

CFS inputs to the 2021 HLPF

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) took action since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to explore the likely links to global food security and nutrition, with the intention of helping draw attention to the potential threat of rising hunger and malnutrition rates, and stave off a full-blown food crisis that might emerge. In March 2020, the CFS Chair issued a Statement on COVID-19. CFS held extra-ordinary meetings to address the implications of COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition, including specific policy and programmatic actions being taken in response by CFS Advisory Group members and other relevant institutions/constituencies. CFS also sought to bring together the community of policy experts around specific themes such as resilient food supply chains and workers' health during COVID-19.

The CFS High Level Panel of Experts drafted an Issues Paper, which was updated in September, to set the stage for the discussion on COVID-19 at the session on 14 October, during the CFS High-Level Special Event, held from 13 to 15 October 2020.

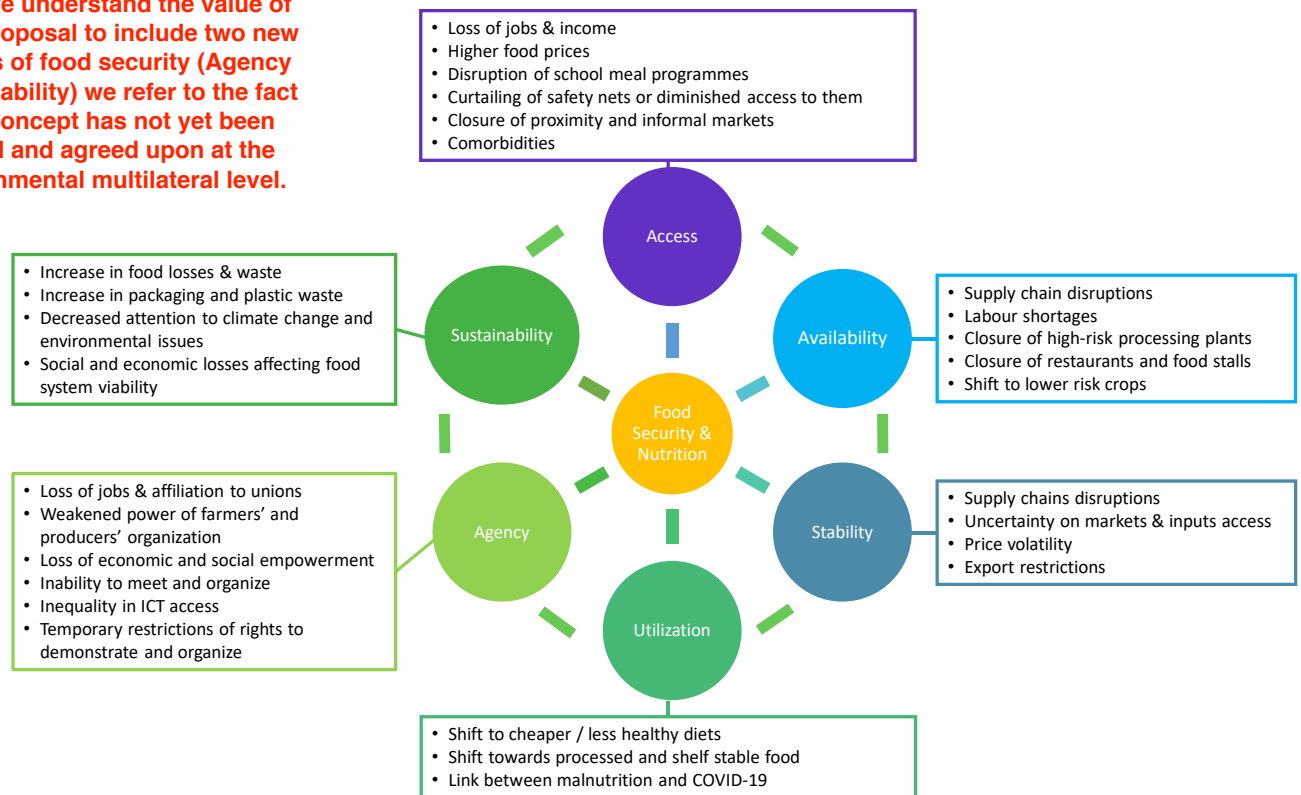
Below are the inputs prepared by the Bureau, in consultation with the Advisory Group, on the basis of the HLPE issues paper and the above mentioned CFS activities.

Due to time constraints to discuss and negotiate the content of the document and that we will not be able to follow the official procedure outlined in paragraph 96 of the MyPOW, we propose to change the format of the document to «Chair's Summary» and/or to clearly reflect in the document the following: «These CFS inputs should not be considered as intergovernmentally agreed negotiated CFS product».

The COVID-19 pandemic is undermining efforts to achieve SDG 2

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and there is no evidence that food itself is a vector of its transmission. However, the virus, and measures to contain its spread have unleashed a number of overlapping and reinforcing dynamics that are affecting all dimensions of food security and nutrition, as depicted in the diagram below.

Although we understand the value of the HLPE proposal to include two new dimensions of food security (Agency and Sustainability) we refer to the fact that this concept has not yet been discussed and agreed upon at the intergovernmental multilateral level.



Source: [CFS-HLPE](#)

The food security and nutrition risks of these dynamics are serious. Already, before the outbreak of the pandemic, according to the latest *State of Food Security and Nutrition* report (FAO *et al.*, 2020), some two billion people faced food insecurity at the moderate or severe level. Since 2014, these numbers have been climbing, rising by 60 million over five years.

The complex dynamics triggered by the lockdowns intended to contain the disease are creating conditions for a major disruption to food systems, giving rise to a dramatic increase in hunger. The most recent estimates indicate that between 83 and 132 million additional people (FAO *et al.*, 2020)—including 38-80 million people in low-income countries that rely on food imports (Torero, 2020)—will experience food insecurity as a direct result of the pandemic. At least 25 countries, including Lebanon, Yemen and South Sudan, are at risk of significant food security deterioration because of the secondary socio-economic impacts of the pandemic (FAO and WFP, 2020). In Latin America, the number of people

requiring food assistance has almost tripled in 2020 (UN, 2020a). Food productivity could also be affected in the future, especially if the virus is not contained and the lockdown measures continue.

The pandemic is also underscoring food safety and the protection of the health of food workers being crucial for achieving food security, and the need to ensure healthy diets affordable to all.

It is vital that the global community continue to monitor the situation closely, respond in necessary ways to avert the worst outcomes with respect to food security and nutrition, and carefully consider how to build more resilient food systems and ensure the right to food, in order to achieve SDG 2.

The following recommendations seek to provide guidance for how to proceed along these lines.

1. Implement more robust targeted social protection programmes to improve access to healthy and nutritious foods (*linkages to SDG1*)

Priority actions include:

- Provide adequate emergency food aid, wherever possible with local and regional purchase of foods for food assistance.
- Provide debt relief to governments struggling to maintain necessary social safety nets.
- Maintain robust social safety nets recognising that household food expenditures rise and fall in relation to other expenditures (e.g. on housing, health care, education, etc.).
- Design food assistance programs that offer adequate access to healthy food, not just sufficient calories.
- Whenever possible, provide alternatives to school lunch programs when schools are closed.
- Allow for adequate access to health care, including access to mental health services, in the design and implementation of social safety nets.

2. Ensure better protections for vulnerable and marginalized food system workers and farmers who are disproportionately affected by the crisis (*linkages to SDG8*)

Food workers in perishable sectors - including meats, dairy products, fish products, fruits, and vegetables – are particularly vulnerable as they are required to continue working in their usual workplaces, where risks of COVID-19 transmission are much higher, as these workstations are often positioned in close proximity (e.g., in abattoirs and meatpacking/meat processing plants), entail exposure to large numbers of customers (e.g., food markets, retail), and their environmental and climatic conditions may promote the survival and the transmission of the virus (e.g., in-door workplaces with low temperatures and high humidity).

Specific recommendations include:

- Ensure food system workers' rights are recognized and integrated in national legislation; promote and enforce compliance with the norms.
- Ensure food systems workers have access to full protection from hazards and risks (in terms of personal protective equipment, distancing measures, clear health and safety guidelines, paid sick leave, adequate sleeping, eating and sanitary facilities, quarantine shelters).

- Pay special attention to migrant workers in the food system to ensure they are protected from health risks, have access to health services and social protection.
- Implement mechanisms to protect farmers and small-agricultural producers from uncertainties and income losses, such as specific insurances, transfers and inputs distribution.

3. Provide better protections for countries that depend on food imports (*linkages to SDG10*)

Specific recommendations include:

- Discourage food export restrictions to protect countries reliant on food imports.
- Provide policy space and support to countries seeking to improve their domestic food production capacity within their ecological boundaries in the medium and longer-term.
- Encourage countries to build up better long-term grain storage capacity.

4. Strengthen and coordinate policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic impact on food systems and food security and nutrition, including at the international level (*linkages to SDG17*)

Specific actions to support this recommendation include:

- Recognize the role of the CFS as a lead body in coordinating an international governance response to the impact of COVID-19 on FSN.
- ~~Create a task force led by the CFS~~ to track the food security impacts of COVID-19.
- Establish a reporting system for CFS member states to share information and experiences with respect to the impact of COVID-19 on FSN in local and national contexts.
- Develop a global campaign to educate and inform the public on nutrition-sensitive practices to prevent and manage COVID-19 infections at household and individual levels.
- Include food system workers and agricultural producers' organizations in COVID-19 decision processes at national and international levels.

5. Support more diverse and resilient distribution systems, including shorter supply chains and territorial markets (*linkages to SDG9*)

Specific actions along these lines include:

- Invest in enhanced territorial market infrastructure at the regional, national and local levels.
- Carefully review policies that may unjustifiably privilege formal retail food outlets over more informal markets that provide points of connection between small producers and lower income consumers, including periodic rural markets and street vendors.
- Consider adopting stronger regulation, including competition policy, to empower small and medium agrifood enterprises (SMEs) to participate in national, regional and global supply chains.

1) Please change «lead body» to «one of the lead bodies» as we would not like to undermine the role of FAO, WFP and IFAD

2) We propose to delete «Create a task force led by the CFS» as this recommendation should be thoroughly discussed prior to its endorsement.

3) Please add «on voluntary basis» after «to share information»

4) In our view, «decision» should be changed to «discussion», as the decision-making role belongs to MS.

In developing countries, informal markets are where most food is bought and sold. Unfortunately, infrastructure investment for such markets is very low, as the attention of policy makers is often more focused on large stores and supermarkets. Solutions will require local authorities to provide informal markets with essential infrastructure (electrification, sanitation, etc.) to make them healthier and safer places for workers and consumers.

6. Support more resilient food production systems based on agroecology and other sustainable forms of food production (*linkages to SDG12*)

Specific recommendations include:

- Invest in more agroecological research-action projects.
- Support the development of an agroecology curriculum at schools of agriculture in a range of countries.
- Given that the majority of agricultural development assistance projects support conventional or industrial agricultural approaches, work to support more projects that encourage agroecology and other sustainable forms of agriculture.
- Include support for individual and community responses, such as home and community gardens.
- Ensure sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, as well as animal production and forestry, are integrated in policy responses to COVID-19 so as to reap their full potential in terms of nutrition and livelihoods.