

## Proposal for CFS engagement in advancing nutrition

### Draft proposal to be finalized by OEWG for discussion by the Bureau in consultation with the Advisory Group, and presented for endorsement at CFS 43 in October 2016

1. The objective of this paper is to propose a framework to enable the Committee to step up its contribution to the global fight against malnutrition in all its forms, consistent with its existing mandate and in harmony with the work and mandate of other bodies.

#### I- BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2. The last twenty years have witnessed profound changes in the nutrition situation, as a result of rapidly evolving social, cultural, economic and political factors. Undernutrition is declining but remains at unacceptably high levels, while other forms of malnutrition especially overweight, obesity and diet related non communicable diseases are increasing, with dramatic consequences for individuals, families, societies and States: in 2014, about 2 billion people were suffering from micronutrient deficiencies, and 1.9 billion adults were overweight; both forms of malnutrition often coinciding within countries, households and individuals.
3. Decision makers worldwide are increasing efforts to tackle malnutrition in all its forms. Nutrition is recognized as a powerful driver of sustainable development as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nation Member States in September 2015, and for the achievement of many of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup>. Malnutrition is the result of inadequate nutrient intake and/or disease, which are in turn influenced by a combination of underlying factors, including food insecurity, inadequate caring and feeding practices, and access to health services and a sanitary, hygienic environment.
4. Food systems play an essential role in determining healthy diets. They are driven by political, environmental and socio-economic factors such as poverty, inequality, climate change and natural resource management, and tensions between sometimes conflicting objectives such as nutrition and profitability objectives. All these contribute to making current food systems globally unstable and unsustainable, with often dramatic consequences reaching beyond public health concerns, to economic, social and political dimensions.
5. Nutrition has dramatically moved up both the global political and development agendas over the past years, and momentum for tackling malnutrition in all its forms has grown among a great number and variety of actors, in different sectors and at all levels, producing knowledge, norms, policy and guidance. The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), jointly organized by FAO and WHO in Rome in November 2014, marked a turning point. “Reaffirming the right to 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”, the Rome Declaration was complemented with a Framework For Action containing sets of recommendations for policy and programme options of voluntary nature to guide the

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<sup>1</sup> Nutrition is explicitly addressed in the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, which includes an ambitious target of ending malnutrition in all its forms. Nutrition has also a role to play in achieving other goals of the 2030 Agenda, such as the goals related to poverty, health, education, gender, work, growth, inequality and climate change.

implementation of the ICN2 commitments, calling for an integrated approach to all forms of malnutrition.

6. In order to implement ICN2 recommendations, country efforts will require broad support from the United Nations System<sup>2</sup>, its agencies and bodies, according to their respective mandates. More effective collaboration and coherence is needed, that requires broad multisectoral partnerships between different actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector, at all levels.
7. Since its reform, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) aims to be *“the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings”*<sup>3</sup>.
8. The Committee, through inclusive multi-stakeholder processes supported by evidence-based reports, produces policy guidance addressing cross-cutting issues related to food security and nutrition. Through its activities, it provides opportunities for a wide-range of food security and nutrition actors to come together, network, and coordinate their work. Its annual plenary sessions offer policy makers and other international stakeholders a platform to discuss progress, share best practices, and learn from each other.
9. Acknowledging that CFS can make a significant contribution to global nutrition efforts, it will focus a more significant share of its work in the coming years on nutrition issues, building on existing work. CFS will strive to provide a forum with a wide array of nutrition actors, thereby offering a platform dedicated to multi-sectorial, cross-cutting issues that impact food security and nutrition. It will strive to build greater coherence between policies and programmes, thus contributing to the collective achievement of improved nutrition for all through a truly integrated approach.

## II- SCOPE AND VISION

10. CFS recognizes the need for a holistic, interdisciplinary and inclusive approach to nutrition that bridges the food/agriculture and health sectors. Its mandate and comparative advantages lend themselves to addressing food systems and food value chains as an early priority, which can be extended to other areas at a later stage. By committing initially to food systems and food value chains, CFS can build on previous work in a number of relevant areas, including the work of the HLPE, draw on the technical expertise from the three Rome-based agencies and contribute to strengthening knowledge around the contribution of food systems to nutrition, an area that is of global interest and significance.
11. There is increasing evidence of the causal relationship between different food systems<sup>4</sup> and malnutrition. Food-based approaches are considered essential to address malnutrition and

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<sup>2</sup> ICN2 Rome Declaration, paragraph 14 o) *“the United Nations system, including the Committee on World Food Security, and international and regional financial institutions, should work more effectively together to support national and regional efforts, as appropriate, and enhance international cooperation and development assistance to accelerate progress in addressing malnutrition”*.

<sup>3</sup> Reform document, paragraph 4 CFS:2009/2 Rev.2

<sup>4</sup> Food system is defined in the HLPE Report on *“Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems”* as follows: *“A food system gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.)*

ensure diversified, balanced and healthy diets. They are complemented by interventions that aim at ensuring a sanitary environment, adequate health, education and care. The importance of sustainable food systems for nutrition was acknowledged in the ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition<sup>5</sup>. The need to understand how food systems can contribute to healthier food outcomes was identified as a critical and emerging issue by the HLPE for the CFS.<sup>6</sup>

12. The vision for CFS work in advancing nutrition is: “A world free from malnutrition in all its forms, where all people at all stages of life and at all times consume sufficient, safe and healthy food that is produced by sustainable food systems and meets their dietary needs for an active and healthy life.” Achieving this vision relies on identifying and promoting policies, interventions and approaches for national governments and other stakeholders to improve the nutritional outcomes of sustainable food systems.

### III- FUNCTIONS OF CFS WORK ON NUTRITION

13. The CFS work on advancing nutrition will contribute to improving the nutritional outcomes of sustainable food systems through three interconnected and mutually reinforcing functions: policy convergence; lessons and good practice sharing; and using the CFS platform for reviewing progress. The effective engagement of CFS in advancing nutrition through the three functions requires raising awareness and ensuring improved understanding of CFS constituencies in nutrition and food systems.
14. Nutrition is being mainstreamed into on-going CFS workstreams, including the work of HLPE. This ensures that CFS policy recommendations and decisions address the underlying determinants of nutrition within sector-specific objectives, resulting in positive or neutral outcomes for nutrition and avoiding negative impacts. CFS efforts to mainstream nutrition at the global level, including through promoting effective ways to implement multisectoral approaches, are important to support cooperation and coordination at country level among agencies involved in health, agriculture and other sectors that influence nutrition outcomes.
15. CFS policy convergence work will provide national governments and other stakeholders with policy guidance within and across the main relevant sectors for food systems to contribute to healthier nutrition outcomes. The priorities for future policy convergence work will be identified on the basis of the HLPE work, including the forthcoming report on Nutrition and Food Systems, the work of organizations that are working on connecting nutrition to food systems, and the successful approaches, interventions and institutional arrangements that will be identified and promoted under the lessons and good practice sharing function, and ultimately approved through endorsement of the CFS Multiyear Program of Work. Priorities will also rely on the identification of the factors associated with positive results through reviewing progress.
16. The lessons and good practice sharing function will promote the exchange of successful experiences for implementing multi-sectoral policies that contribute to healthy diets. It will

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*and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.”*

<sup>5</sup> Member states committed to “enhance sustainable food systems by developing coherent public policies from production to consumption and across relevant sectors to provide year-round access to food that meets people’s nutrition needs and promote safe and diversified healthy diets.”, ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition.

<sup>6</sup> The Note is available at:

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/hlpe/hlpe\\_documents/Critical\\_Emerging\\_Issues/HLPE\\_Note-to-CFS\\_Critical-and-Emerging-Issues\\_6-August-2014.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/Critical_Emerging_Issues/HLPE_Note-to-CFS_Critical-and-Emerging-Issues_6-August-2014.pdf)

inform CFS policy convergence work, ensuring *inter alia* that this work is based on reality, making it more relevant to countries and highlighting policy gaps, inconsistencies and areas for improvement. The identification of lessons and good practices to be shared under this function will benefit from the work carried out under the two other functions.

17. The reviewing progress function will provide a platform to the organizations responsible for reviewing the implementation of ICN2, SDGs and other initiatives. This will inform countries and the international community of progress in reducing malnutrition in all its forms, in particular but not exclusively in implementing ICN2 outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will contribute to the identification of lessons and good practices and priorities for CFS policy convergence work, e.g. by highlighting the policies, approaches and interventions that are associated with successes or failures in improving the nutrition outcomes of food systems.

**(i) Policy convergence**

18. CFS policy convergence work aims to improve the convergence and coherence of policies that influence the nutritional outcomes of food systems within a multi-sectoral approach that includes agriculture, health, social protection and education. It will build on independent and evidence based knowledge and policy work and leverage on-going efforts to better understand the relationship between nutrition and different elements of the food systems<sup>7</sup>, impacts at the nexus of agriculture, nutrition and health, and institutional arrangements that promote multi-sectoral interventions at that nexus. It will complement and be carried out in coordination with other initiatives. It will lead to the formulation of policy recommendations, building on and contributing to the operationalization, among others, of the ICN2 policy recommendations, the development of international strategies, voluntary guidelines, principles and other policy frameworks as appropriate.

19. CFS policy convergence work will be carried out with strong linkages to concrete development challenges faced by individuals and communities in countries, such as challenges related to climate change and environmental sustainability, based on actual experiences and approaches in implementing successful public policies, capitalizing on the work carried out under the two other functions. It will benefit from inputs from the national and regional levels, expert advice and opinions from the whole range of CFS stakeholders. This approach will ensure that CFS work is based on the reality on the ground and results in policy changes that impact on nutrition.

20. CFS policy convergence work will recognize the fundamental roles of women in the nutrition and health of their families, including through their important contribution to food production, processing, marketing, retailing, preparation, consumption and other food systems activities. It will promote an enabling environment for both men and women to actively participate and contribute to caring for infants and young children<sup>8</sup>. These will imply giving special attention, in the design and targeting of policies that shape both supply- and demand-oriented food systems interventions for good nutrition, to:

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<sup>7</sup> Different elements of the food systems are addressed in the set of recommended actions for Sustainable food systems enabling healthy diets for policy and programme options in the ICN2 Framework for Action.

<sup>8</sup> Recommendation 32 of ICN2 FFA: “Encourage and promote, through advocacy, education and capacity building, an enabling environment where men, particularly fathers, participate actively and share responsibilities with mothers in caring for their infants and young children”.

- (i) promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout sustainable food systems;
- (ii) safeguarding and increasing women’s access to, and control over, incomes and natural resources and agricultural inputs;
- (iii) reducing women’s time constraints, which is critical for women to perform nutrition-related activities including breastfeeding<sup>9</sup>; and
- (iv) promoting effective interventions that are sensitive to gender, including nutrition education.

21. CFS policy convergence work will identify policy changes needed for reshaping food systems to improve nutrition and enable healthy diets, addressing the key causes of vulnerability to all forms of malnutrition in different types of food systems in both rural and urban areas - in particular the causes related to poverty and social inequalities<sup>10</sup>. This will require CFS to address issues related to consumers’ empowerment, including the poorest, to demand and access nutritious goods. Vulnerability profiles will be established according to socio-economic determinants and across the life-cycle (including children, adolescents, the elderly, pregnant and lactating women, the overweight and obese). They will allow for the fact that women have special needs related to their reproductive role that make them and their children more susceptible to malnutrition.

Activities	Who	When
Prepare an HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems to set the basis for a multistakeholder consensus-driven discussion	HLPE	Report to be launched during CFS 44 in October 2017
Identify priorities for policy convergence work based on the HLPE report, work on connecting nutrition to food systems, successful experiences and approaches	OEWG on nutrition, Bureau/AG, Plenary	CFS 45 in October 2018
Develop policy guidance and recommendations in priority areas	OEWG on nutrition, Plenary	Following CFS 45 in October 2018

**(ii) Lessons and good practice sharing**

22. Sharing successful lessons and practices about efforts to improve the nutrition outcomes of food systems and maximize their impact on the poor is a powerful way to stimulate CFS stakeholders to adopt, adapt and scale up proven and effective practices that are country- and context-specific. The aim is to involve all countries, regardless of their income, the nature of malnutrition problems and the characteristics of their food systems. The results will feed into CFS policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems, ensuring that this work is aligned to country needs.

<sup>9</sup> Early, exclusive and continued breastfeeding plays an important role in the first six months of life in mitigating malnutrition and preventing child illnesses and deaths.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

23. The first step will be to identify effective approaches based on evidence on the causal relationship between nutrition and food systems which will be ascertained through the policy convergence work and through reviewing progress. Criteria will be established for selecting lessons and good practices in line with the work of the CFS OEWG on monitoring.
24. In parallel to a global level exchange between member countries and other CFS stakeholders, south-south and triangular exchanges will also be considered during plenaries and intersessional work to provide more in-depth learning experience in country-led approaches to nutrition. There may be interesting opportunities to group countries that have made less progress in nutrition with those that are more advanced but share similar challenges. CFS could play a role in helping countries identify contextual differences and analyzing how these differences influence potential for replicability and the need for adjustments.

Activities	Who	When
Identify effective approaches and institutional arrangements that promote multi-sectoral interventions across agriculture, health, social protection and education for improving the nutrition outcomes of food systems	HLPE, CFS stakeholders	Intersessional periods, starting after CFS 43
Countries to share their experiences, lessons and good practices in implementing multisectoral policies that contribute to improve the nutritional outcomes of food systems, including through south-south and triangular exchanges	Countries, in collaboration with existing mechanisms and platforms	Continuing, during plenaries and intersessional periods

**(iii) CFS Platform for reviewing progress**

25. Under this function, CFS will enable institutional actors responsible for reviewing progress on nutrition including in implementing ICN2 recommendations and nutrition-related targets of the SDGs, to inform countries and the international community of progress in reducing malnutrition and allow political debate among CFS constituencies on priorities to be addressed for advancing nutrition. This will highlight policies, approaches and interventions associated with successes and failures, contribute to the establishment of priorities for policy convergence work, and promote a CFS coordinated response among all actors at global, regional and national levels to improve the nutritional outcomes of food systems.
26. It is also proposed to establish a two-way communication between CFS and WHO/FAO, with the CFS Chair providing updates to the governing bodies of both UN agencies (WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly; FAO Conference) on the progress of CFS work on nutrition, as a contribution to ICN2 follow-up work. This would demonstrate active engagement into multisectoral collaboration on nutrition, bringing agriculture, food security, nutrition and health together. It would give a strong signal to countries and support their efforts of working across sectors for improved nutrition and health for all.

Activities	Who	When
Provide space and setting to forthcoming progress review mechanisms to discuss progress in implementing nutrition related policies and interventions that are relevant to CFS work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration with WHO/FAO on ICN2</li> <li>- Collaboration with High Level Political Forum</li> </ul>	Continuing, starting from CFS 43 in October 2016, either during plenaries or intersessional periods
Brief governing bodies on CFS work on nutrition as a contribution to ICN2 follow-up	CFS Chair	FAO Conference, WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly