

CFS Regional Consultations on the Preparation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition

BACKGROUND

The [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)](#) at its 46th Session in 2019 endorsed a policy process which will result in Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition.

The Voluntary Guidelines, like earlier CFS products, are intended to be a reference document that provides guidance to governments, as well as to other stakeholders, on appropriate policies, investments and institutional arrangements needed as part of their efforts to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

Advancing gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is critical to ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all, and for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is also essential to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, contributing to poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable natural resource management, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, protection of ecosystems and conservation of biodiversity.

An increasing number of people are failing to meet their food and nutrition needs. Almost 690 million people were estimated to be hungry in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic may have added up to 132 million people to the ranks of the undernourished in 2020, disproportionately affecting women and girls. In this context, urgent actions are needed to address the challenges, gaps and barriers that hinder progress in achieving gender equality and the full realization of women's and girls' rights in the context of food security and nutrition.

Fostering discussion and debate around policy and institutional reforms are key to promoting gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, and are fundamental prerequisites to the realization of human rights and sustainable food systems and development.

REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

To ensure a wide and inclusive process, the CFS Secretariat is planning six regional consultations to be held between September and November 2021, funded

largely by the generous support of Finland, France, Spain and Sweden. The inputs received during these consultations will contribute to the preparation of the First Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines, which will be negotiated in spring 2022, in anticipation of a final draft being presented for consideration by the CFS Plenary at its 50th Session in October 2022.

The regional consultations are an opportunity to receive inputs, comments, and suggestions on how to best align the Voluntary Guidelines with regional/national priorities and needs. The results of each regional consultation will be documented in a report of the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls Empowerment.

The regional consultations will be organized by the CFS Secretariat in collaboration with the decentralized offices of FAO, IFAD, WFP and other relevant partners.

PARTICIPANTS AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Based on the CFS multi-stakeholder model, these regional consultations are expected to gather participants from governments, civil society organizations (expedited by the CFS Civil Society Mechanism), private sector associations (expedited by the CFS Private Sector Mechanism), agricultural research organizations, UN bodies, international financial institutions, and private philanthropic foundations to ensure the multi-stakeholder nature of the discussion and its results.

Each regional consultation is anticipated to last two days to guide the participants through the Zero Draft and obtain structured feedback to enhance the next stages of the process. Interpretation in UN official languages relevant to the region will be provided.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The Zero Draft of Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition will be available from June in the [CFS Working Space](#) along with other relevant background documents. A concept note and agenda of the regional consultations along with logistical information for participants will also be made available in due course.

Twitter: @UN_CFS

Email: cfs@fao.org

Website: www.fao.org/cfs