

**Written comments on the MYPoW ‘Zero Draft’ by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food**

29 April 2019

Dear CFS Chair, Secretary and Secretariat,

It is with pleasure that I am sharing this statement and comments below to contribute to the CFS efforts towards the MYPoW. These comments build on and expand preliminary comments made during the past OEWG meetings.

Thanking the CFS Chair, Secretary and the whole Secretariat for the work undertaken so far, please let me know if there is a need for further discussion and/or clarification.

Sincerely,



Hilal Elver  
Special Rapporteur on the right to food

1. I fully support the proposal on gender equality and women's empowerment, and the proposal on youth in agriculture and food systems. As previously stated, I believe that special attention to both of these fundamental issues should be mainstreamed throughout the CFS MYPoW. I particularly urge the prioritization of women, who play a special role in reducing poverty, hunger and malnutrition, an issue to which I dedicated one of my earlier thematic reports ([A/HRC/31/51](#)). CFS must align its workstreams with global policy priorities on gender inequality, including those set forth in the 2030 Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goal Nr. 5, for example, calls for tackling the most pervasive form of inequality in the world, gender inequality, especially in agriculture and food systems. At the same time, youth and opportunities for decent work and employment must rank among CFS' top priorities. Globally, the agriculture sector is aging, and youth populations are struggling to secure access to decent rural jobs and resources. This trend is very dangerous for future food production and rural development. These workstreams on gender equality and youth, respectively, are therefore key for promoting poverty reduction, rural development and for fighting hunger and malnutrition. They also focus on those populations that often lack adequate legal protections, often excluded from decision-making processes and that are at greater risk of human rights violations, *i.e.*, women, girls and youth, all of whom must be considered in order to effectively apply a human rights-based approach to MYPoW of CFS.

2. I wish, however, to recall my previous full support for the preliminary proposal on reducing inequalities for FSN and ask the CFS Secretariat and Chair to reconsider their decision to include of this workstream in the timeline. I had envisaged this workstream to be more comprehensive than focus on youth and gender, and that it would present the possibility to include other more neglected and highly critical forms of discrimination and inequality. **Such discrimination is often unspoken and directed towards indigenous peoples, disabled individuals, IDPs, refugees, migrants, and ethnic minorities with a history of exclusion and marginalization.** All these groups are crucial to achieving FSN and it is relevant to SDGs "no one left behind" motto. It is important to note that SDG 10 deals with inequality at the national and international levels, as it is one of the root causes hunger and malnutrition. Inequality creates and exacerbates problems of economic inaccessibility, and undermines efforts to promote inclusive and just growth in the agricultural sector. CFS is an excellent platform to provide necessary technical and political support to SDG 10 by including inequality in its future agenda.

3. Taking into account the importance of equality and with respect to the workstreams on women empowerment and youth, I encourage the MYPoW to do the following:

a. Promote greater interconnection and interrelation between workstreams, recalling the global strategic framework, which embraces the MYPoW, and **avoiding any form of duplication and overlap between these efforts.** For instance, the distinct workstream on gender equality, will surely include the element of youth employment. Hence, the workstream on youth employment, should benefit from any research, findings, discussions, and policy outcomes pursued within the context of the gender equality workstream.

b. **Address the workstream on inequalities sooner rather than later.** The workstream on inequality is highly complementary, and both underlies and

depends upon advancements within the gender and youth workstreams. After all, women and youth are experiencing heightened inequality that only deepens in the face of today's most prominent challenges, including climate change, natural disasters, and all forms of conflicts and protracted crises.

3. **Workstreams focusing on most critical populations (women, youth and any subsequent ones) should clearly focus on issues of access, including to production resources (land, water, seeds), services, credit and goods.** Guaranteeing access is essential for eliminating inequalities. It is also more than a political issue; access requires consideration of socio-economic and cultural factors, and thus often means enabling self-reliance and determination and promoting sustainable food systems. The impact of our actions on these systems inevitably touch upon other areas of life. Health, education, housing, decent work, and water, are all fundamental human rights and are all interlinked with food security and nutrition. This brings us back to the important concept that all human rights are universal, interdependent, interrelated and interconnected. However, this does not mean that CFS should work on the entire human rights agenda. Rather, CFS should merely recognize that eliminating inequality, and empowering women and youth will contribute to the greater human rights agenda, as these workstreams can help meet the fundamental needs of those who are generally left behind.

4. **I wish to also restate my support for the workstream on conflict and food insecurity.** I fully agree with the OEWG's overall comment that the workstream should not be limited to just armed conflict. I hence welcome the previous title and content focus of the workstream on conflicts. In fact, I would also welcome an even broader scope of the workstream to afford additional attention to the most vulnerable people and groups. Let us be reminded that next year the GTE will be on the Framework Action on Protracted Crises. This monitoring effort should be followed up by a specific workstream on these issues, **to ensure that none of the experiences, contributions and best practices are lost,** and that we commit to continue finding solutions to these global plagues. We are all accountable to those affected by conflict and other emergencies. These include the most food insecure and malnourished people on this planet, now accounting for almost 500,000 million. Considering that 80% of food insecure and malnourished people live in countries experiencing conflict, this issue must remain a priority. Finally, I hope that CFS discussions and efforts on these topics can benefit from the thematic reports I produced on the right to food in conflict settings and areas recovering from natural disasters ([A/72/188](#), [A/73/164](#), [A/HRC/37/61](#)).

5. As stated during the OEWG on the 17th of April, and in agreement with other member states and CSM who raised this point, the MYPoW is a work plan and can be reviewed through the MYPoW rolling review process in plenary. This review allows for us to reconsider planning and readjust the timeline, if necessary. It is always easier, in my view, if necessary to sideline a workstream or postpone it when it is already included in the work plan. **The Chair also appropriately mentioned that the principle of “flexibility” should be part of our ongoing discussion** as the agenda may change to adjust to potentially unpredictable events in the future. The CFS should make such adjustments as needed, but should do so without creating additional uncertainty.

6. With respect to the timeline, I suggest a clearer breakdown by 'type' of policy outcome (guidelines, recommendations, event, etc.). This will ensure a more immediate understanding as to each workstream's aims in terms of policy product/outcome/output.

7. I want to acknowledge the OEWG's concern that there are too many workstreams, too little resources and not enough time for implementation, let alone monitoring. Surely it would be easier to have a shorter list of topics and less of a committing schedule. However, I want to express my support for the CFS Secretary, who explained that resources were carefully assessed before proposing the timeline, as per the morning session discussion. I also agree with those who have mentioned that **the CFS should aim higher and I personally do not believe that a lighter work plan is necessarily a good thing.** The 2030 Agenda is not aiming low. It provides us with a long-term time span, which is becoming more and more short-term. We should think about what this platform wishes to achieve by 2030, and take stock of its progress by 2023. **Outside of Rome there is great respect and expectation as to what this unique Committee can and should be doing.**

8. **Finally, we should not forget all of the great work that the CFS has carried out in the past, and the potential impact of the work on which it is about to embark.** I would like to encourage a greater focus on the post-endorsement use and application of the policy guidance that the MYPoW is committing to produce, as well as on the process leading up to these products and outcomes. CFS has endorsed and is being guided by a number of previously negotiated instruments (RTF Guidelines, VGGTs, RAI, FFA, Sustainable Soil Management, etc.), as well as the complementary policy instruments that other Committees have produced and endorsed (e.g. the COFI with its SSF Guidelines). **We should ensure adequate policy coherence among them, and allow for complementarity of efforts in the present and future.** It is important that CFS promotes new and older policy guidance in a coherent and sustainable manner. The collective application of these tools should be mainstreamed in all future **MYPoW activities to avoid casting aside the incredible time and resources spent on previous negotiations with each new policy product.**