

**PSM comments on Draft One of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition**

The Private Sector has been actively engaged in the gender workstream negotiations and we look forward to a final product that will make a difference in the lives of women in food systems around the world. We congratulate the secretariat for an ambitious First Draft that has captured the multiple range of issues that affect women in food systems today and hinder their effective participation. However, we believe the draft could further benefit from strengthening in important areas.

- **Par. 42 (iii)** Enhance access to **proper maternal health services for women** and focus particularly on **nutrition for the first 1000 days of mother and child**. Interventions must ensure women who often lack access to health facilities and healthcare services (eg women in rural and conflict zones) have alternative systems of accessing maternal health services including nutrition education. Existing informal/traditional systems of healthcare provision for pregnant women should be avenues for disseminating critical maternal services and nutrition education to women out of reach (e.g. by training midwives on nutrition education).
- **Par. 53 (ii)** Ensure social protection programs adequately respond to the needs of pregnant women in the workplace. Governments should **support and incentivize employers to provide appropriate maternity, paternity, and shared parental leave**. This is particularly relevant for SMEs and startups which do not have the capacity and resources to support female employees while on maternity leave.
- **Par. 57 (i)** Amplify **women's voice and leadership to go beyond gender quotas**. Ensure women leaders are heard and there is greater uptake of their ideas and contributions in decision making at all levels of leadership, from the household to the boardrooms.
- **Par. 60** Replace "Agriculture is one of the most hazardous occupations, involving exposure to agrochemicals, machines and equipment and livestock. Women often lack access to social protection systems and to information about their rights as employees." With "*Agriculture, like many industries, can be hazardous if the proper training and equipment is not employed.... or agriculture can pose potential risk to women if the proper training and equipment is not employed.*"  
The paragraph as it currently reads (without reference/evidence) can be used by some as a deterrent and rationale for women not to be involved in agriculture.
- **Par. 76(ii)** Solid legal frameworks should include investment and legislation on safety standards in use of chemical and agricultural technologies.
- **Par. 103 (iii)** Social protection measures should also support **education goals for orphans and vulnerable children**, particularly in developing countries where agriculture can be the primary means of employment for the vast majority of the population. When the family unit is disrupted, many of these children lose their opportunity to learn **basic farming skills**.

- Address the needs of **non-binary genders** who also face discrimination in food systems. The guidelines should be **inclusive and grounded in human rights**.