

Multilateral Policy Convergence for Food Systems Transformation: CFS and its voluntary guidance on food systems and nutrition

Statement by Rick White, Chair of the CFS Private Sector Mechanism

26 July 2021

Good afternoon distinguished delegates and fellow stakeholders, as Chair of the Private Sector Mechanism, it is my pleasure to speak to you today on the role of Multilateral Policy Convergence for Food Systems Transformation.

The Private Sector Mechanism (also known as PSM) is an open platform providing a permanent seat for private enterprises right across the agri-food value chain, from farmers, to input providers, cooperatives, processors, SMEs and food companies. We embrace the responsibility that this gives us, which is to coordinate the consultation with the wider private sector to provide CFS with contributions from business and industry.

We take these activities very seriously and have participated in the CFS policy convergence processes that have led to outputs that align not only with the SDGs, but also include multi-stakeholder partnerships vital to their achievement. This multilateral policy convergence is aligned to the 2030 Agenda which calls for an enhanced global partnership that includes all actors and mobilizes all available resources to achieve the SDGs.

This inclusivity is exactly what CFS represents through its various activities, that lead to its outputs. These include the recently **Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition** and Policy Recommendations on the Agroecology and other Innovative Approaches, as well as the CFS VGGT, RAI principles, and the FFA.

By participating in the CFS nutrition workstream, the PSM has contributed to the endorsement of its Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition. This work required countless hours not only from its tireless Secretariat, and Workstream Chair, Ambassador Hoogeven, but also from its various members and stakeholders. WHY would we dedicate so much time to this process?

Because WE are aware of the tremendous challenges that the agriculture sector is facing, and not the least of which, those our farmers face—on a daily basis.

The 2021 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World has analyzed the drivers leading to the increased hunger and they point to the areas that need change.

Representing the entire agri-food chain, the PSM brings to the CFS process its expertise from industry to those topics under discussion. On Food Systems and Nutrition, we were able to share our expertise in various areas, including innovation, technology, and research so that the recommendations reflected the scientific evidence base that we have at the moment. While great commitments have been made to improve nutrition, much more needs to be done according to each regional and national context.

By identifying a path through a multistakeholder process, we believe the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Nutrition provide the policy tool for governments to develop the right policies and responsible investments to address the causes of hunger and malnutrition, from a food systems perspective.

We understand food systems transformation requires ambitious actions to meet the growing number of hungry, and this will require varied approaches to tackle the challenges through greater innovation, technology, data, improved governance and institutions. For this reason, the Private Sector will continue to engage on these issues where we believe we can provide a valuable contribution towards the Food Systems Transformation, within the CFS space and beyond.

These topics are being discussed today because they relate directly to the topic of Food Systems Transformation, but we must note they have been discussed extensively at CFS before.

In fact, because many issues are thoroughly addressed through CFS processes and outputs, the PSM urges the recognition of their relevance by Member States. Here I am speaking about the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, as well as the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure, Responsible Agriculture Investment, and all CFS products.

They are the result of a transparent and multistakeholder CFS process supported by the independent, scientific expertise and research from the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition.

Today's event during the Pre-summit is a great step in the right direction. And we hope that through our continued engagement in CFS and the Food Systems Summit, the input of the Private Sector will continue to contribute positively towards achieving the mandate on food security and nutrition.

To build a world without hunger is the noble mandate against which all CFS members, stakeholders and UN agencies engage at FAO.

We need no starker reminder of the importance of this mission than the findings of this month's launch of the State of Food Security and Nutrition Report.

Thank you Chair, CFS Secretariat and fellow stakeholders for your time today.