



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, corporate concentration in food trade, transformation and distribution, and inequitable distribution of agricultural assets and access to natural resources and finance are all trends that perpetuate and deepen inequalities among different actors in agriculture and food systems.

Inequalities in food security and nutrition (FSN) 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, 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.

This vicious cycle continues as food insecurity and malnutrition further deepen inequalities through lost opportunities in other sectors such as health, education and employment.

Sustained disparities across countries and between vulnerable and other social groups can slow growth and lead to political 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 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 land, fisheries, forests, aquatic resources and other food production resources for all, women and men, youth, Indigenous and vulnerable 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. Develop and strengthen policies that foster a more enabling environment for vulnerable and marginalized groups to improve their access to markets for land, inputs, services, and water while mitigating concentration of resources; (*access to resources*)
3. 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*)
4. Foster public procurement programs for public institutions, food assistance and school feeding and implement policies that prioritize family farmers and smallholders. (*public procurement*)

Institutions and partnerships

5. Facilitate formal and informal organizations of disadvantaged groups and build inclusive institutions and partnerships to foster their collective action and participation in decision-making processes by empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in shaping food systems; (*participation and representation*)
6. Promote, strengthen and implement FSN strategies, policies and programmes for supporting and enhancing the social and solidarity economy¹ recognizing their role in providing decent work opportunities, particularly to the most disadvantaged, and in eliminating poverty; (*social and solidarity economy*)
7. Promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation, as well as North-South Cooperation, to improve disadvantaged groups' productivity and capacity to engage in all markets. (*cooperation for development*)

Investments in supply chains and in disadvantaged areas

8. 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*)
9. Increase responsible investment in infrastructure, logistics and supply chains and in disadvantaged areas by adopting territorial approaches and strengthening regional and local trade and market connections; (*improved connectivity*)
10. Create opportunities for smallholders, vulnerable and marginalized groups and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to access finance, including through credit, savings and insurance; (*access to finance*)

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](#).

11. Invest in inclusive information systems across agriculture and food systems, leveraging digital technologies – such as market price information services, weather forecasting and video-based extension – to enable all stakeholders to make informed decisions and help overcome asymmetries in access to information; (*access to information*)
12. Strengthen responsible investments in support of agroecological and other innovative approaches that contribute to the transition to more sustainable, resilient, inclusive agriculture and food systems, while also recognizing their role in facilitating equitable access to healthy diets; (*agroecological and other innovative approaches*)
13. Increase investment in research, extension, 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*)

Food environments including processing, retail and trade

14. 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*)
15. 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*)
16. Promote better access by disadvantaged groups to knowledge and innovation (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*)
17. Develop and strengthen programs and partnerships, such as state, community, or public-private food banks and popular kitchens, 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

18. Foster universal access to services that are relevant to food security and nutrition, including primary healthcare, immunization, nutrition education, housing, sanitation and safe drinking water; (*universal access to services*)
19. 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*)
20. 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*)
21. 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*)

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

22. 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*)
23. 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*)
24. 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*)
25. Assess the food security and nutrition constraints associated with national debt and undertake appropriate measures for its restructuring, swap or cancellation; (*debt relief*)
26. 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

27. Leverage SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities within and among countries) to address the systemic drivers of inequalities by promoting inclusion of marginalized groups in policymaking and practice; (*SDG10*)
28. 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*)
29. 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*)
30. 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*)
31. 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

32. 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*)

33. Promote the participation of the most affected populations in climate action decision-making; (*participation in climate action*)
34. Address the multiple drivers of food security and nutrition inequalities by working across fragile contexts and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; (*HDPnexus*)
35. Foster funding mechanisms to support the transformation towards more equitable climate resilient food systems. (*funding mechanisms*)

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

FSN data collection and analysis

36. Prioritize capacity building on FSN data collection and analysis in areas where current relevant food security and nutrition data availability is poor, 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*)
37. 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*)
38. Collect and share data to monitor agriculture and food systems market trends, including market concentration; (*market trends data*)
39. 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*)

FSN related research

40. 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*)
41. 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 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*)