



CFS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON REDUCING INEQUALITIES FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

ZERO DRAFT

Rationale

Rising inequalities within and among countries is recognized as a major challenge to sustainable development.

It is evident that inequalities across food systems and related systems affect food security and nutritional outcomes. ~~High levels of concentration in food production~~ propose: **Complex food value chains, inequitable access to mainstream local, national and international markets and high value commodities amongst populations and specifically women and youth, corporate concentration in food trade,** transformation and distribution, and inequitable distribution of agricultural finance, security against climate catastrophe, assets, rural infrastructure and access to **research and innovative technologies, access to extension services,** natural resources **such as productive land and water, fertilizers and soil analysis technologies,** are all trends that perpetuate and deepen inequalities among different actors in agriculture and food systems.

PSM Comment: To effectively address the various drivers of inequalities, all stakeholders, including the private sector, must form alliances and partnerships that drive innovation, bring small holder women farmers under supply chain with mainstream market rates, create jobs and advance equitable growth for food security and nutrition. The reference to corporate concentration in food trade does not accurately reflect the role of the Private Sector in food trade. Larger corporations provide economies of scale for aggregation of food products, value addition, and market access through broader distribution networks and the importance of this contribution should be recognized in the guidelines.

In many countries these Inequalities in food security and nutrition (FSN) are systemic in nature and are deeply rooted in historic and structural systems. Cultural and structural barriers for women are also one of the vital reasons behind food insecurity. These reduce people's life chances and quality of life, decrease productivity, perpetuate poverty, hinder economic growth and tend to systematically disadvantage and exclude certain groups: women, **food producers,** farmworkers, informal workers, migrants, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses, elderly people and youth. Often multiple sources of disadvantages are compounded, amplifying marginalization and exclusion.

Ongoing natural disasters, shocks and conflicts in various parts of the world add another layer of complexity and exert pressures to already compromised vulnerable groups. Funding for resilience programs, particularly for women, youth and smallholder farmers is essential. This vicious cycle continues as food insecurity and malnutrition further deepen inequalities through lost opportunities in other sectors such as health, education and employment.

Extension and advisory services are important functions in reaching the last mile; as such, functioning and pluralistic extension systems that include public and private sector, NGOs, Academia and other actors cannot be overlooked if inequalities in food security and nutrition are to be addressed.

Sustained disparities across countries and between vulnerable and other social groups can slow growth and lead to **economic** instability, migration fluxes, with related adverse consequences on food security and nutrition and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, in high, medium and low-income countries.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for “a just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met”, the following CFS policy recommendations are envisioned as a focused, action-oriented document that provides guidance on developing and strengthening policies that explicitly focus on reducing inequalities and addressing their systemic drivers, in order to guarantee food security and nutrition to all.

In working towards this goal, the importance of grounding actions that address the drivers of FSN inequalities in a rights-based approach should be recognized, as well as the need to take into account national, sub-national and local contexts.

Based on the understanding that all stakeholders share the responsibility to reduce inequalities in agriculture and food systems, these policy recommendations are addressed to Governments (relevant ministries, national, regional, and local authorities and institutions), global international economic and financial institutions, the private sector (including micro, small and medium as well as larger-sized-entities), philanthropic foundations, UN agencies and civil society.

These policy recommendations are voluntary and non-binding. They should be applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law. They build upon and complement relevant existing instruments of CFS and are informed by the CFS High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) report on “Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition”.

A. TACKLE INEQUALITIES WITHIN FOOD SYSTEMS

Access to natural resources and access to markets

1. Promote equitable tenure rights and access to **productive** land, **seeds, fertilizers and soil analysis technologies**, fisheries, forests, aquatic resources and other food production resources for all, **including women and men, youth, Indigenous and vulnerable groups, in urban and rural areas** and traditionally marginalized people within the national context, in accordance with the [CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security \(CFS-VGGT\)](#) and other relevant frameworks; (*tenure rights*).
2. **To Include women in food system with equal rights as a farmer and accesses for affordable finance, technology, data and other resources requires different approaches and methodologies to address cultural and structural barriers. Organizing small and marginal women farmers is surest way to fight against hunger and poverty which will help them bring out their voice, visibility and validation of their action by providing them accesses to affordable finance, technology to reduce drudgery and emission and building capacities specifically bargaining power within their vicinity.**
3. **Develop market platforms where small and marginal women farmers and private sector can meet, negotiate and match supply chain to make a win - win inclusive supply chain.**
4. Develop and strengthen policies that foster a more enabling environment for vulnerable and marginalized groups to improve their access to **international, regional, national and local** markets, **including strengthening and formalizing local market systems**, for land, inputs **including seeds and fertilizer**, services, and water while mitigating concentration of resources; (*access to resources*)
5. Increase smallholders’, vulnerable and marginalized groups’, capacity to access markets by strengthening cooperatives, associations and networks, and other organizations which can expand their bargaining power and participation in value chains, prioritizing nutritious foods to address all forms of malnutrition; (*access to markets*)

6. Foster public procurement programs for public institutions, food assistance and school feeding and implement policies that prioritize **locally produced and processes, accessible, affordable nutrient-rich, culturally acceptable foods**, family farmers, ~~and~~ smallholders **and specifically women food producers**. *(public procurement)*
7. **Improve access by women to technologies, resources and finance as vital to address social and cultural norms and help women to reduce drudgery and access information, various markets and other resources to be part of the supply chain**

Institutions and partnerships

8. Facilitate formal and informal organizations of disadvantaged groups and build inclusive institutions and partnerships **around supply chain** to foster their collective action and participation in **equitable negotiations and** decision-making processes by empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in shaping food systems; *(participation and representation)*
9. Promote, strengthen and implement FSN strategies, policies and programmes for supporting and enhancing the social and solidarity economy ¹recognizing their role in providing decent work opportunities, particularly to the most disadvantaged, and in eliminating poverty; *(social and solidarity economy)*
10. Promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation, as well as North-South Cooperation **around formal supply chain**, to improve disadvantaged groups' productivity and capacity to engage in all markets. *(cooperation for development)*

Investments in supply chains and in disadvantaged areas

11. Increase investment in inclusive value chain approaches, labor rights protection, equity-sensitive storage, food processing and distribution to reduce inequalities in food supply chains; *(inclusive value chains)*
12. Increase responsible investment in infrastructure, logistics and supply chains and in disadvantaged areas by adopting territorial approaches and strengthening **international, regional, national, and local trade and market connections**; *(improved connectivity)*
13. Create opportunities for **food producers, including** smallholders, vulnerable and marginalized **and women's** groups and **tiny, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** to access finance, including through credit, savings and insurance; **and public and private partnerships to produce more nutrient-rich foods while using natural resources efficiently to improve food security and nutrition**. *(access to finance)*
14. Invest in inclusive information systems across agriculture and food systems, **including in increasing access and literacy to digital technologies and thereby** leveraging digital technologies – such as market price information services, weather forecasting and video-based extension – to enable all stakeholders, **including women**, to make informed decisions and help overcome asymmetries in access to information; *(access to information)*
15. Strengthen responsible investments in support of agroecological and other innovative approaches, **including local innovations and co-generation of knowledge**, that contribute to the transition to more sustainable, resilient, inclusive **agri food systems** ~~agriculture and food systems~~ while also recognizing their role in facilitating equitable access to healthy diets; *(agroecological and other innovative approaches)*
16. Increase investment in research, **pluralistic extension and advisory services**, innovation, and technical

assistance in collaboration with universities, research institutions, and civil society organizations, with the aim of improving linkages between institutional markets and disadvantaged groups, particularly smallholders. *(inclusive research and extension)*

17. Creation of climate resilient fund for women in food supply chain to have access to mainstream finance for climate mitigation and adaptation. The funds should include a combination of grants, soft loans, equity which can provide affordable immediate finance at the time of climate catastrophe to redo agriculture to ensure food security and to buy equipment for climate mitigation and adaptation

Food environments including processing, retail and trade

18. Undertake proactive planning of food environments in areas of rapid demographic growth to ensure that all populations, particularly those most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, have equitable access to sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious food. ~~Depending on the specific context, this may include labelling and restricting marketing of unhealthy foods;~~ *(healthy food environments)*

PSM Comment: Given the current state of food security and nutrition, coupled with global inflation and unstable food prices, proposals that would pick winners and losers will unnecessarily increase the cost of food and in the absence of a clear definition of healthy, restrictions could lead to consumers confusion. These fiscal policy measures have also not been able to demonstrate significant, positive changes in health and need to be avoided.

19. Protect the rights and recognize the role of informal vendors in meeting the food security and nutritional needs of populations and develop planning and policy tools that enhance their capacity to sell healthy, nutritious and safe foods; *(informal vendors)*
20. Promote better access by disadvantaged groups to knowledge and innovation **throughout the whole value chain of food production** (e.g through training and capacity building), markets, financial services, logistics (e.g. storage, processing, packaging, and transport) and other services which are important to reducing food losses and waste at all stages of the food chain; *(FLW)*
21. Develop and strengthen programs and partnerships, such as state, community, or public-private food banks and popular **community** kitchens, **academic institutions**, that foster the recovery and redistribution of food fit-for-human consumption, in order to promote the access to healthy food by disadvantaged groups. *(food recovery and redistribution)*

B. TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN RELATED SYSTEMS

Access to services and resources that impact food security and nutrition

22. Foster universal access to services that are relevant to food security and nutrition, including primary healthcare, immunization, nutrition education, housing, sanitation, climate security coverage and safe drinking water; *(universal access to services)*
23. Foster universal access to social protection as direct support to food security and nutrition among the most vulnerable. This involves analyzing specific barriers to accessing social protection systems and promoting the participation of community organizations and actors in the design, implementation, and monitoring of social protection policies and programs; *(social protection)*
24. Promote access to decent work for all in agriculture and food systems by strengthening regulatory frameworks and the enforcement of laws and regulations in practice; *(decent work)*

25. Leverage fiscal space, ~~including through progressive taxation~~, to prioritize basic public services and use the available resources to support those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition. (*fiscal space*)

¹ Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) definition available at [Resolution II, International Labour Conference – 110th Session, 2022](#). Additional information can also be found at: [UNGA 77/281](#).

Trade, investment and debt governance related to food security and nutrition

26. Incorporate an **equity focus** into trade, investment and debt governance related to food security and nutrition by addressing existing disparities of opportunity, wealth and decision-making power within food systems governance; (*equity focus*)

PSM Comment: This paragraph does not clearly define what is meant by “equity focus” nor does it clearly state an implementable action. There also needs to be further elaboration on what is meant by existing disparities and how this can be addressed. To increase equity in trade and investment, actions need to be taken to create more opportunity and access throughout the value chain.

27. Foster increased transparency in the negotiation of multilateral trade and investment agreements to promote access to healthy diets and healthy food environments for all, while also prioritizing the needs of the most affected; (*transparency*)
28. Strengthen the rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core; (*rules-based multilateral trade*) – *PSM supports this para*

PSM Comment: PSM welcomes the guidelines call to strengthen the rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core. In alignment with other recommendations within the guidelines that call for improved capacity to engage in markets and increased investment in infrastructure and supply chains, PSM wishes to see equal focus on the importance of international, in addition to regional, national, and local trade which can assist in ensuring improved FSN outcomes for marginalized peoples and communities.

29. Assess the food security and nutrition constraints associated with national debt and undertake appropriate measures for its restructuring, swap or cancellation; (*debt relief*)
30. Continue efforts to decrease agricultural subsidies which negatively affect production, food prices, nutrition, trade and environment. (*subsidies*)

C. TACKLE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND OTHER DRIVERS OF INEQUALITIES

Systemic drivers of inequality

31. Leverage SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities within and among countries) to address the systemic drivers of inequalities by promoting inclusion of marginalized groups, **including women and youth**, in policymaking and practice **through more inclusive institutions and improved representation**; (*SDG10*)
32. Promote a strong focus on reducing inequalities within interministerial and international platforms on food security and nutrition to enhance policy coherence and coordination across sectors such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forest, health, economy, finance, and trade; (*multisectoral approach*)
33. Identify and manage conflicts of interests, including in research, by developing and strengthening safeguards against power imbalances in agriculture and food systems, and other safeguards to prioritize public interests and promote participatory decision-making; (*conflicts of interest*)
34. Increase responsible and equity-sensitive investments that foster the potential of developing countries through appropriate financing instruments, such as climate financing, blended finance, sovereign risk insurance, loss and damage funds; (*financing for development*)

35. Develop and strengthen policies that pay specific attention to women's unequal burden of care and domestic responsibilities in food security and nutrition. These can include measures to reconcile paid work and unpaid care work responsibilities, such as flexible working arrangements for women and men and the provision of high-quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive childcare. *(gender equality)*

Climate, ecological, political and economic crises and FSN related actions

36. Prioritize populations whose livelihoods and safety are threatened by climate change, conflict and other contemporary global crises through targeted policies and resource allocations, including by increasing, adapting and diversifying incomes and by increasing access to early-warning systems, anticipatory actions, climate risk management services; *(protecting livelihoods)*
37. Promote the participation of the most affected populations in climate action decision-making; *(participation in climate action)*
38. Address the multiple drivers of food security and nutrition inequalities by working across fragile contexts and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; *(HDPnexus)*
39. Foster funding mechanisms to support the transformation towards more equitable climate resilient food systems. *(funding mechanisms)* including the creation of the climate resilience fund for women with management and implementation by women centric institutions.

D. STRENGTHEN DATA AND KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS TO ENABLE IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING AND MONITORING OF EQUITY IN FSN-RELEVANT DOMAINS

FSN data collection and analysis

40. Prioritize capacity building on FSN data collection and analysis in areas where current relevant food security and nutrition data availability is poor, including through local universities and institutions, with a focus on those countries which are lacking resources, infrastructures, data literacy and skills, in order to guide decision-making related to FSN; *(FSN data capacity building)*
41. Identify and fill data gaps through investment in FSN collection and analysis with the aim of assessing which groups have the poorest FSN outcomes in different contexts, paying special attention to historically marginalized groups and disadvantaged regions; *(closing FSN data gaps)*
42. Collect and share data to monitor agriculture and food systems market trends, including disaggregated data; including market concentration; *(market trends data)*
43. Promote innovative and inclusive governance frameworks for FSN data which strike the right balance between access, sharing and protection, while facilitating equitable access to data benefits. *(FSN data governance)*
44. Develop capacities of youth and women of informal sector for data collection, analysis and taking awareness back to the food supply chain workers.

FSN related research

45. Increase investment in agricultural and food systems research, including on FSN indicators and metrics that facilitate globally standardized reporting, with focus on inequalities in FSN outcomes and tailored to the most

marginalized groups and areas; *(equity-sensitive research)*

46. Promote the development and use of research that focuses on the systemic drivers of FSN inequalities, with special consideration to research carried out in and by developing countries, including **participatory research**, qualitative research, engaging with local universities and local knowledge institutions, while also taking into account diverse knowledges, such as those of Indigenous and local communities. *(diverse knowledge)*