

## Open Ended Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Date: 30 October 2020 – 9.30-12.30

### **FAO inputs to the draft Terms of Reference for the preparation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition**

#### **Section A: Background and rationale**

FAO reaffirms its support to the development of the Voluntary Guidelines. These ToRs are a very good basis for the development of the Voluntary Guidelines. As it is also stated in the Multi-Annual Programme of Work of the CFS, FAO agrees that the Guidelines should focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

FAO proposes the following changes (see yellow highlights) in paragraphs 3 and 8:

**Para 3.** Currently, the global food system produces enough food to feed every person on the planet. However, due to a range of diverse challenges, an increasing number of people are failing to meet their daily food and nutrition needs. In 2019, almost 690 million people were estimated to be hungry, up by nearly 60 million since 2014, representing 8.9 % of the total population<sup>2</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic may add an additional 83 to 132 million people to the ranks of the undernourished in 2020.<sup>3</sup> Malnutrition in all its forms - undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity - is now the number one factor contributing to the global burden of diseases and reduced life expectancy. **At the same time, wide disparities in terms of rights, entitlements and opportunities between women and men from various social categories hinder both of them to develop and use their potential as economic, political and social actors making them more prone to remain trapped in poverty, across several generations.** In this challenging global context, closing the gender gap and supporting women to use their full potential to achieve food security is more important than ever.

**Para 8.** Despite positive progress made over decades in narrowing gender gaps, gender inequality persists as women continue to face discrimination in many areas - including access to and control over key productive resources, assets, services and economic opportunities, and participation in decision-making processes at household, community and national levels, **as well as unbalanced and unrecognized responsibilities in the domestic and care work –** that negatively impacts the four dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization and stability.

## Section B: Objectives of the Guidelines

As for the Objectives of the Guidelines FAO particularly appreciates the inclusion of paragraph 12, which underlines the importance of gender transformative interventions. Transformative interventions aim at challenging and changing underlying structural causes of gender inequalities and food insecurity and malnutrition and are essential if long term positive and sustainable impact is to be achieved.

FAO proposes the following changes (see yellow highlights) in paragraphs 12, 13, 14, 15.5, 15.6 and 15.7:

**Para 12.** The Guidelines will provide concrete policy guidance based on best practices and lessons learnt on gender mainstreaming, gender transformative interventions and innovative solutions, with the aim of improving legal and policy framework and policies, institutional arrangements, national plans and programmes, and promoting increased investments in human and financial resources **that are conducive to gender equality and women's empowerment and recognize and address the multiple roles that women play at productive, reproductive and community level.**

**Para 13.** The Guidelines aim to foster greater policy coherence between gender equality and food security and nutrition agendas and promote mutually reinforcing policy measures. Generating and disseminating evidence on the **differentiated** opportunities and constraints that **women and men face from different social groups** help to raise awareness and support the development of policies and programs that coherently integrate **the perspective of gender equality and women's empowerment** with food security and nutrition objectives.

**Para 14.** The Guidelines will contribute to accelerating action by all stakeholders at all levels to achieve the vision of CFS and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as part of the United Nations Decade of Action for Sustainable Development (2020-2029). Given the important role that women play **in agriculture and food systems, family farming,** as well as in household food security and nutrition, the Guidelines will also contribute to the implementation of the Action Plans of the UN Decades of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), on Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028) and on Family Farming (2019-2028) **and the outcomes of the 2021 Food Systems Summit.**

**15.5** Underline the importance of collecting, analysing and using relevant **gender-** sex- and age-disaggregated data and **well-grounded qualitative information and gender-sensitive indicators** to support evidence-based policies, programmes, plans and strategies and adequate monitoring and impact evaluation.

**15.6** Promote context-specific actions with a focus on women in situations of vulnerability **and/or marginalization** recognizing that women are not a homogenous group, but they often experience different, multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination across and throughout countries. **An intersectional approach shows the way that people's social identities (i.e. age, race, ethnic, social) can overlap, creating compounding experiences of inequalities and discrimination.**

**15.7** Advocate, promote and strive for the use of transformative and other innovative approaches that are able to tackle and address both the symptoms and the structural causes of gender inequality, with the aim of achieving lasting change in terms of the power and choices women have over their own lives, rather than just temporary increases in opportunities. This should contribute to create a world with more equal gender relations in which both women and men can equally contribute to and benefit of the wellbeing of their households, communities and societies.

### Section C: Scope of the Guidelines

FAO agrees that the language used in the ToRs and the Voluntary Guidelines should be in line with language already established in intergovernmental treaties already ratified by Member Countries, such as the CEDAW. In relation to CEDAW, FAO proposes to include that the Voluntary Guidelines will not only highlight the need to work towards the implementation of CEDAW, but that the VGs will effectively provide concrete operational guidance for the implementation of CEDAW and thus helping to put the CEDAW provisions into action.

FAO proposes the following additions (see yellow highlights) in paragraphs 15.9 and 15.11:

**Para 15.9** Highlight the need to work towards the implementation of the of the UN General Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), especially its General Recommendation 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and other legally binding international conventions, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). The Guidelines will provide concrete operational guidance for the implementation of CEDAW and thus helping to put the CEDAW provisions into action.

FAO proposes to include in paragraph 15.11 or in a new paragraph, that the VGs will provide guidance on the monitoring and evaluation of the use and application of the Guidelines by States in accordance of their national jurisdiction, and so not only in the context of the CFS monitoring mechanism.

**Para 15.11** Include guidance on the evaluation of the use and application of the Guidelines within the framework of the CFS monitoring mechanism as well as guidance on the monitoring and evaluation of the use and application of the Guidelines by States in accordance of their national jurisdiction.