

**Agenda item V. Empowering Women and Girls and Promoting Gender Equality: Endorsement and Uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment (GEWE) in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition**

Chair,

The World Health Organization welcomes the CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

As stated in these Guidelines (paragraph 34), women and girls have specific nutritional needs throughout the life course. (And para 35) It also highlights that women and young women have additional nutritional needs in both quantity and quality.

For example,

Anaemia is a major public health concern affecting women and girls. Inadequate diets and poor absorption of key nutrients are important causes of anaemia.

A global nutrition target for anaemia in women of reproductive age was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2012 to achieve a 50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age by 2025.

However, little progress has been made in reducing anaemia and if current trends are not reverted, nearly one-third of women of reproductive age will still be affected by anaemia in 2025, thus widely missing the global target of a 50% reduction in the prevalence compared to the 2012 baseline of 28.5%.

In 2019, globally 570 million women of reproductive age (29.9%), 31.9 million pregnant women (36.5%) and 269 million children 6 to 59 months of age (40%) were affected, impairing physical capacity and work performance and, when women were pregnant, increasing the risk of complications and maternal and neonatal mortality. Those affected were more likely to reside in rural settings, in poorer households and to have received no formal education.

This year, WHO has launched a [comprehensive framework for action to accelerate anaemia reduction and an Anaemia Action Alliance](#), recognizing that this requires coordinated action across sectors such as health, food and agriculture, environment, education and social protection. It also highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach of promoting gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, a focus on young children, on greater equity, poverty eradication, inclusive economic growth, and the protection of human rights.

Thank you.