



# Key Reference Documents for the UN Food Systems Summit

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for relevant stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. With its Secretariat based in Rome, Italy, CFS reports to the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to FAO Conference.

CFS develops and endorses policy recommendations and guidance on a wide range of food security and nutrition topics using a multi-stakeholder, inclusive approach. The CFS policy recommendations have an unrivalled level of international legitimacy and authority as they are negotiated and agreed by Member Nations with the inclusive participation of all key actors concerned with food security and nutrition: are informed by evidence and scientific analysis provided by the CFS High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (CFS HLPE); and draw from the technical capacity of the three Rome-based Agencies FAO, IFAD, and WFP and other recognized experts and institutions from around the world.

Among CFS's most prominent and impactful products to date are its 2012 Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forestry, its 2014 Principles of Responsible Agricultural Investments, and its 2021 Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.

## **The Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSN)**

**T**he CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSN) were endorsed at CFS 47 in February 2021. They represent a concrete tool in the hands of governments, UN agencies, civil society, private sector, financial institutions and other development actors that provide guidance on policies and

interventions to address malnutrition in all its forms, through a holistic food systems perspective.

These Guidelines present a wide range of recommendations aimed at promoting policy coherence and reducing policy fragmentation between relevant sectors - such as health, agriculture, education, environment, gender, social protection, trade and employment - all of which have an impact on food systems and nutrition.

The Guidelines aim to support the development of coordinated, multi-sectoral national policies, laws, programmes and investment plans to enable safe and healthy diets through sustainable food systems.

Based on the recognition of the strong interlinkages between sustainable food systems and healthy diets, the Guidelines recognize the importance of implementing interventions within and across food systems, and their constituent elements - food supply chains, food environments, consumer behaviour - to improve their ability to deliver healthy diets and to generate positive outcomes along the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The Guidelines include a wide range of recommendations of actions to promote transparent and accountable governance, sustainable food supply chains, access to healthy diets, food safety across sustainable food systems, nutrition education, gender equality, and resilient food systems in humanitarian contexts. A specific section is dedicated to the implementation and application of the Voluntary Guidelines at regional and country level. This section outlines roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders towards the promotion of the dissemination and uptake of the VGFSN.

The Guidelines have been produced during a re-

newed international attention to food systems and nutrition. In this context, they are the only policy instrument being negotiated at multilateral level on these matters and will be an important contribution to the [UN Food Systems Summit](#).

### **Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems that Enhance Food Security and Nutrition**

**F**ood systems are at a crossroads. Profound transformation is needed to achieve global food security and nutrition and to face multidimensional and complex challenges, including a growing world population, urbanization and climate change, which drive increased pressure on natural resources, impacting land, water and biodiversity.

The CFS Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches aim at providing decision-makers in the different spheres of society with guidance on context-appropriate transition pathways towards sustainable food systems.

Agroecological and other innovative approaches, as articulated in the CFS policy recommendations, are intended as a set of practices, technologies and/or methods that look beyond single technological social or institutional innovations to deliver sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition for current and future generations. They focus on five key areas: (i) policy foundations; (ii) performance measurement and monitoring frameworks; (iii) transition to resilient and diversified sustainable agriculture and food systems; (iv) research, innovation, training, education, knowledge co-creation, knowledge sharing and co-learning; (v) institutions and enabling environment.

While there have been a number of initiatives addressing either agroecology or innovations and digital technologies, the CFS Policy Recommendations add value by highlighting the importance of policy contexts because they shape the behaviour of ag-

riculture and food system actors. The policy recommendations also add value by expressing global consensus on some of the key issues at the center of global debates around sustainable food systems, such as:

- the management of, and reduction of the reliance on, chemical pesticides and other agrochemicals;
- the reduction of (economic, environmental, social) negative impacts, including externalities, or;
- the importance of ecological alternatives for the protection and improvement of human, animal, plant health and the environment.

### **The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (CFS VGGT)**

**T**he overarching goals of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security - known as CFS "VGGT" - are to achieve food security for all and support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

While supporting efforts toward the eradication of hunger and poverty, the Guidelines contribute to achieving sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, rural development, environmental protection, and sustainable social and economic development.

The Guidelines are intended to benefit all people in all countries, although there is an added emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized people. The Guidelines serve as a global reference document and set out principles and internationally accepted standards of practice for the responsible governance of tenure. They provide a framework which States can use when developing their own strategies, policies, legislation, programmes and activities. They allow governments, civil society, the private sector, and individual citizens

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to judge whether their proposed actions and the actions of others constitute acceptable practices. Since its endorsement, the CFS VGGT has reframed the land policy debate internationally and is widely recognized as a global reference point that is helping countries and other stakeholders develop enabling environments to attract sustainable investment in agriculture via improved land policies and institutions.

### Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS RAI)

**A**s widely recognized by the global community, eradicating hunger will require a significant increase in agricultural investment and, more importantly, it will require improving the quality of investment so that it benefits those that need it most. The CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems – or, CFS-RAI – acknowledge that recognition of, and respect for, human rights is the starting point for defining how responsible investment in agriculture and food systems can contribute to food security and nutrition.

While there have been a number of initiatives that aim to address responsible agricultural investment in a variety of ways, the Principles developed by CFS add value as the only internationally negotiated document that:

- Applies to all agricultural investments (foreign and domestic, public and private, small, medium and large-scale);
- Addresses all stakeholders that are involved in/benefit from/affected by investments in agriculture and food systems and sets out roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder group;
- Takes into account the special interests and needs of smallholders, including family farmers;
- Applies to all stages of the value chain (from primary production to consumers);
- Is globally applicable for implementation by both public and private entities worldwide involved

with investments in agriculture and food systems;

- Addresses key issues such as employment and labour rights; land and water tenure; natural resource use; climate change; youth; women; cultural heritage and traditional knowledge; genetic diversity and benefit-sharing; safety; health; inclusive governance; grievance mechanisms; and accountability.

### Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis (CFS-FFA)

**T**he objective of the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA, or, “the Framework”) is to improve the food security and nutrition of populations affected by, or at risk of, protracted crises by addressing critical manifestations and building resilience; adapting to specific challenges; and contributing to addressing underlying causes.

The CFS-FFA, adopted in 2015, provides a broad framework that can be used by all stakeholders who have a role in improving or impacting food security and nutrition in protracted crises.

### Other Notable CFS Products and Reports

- The CFS is also in the process of producing Policy Recommendations on “*Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches*” which are expected to be finalized during Spring 2021.
- The CFS HLPE produced its 15th and latest report on “*Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030*” which, along with all other HLPE reports, can be found **here**.
- The CFS HLPE produced two issues papers on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition. The most recent one proposes to “[develop] effective policy responses to address the hunger and malnutrition pandemic”, and can be found **here**.

See annex for all CFS policy guidance and recommendations, and HLPE independent reports.

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# Annex: **CFS Reference documents**

## **1. CFS endorsed policy guidance and recommendations**

### **CFS Policy Guidance**

- Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (2004)
- Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition – the repository of all CFS policy work
- Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGTs 2012)
- Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI 2014)
- Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis (CFS-FFA 2015)
- Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (2021)

### **CFS Policy Recommendations**

- Agroecological and other innovative approaches (CFS 48, 2021)
- Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition (CFS 44, 2017)
- Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: What roles for livestock? (CFS 43, 2016)
- Connecting Smallholders to Markets (CFS 43, 2016)
- Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42, 2015)
- Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems (CFS 41, 2014)
- Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition (CFS 41, 2014)
- Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security (CFS 40, 2013)
- Biofuels and food security (CFS 40, 2013)
- Social protection for food security (CFS 3, 2012)
- Food security and climate change (CFS 39, 2012)
- Gender, food security and nutrition (CFS 37, 2011)
- How to increase food security and smallholder sensitive investments in agriculture (CFS 37, 2011)
- Land tenure and international investments in agriculture (CFS 37, 2011)
- Price volatility and food security (CFS 37, 2011)

## **2. HLPE independent reports**

- HLPE Report #16 Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems (2021)
- HLPE Report #15 Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030 (2020)
- HLPE Report #14 Agroecological approaches and other innovations for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition (2019)

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- HLPE Report #13 Multi-stakeholder partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda (CFS 45, 2018)
- HLPE Report #12 Nutrition and Food Systems (CFS 44, 2017)
- HLPE Report #11 Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition (CFS 44, 2017)
- HLPE Report #10 Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: What roles for livestock? (CFS 43, 2016)
- HLPE Report #9 Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42, 2015)
- HLPE Report #8 Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems (CFS 41, 2014)
- HLPE Report #7 Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition (CFS 41, 2014)
- HLPE Report #6 Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security (CFS 40,2013)
- HLPE Report #5 Biofuels and food security (CFS 40, 2013)
- HLPE Report #4 Social protection for food security (CFS 39, 2012)
- HLPE Report #3 Food security and climate change (CFS 39, 2012)
- HLPE Report #2 Land tenure and international investments in agriculture (CFS 37, 2011)
- HLPE Report #1 Price volatility and food security (CFS 37, 2011)
- HLPE Note on Critical and Emerging Issues: **2014** and **2017**
- HLPE Steering Committee contribution to SDG2 review

### **3. Compilation of experiences resulting from thematic lessons learned events**

- Experiences and good practices in the use and application of the Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGTs) Summary and key elements (CFS 43, 2016)
- Experiences and good practices in the use and application of the voluntary guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security – Summary and key elements (CFS 45, 2018)