

Panama's Contributions to the Zero Draft – CFS Policy Recommendations

Dear Rapporteur,

I hope this message finds you well.

On behalf of the Permanent Mission of Panama, I would like to thank you and the Working Group for the ongoing efforts in drafting the CFS Policy Recommendations on Strengthening Urban and Peri-Urban Food Systems.

Considering the structural challenges faced by middle-income countries regarding food affordability, local production limitations, and urban inequalities, we respectfully submit the following contributions to the Zero Draft. These inputs aim to enhance the relevance and applicability of the policy recommendations for countries with similar contexts.

We suggest the following insertions into the Zero Draft document:

1. Economic Barriers to Healthy Diets

Suggested placement: Section on “Market, retail and trade” – after paragraph 16 (regulatory and fiscal instruments)

“In many middle-income countries, the affordability of healthy diets remains a key barrier. High prices of fresh and nutritious foods make them inaccessible to a large part of the population. We recommend integrating nutrition-sensitive fiscal instruments, such as targeted subsidies and tax incentives for healthy foods, as a means to address this constraint.”

2. Limited Local Food Production Capacity

Suggested placement: Section on “Production” – after paragraph 1 (access to resources)

“In contexts with high food import dependency, it is essential to strengthen national food production systems through public investment, access to technology for smallholders, and support for peri-urban agriculture. This will reduce vulnerability to global shocks and enhance national food sovereignty.”

3. Addressing Urban Food Deserts

Suggested placement: Section on “Market, retail and trade” – following paragraph 12 (food safety)

“To tackle urban food deserts in low-income areas, investments should be prioritized for local markets, mobile food vendors, and logistics infrastructure to ensure geographic equity in access to nutritious foods.”

4. Coherence Between Nutrition Education and Food Environments

Suggested placement: Section on “Promote behavior change” – following paragraph 17 (nutrition education)

“Behavior change interventions should be accompanied by enabling environments. These include front-of-package nutrition labelling, regulations on food marketing to children, and school feeding programmes that incorporate healthy, locally produced foods.”

5. Suggested Text for the Executive Summary

“In the context of Middle-Income Countries, structural constraints such as the high cost of healthy foods, weak local production systems, and urban food deserts require targeted policy measures. These include nutrition-sensitive subsidies, territorial food infrastructure investments, and fiscal incentives for nutritious local foods. Without addressing these, efforts to promote equitable access to healthy diets risk falling short.”

We appreciate your kind consideration of these proposals and remain at your disposal for any further clarification.

With best regards,

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Permanent Mission of Panama to FAO, IFAD and WFP