



**CFS VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S AND GIRLS'
EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

DRAFT FOR NEGOTIATIONS

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
EAS	Extension and Advisory Services
GEWGE	Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment
GSF	CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition
ICERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
RBA	Rome-based Agencies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
SME	Small and medium sized enterprises
SOFI	The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNDROP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and rationale

1. Ensuring gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (GEWGE) is critical to achieving CFS' vision of ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all. GEWGE is fundamental to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. GEWGE is also essential to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. In order to transform this vision into reality, at its 46th Session in October 2019, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) endorsed a policy process that will result in Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition (referred to as the "Guidelines" in this document).
3. The importance of GEWGE for sustainable development was acknowledged by the international community through the adoption of gender equality as a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Agenda (SDG5).
4. Currently, the global food system produces enough food to feed every person on the planet. However, due to a range of challenges, an increasing number of people in both rural and urban areas are failing to realize their right to adequate food, as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and meet their daily food and nutritional needs. Gender-based discrimination and inequality result in women and girls often being the worst affected by hunger and malnutrition. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequality, disproportionately affecting women and girls¹. In this challenging global context, addressing gender inequality and ensuring women's and girls' rights is urgent and more important than ever to achieve food security and nutrition for all.
5. A growing body of evidence demonstrates the positive links between GEWGE and food security and nutrition. Supporting the empowerment of women and girls is one of the most effective ways to improve nutrition outcomes not only of women but of all family members, lowering infant mortality and reducing child malnutrition, thereby helping to break intergenerational cycles of malnutrition, with special attention to the nutritional needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women.
6. GEWGE is essential to poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable natural resource management, mitigating and adapting to climate change, protecting ecosystems and conserving biodiversity. Achievement of gender equality is positively correlated with increased production and improved efficiency in many sectors - including in agriculture² in a context where small-scale and family farming is increasingly feminized - whereas inequality and discrimination in access to, and control over, resources continue to undermine economic performance, leading to below-potential economic outcomes³. Women play active roles as agents in food systems as farmers, producers, processors, traders, wage-workers and entrepreneurs throughout the value chains.
7. Despite progress made over decades, women and girls continue to face multiple and intersecting

¹[The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021](#) (SOFI 2021) Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all. FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2021.

² Agriculture includes crops, forestry, fisheries, livestock and aquaculture. UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/242. Paragraph 20.

³ [The cost of the gender gap in agricultural productivity](#), UN Women, World Bank Group, UNEP and UNDP, 2015.

forms of discrimination and inequality⁴ across the world⁵, manifested through multiple challenges that include barriers to decision-making processes; exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)⁶; unequal access to, and control over, key productive resources, assets, technologies, services, economic opportunities; limited access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights⁷ and to social protection, as well as unbalanced and unrecognized responsibilities in terms of unpaid care and domestic work. These all contribute to food insecurity and malnutrition, negatively impacting various pillars of food security: availability, access, utilization and stability, creating barriers to food system inclusiveness, innovation and sustainability and limiting women's agency and preventing them from benefitting equally. Part 3 explores these challenges and offers strategic entry points for change.

1.2. Objectives of the guidelines

8. The core objective of the Guidelines is to support Member States, development partners and other stakeholders to advance gender equality, women's and girls' rights, empowerment and leadership, as part of their efforts to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.
9. The Guidelines will provide concrete policy guidance based on good practices and lessons learnt on gender mainstreaming⁸, gender-responsive interventions and innovative solutions. They aim to contribute towards a gender-transformative approach⁹, improving legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, national plans and programmes, and promoting innovative partnerships and increased investments in human and financial resources that are conducive to promoting GEWGE.
10. The Guidelines aim to foster greater policy coherence among GEWGE and food security and nutrition agendas, and promote mutually reinforcing policy measures. Generating and disseminating evidence on the diverse situations and experiences of women and girls, men and boys and recognizing their differentiated opportunities, constraints and outcomes in the context of food security and nutrition help to transform discriminatory social norms, raise awareness, and support appropriate responses including targeted policies and programs.
11. The Guidelines will contribute to accelerating action by all stakeholders at all levels, including farmers' and women's organizations, to achieve the CFS vision and the goals of the 2030 Agenda, as part of the United Nations Decade of Action for Sustainable Development (2020-2030). Given the important roles that women and girls 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), on Family Farming (2019-2028), and Ecosystems Restoration (2021-2030).

⁴ [Commission on the Status of Women 2018 \(CSW62\) Agreed Conclusions](#), 2018; [CSW 63 Agreed Conclusions](#), 2019; Also HR Council Resolution 17th July 2020.

⁵ United Nations, 1979. [Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW), Article 1.

⁶ [CSW62. Agreed Conclusions](#), 2018, para 25.

⁷ UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/2, UNGA, October 2019.

⁸ Gender mainstreaming is defined in the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2.

⁹ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/079/07/PDF/N2107907.pdf?OpenElement>.

1.3. Nature of the voluntary guidelines and their intended users

12. The Guidelines are voluntary and non-binding.
13. The Guidelines are intended to be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law, with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable international and regional instruments. Nothing in the Guidelines should be read as limiting or undermining any legal obligations to which States may be subject under international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.
14. The Guidelines are intended to be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions. They should be implemented within countries and at regional and global levels, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.
15. The Guidelines are complementary to and support national, regional and international initiatives, which aim at addressing all forms of discrimination against women and girls due to their negative impact upon food security and nutrition. In particular, CFS guidance builds upon and integrate existing instruments adopted on this topic within the context of the UN system.
16. The Guidelines are intended for all stakeholders that are involved in addressing food security and nutrition, gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and leadership. They primarily address governments at all levels to help design and implement public policies, as their primary objective is to strengthen coherence between and across public sector policies at local, national, regional and global levels. They are also of value to other actors involved in policy discussions and policy implementation processes. These actors include:
 - a) Governments;
 - b) Intergovernmental and regional organizations, including UN agencies and bodies;
 - c) International and local civil society organizations, including women's, farmers' and small-scale food producers' organizations, professional associations, trade unions including domestic, rural and agricultural workers, youth as well as Indigenous Peoples;
 - d) Private sector, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and commercial banks;
 - e) Research organizations and educational institutions including universities;
 - f) Development and humanitarian agencies, and international and regional financial institutions;
and
 - g) Philanthropic foundations.

PART 2 - CORE PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERPIN THE GUIDELINES

17. The Guidelines are intended to be applied, consistent with the following instruments as far as each of these instruments are relevant and applicable and as far as they have been agreed, acknowledged and/or endorsed by respective Member States:
- Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (2015);
 - ECOSOC – AC 1997/2 – Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations System;
 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights – adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948;
 - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights;
 - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), including the General Recommendation 34;
 - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD);
 - Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
 - Convention against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT);
 - UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 13 September 2007;
 - UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, 28 September 2018 (UNDROP);
 - UNGA Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 28 July 1951;
 - UNGA Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 - ILO Conventions 100, 111, 156, and 183;
 - ILO Resolution concerning Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work, 17 June 2009;
 - ILO Resolution concerning the Promotion of Gender Equality, Pay Equity and Maternity Protection, 8 December 2008;
 - Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2417;
 - Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, and its review conferences;
 - International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, the ICPD Programme of Action and its review conferences.
18. The Guidelines are intended to build upon and complement the work and mandate of other international bodies, and related guidance contained in other policy products, including:
- CFS Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (2004);
 - CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (2012);
 - CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (2015);
 - CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (2015);
 - Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, 2015;
 - CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (2017);
 - CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (2021);
 - All endorsed CFS policy recommendations.

The core principles that underpin the Guidelines are:

19. **Commitment to human rights and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.** Achieving GEWGE is fundamental to the realization of

human rights, which are indivisible and interdependent. The Guidelines are consistent with, and draw upon, international and regional instruments, including the SDGs that address human rights.

20. **Non-discrimination:** No one should be subjected to discrimination under law and policies as well as in practice. States should ensure the equal right of women and men to the enjoyment of all human rights, while acknowledging difference between women and men and taking specific temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality as appropriate¹⁰.
21. **Empowerment of women and girls.** The Guidelines rest integrally on supporting the empowerment of women and girls, recognizing them as right holders, agents of change and leaders. They build on the positive relationship between women's and girls' empowerment and achieving food security and nutrition. They recommend actions to ensure women's and girls' agency and autonomy, individually and collectively, participating actively and meaningfully in decision-making to control their own lives and to strengthen strategic choices affecting their lives and livelihoods.
22. **Gender transformative approaches.** The Guidelines promote the application of gender transformative approaches that challenge and tackle both the symptoms of gender inequality – including women's restricted access to land, financial services and other productive resources - and the structural causes of gender inequality entrenched in patriarchal systems and structures. Promoting gender transformative change also means identifying and creating unique opportunities for change in discriminatory gender norms and unequal power relations for sustainable food security and nutrition.
23. **Strengthening policy, legal and institutional coherence.** The Guidelines contribute to improving and strengthening policy, legal, and institutional frameworks that promote coherence in mainstreaming GEWGE on aspects related to food security and nutrition. This will help to enhance synergies, avoid duplication, mitigate risks and prevent unintended or contradictory effects from one policy or legal area to another.
24. **Context-specific gender analysis and approaches.** The Guidelines promote inclusive and participatory context-specific gender analysis and actions - avoiding generalizations and stereotypes - that take into account the diversity of women and girls' lived experiences, context at local, national, regional levels and its impact on gender relations, roles and norms.
25. **Intersectionality and multidimensional approach.** The Guidelines recognize that women and girls often experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination affecting their food security and nutrition outcomes. The Guidelines promote a multidimensional approach that address these interrelated and mutually reinforcing deprivations, in particular for Indigenous communities, and marginalized and disadvantaged women most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.
26. **Gender mainstreaming combined with targeted actions.** Alongside transformative approaches, the Guidelines support mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and interventions while recognizing that achieving gender equality requires complementing gender mainstreaming with targeted interventions that focus specifically on women and girls.
27. **Evidence-based approach.** The Guidelines are based on sound evidence that enables informed decision-making and the development of evidence-based monitoring and evaluation systems and effective responses and policies.
28. **Inclusiveness and participation in policy- and law-making processes.** The Guidelines promote policies and legal frameworks that respect the human rights of all individuals based on the full, equal and meaningful participation of all women and girls, while respecting diversity in the development and implementation of policies and laws. Enabling and promoting the full, equal and meaningful

¹⁰ CEDAW, Articles 2 and 5.

participation of women and girls in all their diversity¹¹, including Indigenous women and women and girls with disabilities, and women-led organizations, including women's rights organizations and social movements, in marginal and vulnerable situations, is not only critical to ensuring that policy goals respond to their priorities, but also offers a strategic means for overcoming social exclusion.

29. **Multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnership.** The Guidelines recognize the importance of promoting effective multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships and engaging with non-traditional actors and leaders as allies in processes to advance GEWGE in the context of food security and nutrition. Effective partnerships, including with the private sector require transparent rules of engagement and accountability including safeguards for the identification and management of potential conflicts of interest.

¹¹ <https://undocs.org/A/C.3/76/L.45/Rev.1>.

PART 3 - ISSUES, CHALLENGES, POLICIES AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES

3.1. Cross-cutting recommendations which apply to all sections of Part 3

30. Governments should:
- (i) Strengthen the **implementation of existing obligations** under national and international law, including human rights law, with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable international and regional instruments.
 - (ii) **Implement, strengthen or introduce legislation promoting non-discrimination and gender equality** for all women and girls in all their diversity.
 - (iii) Ensure **equal access to justice and legal assistance** to ensure that women's and girls' rights are protected, including on issues related to property in rural and urban areas, inheritance and financial services.
 - (iv) Ensure, where possible, that **targeted social protection measures**¹² are in place to support the poorest, including women and girls, also during times of vulnerability, emergency and protracted crisis.
 - (v) Address **gender discriminatory socio-cultural norms at all levels of the food system** that perpetuate gender inequality in the context of food security and nutrition, by promoting the application of gender transformative approaches, including engagement with non-traditional actors and leaders as allies in change processes. In order to achieve gender equality, transformation needs to go from individual to systemic change and across informal to formal spheres of life.
 - (vi) Promote **gender mainstreaming across different relevant sectors**, including agriculture and food sectors at all governmental levels as this supports women's and girls' participation and empowerment and creates impetus to address inequality across a range of connected issues.
31. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:
- (i) **Design and implement interventions based on country-specific and country-owned** gender inclusive and participatory analysis and approaches, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.
 - (ii) Ensure that **men and boys are engaged as allies, actors and participants** in gender transformative processes and strategies. Their active involvement is essential for successful transformation of unequal power relations and discriminatory social systems, institutions and structures. Promote positive masculinity and give more visibility to positive behaviours that promote gender equality.
 - (iii) Regularly **collect, analyse and use data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other variables** related to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination as well as gender sensitive statistics and indicators, reflecting women's and men's current and traditional indigenous and local knowledge.
 - (iv) Promote **more sustainable food systems** that are gender equal, supporting more local ownership and control over production, and lead to the production of appropriate, healthy, and

¹² UNGA Resolution, [A/RES/74/2](#), 10 October 2019 on Universal Health Coverage. ILO [Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 \(No. 202\)](#).

affordable foods.

- (v) Ensure **adequate financial, technical and human resources**, supported by political commitment and public policies that promote an enabling environment to generate social, economic and cultural **changes** with specific gender-transformative policies, programmes and institutions. Measures to support gender-responsive budgeting should be put in place and implemented where possible.

3.2. Women's and girls' food security and nutrition

3.2.1. Issues and challenges

Gender inequitable access to and distribution of nutritious food

- 32. Worldwide, the prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition is higher among women and girls than among men and boys, due to a combination of social, economic and biological factors and reflecting gender inequality and discriminatory socio-cultural norms in access to adequate food¹³. As a result, women and girls may eat less and/or lower quality food, exposing them to greater risk of hunger and malnutrition.

Women's and girls' specific nutritional needs throughout the life cycle

- 33. Women's and girls' nutritional needs vary depending on their life course and labour activities. Gender discriminatory norms prevailing in many communities and societies, combined with poverty, often prevent women and girls from accessing, demanding and consuming healthy diets. This exposes them to increased risk of anemia, undernutrition and obesity.
- 34. Women have additional nutritional needs, in quantity and quality, when pregnant or breastfeeding and when they engage in physically demanding work such as farm labour. Women's own nutritional status during pregnancy and breastfeeding, impacts the nutritional status of their child.

Empowerment of women and girls for improved food security and nutrition for all

- 35. There is evidence that women's and girls' empowerment is a pathway to improved nutrition, in both rural and urban areas, and also evidence of positive links between women's empowerment and child and maternal health.
- 36. While some aspects of the decisions on food production, procurement, and preparation of food are controlled by women, in many societies some of the key decisions are predominantly men-dominated due to social norms and structural inequality. Women should be in a position to make decisions over their own nutrition and be able to contribute to the improvement of their families' nutrition.
- 37. Conventional approaches to nutrition education tend to reinforce existing gender roles, focusing on women's roles as mothers and caregivers of young children.

3.2.2. Policies and strategic approaches

- 38. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:
 - (i) **Design and implement policies and interventions that acknowledge women and girls' specific nutritional needs linked to their life cycle.** These should recognize and contribute to improve the nutritional status of women and girls throughout the life cycle. Targeted measures for the most nutritionally vulnerable groups, for example pregnant and lactating women

¹³ SOFI 2021.

- (particularly during the first 1000 days for mother and child) should be a priority.
- (ii) **Promote a coordinated and integrated policy approach to effectively reducing gender inequality, empowering women and girls and improving their nutritional status in urban and rural settings.** Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination are essential for achieving desired results. Sectoral programmes, such as health, education, environment, water and sanitation, climate change, and social protection programmes, need to incorporate and respond to gender equality in the context of food insecurity and malnutrition.
 - (iii) **Promote the creation of programmes that facilitate the provision of nutritious food to women and girls in contexts of scarcity.**
 - (iv) **Promote and ensure adequate nutrition knowledge and education for women, men, girls and boys** to strengthen ability to make strategic choices over their own and their family's nutrition.

3.3. Elimination of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls for improved food security and nutrition

3.3.1. Issues and Challenges

- 39. Every human being has the right to live a life free from all forms of violence. However, multiple forms of SGBV against women and girls persist in every country. SGBV, which includes physical, sexual, psychological, economic abuse and harmful practices¹⁴, is an extreme manifestation of gender inequality and fundamental human rights violation. It reinforces the vicious cycle of poverty and food insecurity.
- 40. Food insecurity, malnutrition and SGBV are linked in multiple ways. Deterioration in food security status can contribute to the increase in SGBV at individual, household, community and societal level¹⁵. Intersectional factors such as ethnicity or disability can intensify the risk of SGBV. There is extensive evidence documenting SGBV in the agriculture and food sectors¹⁶. In rural areas collection of water and fuelwood may expose women and girls to SGBV. Defenders of human rights are often at heightened risk of violence.
- 41. SGBV severely undermines women's and girls' physical, psychological, emotional and mental health, dignity and well-being, compromising their capacity to take advantage of opportunities to further contribute to food security and nutrition and undermining their right to quality of life. Yet it often remains shrouded in a culture of shame and silence.

3.3.2. Policies and strategic approaches

- 42. Governments should support the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls including harmful practices, in the context of food security and nutrition by:
 - (i) **Implementing existing international legal obligations and commitments**, including CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, which call for the provision of legal frameworks to criminalize SGBV and protect survivors.

¹⁴ SGBV is defined in [CEDAW, General Recommendation No35](#).

¹⁵ [How can we protect men, women and children from gender-based violence? Addressing GBV in the food security and agriculture sector, FAO, 2018](#).

¹⁶ FAO, *ibid*.

- (ii) **Implementing and strengthening existing national legislation and introducing new legislation and regulations to prevent and respond to SGBV where needed.** Many countries now have domestic violence laws in place but too often these are not mobilized when they are most needed. It is therefore vital to raise awareness of SGBV among the police, healthcare professionals and social care workers and the public, and to improve reporting mechanisms for SGBV.
 - (iii) **Ensuring measures and services are in place for supporting and protecting survivors of SGBV from further abuse,** as well as for dealing effectively in a legal context with perpetrators and investing in preventive measures. This requires providing effective reporting mechanisms such as emergency helplines, shelters for survivors and their children and ensuring there are ‘one-stop-centres’ where they can receive the support they need in an integrated way. It means not only punishing perpetrators but engaging them in processes to change harmful behaviours and attitudes.
 - (iv) **Introducing measures to ensure the security and safety of women and girls from the onset of crises,** with targeted approaches for survivors of violence and to the most disadvantaged, promoting their protection, dignity and integrity, with special attention to women and girls at heightened risk of violence, in particular women and girls with disabilities.
43. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should take all appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices by:
- (i) **Promoting changes in social norms and stereotypes that generate and perpetuate SGBV.** Efforts towards building resilience should include addressing the root causes of SGBV – including gender discriminatory norms and gender stereotypes. Initiatives could include campaigns and training programmes raising public awareness of SGBV, sexual harassment and online bullying, and taking a zero-tolerance attitude to these forms of violence. They should promote positive masculinity – for example challenging the normalization of violence as a manifestation of male behaviour - and elimination of harmful practices. Men and boys should be actively engaged in these gender transformative processes.
 - (ii) **Strengthening women’s rights and feminist organizations, social movements and civil society organizations** working to eliminate SGBV as well as food insecurity and malnutrition.

3.4. Women’s and girls’ full, equal and meaningful participation, voice and leadership in policy- and decision-making at all levels

3.4.1. Issues and Challenges

- 44. Participation of women in high-level decision-making bodies on food security and nutrition in public and private spheres remains low in many countries. Promoting women’s effective participation and leadership is vital to advancing food security and nutrition for themselves, their household and society, enabling them to influence policies, strategies and investment plans and to take into account their specific knowledge, interest, needs and priorities.
- 45. At the community level in both urban and rural settings, participation in producer and community associations can be affected by unequal power relations, gender roles and social norms, and discriminatory practices. Challenges may be more pronounced for women in rural communities due to inadequate access to essential and social support services and the lack of opportunities to be represented in decision-making functions, as well as the persistence of traditional views about women’s and men’s roles in society.

46. Women's decision-making power relating to household spending is associated with healthier diets and better nutrition outcomes for themselves and for other family members¹⁷.
47. Violence and discrimination against women and girls represent serious barriers to women's leadership and full participation in public life.

3.4.2. Policies and strategic approaches

48. Governments should:
 - (i) **Introduce and apply positive discrimination measures**, such as gender parity in decision-making processes and positions at all levels and in all spheres to ensure women's equal representation in leadership and managerial positions, including in political parties, public and private sectors, and ensuring gender equality in access to quality education and participation in community organizations.
 - (ii) Ensure the **full, equal and meaningful participation and engagement of women and their organizations** in all dimensions of policy design and programmatic decisions for food security and nutrition, supporting women's leadership through training and capacity building.
 - (iii) **Empower young women as the next generation of leaders**. This means promoting and funding leadership training for women and girls, and ensuring they complete secondary education and supporting their entry to tertiary education in order to be able to participate in decision-making at various levels.
49. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:
 - (i) **Strengthen women's organizations and women's collective action**, recognizing the importance of self-association and the role of social movements to promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in decision-making at all levels. Support should include direct funding for women's rights organizations to take leadership roles in high-level food security and nutrition decision-making processes, at local, national, regional and international levels.
 - (ii) **Address discriminatory gender norms, biases and attitudes**, including among men leaders through awareness raising, training and introduction of gender policies and action plans.

3.5. Recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work

3.5.1. Issues and Challenges

50. Women often carry significant responsibilities in terms of unpaid care and domestic work in addition to their productive roles. This often hampers women's ability to participate in paid productive activities, decision-making processes and public life, education and training. Unpaid care and domestic work is often not equally shared.
51. Unpaid care and domestic work is critical to food security and nutrition. It includes the production and/or preparation of food for the family, feeding and caring for children, older people, people with disabilities, illnesses or injuries in the household and community; and many other activities essential to human well-being and society as a whole. These activities are often unrecognized and undervalued despite the reality that economies and wellbeing depend on them.

¹⁷ [Is women's empowerment a pathway to improving child nutrition outcomes in a nutrition-sensitive agriculture program?](#), IFPRI, 2019.

52. Activities undertaken by women relating to food production, such as planting, tending, irrigation and harvesting crops and processing fish, are also often unpaid and unrecognized despite their enormous economic and social value.
53. In many low-income countries and in the context of limited infrastructure, rural women and girls spend an enormous amount of time accessing water and fuel wood for domestic and agricultural use, which also has a negative impact on girls' school attendance¹⁸.

3.5.2. Policies and strategic approaches

54. Governments, with the support of development partners, civil society, private sector and other relevant stakeholders, should:
 - (i) **Recognize, make visible and value women's unpaid work, including their crucial contributions to agriculture, food production and preparation**, through measures such as counting and including it in national statistics.
 - (ii) Support more **flexible working arrangements in workplaces and decision-making spaces** through the provision and implementation of effective gender policies that reflect ILO standards. This will enable women and men to achieve a better balance between domestic and care responsibilities and paid employment, and create more opportunities for women in the work place.
 - (iii) Promote the provision and take up of **appropriate maternity, paternity and shared parental leave** and other valuable social benefits linked to parenthood. This is also relevant for SMEs and startups.
 - (iv) **Promote nutrition education programmes that recognize that care work should be shared, and that men must play a role in ensuring adequate nutrition for their families**, while also challenging masculine gender norms that may affect men's willingness to take on these shared roles.
 - (v) Reduce and/or compensate unpaid work through **public investments in social protection, provision of child and elder care services, and rural infrastructure** including the provision of essential services (water supply, sanitation and hygiene facilities and access to electricity and broadband) **and social services** (access to education, health care, long-term care and other support services) that can reduce the burden of unpaid work.
 - (vi) Fund the **provision of labour-saving technologies** for domestic work as well as agricultural and aquatic food production, for reducing women's work burden, as appropriate. Technology should be accessible for women and adapted to women's needs and priorities.

3.6. Women's economic and social empowerment in the context of sustainable food systems

3.6.1. Women's access to the labor market and decent work

3.6.1.1. *Issues and challenges*

55. Access to secure and decent employment in conditions of dignity and safety is vital to human welfare and well-being and is a key contributor to food security and nutrition. Women are more likely than men to be employed in informal and insecure jobs, including in agriculture and aquaculture, with less

¹⁸ Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2017, WHO and UNICEF, 2017
<https://www.unicef.org/media/55276/file/Progress%20on%20drinking%20water,%20sanitation%20and%20hygiene%202019%20.pdf>.

access to social protection. They are subject to a gender wage gap, earning less than men for the same or similar work, and are vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, SGBV and harassment in the workplace. This is due to multiple factors, including gender-based discrimination among employers, lower levels of education, lack of knowledge of their rights as employees and lack of enforcement of these rights.

56. Many agricultural workers - including women – are affected by the lack of adequate health and safety measures. Agriculture can pose potential risks to women if proper training and equipment are not provided.
57. Gender-biased social norms, discriminatory laws and practices and other structural barriers often limit women’s participation in workers’ and producers’ organizations and in organized labour institutions such as trade unions.
58. Migrants including migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, are more vulnerable to severe labour exploitation and other forms of abuse. Migrant women are particularly vulnerable due to gender-based discrimination, and multiple and intersecting forms of vulnerability and violence.

3.6.1.2. Policies and strategic approaches

59. Governments should:
 - (i) **Implement the ILO Conventions** as essential instruments to ensure GEWGE and respect for human rights within the workplace.
 - (ii) **Ensure there is a solid legal framework in place** - establishing the right to decent work and safeguarding key principles such as equal pay for work of equal value, and safe working conditions, including the prohibition of harassment- **and proactive enforcement of the laws.**
60. Governments, with the support of the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, should:
 - (i) **Promote decent work in public and private sectors** through workplace policies and other measures including access to social protection systems.
 - (ii) **Adopt specific interventions and strategies to increase the access of women to farm and non-farm employment in the agriculture sector**, including training and skills development, suitable labour intermediation services, as well as increased public and private gender-sensitive investments that consider women’s specific needs and priorities.
 - (iii) Support **women’s transition from informal to formal economy**, reducing labour market segregation. At the same time recognize and protect **the labour rights of women producers working in the informal sector.**
 - (iv) **Introduce or strengthen gender-sensitive policy interventions across sectors, including in agriculture and food value chains**, to promote decent work, including in terms of safer and labour-saving technologies and practices across agricultural sub-sectors, adoption of occupational safety and health measures, access to social protection, adequate living wages, and measures to reconcile paid and unpaid care work responsibilities, such as flexible working arrangements and the provision of subsidized child care.

3.6.2. Women’s involvement in food systems as producers and entrepreneurs

3.6.2.1. Issues and Challenges

61. Gender inequality in food systems limits women’s and girls’ access to resources, affecting

productivity and their ability to manage risks; women's participation and voice in farmer groups; and women's access to, as well as time and energy for, remunerated activities, constraining their contribution to their family's income.

62. Women are actively engaged across food systems as producers and entrepreneurs. They contribute to food systems not only with their labour but also with their knowledge of agricultural practices and biodiversity. They play a central role in natural resource management and food production, processing, conservation, and marketing¹⁹. However, these roles are too often unpaid and unrecognized and are often not protected by labour laws because the majority of work in small-scale food production where women tend to engage is undertaken in the informal sector. Women farmers, pastoralists and women engaged in fisheries face constraints to full participation in value chains.
63. Women's access to physical and other necessary complementary resources and services for their full participation in value chains are determined by their inclusion in networks and their social capital. Producer groups, agricultural extension agents, and transportation are often more accessible to men than women. Agricultural extension agents, who often facilitate access to markets and services, are often men and less likely to make these connections for women farmers.

3.6.2.2. Policies and strategic approaches

64. Governments should:
- (i) Address **social norms and gender stereotypes that condition women's involvement in agricultural investments, value chains and access to markets**, and **promote policies that allow women equal control in value chains** and equal benefits.
 - (ii) Enable the **participation of women in investments in food systems as business actors**, including in small-scale agro-industrialization, in collaboration with other actors such as private enterprises, through cooperatives and producer organizations.
 - (iii) Promote **investments in technologies, rural infrastructure, transport and women's specific activities** (across food systems and along value chains) that support women producers and entrepreneurs and strengthen women's capacities to use technologies (including information and communication technologies - ICTs) and other methods that reduce their work burden.
 - (iv) **Promote the collection of disaggregated data** on women and girls in agriculture and fisheries.
65. Governments, with the support of private sector and other relevant stakeholders, should:
- (i) Establish **strategies in food security and nutrition aimed at strengthening the capacities of women and girls**, including for the labour market.
 - (ii) **Facilitate women's participation in social and economic networks**, including cooperatives, with recognition and support to local traditional financial systems familiar to women, and attention to effective participation and leadership of women when in mixed networks. These networks can contribute to real change towards financial autonomy of rural women.
 - (iii) Support **analyses of value chains** focusing on production, processing, storage, transportation, distribution processes and retail from a gender perspective. These analyses should take into account implications of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
 - (iv) **Promote cross-sectoral policy coherence and policy dialogue** towards productive employment and decent work of women in the agriculture and food sectors, in particular among

¹⁹ UN Decade on Family Farming, Action Plan Pillar 3.

agriculture, employment, social protection, and youth and gender related policies.

- (v) **Foster the productive inclusion of Indigenous women** in terms of food processing, conservation, and use.
- (vi) **Provide** women equal access to agribusiness and investment opportunities across food systems by facilitating their access to resources and service provision, enhancing their business capacities and skills, supporting their effective engagement with agribusiness actors.

3.6.3. Access to financial services and social capital

3.6.3.1. Issues and Challenges

66. Lack of financial capital is a significant constraint to women's entrepreneurial activities and engagement all along the food system and value chains, from investment in land to agri-food businesses. Constraints to women's access to financial services such as credit and insurance include restricted access to assets, including land and property, that could be used as collateral for loans; family indebtedness; limited knowledge of financial services; restricted availability of appropriate loan products for women-led small and micro-businesses; gender blindness and discrimination in statutory and customary laws; and patriarchal norms that prevent women from developing and growing their enterprises and productivity.

3.6.3.2. Policies and Strategic Approaches

67. Governments, with the support of private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, should:
- (i) **Address legal barriers, gender norms and gender biases for women's financial inclusion.** For example, improve women's access to credit and bank accounts, including through **specific financial programmes for rural women entrepreneurs**, with more flexible collateral requirements, alternative data to assess credit risk, and customized disbursement schedules that fit women's crop and cash flow needs.
 - (ii) **Promote women producers' capacity building in financial literacy as well as developing accessible information on financial services and products.** This should include training in e-commerce. It is important to provide ongoing support and enable knowledge sharing among women producers, as they move through different stages of business development.
 - (iii) **Facilitate women producers' access to markets, including through promotion of business knowledge and the support of appropriate, targeted financial products and services** that are tailored to their specific needs and circumstances, to improve productivity and incomes and food security and nutrition for themselves and their families.

3.7. Women's and girls' access to and control over natural and productive resources, including land²⁰, water, fisheries and forests

3.7.1. Issues and Challenges

68. Women's restricted access to and control over key natural and productive resources undermine their rights and economic capacity, affecting the efficiency of the agricultural sector and limiting economic growth overall, failing to tap into women's enormous productive potential.
69. Land serves as a foundation for security, shelter, income and livelihoods. However, women encounter persistent barriers to having their land rights respected, sometimes despite the existence of laws and

²⁰ CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, CFS, 2012.

policies that enshrine those rights. When women do have access to agricultural land, their plots are usually smaller, and of poorer quality than men's, and often with less secure use rights. The poorest people, including women – in particular those in Indigenous communities – can be affected by land grabbing and often do not have the power or resources to fight these practices.

70. Climate-induced weather-related events have severe impacts on the value and availability of natural resources, which are directly affecting women, for example by increasing the time they need for fetching water and fuelwood.
71. When climate-related disasters result in outmigration of men, women are often obliged to assume additional on-farm responsibilities but have limited power to request and receive government subsidies or financial services.
72. Women's access to **water** is crucial for agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture production and for household and domestic purposes. However, women's rights to water are often unequal. Women represent up to half of the labour force in aquaculture, largely in processing and trading, but typically receive lower labour returns and income than men.
73. Women also often have unequal access to **forests** and their resources. Men's activities in forests are often driven by commercial objectives, including timber extraction. Women's activities are often linked to the household well-being, including collecting fuelwood for domestic use and a range of non-timber forest products, e.g. food and medicine for their family and fodder for livestock.
74. The differential uses of land, water, fisheries, trees and forestry resources by men and women often lead to different specialized knowledge of resource management needs of these resources. Failure to take into account this knowledge in policy and planning can lead to poor outcomes, including loss of biodiversity, water pollution, soil degradation, loss of forest cover, and a failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
75. Men and women often grow different crops and/or different varieties and have different uses for the crops they grow. Typically, breeding and crop management programmes largely work with men farmers, while women's priorities are rarely considered.
76. Most farm implements, including mechanized tools, have been designed based on the height, strength and body type of men and are inappropriate for use by, or even harmful to, women. Moreover, mechanization for women's activities in drying, storage and processing may be unavailable.
77. Agroecology, sustainable intensification, no-till farming, and all other innovations and technologies can improve the sustainability and inclusiveness of agriculture, fisheries and food systems because of their holistic approach and emphasis on gender equality, embracing the economic, social and environmental dimensions of food systems and contributing to the local production and availability of diverse, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food.

3.7.2. Policies and strategic approaches

78. Governments should:
 - (i) **Implement and strengthen existing legislation or introduce new legislation**²¹ to promote women's and girls' equal access to and control over resources such as land, including through inheritance. At the same time, it is vital to recognize and **address tensions between statutory**

²¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/10/realizing-womens-rights-to-land-and-other-productive-resources-2nd-edition>.

and customary or religious laws in sensitive ways – for example by engaging local chiefs and religious leaders as allies.

- (ii) Ensure **equal and secured tenure rights and access to land, water, fisheries and forests for women and men – including Indigenous Peoples** – independent of women’s civil and marital status. This should be formalized through the provision of land tenure certificates. Girls require equal rights to inheritance, including in customary and faith-based inheritance regimes.
- (iii) **Prevent the damaging practice of land grabbing** from the poorest rural producers, who are often women, and ensure the provision of legal support to enable farmers to fight these practices, as well as the introduction of governmental land distribution strategies to promote equitable control over land.
- (iv) **Ensure the legitimate tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples**, and the respect of free, prior and informed consent, critical for their food security, livelihoods and culture.
- (v) Ensure the **full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in the development of Emergency Preparedness and Response Programmes (EPRP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies**.

79. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:

- (i) Advance **knowledge on land tenure as well as user rights in fisheries** as a crucial step towards achieving gender equitable governance of fisheries and attaining food and nutrition security and livelihood benefits.
- (ii) Ensure **full, equal and meaningful participation of women, including Indigenous women, in the management, transmission and governance** of natural resources at all levels, including of customary institutions, recognizing the importance of traditional, Indigenous knowledge systems.
- (iii) Promote **adapted and appropriate practices, approaches, tools, knowledge and technologies** for women across the food systems in particular small-scale food producers.
- (iv) **Promote and fund**, especially in regions with permanent or regular lack of water, **social technologies and facilities for access to water** - such as cisterns - for household consumption and food production, with a focus on the needs of women and girls.
- (v) **Promote the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women**, including Indigenous women, in all aspects of climate and environmental policy formulation and actions at all levels.

3.8. Access to education, capacity building, training, knowledge and information services

3.8.1. Women’s and girls’ access to formal education

3.8.1.1. *Issues and challenges*

80. Women’s and girls’ education is a strategic and critical development priority for food security and nutrition. Women with more years of schooling tend to be more informed about nutrition and adopt healthier dietary practices for themselves and their families. Literacy and school attendance correlate with greater understanding of nutrition, breastfeeding, better farming practices and improved crop production methods, including increased likelihood of developing and using seeds and crops appropriate for their particular ecological and cultural context. Education also increases women’s ability to access information and knowledge, enhancing their capacity to participate in the formal labour market and in decision-making.

81. Girls' education is associated with future economic and social prospects and lower fertility rates, as well as with improved food security and nutrition. Yet, persistent inequality in education and high drop-out rates for girls continue to affect the lives of millions of women and girls worldwide. Obstacles to girls' education include gender-discriminatory stereotypes and social norms, early marriage and pregnancy, SGBV, discriminatory laws and policies, poverty and gender-blind school facilities such as a lack of bathrooms for girls. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on girls' education.

3.8.1.2. Policies and strategic approaches

82. Governments should:

- (i) **Implement and/or strengthen existing legislation or introduce new legislation** promoting gender-equitable access to education for all.
- (ii) **Foster gender-transformative education systems**, resources and processes to promote gender equality and deliver more equitable education results for girls and boys.
- (iii) **Eliminate barriers and prioritize efforts** to ensure that girls complete primary school and secondary school education and to support their entry to tertiary education, including social protection measures such as school feeding to encourage the retention of girls while supporting nutrition for the poorest families.
- (iv) **Promote literacy programmes for women** that integrate literacy classes into agriculture and nutrition programmes.

83. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:

- (i) **Address social norms** that perpetuate gender inequality and gender stereotypes in education, capacity building, training, knowledge access and generation, and information.
- (ii) **Promote life and leadership skills training** for girls and young women.

3.8.2. Women's and girls' access to advisory and extension services

3.8.2.1. Issues and challenges

84. Capacity building through agricultural extension services and other forms of training is vital for improving female producers' knowledge and increasing productivity, particularly for small-scale food producers. Yet many women producers have less access to rural advisory and extension services than men. The services they are able to access are often not well adapted to their needs and realities²². In addition there is a limited pool of available women extension service providers, agricultural technicians, researchers, planners and policy makers. Women also often have limited access to market information, affecting their ability to realize their potential as producers, entrepreneurs and traders.

3.8.2.2. Policies and Strategic Approaches

85. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:

- (i) **Promote systemic changes in the design and delivery of extension and advisory services (EAS)** ensuring they are gender transformative. For example, EAS policies should include concrete gender equality objectives and gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation frameworks informed by women producers. Women producers' traditional knowledge should be

²² The Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool, FAO, 2018.

recognized and respected as part of these processes. Service providers should deliver services and technologies taking into account women's time, mobility and educational constraints as well as women's specific needs.

- (ii) **Support EAS organizations to develop gender equal organizational cultures**, including putting into place mechanisms to recruit and retain women advisors and address specific barriers they face in adequately carrying out their work.

3.8.3. Women's and girls' access to appropriate ICTs-based, digital and innovative technologies

3.8.3.1. Issues and challenges

- 86. ICTs and digital technologies and solutions can benefit women in many ways. Women can gain access to knowledge and capacity building opportunities, credit and new economic and employment opportunities, information on health care and agriculture, including for instance pricing of products as well as early warning messages related to weather conditions through online information resources. ICTs and targeted digital content can help women entrepreneurs in rural and remote communities as well as in urban centres to achieve access to new markets and consumers. ICTs can also facilitate cash transfers and mediate secure transactions, including the receipt of remittances and purchase of inputs. However, the knowledge gained through use of ICTs cannot replace EAS.
- 87. Access to ICTs varies significantly across regions and between women and men. Women located in rural or remote areas in particular face significant barriers in access and use of digital technologies, due to unaffordability, low digital literacy, social norms, lack of electricity and connectivity. The gender gap in access to ICTs needs to be urgently addressed if the benefits of ICTs to GEWGE are to be realized. It is vital to ensure that new technologies do not result in gender-based discrimination or worsen existing inequality.

3.8.3.2. Policies and Strategic Approaches

- 88. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:
 - (i) **Increase girls' and women's access to affordable, accessible, safe and secure digital connectivity**, reaching out to rural and remote areas, with the aim of closing the digital gender gap.
 - (ii) **Promote digital literacy for women and girls in education**, and address the gender norms and stereotypes as well as structural and infrastructural barriers that undermine women's and girls' access to digital technologies.
 - (iii) **Design agri-tech and other digital platforms for women entrepreneurs** and tools with equal participation of men and women as co-designers to address and recognize women's and girls' needs, preferences, opportunities and constraints.

3.9. Social protection and food and nutrition assistance

3.9.1. Issues and Challenges

- 89. Gender-responsive social protection policies and programmes can address risks and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls over their life course and support them with measures to prevent poverty, overcome social exclusion and manage risks in relation to different types of shocks and constraints throughout their life course. They include cash or food transfers in times of crisis, school feeding, child and family support payments, maternity protection and paid parental leave, employment injury benefits, sickness and health protection, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. Social protection instruments can also

include pensions, unemployment insurance, and labour market and livelihood enhancement interventions.

90. Social protection can also be a transformative lever that can be used to challenge and transform gender relations. It can have direct positive impacts on food security and nutrition by giving access to more nutritious food and healthier diets for women and their families, particularly in times of crisis.
91. The first 1,000 days of life are critical for children's nutrition. Therefore, interventions that support a healthy pregnancy, safe childbirth, exclusive breastfeeding for six months and diversified nutritious complementary feeding are crucial. The provision of school meals, one of the most common social protection programmes, incentivizes parents and caregivers to send children, especially girls, to school.
92. Universal social protection should be enshrined in domestic legislation as a set of permanent entitlements defining individuals as rights-holders and guaranteeing them access to independent claims mechanisms if they are denied the benefits for which they qualify.

3.9.2. Policies and Strategic Approaches

93. Governments should:
 - (i) **Ensure access to adequate social protection through a comprehensive legal framework.** Social protection programmes should be comprehensive and accessible by all who need them throughout their life course. They should also be agile enough to respond to shocks, paying attention to women's and girls' special needs, including nutritional needs.
 - (ii) **Ensure social protection programmes address women's and girls' specific life course transitions and risks,** and the diversity of women's experiences, informed by relevant, disaggregated and up-to-date data.
 - (iii) Provide **specific financial investments and allocations** to support long-term social protection programmes.
94. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:
 - (i) Enable women and men to **participate equally in decision-making on social protection,** including in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies.
 - (ii) **Enhance women's control of food in food distributions** by making women the household food entitlement holder.

3.10. Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment across food security and nutrition in humanitarian crises and emergencies

3.10.1. Issues and challenges

Climate change and natural disaster impacts for women and girls

95. Women and girls are often disproportionately affected by climate change, climate-related shocks, like drought and floods, and loss of biodiversity and land degradation because they have less ownership and control over assets and because gender roles in many cultures leave them with more of the burden of caring for family members while simultaneously reducing their own adaptive capacity. Women producers are often least able to withstand these impacts due to lack of financial inclusion that limits their ability to access financing for climate-related disaster risk management and recovery, including agricultural insurance.

96. Climate change is magnifying and exacerbating fault-lines of gender inequality on a global scale, while at the same time gender inequality is deepening the impacts of climate change, particularly for the most disadvantaged, with serious implications for food security and nutrition.
97. Women and girls play a key role in climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction in many communities – for example through the management of early warning systems. Many women farmers and fisherwomen have gained vital knowledge of what works in the face of climate change that they are applying to their production techniques, yet too often they are not consulted or included in decision-making processes.

Impacts of zoonotic diseases for women and girls

98. COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the full extent of gender inequality and women's and girls' exposure to SGBV. The pandemic and related containment measures have exacerbated pre-existing drivers of fragility, widened inequality and exposed structural vulnerabilities of local and global food systems, hitting the most economically vulnerable households particularly hard, with women and girls often the most affected.
99. Lock down and other measures have left many women and girls in already difficult situations unable to escape from abusive situations in the home, and also with reduced support networks and financial capacity.

Conflict impacts for women and girls in the context of food security and nutrition

100. Conflicts are a main cause of hunger and food insecurity globally disrupting supplies of nutritious food, economic activity, and food production and creating additional challenges for women to feed their families. Conflicts also leave women and girls at a heightened risk of SGBV.
101. Gender unequal access to assets such as land, property or credit results in women often having fewer financial resources to cushion against the loss of productive capacity caused by conflict. As a result, their ability to meet both their own nutritional needs and those of their families is severely compromised and may lead to negative coping strategies.

3.10.2. Policies and strategic approaches

102. Governments, with the support of development partners and other relevant stakeholders, should:
 - (i) **Strengthen resilience and adaptation measures** in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, particularly for women farmers, pastoralists and women engaged in fisheries, with more investment into solutions such as grain banks and other forms of food preservation, as well as ensuring access to micro-insurance and affordable, local sources of clean water.
 - (ii) **Provide direct funding and support** to local civil society and community-led organizations that are leading mitigation and adaptation efforts to climate change, conflict-induced risks and the COVID-19 or other possible pandemics.
 - (iii) **Consult women and girls in rural and urban areas about their needs in the face of crises.** Their local knowledge gained from adapting to crises should be respected and taken into account.
 - (iv) **Support the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in the discussions and decisions over climate change mitigation and adaptation.** This includes discussions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) related to agriculture and in similar climate-related policy dialogues in their countries and communities.
 - (v) **Address the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic and possible future zoonotic**

- diseases** in conflict and humanitarian crisis settings, and the impacts on women's economic needs, including forcibly displaced women and girls and women from Indigenous communities.
- (vi) **Support environmentally sustainable, locally-owned, small-scale agricultural production** to avoid over-reliance on external value chains and prices, which often undermine women farmers' market power and have a direct impact on women managing food provision in the household.
 - (vii) **Make social protection measures, including cash and food transfers available and easily accessible for those most affected by humanitarian crises**, including women and girls.
 - (viii) **Support women and build their capacity to engage directly as peacebuilders** as a critical component of humanitarian response efforts.
 - (ix) **Provide safe spaces for women and girls in every humanitarian response.** This means reducing security risks at food distribution and including women and girls in the process of selecting the location of the distribution points.
 - (x) Ensure that the **humanitarian crisis response planning, frameworks and programming** are informed by gender analysis and needs assessments.

PART 4 - PROMOTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE USE AND APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES

103. Governments have primary responsibility for promoting CFS and the use and application of CFS policy products and policy recommendations at all levels, working in collaboration with Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and other relevant actors. To increase linkages between CFS and the regional and country levels, Governments are encouraged to establish or strengthen existing multidisciplinary national mechanisms with the active engagement of the RBAs headquarters and decentralized networks²³.

4.1. Implementation of the guidelines

104. All CFS Members and stakeholders are encouraged to support and promote at all levels within their constituencies, and in collaboration with other relevant initiatives and platforms, the dissemination, use and application of the Guidelines. The Guidelines are intended to support the development and implementation of relevant coordinated multisectoral national policies, laws, programmes and investment plans that will contribute to the achievement of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition, in line with the principles outlined in Part 2.
105. Governments are encouraged to use the Guidelines as a tool to undertake initiatives toward achieving gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition at all levels. These include implementing existing national strategies and programmes and designing new ones where needed; identifying policy opportunities and fostering transparent and open policy dialogue; enhancing policy coherence and coordination; establishing or strengthening multistakeholder platforms, partnerships, processes and frameworks, with safeguards for the identification and management of potential conflicts of interest; and supporting women's participation and leadership in policy processes including representatives of women's organizations and the most vulnerable groups²⁴.

4.2. Building and strengthening capacity for implementation

106. Governments are strongly encouraged to mobilize adequate financial, technical and human resources, and to put in place gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms, with support of international cooperation and local actors to increase the human and institutional capacity of countries at the international, regional, national and local levels to implement the Guidelines and to identify priorities toward their contextualization, operationalization and monitoring.
107. Technical agencies of the UN, including the RBAs (in collaboration with UN agencies such as UN Women, UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, UNFPA, UN Nutrition), bilateral cooperation agencies, intergovernmental and regional organizations and other development partners), are encouraged to support - with their resources and within their mandates - efforts by governments to implement the Guidelines.

4.3. Monitoring the use and application of the guidelines

108. As per the CFS 2009 Reform Document, one of the roles of CFS is to promote accountability and share best practices at all levels. CFS will regularly monitor and report progress towards the implementation of these Guidelines, once endorsed, and their relevance, effectiveness and impact on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, in accordance with CFS agreed decisions²⁵,

²³ CFS 2018/45/3, para. 28.

²⁴ See Part 3 for more detailed policy recommendations.

²⁵ https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2021/GSF/NF445_CFS_GSF_2021_Clean_en.pdf.

using a selected set of indicators.

109. CFS monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Guidelines will be in line with the agreed principles in the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF), ensuring that processes (i) are human-rights based; (ii) promote accountability of decision-makers (iii) are participatory, involving all stakeholders and beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable; (iv) are simple, yet comprehensive, accurate and timely with disaggregated indicators that capture impact, process and expected outcomes; (v) do build upon existing systems.
110. Governments, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to define context-specific indicators, mobilize regional and local structures to report on these indicators, and establish or strengthen, where appropriate, existing monitoring and reporting systems in line with best practices and lessons learned, in order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of policies and regulations, and implement appropriate remedial actions in case of negative impacts or gaps. Meaningful participation of the most affected by hunger and malnutrition – particularly women and girls – as well as the development of user-friendly technical guides, is important to adapt approaches to local contexts. Governments are encouraged to use science and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation approaches focused on learning what works and adaptation to achieve maximum results.