Dear Chair of the CFS High-Level Panel of Experts Steering Committee (CFS-HLPE),

Dear Patrick,

Following the decision taken by the 42nd Plenary of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) last 15 October 2015, I am pleased to send you, on behalf of the CFS Bureau, the request for a HLPE report on “Nutrition and Food Systems”, to be launched in October 2017 during the 44th CFS Plenary. The request is attached. As specified in the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work adopted in CFS42, the request was based on preparatory work by a technical taskteam on nutrition, discussion by the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Nutrition, and finalized by the CFS Bureau following consultation with the Advisory Group.

I would like to stress the crucial role that this HLPE report is expected to play, in order to provide CFS stakeholders with an evidence base for policy convergence work on nutrition beyond 2017. As a consequence of the high importance CFS stakeholders attach to this topic, this request has received extensive inputs from Bureau, Advisory Group, and OEWG members in order to identify within the report request the range of CFS stakeholders’ information and policy advice needs.

I would be grateful if you could kindly forward this request to the HLPE Steering Committee, together with, on behalf of the 2016-2017 CFS Bureau, my expressions of immense appreciation for the excellent work done so far to provide CFS with solid evidence for its discussions in 2016-2017.

Accept, Mr Caron, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Amira Gornass
Chair, Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
Request from the CFS Bureau to the High Level Panel of Experts for the preparation of a report on Nutrition and Food Systems

Recognizing that malnutrition, in all its forms, is a major impediment to achieving both global food security and nutrition and sustainable development worldwide, the CFS High Level Panel of Experts is requested to prepare a report on “Nutrition and Food Systems” to provide the evidence base for CFS work on nutrition and food systems in the coming years, in the context of the progressive realization of the "right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger". CFS work on nutrition will contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Building on existing work and initiatives including previous HLPE reports, ICN2 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the report will synthesize current and available independent evidence-based knowledge on the dynamic relation between nutrition and food systems, highlight knowledge gaps, and identify policy implications to guide the changes needed for reshaping food systems to improve nutrition and enabling healthy diet, in particular in addressing poverty, social inequalities and the needs of the most vulnerable in both rural and urban areas. Policy implications will be drawn out for governments and other stakeholders.

The report will provide an overview of the different elements of food systems, from both the supply and demand sides, which influence food consumption and nutrition. It will review rapidly evolving trends and environmental, socio-economic and cultural drivers of food consumption changes, including factors related to urbanization, climate change, natural resources management and economic growth. The diversity and complexity of co-existing (and sometimes competing) food systems in countries will be analyzed, as well as their diverse opportunities for impact on nutrition. Vulnerability profiles will be defined for different food systems for all forms of malnutrition, according to socio-economic determinants and across the life-cycle (including children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, overweight and obese children and adults). The report will look into the fundamental roles of women in the nutrition and health of their family, their important contribution to food production, processing, marketing and retailing and other parts of the food systems and the constraints they face relating to their rights, access to resources and decision making to fulfil their roles.

The report will be useful for CFS discussions if it identifies the main knowledge gaps in the causal relation between nutrition and food systems, which would assist the research community in defining future research priorities.

1 Including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity.
2 ICN2, Rome Declaration on Nutrition
3 Poverty, underdevelopment and low socio-economic status are recognized to be “major contributors to malnutrition in both rural and urban areas”, ICN2, Rome Declaration on Nutrition
4 This is justified by the fact that governments “have primary responsibility for taking action at country level, in dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders, including affected communities”, ICN2, Framework for Action
Open Ended Working Group (OEWG)

Nutrition

CFS asks that the report draws out context- and gender-specific public policy implications to create and enhance food systems that promote nutrition and are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable for the well-being of current and future generations. The HLPE is requested to identify key potential entry points - within a multi-sectoral approach that includes agriculture\(^5\), health, social protection and nutritional education - to leverage different types of food systems for nutrition along different food chains. The report could provide available evidence from multidimensional analysis (including cost-benefit analysis) on effective food system interventions to support and help prioritize investments for sustainable and healthy food systems, including to provide nutritional education and information to consumers and reduce food losses and waste, taking into account the main drivers of food systems including profitability, underlying the most efficient institutional delivery mechanisms. Where possible, CFS asks that the report includes country case studies to make the link between evidence and policy implications most persuasively. Case studies would illustrate successful experiences and approaches in operationalizing cross-sectoral public policies and the importance of effective collaboration and partnerships.

\(^5\) The term “agriculture” includes crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.