition, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), at its 47th Plenary Session, endorsed [Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#), as the result of an inclusive multi-stakeholder consultation and negotiation process, informed by the scientific evidence of the CFS' High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (the CFS HLPE).

4. These Guidelines aim to support countries and others to develop, multi-sectoral national policies, laws, programmes and investment plans for healthy diets through sustainable food systems. They provide guidance on policies and interventions to address malnutrition in all its forms through a holistic ‘food systems’ lens that considers food systems in their totality and looks at the multi-dimensional causes of malnutrition.

5. The Voluntary Guidelines aim to promote policy coherence and reduce policy fragmentation between sectors relevant to food systems and nutrition like health, agriculture, education, environment, gender, social protection, trade and employment.

6. They recognize the strong interlinkages between sustainable food systems and healthy diets. They call for interventions within and across food systems, and their constituent elements - food supply chains, food environments and consumer behavior - to enhance livelihoods, health, and well-being of populations; encourage sustainable food production and responsible consumption of diverse and nutritious foods to enable healthy diets; protect and promote sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems; and support mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

I. THE FORUM ON THE UPTAKE OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON FOOD SYSTEMS AND NUTRITION

7. The work of CFS does not finish with the approval of its policy tools. CFS Members and stakeholders are responsible for making sure that such policy instruments endorsed at global level are converted into concrete actions at regional, national and local levels.

8. As foreseen in the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023, a forum on the uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 12 October during the 49th plenary session of CFS.

9. This forum will provide an opportunity to discuss and mobilize political commitments by governments, donors, civil society, private sector, and the UN system for further promotion and implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. This forum can also help translate commitments for action made in the [Rome Declaration on Nutrition](#) in the context of national food system and nutrition-related policies.

10. The forum will bring together different food systems and nutrition actors to:

- Share plans and ideas concerning uptake of the Voluntary Guidelines;
- Focus on how the Guidelines present a useful tool in the hands of policy makers and development partners;
- Explore how the Guidelines can be used at regional, country, and local levels;
- Discuss the role of different stakeholders and coordination mechanisms in promoting their uptake;
- Discuss how to mobilize commitment of stakeholders to drive the uptake and context-specific operationalization of the Voluntary Guidelines.

11. More information on the format and roll-out of the forum are provided in the Guide to CFS 49 (CFS 2021/49/Inf.2).