

## Statement by Australia on Agenda Item IV: CFS MULTI YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK (MYPoW)

### b) Draft Terms of Reference for the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition

Australia is committed to advancing gender equality and the rights of women, both at home and overseas. We consider gender equality to be a fundamental human right that when respected makes the world safer, more secure and more prosperous. At the same time, gender *inequality* undermines global prosperity, stability, and security, and often exacerbates a range of challenges, including poverty, weak governance, conflict and violent extremism. In turn, it also negatively impacts food security and nutrition.

Australia is committed to boosting women's economic security by creating opportunities and removing barriers to women's participation in the workforce. Since 2015, the Australian Government has released Economic Security Statements which have included measures totalling around 360 million Australian dollars. These measures have included supporting more women into male-dominated industries, improvements to the Parental Leave Pay system, and support for female-led start-ups.

Australia supports the development of the Terms of Reference of the voluntary and non-binding Guidelines on Gender Equality and offer the following comments:

- We are encouraged by the attention on causes, the consolidation of existing work, the use of data and research, and the focus on intersectionality. We also welcome that the issue is being addressed from an empowerment perspective rather than one of vulnerability.
- In relation to opportunities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in paragraph 14e, we suggest cross-checking coverage of SDG 2 and SDG 5 targets, noting, for example, that sexual and reproductive health and rights is relevant to food security and nutrition but is not currently listed.
- We recommend updating the statistics in the Terms of Reference if possible, drawing from more recent existing work including the 2020 SOFI report.
- We suggest that the guidelines not limit themselves to drawing on development work. We say this noting that organisations with a remit broader than development, such as the APEC Policy Partnership for Food Security, have also done useful and relevant work in this space.
- And finally, we consider it would be useful to draw upon broader guidelines on responsible investment in agriculture and financing with a view to building on the role of the private sector in improving gender equality and women's empowerment.

In closing we would like to draw attention to the excellent series of short videos outlining why gender equality and women's empowerment matter to food security and nutrition in the WFP Gender Toolkit.