

CFS 54 - SATELLITE SESSION

Draft Concept Note

Monday, 19 October 2026 13.00 – 14.30

Empowering women farmers for food security and nutrition: working together to advance inclusive and sustainable food systems

Background

Advancing women's and girls' empowerment is essential to achieving the CFS vision of ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all.

Evidence consistently shows that when women have equal access to productive resources, services, opportunities and decision-making in agriculture and food systems, outcomes improve: food security and nutrition are strengthened, economies grow and communities become more resilient. Yet women's participation in agriculture and food systems continue to face persistent structural barriers. These include unequal access to land, credit, technology, extension services, and markets, as well as social norms that limit their participation and decision-making power.

The **CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition (GEWGE VGs)** provide a globally agreed framework to support governments and stakeholders in integrating equal opportunities and promoting women's and girls' empowerment into food security and nutrition strategies, policies and programmes, fostering greater policy coherence across sectors and supporting mutually reinforcing policy measures. The Guidelines call for eliminating discrimination against women, recognizing and valuing contributions to food security and nutrition, and ensuring women and girls can meaningfully participate in decision-making processes across food systems. They serve as a practical tool to translate global commitments into concrete actions at local, national and regional levels.

The designation of 2026 as the **International Year of the Woman Farmer** underscores the vital role of women in agriculture, food systems, and rural development, while drawing global attention to the barriers they continue to face. This global recognition offers a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the challenges and achievements of women farmers, strengthen advocacy for gender-responsive policies, showcase innovations and promote investments that support women's empowerment in agriculture and advance the implementation of the Guidelines. The International Year also emphasizes the need to address systemic barriers and ensure women's equal access to resources and opportunities. In this context, the CFS GEWGE Voluntary Guidelines provide a normative foundation for the International Year's advocacy efforts, grounding its messages in concrete policy actions, promoting more inclusive and sustainable food systems, and contributing to the realization of the right to food for all.

At the same time, the global context has become more complex. Increasing geopolitical pressures, competing priorities and constraints on public resources have made the implementation of gender responsive policies more challenging. While important progress has been made in developing normative guidance, efforts to operationalize these commitments often remain fragmented or insufficiently aligned across policy, financing and implementation domains.

In this context, advancing women empowerment in agriculture and food systems requires stronger alignment among actors contributing through complementary roles, including policy development, financing, technical support, innovation and community engagement. It also calls for making more effective use of existing policies, including relevant CFS policy products, as well as ongoing programmes and partnerships, with a view to strengthening synergies and coherence across these efforts.

Building on its inclusive mandate, the CFS offers its platform to facilitate dialogue and encourage cooperation among its members and stakeholders, while strengthening connections with partners engaged in financing, innovation and programme implementation.

This satellite session is therefore designed not as a thematic discussion or a review of uptake, but as a forward-looking and catalytic space that leverages the momentum of the International Year of the Woman Farmer to bring together actors with complementary roles, using the CFS GEWGE Voluntary Guidelines as a shared reference point to support alignment, collaboration and practical pathways for implementation.

Objectives and Expected outcomes

This session is expected to:

- Elevate political leadership on gender equality and the empowerment of women farmers in agrifood systems and highlight the essential contributions of women farmers and rural women to food security, nutrition and sustainable development.
- Promote the GEWGE Voluntary Guidelines as a shared policy reference and a practical framework to support inclusive policies and the empowerment of women and girls, including in strengthening legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, and national plans and programmes.
- Explore how the GEWGE Voluntary Guidelines and other relevant CFS policy products can be leveraged in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner, and how Members and stakeholders can contribute, through their respective roles, to strengthen policy coherence across women's and girls' empowerment, and food security and nutrition agendas.
- Foster dialogue among CFS members and stakeholders on how to strengthen collaboration across policy, financing, innovation and programme implementation domains, including by identifying concrete opportunities for synergies and coordinated approaches, and by exploring how existing initiatives, partnerships and financing instruments can be better leveraged to support the implementation of the GEWGE Voluntary Guidelines.
- Although this session is not part of the official agenda of the CFS 54th Plenary Session, a Rapporteur's summary will be presented at the Plenary along with a brief text proposal for possible inclusion in the CFS 54 Final Report.