



# CHAIR'S PROPOSAL - BASED ON INPUTS RECEIVED DURING FIRST ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS

**TITLE, to be decided at the end of negotiations**

## [PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

1. Hunger and malnutrition in all its forms – undernutrition, including wasting and stunting, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight, and obesity – are one of the major challenges that countries face and are a potential result of food insecurity<sup>1</sup> and unhealthy diets along with many other factors and causes. Malnutrition, in at least one of its forms, affects every country in the world and most countries are affected by multiple forms. The number of people who suffer from hunger has increased in the last years, and obesity is on the rise in almost all countries<sup>2</sup>. The impacts of malnutrition have profound consequences on people's health and wellbeing, physical and cognitive development, and livelihoods throughout their lifetime and across generations. Malnutrition in all its forms represents a significant challenge for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2. The heavy health, social and economic impacts of hunger and malnutrition in all its forms are transmitted across generations. Undernourished women are more likely to have low-birth-weight babies who are at an increased risk of becoming malnourished as children – and into adulthood - as well as overweight or obese as adults. Maternal obesity poses short- and long-term risks for maternal and child health and wellbeing including poor cognition and increased risk of neurodevelopment disorders early in life, and an increased susceptibility to overweight in school-age and pre-school age children and obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in adult life. Malnutrition in children may result in reduced stature, diminished physical and mental health, and poor school performance, reduced economic productivity in adulthood, and increased vulnerability to NCDs and other chronic diseases in all stages of life. These diseases may lead to early death and increased morbidity and disability which require higher spending on health care, and place significant burdens on national health care systems and economies. (agreed ad ref)

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<sup>1</sup> "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, economic and social access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". FAO, 1996. Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action.

<sup>2</sup> FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2020. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets](#). Rome, FAO.

3. Malnutrition in all its forms has many interrelated and underlying causes that need to be addressed simultaneously. They manifest differently and affect people in different ways depending on their gender, age, wealth, and other social markers. These causes include, amongst others, the lack of stable access to adequate, safe, sufficient and nutritious food and healthy diets, lack of information concerning dietary recommendations, inadequate infant and young child-caring and feeding practices, poor sanitation, and hygiene and insufficient access to safe drinking water, insufficient access to quality education and health services, low socio-economic status, gender inequality, marginalization, insufficient support to local production systems as well as lack of access to markets, trade, and innovations and technologies. Basic causes of poor nutrition are systemic and interdependent, and include the economic and societal structures that prevent the realization of human rights in all their indivisibility and interrelatedness, perpetuate poverty and deepen already existing inequalities, and fail to make healthy diets readily accessible, limiting or denying the access to essential resources and services for achieving adequate nutrition and health.

4. Those most affected by malnutrition in all its forms typically include those living in poor and marginalized communities, people with increased nutrient requirements and those who have less control over their dietary choices and those living in poor and marginalized communities. This includes, amongst others, young and school-aged children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women, girls, the elderly, and people with disabilities. In addition, indigenous peoples and local communities, seasonal informal workers, subsistence farmers, peasants, urban and rural poor, landless, pastoralists and fisher folks, food and agriculture workers, upland and remote communities, migrants, refugees and displaced people, among others, are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition in case of their persistent or temporary poverty and marginalization.

5. Hunger and Malnutrition in all its forms is associated with various forms of ill health and increased mortality. Undernutrition is a major cause of death among children under the age of five years, and a source of increased susceptibility to infectious diseases and NCDs in adulthood. Wasting, also known as acute undernutrition, poses a significant risk of increased morbidity and mortality in children. Stunting, largely a result of chronic malnutrition, is associated with delays in both physical growth and cognitive development. Stunting and wasting represent significant challenges to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

6. Micronutrient deficiencies related to the inadequate intake of food rich in iron, vitamin A, iodine, folate, vitamin D, and zinc, and other essential nutrients, affect a large proportion of the global population with serious consequences on health, well-being, and development. Nutritional needs vary across the lifecycle. Children under the age of five years, adolescents, women and girls, women of childbearing age, and pregnant and lactating

women are particularly vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies, including among others, iron deficiency anaemia, which is one of the most prevalent micronutrient deficiencies in the world. Also referred to as “hidden hunger,” micronutrient deficiencies increase a person’s vulnerability to infection, birth defects, impaired development, and lower life expectancy.

7. Overweight and obesity represent major and increasing risk factors globally for diet-related NCDs such as some forms of cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes type II. Undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies are still the main forms of malnutrition among children under the age of five years globally but overweight and obesity are increasingly prevalent among young and school-aged children, adolescents and adults, and increasing in every region, with rural areas catching up to urban settings. In addition, as with undernutrition, optimum growth in the first 1,000 days is essential to the prevention of overweight; children who suffered from undernutrition are more susceptible to become overweight or obese later in life. (agreed ad ref)

8. Poverty and inequalities at the global, regional and national levels are important underlying causes of hunger and malnutrition in all its forms. Insecure and underemployment, informal employment, low wages and incomes, and decreased purchasing power, and lack of access to land and other natural resources and assets, have negative consequences on nutrition and health outcomes. International, regional and national negative economic trends and political factors limit the capacity of national governments to deliver essential services linked to nutrition, such as amongst others social services and health care. In this context, inequality in income and asset distribution as well as in access to nutrition-relevant services contributes to marginalization and social exclusion, and further increases vulnerability to malnutrition.

9. Complex and protracted crises<sup>3</sup> also have short, medium and long-term adverse consequences on the nutritional status of impacted populations, particularly pregnant and lactating women, girls, and children under five. Conflicts, fragility and susceptibility to natural disasters, climate change, epidemics, pandemics, and other cyclical health crises, are also serious factors that affect food systems preventing the availability and access to nutritious foods for healthy diets.

10. Zoonotic and other pathogenic infectious diseases, and epidemics and pandemics, such as COVID-19, and the strategies adopted to reduce their transmission can significantly worsen global food insecurity and malnutrition even in the absence of evidence of the transmission via food or food packaging. Without multisectoral, multilevel and evidence-

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<sup>3</sup> Protracted crisis situations are “characterized by recurrent natural disasters and/or conflict, longevity of food crises, breakdown of livelihoods and insufficient institutional capacity to react to crises”. [2010 State of Food Insecurity in the World Report](#). FAO. 2010

based coordinated actions and policies, including mitigation measures, in line with multilaterally and agreed rules and standards, such crises have the capacity to disrupt functioning of food systems, impacting all actors, especially the most vulnerable and food and economically insecure people, reducing incomes among small-scale producers, including family farmers, negatively impacting food access due to loss of critical income sources, lockdowns, and closure of markets and food environments. These crises can also disrupt food markets and supply chains, affecting the volatility of food prices, and creating market distortions for food security and nutrition of the poorest populations, and increasing the vulnerability of high-value commodity markets. Furthermore, measures like lockdowns and school and other child care facilities closures, impede access to school meals for children, and may increase food losses and waste.

11. To prevent and reduce negative impacts to food systems as a result of a crisis or pandemic, governments have a leading role in the definition of measures, in collaboration with private sectors, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders, to ensure food supply chains continue to function, the rights and health of food system workers is protected, the most vulnerable have access to social protection programmes, and that humanitarian assistance and food safety are prioritized.

12. Climate change, agriculture, food systems, diets and nutrition are interconnected. Climate change affects temperature and precipitation, as well as the frequency and severity of weather events. Increases in temperature, heat waves, droughts, floods, cyclons, and land degradations negatively impact agriculture, amongst others decreased crop yields and livestock productivity, as well as declines in fisheries and aquaculture and agroforestry production in areas already vulnerable to food insecurity. Climate change also affects all the dimensions of food security, as well as food quantity, quality, safety and ultimately food prices, with significant implications for the availability of and access to healthy diets. Climate change can also contribute to changing nutrient composition of major staple crops, including decreases in proteins, and some essential minerals and vitamins. (decreasing protein and mineral concentration and B vitamins). At the same time, unsustainable agricultural and food production practices contribute, at different levels, to the total emissions of greenhouse gases and other environmental degradation such as fresh water use and land use changes. On the other hand, agricultural and forestry activities of sustainable food systems can contribute to the sequestration of carbon in the soil and to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. Enhancing the sustainability of food systems and their resilience is thus a precondition for healthy diets.

13. Healthy diets are those diets that are of adequate quantity and quality to achieve optimal growth and development of all individuals and support functioning and physical, mental and social wellbeing at all life stages. They help to protect against malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity and

lower the risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes (e.g. type 2), heart disease, stroke and some forms of cancer. The exact make-up of healthy diets varies depending on individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, lifestyle and degree of physical activity), cultural context, local availability of foods and dietary customs. Healthy diets are safe, diverse, balanced, and as whole as possible and made up of nutritious foods, rich in nutrients beneficial for growth, health and development. Some socioeconomic and environmental changes can have an impact on dietary and physical activity patterns, leading to higher susceptibility to obesity and non-communicable diseases through increasing sedentary lifestyles and consumption of food that is high in fat, especially saturated and trans-fats, sugars, and salt/sodium<sup>4</sup>. Healthy dietary practices start early in life – breastfeeding fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development and may have long-term health benefits<sup>5</sup>.

14. Nutritious foods are among other factors (e.g. the level of processing, the balance and relation of different nutrients) foods that tend to be *high* in essential nutrients such as vitamins and minerals (micronutrients), as well as proteins, unrefined carbohydrates such as fibre, and/or unsaturated fats that contribute to a healthy diet<sup>6</sup>.

15. Unhealthy diets have become a major risk factor of multiple forms of malnutrition and poor health outcomes globally. Diets are moving away from well-balanced healthy consumption patterns, with basic and non-staple food products and healthy high quality protein sources towards more unhealthy ones. In many regions of the world, dietary changes are shifting towards the consumption of food and beverages high in fat, especially saturated and trans-fats, sugars and salt/sodium. Diets based on these foods are associated with an increased prevalence of overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs. Profound dietary changes, both positive and negative, are occurring due to a variety of reasons, including people migrating to urban centers, changing food systems, increasing purchasing power and preferences of newly middle-class consumers and changing consumer choices and lifestyles.

16. Food systems shape people's dietary patterns and nutritional status. Food systems are complex and multidimensional webs of activities, resources and actors involving the production, processing, handling, preparation, storage, distribution, marketing, access,

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<sup>4</sup> [Rome Declaration on Nutrition](#), ICN 2 (2014) – paragraph 7.

<sup>5</sup> WHO indicates for a diet to be healthy that daily energy needs, vitamins and minerals should be met, energy intake should not exceed needs; consumption of fruits and vegetables should be 400 grams per day; total fat intake should be less than 30% of total energy intake; intake of saturated fats is less than 10% of total energy intake; intake of trans fats is less than 1% of total energy intake; intake of free sugars is less than 10% (preferably less than 5%) of total energy intake; intake of salt is less than 5 grams per day. [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet)

<sup>6</sup> HLPE. 2017. [Nutrition and food systems](#). A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security.

purchase, consumption, and loss and waste of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socioeconomic and environmental outcomes. Food systems are constantly being shaped by different forces, drivers and decisions by many different stakeholders. When these external factors are in favor, food systems are enabled to produce healthy diets needed for optimal nutrition. The sustainability of food systems– including health, economic, social and environmental– determines the ability of food systems to provide healthy diets for current and future generations. In order to improve nutrition, context-specific changes are needed in agriculture and food policies, but also across multiple sectors and policy areas that address the sustainability of food systems. Some of the current global food systems are unsustainable and are negatively impacting the world’s natural resources, biodiversity, and ecosystems. Agricultural biodiversity is important as a safeguard against hunger, a source of nutrients for improved dietary diversity and quality, and strengthening sustainable food systems. The process of transforming unsustainable food systems and achieving sustainable food systems<sup>7</sup> should be inclusive, equitable, sustainable, and resilient, and should contribute to the sustainable use and sustainable management of ecosystems, natural resources and biodiversity, and minimize food loss and waste.

17. Agriculture includes crops, forestry, fisheries, livestock and aquaculture<sup>8</sup>. Agriculture and food systems encompass the entire range of activities involved in the production, processing, marketing, retail, consumption, and disposal of goods that originate from agriculture, including food and non-food products, livestock, pastoralism, fisheries including aquaculture, and forestry; and the inputs needed and the outputs generated at each of these steps<sup>9</sup>.

18. The functionality of food systems and their ability to deliver healthy diets is influenced by a number of drivers which indicate that, in order to ensure food security and improve nutrition, context specific changes are needed not only in agriculture and food policies, but also across multiple sectors and policy areas that address, for example, national development priorities, economic policies, and social norms<sup>10</sup>. These context specific changes may require tailoring approaches to address the different drivers of poverty and inequities across populations. (agreed ad ref)

19. Transforming unsustainable food systems and achieving sustainable food systems that meet the dietary needs of populations require policy, institutional and behavioural changes among all food systems actors. Food system-related policies should focus on their direct

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<sup>7</sup> FAO Council, [Final Report of the 164<sup>th</sup> Session](#) (2020), paragraph 15k. FAO Programme Committee, [Final Report of the 128<sup>th</sup> Session](#) (2019), paragraph 9.i.

<sup>8</sup> [UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/242](#) .Paragraph 20

<sup>9</sup> [CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems](#) (CFS RAI), 2014. Paragraph 2

<sup>10</sup> HLPE. 2017.

and indirect economic, social, environmental, cultural, nutritional, and health impacts, paying special attention to the poorest and most vulnerable to all forms of malnutrition and addressing barriers they face in accessing food for healthy diets.

20. Changes are needed within and across food systems, and its constituent elements -, food supply chains, food environments, consumer behaviour - to generate positive outcomes along the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic, and environmental, with inclusive approaches for all relevant stakeholders.

21. Coordinated policies and processes are required to enhance policy coherence and coordination in addressing policy fragmentation across sectors such as health, agriculture, education, environment, water, sanitation, gender, social protection, trade, employment, and finance – all of which impact on food systems and nutrition outcomes.

22. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) has undertaken a policy process to produce Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems for Nutrition (VGFSyN). The preparation of the VGFSyN is informed by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition’s (HLPE)<sup>11</sup> Report on Nutrition and Food Systems, additional literature as well as an inclusive consultation process that took place between May and November 2019 which involved the participation of CFS stakeholders<sup>12</sup>. (agreed ad ref)

23. Food systems and nutrition are receiving increased attention from the global community, including the United Nations (UN) and its Member States, and are recognized as essential co-determinants for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2014, at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), members of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) committed to ending hunger and malnutrition in all its forms<sup>13</sup>. In 2016, the General Assembly of the UN (UNGA) proclaimed the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025)<sup>14</sup> and called upon FAO and WHO to lead its implementation, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), using coordinated mechanisms such as UN Nutrition and multistakeholder platforms such as the CFS. In 2017, the UNGA proclaimed the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028)<sup>15</sup>. Specific attention to nutrition has been given by a number of UNGA Resolutions<sup>16</sup>,

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<sup>11</sup> The HLPE is the science-policy interface of CFS and provides a structured evidence base to inform CFS policy discussions drawing on existing research and knowledge, experiences, and policies at different scales and in different contexts.

<sup>12</sup> With meetings in Italy, Ethiopia, Thailand, Hungary, Egypt, Panama, and the United States of America, as well as through an electronic consultation.

<sup>13</sup> FAO/WHO. 2014. ICN2, [Rome Declaration on Nutrition](#).

<sup>14</sup> UNGA Resolution [A/RES/70/259](#) - The [Work Programme of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition](#)

<sup>15</sup> [UNGA Resolution A/RES/72/239](#).

<sup>16</sup> UNGA Resolutions, on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases [A/RES/73/2](#), on global health and foreign policy [A/RES/73/132](#), and on agriculture development, food security and nutrition [A/RES/73/253](#).

the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)<sup>17</sup>, the UN Environment Assembly<sup>18</sup>, the World Health Assembly (WHA)<sup>19</sup>, the CODEX Strategic Plan 2020-2025<sup>20</sup>, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food <sup>21</sup>. In 2021 the UN Food Systems Summit will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to discuss more inclusive and sustainable food systems for healthy diets for all. Likewise, the 2021 Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit will represent an opportunity to discuss how to strengthen the link between diets, food systems and health.

24. The VGFSyN are expected to contribute to and complement these international initiatives with a view to promoting policy coherence, coordination and convergence across different domains. They provide science and evidence-based guidance to help countries and other relevant stakeholders operationalize ICN2's Framework for Action<sup>22</sup> recommendations in support of the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health<sup>23</sup>, and to achieve the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

## PART 2 – OBJECTIVE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 – OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

25. The objective of the VGFSyN is to contribute to transforming unsustainable food systems<sup>24</sup> and achieving sustainable food systems that guarantee the availability, affordability, accessibility and safety of food that contributes to healthy diets while respecting planetary boundaries, conforming “with beliefs, culture and traditions, dietary habits, and preferences of individuals, in accordance with national and international laws and obligations”<sup>25</sup>, in particular for vulnerable and the most affected groups. The VGFSyN are intended to be a reference point that provides guidance on potentially effective policies, responsible investment and institutional arrangements to address hunger and malnutrition in all its forms from a food system perspective.

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<sup>17</sup> [Ministerial Declaration of the 2018 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Ministerial Declaration of the 2019 United Nations Environment Assembly](#)

<sup>19</sup> The World Health Assembly has endorsed the [Comprehensive implementation plan for maternal, infant and young child nutrition](#), and the [WHO Global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013-2020](#), which delineate policy options for the prevention of malnutrition in all its forms and the promotion of healthy diets.

<sup>20</sup> [Codex Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#), Codex Alimentarius - FAO, WHO

<sup>21</sup> [A/71/282 “Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food”](#) and [A/RES/74/149 “The Right to Food”](#).

<sup>22</sup> FAO/WHO. 2014. ICN2, [Framework for Action](#).

<sup>23</sup> [General Comment N.14](#) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2000).

<sup>24</sup> [UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/242](#). Paragraph 40.

<sup>25</sup> FAO/WHO. 2014. ICN2, [Rome Declaration on Nutrition](#). Paragraph 5.b.

26. The VGFSyN present a comprehensive, systemic, and science and evidence-based approach to addressing policy fragmentation with a special emphasis on the food, agriculture, and health sectors, while also addressing economic, social and environmental sustainability issues and impacts. The VGFSyN address the diversity and complexity of food systems with the aim of promoting policy coherence and coordination, considering benefits, costs and trade-offs, while recognizing diversity and complexity of food systems as well as national capacities and priorities, and fostering and guiding an inclusive dialogue among different institutions, sectors and all relevant stakeholders in the food system.

27. The VGFSyN are intended to be global in scope and to provide guidance to governments and relevant stakeholders when designing context-specific policies, laws, regulatory frameworks, strategies, plans and programmes. They take into consideration different national realities, capacities, and levels of development, as well as different types of food systems and the many drivers impacting them. (agreed ad ref)

28. In the context of shocks, crises and pandemics, the VGFSyN recognize the strong challenges that they present to the functioning of food systems, and emphasize the importance of promoting sustainable and resilient food systems. The VGFSyN provide guidance on health and social risk management to minimize potential impacts on food systems and unintended consequences for food security and nutrition<sup>26</sup>.

29. The VGFSyN take evidence from a range of rigorous studies, based on scientific, traditional and local knowledge, best sustainable practices, and experience - at global, regional and national levels - and apply the evidence through a broad lens.<sup>27</sup> Much of the evidence in the VGFSyN comes from the HLPE 2017 report, various UN technical documents, and peer-reviewed scientific literature.

## **2.2 – NATURE, SCOPE AND INTENDED USERS**

30. The VGFSyN are voluntary and non-binding.

31. The VGFSyN should be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under relevant national and international law, with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable international and regional instruments. Nothing in the VGFSyN should be

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<sup>26</sup> CFS RAI, paragraph 14.

<sup>27</sup> Because situations can vary widely, the generalizability of evidence to other situations is absolutely crucial, but not always available, for food system actions that address diets and nutrition. Additional research designs are needed to contribute to the evidence-base of policymaking. The VGFSyN bring together evidence from different methodologies: some of which is experiential that holds promise for real-world relevance, some comes from the evaluation of programmes and policies that provide guidance on implementation in specific settings and contexts.

read as limiting or undermining any legal obligations to which States may be subject under international law<sup>28</sup>.

32. The VGFSyN should be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions. They should be implemented within countries and a regional and global levels, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities<sup>29</sup>.

33. The VGFSyN are intended to avoid duplication of the work and mandate of other international bodies, build upon and complement related guidance contained in other policy products developed by CFS as well as by other institutions, and should be implemented in accordance with:

- Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (2015),
- Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of the national food security (2004),
- CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security – VGGT (2012),
- WHA Six Global Nutrition Targets for 2025 (2012),
- CFS Principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems – RAI (2014),
- CFS Policy Recommendations on Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems (2014),
- CFS Policy Recommendations on Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition (2014),
- FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), Rome Declaration on Nutrition (2014),
- FAO/WHO Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), Framework for Action (2014)
- FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (2014),

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<sup>28</sup> CFS RAI, paragraph 13

<sup>29</sup> CFS RAI, paragraph 14, and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 21.

- CFS Framework for Action for food security and nutrition in protracted crises – FFA (2015),
- CFS Policy Recommendations on Water for food security and nutrition (2015),
- CFS Policy Recommendations on Connecting smallholders to markets (2016), and
- CFS Policy Recommendations on Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: what roles for livestock? (2016),
- FAO Ten Elements of Agroecology (2019),
- CFS Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition (PENDING APPROVAL).

33. The VGFSyN should be implemented, as far as they are binding for their respective Parties, in accordance with:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights – adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948 and human rights treaties which are binding for the respective State Parties;
- International Covenant on Social and Economic Rights;
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP);
- Convention on Biological Diversity;
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- International Plant Protection Convention;
- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture;
- Standards set by the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS);
- Standards, guidelines and codes of practice adopted by the Codex Alimentarius;
- Standards adopted by the World Health Organisation of Animal Health, OIE
- Relevant international multilateral trade instruments, including WTO obligations.

34. The VGFSyN are intended to support governments, including relevant ministries and national, sub-national, and local institutions, and parliamentarians, to develop holistic, multisectoral, science and evidence-based and inclusive public policies as well as to be used in policy discussions and implementation processes by relevant stakeholders such as:

- a) Intergovernmental and regional organizations, including specialized UN agencies;
- b) Civil society and non-governmental organizations, including those representing indigenous peoples and local communities, vulnerable groups, rural women and young people, smallholders<sup>30</sup>, family farmers, fisher folks, pastoralists, landless and food system workers<sup>31</sup>;
- c) Farmers and fisheries, rangers, pastoralist and fisher folks and other producers organizations, cooperatives and networks;
- d) Private sector organizations, including but not limited to small and medium enterprises, agribusiness, food and beverage manufacturers, food retailers including supermarkets, food service providers, industry trade associations, food wholesalers, food distributors, traders, and the advertising and marketing sector<sup>32</sup>;
- e) Research organizations, academic institutions, and universities;
- f) Development partners, including international financial institutions;
- g) Private donors, foundations, and funds;
- h) Consumer associations.

35. The VGFSyN support States' obligations regarding the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, and all intended users' responsibility to respect human rights<sup>33</sup>.

36. In implementing the VGFSyN governments are urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries<sup>34</sup>.

37. In implementing the VGFSyN governments should correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel

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<sup>30</sup> "Smallholders, including those that are family farmers – women and men – include those that are small-scale producers and processors, pastoralists, artisans, fishers, community closely dependant on forests, indigenous peoples and agricultural workers", CFS policy recommendations on Connecting Smallholders to Markets (2016).

<sup>31</sup> Smallholders, fisherfolks, pastoralists are included in the civil society when they retain the complex status as food producers, workers and consumers

<sup>32</sup> The private sector is made up of many different types of companies with a wide range of sizes, scales, human and financial resources, as well as varying reach into local, domestic and international markets.

<sup>33</sup> CFS RAI, paragraph 21.

<sup>34</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 30.

elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round<sup>35</sup>.

### 2.3 – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

38. The VGFSyN include five guiding principles<sup>36</sup> that emerged from the consultation process as foundational when considering the different actions that should be followed to contribute to transforming unsustainable food systems and achieving sustainable food systems that enable healthy diets.

39. Food systems serve and support multiple objectives within the three dimensions of sustainable development. While food systems might differ greatly, they offer different opportunities for public policies, mechanisms, instruments and investments that aim to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

40. These principles draw on the need to ensure human dignity, equality, non-discrimination, participation, accountability, transparency, empowerment, and the rule of law in order to contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

- a) Systemic, multisectoral, science- and evidence-based approach. Promote a systemic, multisectoral, and science and evidence-based approach that considers food systems in their totality and varied cultural dimensions, appropriately integrates indigenous and traditional forms of knowledge, seeks to simultaneously maximize outcomes across all sustainability dimensions, and looks at the multidimensional causes of malnutrition in all its forms.
- b) Coherent, context-specific and inclusive policies. Contribute to the formulation and implementation of coherent, context-specific and inclusive policies and related responsible investment through coordinated actions among different actors and across all relevant sectors at international, regional, national, subnational, and local levels.
- c) Accountability, transparency and participation. Support efforts in strengthening governance, including accountability mechanisms, fostering citizen and stakeholder participation in national debates on food security and nutrition and on food systems, and transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, which are based on transparent rules of engagement including safeguards for the identification and management of potential conflicts of interest.

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<sup>35</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, paragraph 2.b

<sup>36</sup> These guiding principles are consistent with already agreed international documents and tools, such as the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action of ICN2 and the 1996 World Food Summit Declaration.

- d) Healthy and prosperous people, healthy planet. Promote policies and actions that enhance the livelihoods, health, and well-being of the population, as well as sustainable food production and consumption of safe and quality food products to ensure healthy diets and to protect and promote sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem, and support mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- e) Gender equality and women's empowerment. Promote equitable access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods that meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life independent of their social or demographic factors such as race, gender, income or geographic region. Promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, and respect, protect and fulfill their rights, creating the conditions for women's involvement in decision-making as well as their participation in all economic, political and social sectors and strong engagement in shaping food systems that improve nutrition, recognizing their key role in care, education, agriculture, health promotion and food production and consumption. This may entail targeted strategies to support women in their existing roles in areas such as care, education, agriculture, health promotion and food preparation, production, consumption and preservation of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge.

### **PART 3 – THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON FOOD SYSTEMS FOR NUTRITION**

41. With the aim of fostering the achievement of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, the VGFSyN provide a framework to promote policy coherence and to bring various stakeholders who are involved in food systems to work together to achieve healthy diets for everyone through sustainable food systems.

42. To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its Sustainable Development Goals, and implement the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions and decisions, as well as to fulfil national commitments to end malnutrition in all its forms while respecting planetary boundaries, a food systems approach is needed that recognizes that the various parts that make up food systems are interconnected; that any action or decision to address one aspect of a food system will likely impact other aspects, and that food systems respond and are impacted by other systems, situations, and contexts. Thinking systematically and interdisciplinary about the transformation of unsustainable food systems and achievement of sustainable food systems can foster that challenges are

tackled from multiple perspectives. Thus, the VGFSyN provide guidance on a mix of science and evidence-based policy actions spanning the diversity of food supply chains, food environment and consumer behavior, as well as the drivers and people that shape those actions.

43. During the consultation process, CFS stakeholders identified a number of cross-cutting factors that are relevant for improving diets and nutrition that determined the seven focus areas around which the VGFSyN are structured: i) transparent, democratic and accountable governance; ii) sustainable food supply chains to achieve healthy diets and in the context of climate change; iii) Equal and equitable access to healthy diets ; iv) food safety across sustainable food systems; v) people-centered nutrition knowledge, education and information; vi) gender equality and women's empowerment across food systems; and vii) resilient food systems in humanitarian contexts.

44. The first focus area, the governance of food systems, which establishes the foundation of the remaining policy recommendations of the VGFSyN, is interwoven across the six other areas. Three focus areas (ii, iii, and v) cover the main components of food systems while an additional area (iv) is based on the recognition of the increased importance of collective action in addressing food safety. Special attention is focused on women because of the vital role they play in food systems (focus area vi). The humanitarian context serves as a standalone focus area (vii) because it will continue to be a significant global issue in the context of climate change, protracted crises, conflict and migration.

45. The guidance is principally addressed to governments who should consider it in relation to national and sub-national priorities, needs and conditions, and assess the relevance of the policy in each food system contexts, paying due attention to all direct and indirect costs and economic, social and environmental impacts. It is important for countries to implement a diagnostic lens to their food systems in a systematic and holistic way. This would entail, amongst others, understanding the types of food systems that exist, the make-up and complexity of their food systems, and the major trigger points for change, disruption, exclusion/inclusion and growth. Governments are encouraged to systemically analyze and monitor the potential transition costs, benefits, trade-offs, and impacts of their actions, considering their effects across sectors and actors within their own context of economic, socio-cultural and environmental conditions and objectives.

### **3.1- TRANSPARENT, DEMOCRATIC AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE**

46. This section lays out the importance of governance mechanisms, leadership and accountability across the range of actors, at global, regional, national and local levels, within food systems. Governments are responsible for developing sound, science and evidence-based, coherent, context-specific public policies, and regulatory and legislative frameworks that govern food systems, promote awareness, and set priorities for impactful

action. Governments also should develop transparent mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the distribution of transition costs, cost and benefits of policy actions across sectors and actors, manage conflicts of interests, power imbalances, and other safeguards to put public interests before other interests.

### 3.1.1 Promoting policy coordination and coherence by integrating food systems and nutrition into local, national and regional development:

- a) Governments should foster policy coordination and coherence across sectors to reduce all forms of malnutrition from a food system perspective. These sectors include health, agriculture, education, environment, water, sanitation, gender, social protection, trade, employment, and finance. Governmental actors should include the sustainability of food systems as a priority in order to effectively align relevant sectors around a common set of goals.
- b) Governments should integrate sustainable food system actions that promote healthy diets and improved nutrition into national and local development, health, economic, agricultural, climate/environment, and disaster risk and pandemic diseases reduction policies. Governments should consider increased and improved budgetary allocations, where appropriate, to food system activities, with clear and transparent objectives of improving diets and nutrition, with disaggregated indicators to track and assess impacts of measures taken with a view of addressing malnutrition in all its forms, including its economic, social and environmental impacts.
- c) Governments should endeavor to ensure that the implementation of international and bilateral trade and investment agreements support national food security and nutrition policies, agriculture and environmental policies, and international food safety standards<sup>37</sup>, in order to achieve resilient and sustainable food systems.
- d) Governments should identify opportunities within food systems to achieve national and global food security and nutrition goals, monitor and measure progress against targets, and indicators set out by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>38</sup> the World Health Assembly<sup>39</sup>, the UN Environmental Agency Ministerial Declaration (4, 2019)<sup>40</sup>.

### 3.1.2 Strengthening multisectoral and multilevel coordination and actions:

- a) Governments, intergovernmental organizations and development partners, across sectors at all levels, should work to promote healthy diets and improved nutrition through sustainable food systems, through strengthened policy frameworks and institutional capacities that address the multiple causes and consequences of malnutrition in all its forms. This policy coordination should establish and/or

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<sup>37</sup> Such as those set by Codex Alimentarius and World Organization for Animal Health

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.who.int/nutrition/global-target-2025/en/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28463/K1901029.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>

strengthen multisectoral, multistakeholder and multilevel mechanisms that oversee the design and implementation of evidence- and science-based policies, strategies, and interventions that contribute to improved nutrition outcomes at national, sub-national and local levels.

- b) Governments and intergovernmental actors should facilitate an inclusive and transparent dialogue ensuring the participation of all relevant stakeholders and actors in the food system. [This dialogue should include all dimensions of sustainable food systems.
- c) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society organizations should encourage increased commitment to action with responsible investment<sup>41</sup> from the public and private sectors, and donors to support sustainable food systems that promote healthy diets, while considering synergies and trade-offs with other policy priorities.

### 3.1.3 Creating accountability mechanisms and tools for, monitoring and evaluation:

- a) Governments should establish or strengthen science- and evidence-based, regulatory and policy frameworks to guide private and public sector activities related to food systems and nutrition. They should institute effective, inclusive and transparent accountability mechanisms that promote good governance, public deliberation, independent bodies that monitor compliance and performance, individual complaint procedures, remedial actions to improve accountability, management of conflicts of interest and vested interests, power imbalances, and capacity to settle disputes that may undermine public health. Governmental actors should ensure that dialogue with all stakeholders is transparent and follows clear roles and responsibilities for engagement to safeguard the public interest, in line with multilaterally agreed rules.
- b) Governments, in partnership with research organizations and intergovernmental organizations, should improve the availability and quality of national statistical systems and monitoring systems that capture, harmonize and disaggregate data by key sociodemographic characteristics, and use as much as possible existing indicators, including within SDGs, across all aspects of food systems and outcomes related to food security, diets (particularly dietary intake and dietary quality), food composition, food safety, nutritional status (including the measurement of micronutrient deficiency status and anthropometry), and gender and other relevant social factors, for improved policy development and accountability, and better targeting of public programmes.
- c) Governments should invest in research, where appropriate, to better understand the interconnections between food, nutritional, economic, social, behavioral and environmental dimensions and thus enable the assessment of the cross-sectional impacts of the policies and programmes implemented. It is also necessary to

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<sup>41</sup> In line with the CFS Principles for responsible investment in agriculture and food systems, RAI (2014).

understand the complexity of the interactions between supply and demand at different scales from farms to households.

- d) Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders including intergovernmental organizations, should promote investment in human, system, and institutional capacity to analyze food system information in a comprehensive manner to support the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of programmatic actions, taking into account the need of developing interdisciplinary approach embracing technical, economic and social issues.

#### 3.1.4 Strengthening participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities in food systems:

- a) Governments and relevant stakeholders should strengthen participation of indigenous and local communities in governance of food systems and nutrition by means of dialogue, consultation and information, and by strengthening community mechanisms for inclusive participation at local, sub-national and national level.
- b) Governments and relevant stakeholders should strengthen capacities of local communities so that they can actively and positively participate in formulating policies and strategies regarding food systems.

### 3.2 SUSTAINABLE FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS TO ACHIEVE HEALTHY DIETS IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

47. Food supply chains play a crucial and structural role in health and environmental sustainability, resilience and regeneration. Food supply chains - from production, storage, processing and packaging, distribution, and marketing - operate at assorted scales, structures, and levels, from simple to highly complex, from local to globalized, supply chains involving many food system actors. The decisions made by the actors at any stage have implications on the availability, affordability, accessibility, acceptability and safety of nutritious food for healthy diets. This section complements the goals outlined in the UN Decade of Family Farming and highlights the importance of ensuring nutrition as food moves through the system, and suggests ways to create sustainable and resilient food supply chains in the midst of climate change and natural resource degradation, recalling the need to simultaneously take into account the health of individuals, animals, plants and ecosystems in a One Health Approach.

#### 3.2.1 Mainstreaming climate adaptation and mitigation across sustainable food supply chains:

- a) Governments, development partners, civil society and non-governmental organizations and private sector should collaborate with food producers to enhance the resilience of food supply chains to climate change impacts by managing risk and building

preparedness and resilience and by mitigating food supply chains impact on the environment. This can include increasing access to finance, extension services, insurance, weather forecasting, early warning systems, capacity development and knowledge transfer. It could also include protecting crops, livestock, and fisheries and overall production systems, in terms of nutritional content and productivity from the anticipated impacts of climate change in the form of pests, diseases, weather-related shocks. This could entail disseminating good practices of resilient farming and adopting varieties resistant to drought, frost, heat, pests, or diseases caused or exacerbated by climate change as well as reducing post-harvest and other food losses and developing productive-asset creation initiatives.

- b) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders should promote sustainable agriculture at different scales in order to achieve sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. They also should collaborate with and support farmers and other food producers to reduce the environmental impact of food systems recognizing the positive efforts of farmers that adopt sustainable practices. This could be done by fostering the adoption of appropriate technology and on-farm management practices to improve the efficiency of crop production yields and to promote responsible and sustainable use of pesticides and fertilizers. Governments should promote optimization of agricultural outputs per unit of water, soil, energy, labor and land, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss, and natural resource degradation (including deforestation) of agriculture activities, in accordance with their Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement, and other relevant national planning instruments.
- c) Governments should institute, where appropriate, monitoring systems (including early warning systems), quality indices (e.g. integrated diversification and agro-biodiversity targets, soil health, water quality, farm income and food price) and other food system and dietary metrics as part of the environment and climate-related target setting policies to monitor changing conditions and the effectiveness of policy responses.
- d) Research organizations, academic institutions, and universities should promote the generation and use of rigorous knowledge, including indigenous and traditional knowledge, science and evidence, that demonstrate robust climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience strategies for sustainable food systems and healthy diets. Research should focus on potential interventions and policy entry points to ensure agricultural production, including livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, processing and packaging, retail and markets, and consumer behavior contribute to climate change disasters and other disruptions mitigation and adaptation, as well as to reduce environmental footprint and protect, conserve, sustainably manage and use natural resources.

### 3.2.2 Promoting sustainable use and management of natural resources in food production:

- a) Governments, farmers and their organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should address soil health as central to agricultural production systems, with due attention to the FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management. Governments should encourage the use of integrated soil fertility and nutrients management practices as well as ecosystem services productivity for sustainable production, through sustainable use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers and promote the use of sustainable land management services and agricultural practices to maintain soil biodiversity and nutrient balance, reduce soil erosion, improve water management, and promote carbon storage and sequestration.
- b) Governments should improve and encourage the sustainable management and sustainable use of water resources for agriculture and food production through, where appropriate, integrated water resource management at watershed scale inclusive and participatory approaches, and enhanced water cooperation approaches that involve civil society organizations, farmer organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders, that take into account the variety of water needs across different sectors. These approaches should foster the reduction of water wastage, irrigation, support the systematic use of appropriate water saving technologies, minimize water pollution stemming from agriculture, promote the multiple uses of water without compromising the ability of farmers and food producers to grow sufficient nutritious foods.
- c) Governments and other relevant stakeholders should protect, conserve and sustainably use biodiversity for food and agriculture.
- d) Governments should recognize and respect all legitimate tenure right holders and their rights including the legitimate tenure rights and customary tenure right systems of indigenous peoples and local communities with customary tenure systems that exercise self-governance of land, fisheries and forests, , in line with the CFS VGGT<sup>42</sup>. The traditional, collective knowledge and practices of these right holders should be respected, their traditional diets should be protected, and their nutrition and wellbeing should be a priority.

### 3.2.3 Promoting nutrition within agriculture and food supply chains:

- a) Governments should, where appropriate, integrate nutrition objectives into their national agriculture and other relevant policies.
- b) Governments and private sector and other relevant stakeholders should encourage responsible agricultural investment, and support food producers in the adoption of sustainable production practices and in the production of diverse food that contributes to healthy diets, while ensuring a decent income, livelihoods and resilience for fishers,

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<sup>42</sup> In particular with paragraphs 3.1.1, 9.2 and 9.4.

farmers, particularly smallholders and/or family farms, and farm workers. This should include supporting and encouraging sustainable crop production practices, livestock, agroforestry, animal and fishery systems (including artisanal fisheries and aquaculture).

- c) Governments should integrate urban and peri-urban agriculture and urban land use into national and local food systems and nutrition development strategies, and programmes, as well as urban and territorial planning, as a viable input into healthy diets and support stable supply of nutritious food for growing urban populations and social cohesion of communities.
- d) Governments, private sector, research centers and universities and other relevant stakeholders should promote enabling environments to assist and facilitate food producers' access to affordable, innovative and sustainable technologies, technical assistance, skill training, business models, and nutrition information within agriculture and other extension technical services/programmes, to enable them to promote sustainable production, protect biodiversity, ensure food safety, and nutritional quality of foods, including animal-source foods, for markets.
- e) To reduce excessive food price volatility, governmental actors should promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable, multilateral trading system<sup>43</sup> and market information systems that provide timely, transparent information about food-related market transactions, including enhanced tracking of current and future supply stocks and price data. Further monitoring and market studies on underreported commodities with major impact on nutrition and neglected and underutilized crops should also be developed.
- f) Governments, private sector, donors and other relevant stakeholders should invest in research, knowledge transfer and innovation for producing diversified nutritious crops, such as whole grains, fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds, legumes, including, conventional breeding of nutrient-enriched staples or crops and diverse animal-source foods and breeding (e.g. dairy products, fish, eggs, and meat).
- g) Governments should promote strategies, guidelines and incentives and support appropriate measures and measures to:
  - achieve energy balance and a healthy weight;
  - limit energy intake from total fats and shift fat consumption away from saturated fats to unsaturated fats and towards the elimination of trans-fatty acids;
  - increase consumption of fruits and vegetables, and legumes, whole grains and nuts;
  - limit the intake of free sugars;
  - limit salt (sodium) consumption from all sources and ensure that salt is iodized<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> [UNGA Resolution 74/242 "Agriculture development, food security and nutrition"](#), 2019. Paragraph 35.

<sup>44</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution 54.17, paragraph 22

### 3.2.4 Improving food storage, processing, packaging, transformation and reformulation:

- a) Governments, private sector, and donors should, where appropriate, invest in infrastructure (e.g. storage facilities, transport infrastructure, physical markets and market information systems) and logistical support to prevent postharvest loss and waste and support the ability of food producers, including smallholders and small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) to deliver diverse, perishable and safe food to local, regional, international markets in sustainable ways within a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable, multilateral trading system.
- b) Governments, private sector, and farmers and other producers and their associations should facilitate minimizing food loss and waste on farms, during post-harvest storage, and throughout processing, transportation, and retail. Facilitation includes demand-driven training and capacity on improved management practices and fostering the adoption of appropriate technologies<sup>45</sup>.
- c) Governmental actors should support research, development and scaling up the use of sustainable processing technologies<sup>46</sup> and practices that can retain the nutrient content of food, minimize post-harvest nutrient losses, create, where appropriate, new value added products from food processing by-products, and promote longer-term storage of food, particularly during periods of drought, flooding, and insufficient production. Governments should also promote guidelines to monitor the level of processing of food.
- d) Governments should promote strategies, guidelines, incentives and support appropriate measures such as front-of-pack labels (FOPL), providing accurate, standardized and comprehensible information, including on key nutritional aspects, to help consumers to make informed and healthy choices<sup>47</sup>. (Footnote: WHA resolution)
- e) Private sector should contribute to public health goals aligned with national food-based dietary guidelines by producing and promoting nutritious foods and food products that are produced sustainably and contribute to a healthy diet, increasing and preserving nutrient content, in accordance with paragraph 3.2.4.d. Governments should incentivize private sector food actors to work towards more sustainable and safe packaging of products such as nanotechnology, waxing, plant-based wrapping and biodegradable plastics.

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<sup>45</sup> Technologies include cold chambers storage units, solar walk-ins, refrigerators, dry storage, storage drums and drying facilities.

<sup>46</sup> Technologies include cold chambers storage units, solar walk-ins, refrigerators, dry storage, storage drums and drying facilities.

<sup>47</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution 54.17, paragraphs 40.4 and 61.

### 3.2.5 Improving nutrition and health of farm and food system workers:

- a) Governments should ensure that the right to work<sup>48</sup> is respected, protected and fulfilled for all farmers and other food producers and workers (including migrants and undocumented workers), that these populations are protected and safe, and that there is no unnecessary burden which could negatively impact their health status, including involvement of children in harmful tasks (e.g. child labour), and take appropriate measures aiming at food prices that guarantee a living income for them.
- b) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should provide social protection to food producers and workers to ensure they are food secure, have living wages and sufficient livelihoods, and can physically access and afford healthy diets and adequate health services.
- c) Private sector should strive to improve the nutritional status of workers, increase their access to healthy diets in the workplace, and encourage the establishment of facilities for breastfeeding.
- d) Governments, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should ensure that food system workers are healthy and adopt measures, including early warning systems, to prevent spreading of infectious diseases, including prioritizing low touch, low contact equipment. Workers should be trained on how infectious disease spreads and how they can protect themselves and the food they handle.

### 3.2.6 Empowering youth across food systems:

- a) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should engage, encourage and empower youth, acknowledging their diversity, to be actively involved in food systems by enhancing their access to land, natural resources, inputs, tools, information, extension and advisory services, financial services, education, training, markets, and promote their inclusion in decision-making processes in accordance with national legislation and regulations.
- b) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, non-governmental organizations, and communities should invest in appropriate vocational and skill trainings, formal education, and mentorship programmes for youth to increase their capacity and access to decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities to stimulate and be drivers toward sustainable food systems for the next generation.
- c) Governments, intergovernmental organizations and private sector should promote development and access to social innovations, resource hubs, and new technologies for youth along food supply chains that enhance the sustainability of food systems, improve nutrition and support social enterprises and entrepreneurship of youth (particularly in countries experiencing high rates of youth internal and external migration).

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<sup>48</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) - articles 23 and 24.

### 3.3 EQUAL AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTHY DIETS

48. Food environments comprise foods available and accessible to people in their surroundings and the nutritional quality, safety, price, convenience, labelling and promotion of these foods. These environments should ensure that people have equitable access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods that meet dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life<sup>49</sup>, considering the various physical, social, economic, cultural, and political factors that influence that access. For many people, access to healthy diets can be problematic as they may not be available, accessible, or affordable for a variety of reasons. This section outlines the potential policy entry points to improve physical and economic access, and availability of healthy diets within sustainable food systems in the places where people shop, choose, and eat food.

#### 3.3.1 Improving access to food that contributes to healthy diets:

- a) Governments should improve the availability of and access to nutritious food that contributes to healthy diets including through appropriate trade agreements and policies, within a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable, multilateral trading system.
- b) Governments should take into consideration the guidance developed by FAO and WHO to ensure that in times of crisis (e.g. pandemics), the integrity of the entire food chain is maintained, and adequate and safe food supplies are available and accessible for all people
- c) In times of crisis, Governments should declare food production, distribution, processing and marketing essential services everywhere to keep trade corridors open to ensure the continuous functioning of critical aspects of food systems in all countries<sup>50</sup>.
- d) Governments should take equity and equality into consideration when acting to address food environments and ensure members of vulnerable communities, residents of low-income communities, indigenous peoples and local communities, peasants, pastoralists, small-scale fisher folks, and other people in rural areas, and people facing physical constraints due to age, illness, or disability, have sufficient access to diverse food that contribute to healthy diets.
- e) Governments should minimize barriers so that people can grow, transport, preserve, purchase, order or otherwise access diverse types of foods, including fresh foods, that contribute to healthy diets in a given food environment. This can be done by instituting rural and urban planning policies that encourage retail outlets to sell a variety of affordable nutritious foods that contribute to healthy diets, and that restrict,

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<sup>49</sup> FAO. 2004. Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Paragraph 15.

<sup>50</sup> Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition. June 2020. United Nations, New York

if necessary, the growth of retail outlets which sell an overabundance of foods high in fat, especially saturated and trans-fats, sugars and salt/sodium, and that promote home, community, and school food production and gardens, where appropriate.

- f) Governments should encourage zoning laws, certifications and financial incentives for farmers and fishers markets, mobile food retailers, street food vendors and other retailers that sell nutritious foods, both locally grown and globally sourced, that contribute to healthy diets, and reduce the concentration of vendors that sell foods high in fat, especially saturated and trans-fats, sugars and salt/sodium, in all areas, and especially in low-income areas.
- g) Governments, in consultation with consumer associations, can incentivize local food retailers and markets to increase the number, variety, and sale of sustainably produced nutritious foods that contribute to healthy diets. This can be done by creating local food policy councils to give residents a voice in how best to improve availability, access and affordability of healthy diets in their communities.

### 3.3.2 Improving the availability and affordability of food that contributes to healthy diets:

- a) Governments should consider measures, including where appropriate, fiscal policies to improve the affordability of healthy diets. This includes financial and consumer incentives, to promote nutritious, safe and sustainably produced food to ensure they are affordable and competitive compared with food and beverages high in fat, especially saturated and trans-fats, sugars and salt/sodium for which industry tax benefits for their development and marketing should be removed, if necessary.
- b) Governments, with the support of intergovernmental organizations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, should strengthen public procurement systems by ensuring healthy diets are available, accessible and convenient in public settings and institutions, including kindergartens and other childcare facilities, schools, hospitals, foodbanks, workplaces, government offices military bases and prisons, nursing homes, in line with national food-based dietary guidelines, and engaging with local food chains, where available.
- c) Governments should link the provision of healthy school meals with clear nutritional and environmental objectives, aligned with national food-based dietary guidelines and adapted to the needs of different age groups, with special attention to the needs of adolescent girls. Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should consider promoting home grown school meals, where food served in schools and other child care facilities is procured from local, smallholder and/or family farmers.
- d) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should facilitate the affordability of healthy diets for poor households through social protection programmes, that should be linked to clear nutritional

outcomes, such as vouchers for nutritious foods, cash transfers, school feeding programmes or other community meals programmes.

- e) Governmental actors and intergovernmental organizations should promote the readiness and resilience of social protection programmes to cope with pandemics and other systemic shocks that negatively impact food security and nutrition.
- f) Governments, consumers, farmers and other food producers organizations should promote the availability of nutritious and sustainably produced food that contributes to healthy diets including through local farmers and fishers markets, cooperatives, social organizations and other community-building efforts that engage people around local food cultures.

### 3.3.3 Monitoring new technologies and promoting trends for healthy diets:

- a) Governments should acknowledge the influential roles of the internet, social media, and online marketing of foods, and should monitor and encourage media companies to promote nutritious, safe and sustainably produced foods that contribute to healthy diets on social media spheres.
- b) Governments should recognize the growing trend of food purchased online and consumed away from home (including street food) and should promote policies to incentivize restaurants/online outlets to offer prepared dishes made from nutritious, safe and sustainably produced foods that contribute to healthy diets, display information about food on menus (i.e. calories, product composition, and other nutritional content as well as other relevant information such as life-cycle assessments), avoid food loss and waste, and respect any relevant food safety regulations.

## 3.4 FOOD SAFETY ACROSS SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

49. Food safety is foundational to all parts of the food system and is critical to prevent food-borne pathogens, hazards and illness, as well as naturally occurring toxins and contaminants, residues of pesticides, antibiotics antimicrobials and heavy metals. Animal and plant diseases are likewise threats to the safety and resilience of food systems and to human health and nutrition. Food cannot be considered nutritious if it is not safe, and poor food safety hinders the adoption of healthy diets. There is an increased urgency to improve the ability to track food safety to help monitor the food supply flow, better connect producers to consumers, and facilitate food recalls across coordinated networks. This section highlights the need for global and national cooperation on food safety and for every stakeholder to be responsible and accountable for the sourcing, handling, and quality control of food because of the potential spread of foodborne illness.

### 3.4.1 Strengthening national and international cooperation on food safety:

- a) Governments should promote food safety within their food systems policies and develop science-based food safety policies and programmes that consider actions across the entire food systems - concerning production, processing, handling, preparation, storage, and distribution of food.
- b) Governments should develop, establish, strengthen and enforce, as appropriate, food safety control systems, including reviewing, adopting, updating and enforcing national food safety legislation and regulations to ensure that food producers and suppliers throughout the food supply chain operate safely. Governments should implement, as appropriate, and with the support of intergovernmental organizations, internationally adopted standards, in accordance with paragraph 33 of the VGFSyN.
- c) Governments and the FAO/WHO International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) should participate in, share and contribute data and evidence to international networks that exchange food safety information, including the surveillance of foodborne hazards and disease outbreaks and management of emergencies to improve food safety across a range of issues such as water quality, pesticide residues, antimicrobial residues, residues of veterinary or phytosanitary medical products, endocrine disrupters, use of unauthorized and unsafe food additives, pathogenic bacteria, viruses, toxins, parasites, zoonoses, and fraud/adulteration of food products.

#### 3.4.2 Ensuring food safety across food production systems:

- a) Governments, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should implement a One Health Approach<sup>51</sup> to food safety along the entire food and feed supply chain, recognizing the interconnection between food safety and human, plant, animal and environmental health particularly to prevent and mitigate future transmission of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19”.
- b) Governments, in collaboration with intergovernmental organizations, should develop and implement national plans to combat Antimicrobial Resistance in livestock, aquaculture, and in plants, including in feed production, that take into account multilaterally adopted standards, to promote and support prudent and appropriate use of antimicrobials<sup>52</sup>, including phasing out the use of antimicrobials as growth promoters<sup>53</sup>.

#### 3.4.3 Protecting consumers from food safety risks in food supplies:

- a) Governments, private sector, intergovernmental organizations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders should promote and enhance traceability in food

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<sup>51</sup> One Health is an approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and research in which multiple sectors (such as public health, animal health, plant health and the environment) communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes. Reference: <https://www.who.int/features/qa/one-health/en/>

<sup>52</sup> FAO Conference, [Final Report of the 41th Session \(2019\)](#), Appendix C. Paragraph 7.

<sup>53</sup> FAO Conference Resolution 4/2015 on Antimicrobial Resistance. Paragraphs a and d.

supply chains, early contamination detection, and leverage the opportunities that new technologies offer for traceability solutions.

- b) Investment by governments, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should support training for food producers, handlers and processors to implement national, science and evidence-based, risk-based measures that can provide safe food while retaining their nutrient content.
- c) Governments should acknowledge, monitor and evaluate emerging health risks and manage new food products created by emerging technologies (e.g. lab grown meats, and gene edited products, etc.) as appropriate taking into account scientific risk assessments and Codex standards, where available, as with any new food product in international regulatory frameworks.

### **3.5 PEOPLE-CENTERED NUTRITION KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION**

50. It is important to consider, establish, maintain and protect the range and diversity of food cultures, social norms, relations, and traditions that contribute to healthy diets without undermining progress in gender equality. This section outlines the policy entry points to promote healthy diets through supporting people to improve their knowledge, awareness, education, and the quality of information available, motivations, skills and practices empowering key actors across food systems. Context-specific interventions and promotion of traditional diets and knowledge originating from diverse food systems are vital to ensuring equal, positive and sustainable impacts on nutrition and the environment. Social and behavior change interventions can also shift patterns around food and food consumption and empower people to make better choices for themselves and their families.

#### **3.5.1 Utilizing policies and tools to provide education and information on healthy diets:**

- a) Governments should support and develop, where appropriate, evidence-based food-based dietary guidelines for different age groups that define context-specific healthy diets by taking into account social, cultural, scientific, economic, ecological, geographical and environmental drivers. It is also important to invest, where appropriate, in public health nutrition tools to improve nutrition education and promote healthy diets.
- b) Governments should develop, as appropriate, science and evidence-based nutrition standards as a basis to restrict marketing (including digital marketing), promotion and sponsorships exposure, especially of minors, to foods and beverages high in fat, especially saturated and trans-fats, sugars and salt/sodium, in accordance with multilaterally agreed rules and national legislation, where applicable. Such measures could include, where appropriate, prohibition to sell and advertise such food in public places or near schools, including child-care facilities, where necessary.

- c) Governments should promote breastfeeding and regulate, where appropriate, the marketing of commercial infant formula and other breast-milk substitutes and implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes<sup>54</sup> and subsequent relevant WHA resolutions, taking into account their national contexts.
- d) Governments should promote and support nutritional labelling and front-of-pack labelling (FOPL) to support healthy diets. The FOPL system should be aligned with national public health and nutrition policies and food regulations. The FOPL system should comprise an underpinning nutrient profile model that considers the overall nutrition quality of the product or the nutrients of concern for NCDs (or both).
- e) Governments should, as appropriate, provide incentives to private sector actors to design food outlet, including markets, restaurants, and other places where food is sold or served that encourage the placement and promotion of foods that contribute to healthy diets.
- f) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including medical and health practitioners, should promote the integration of nutrition education and counseling practices in different settings, including for populations participating in maternal and child nutrition programmes.
- g) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders, including medical and health practitioners, should promote a range of behavior change interventions such as social and behavior change communication (SBCC), food and nutrition education and social marketing as a way to positively influence knowledge, attitudes and social norms, and coordinate messaging on nutrition across a variety of communication channels to reach multiple levels of society (e.g. mass media campaigns).
- h) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society private sector and other relevant stakeholders should support the education of all food system actors to prioritize the reduction of food losses and waste. Actions could include awareness campaigns at national, regional and global levels, labelling schemes, and monitoring.

### 3.5.2 Encouraging local food knowledge and culture:

- a) Governments, civil society organizations, private sector, intergovernmental organizations, academia and other relevant stakeholders should use science and evidence-based as well as cognitive, cultural, and plural knowledge resources to promote and support education and knowledge of healthy diets, nutrition, physical activity, food loss and waste prevention, intrahousehold food distribution, food safety, optimal breastfeeding and, where needed, complementary feeding, taking into

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<sup>54</sup> [International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes](#). WHO, 1981. Geneva.

consideration cultural and social norms and adapting to different audiences and contexts.

- b) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, private sector, community leaders, social workers, health professionals, academia and other relevant stakeholders should encourage food culture and the importance of food in cultural heritage, culinary skills and nutrition literacy among communities. This can be done through community and consumer associations and educational institutions, targeting men and women.
- c) Governments should protect and promote the knowledge that indigenous peoples and local communities have with regard to local traditions and methods of producing, preparing, and preserving local and traditional food that has nutritional and environmental benefits, and that promotes food safety.

### 3.5.3 Promoting “hubs” for food and nutrition knowledge, education and information:

- a) Universities, schools and technical and vocational education and training centres should institute tailored nutrition education curriculum for health, agriculture and food technology students during training.
- b) Governments, civil society organizations, private sector, intergovernmental organizations, universities, schools and other relevant stakeholders should promote nutrition knowledge and culinary skills among school-age children, adolescents and adults (including promoting communal mealtimes, socializing around food, consuming healthy diets, and reducing food waste) in a variety of settings.
- c) Governments, with the support of intergovernmental organizations, should, as appropriate, implement comprehensive school and pre-school food and nutrition policies, review education curricula to incorporate nutrition and sustainability principles, involve communities in promoting and creating healthy food environments and healthy diets in schools, kindergartens and other childcare facilities, and support school health and nutrition services.
- d) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, civil society and non-governmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders should support food and nutrition dialogues with communities, farmer field schools and agriculture extension services by sharing the knowledge, experience and insights of individuals who are not usually regarded as members of the nutrition community (e.g. community and religious leaders, chefs, supermarket buyers, youth leaders, farmers and food producers, young entrepreneurs, mayors and local communities).

## 3.6 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT ACROSS FOOD SYSTEMS

51. Gender relations and cultural norms are among the most significant drivers of healthy diets and nutrition outcomes. In many countries, women and girls produce food, make decisions about the household’s diet and influence the nutritional status of household

members. Women are important agents for sustainable development as food system actors, but also as actors in their households, communities and countries. At the same time, women and girls are assigned responsibilities for unpaid care and domestic work and often face higher levels of food insecurity and worse nutrition outcomes. Women's and girl's empowerment through redistribution of such unpaid work, education, and access to information, resources and services are needed to improving nutrition. This section highlights the importance of improving women's wellbeing, ensuring direct access to financial, technical and biophysical resources, improving agency and participation in decision-making, voice and status, and challenging the power relationships and legal impediments that limit equality and choices.

### 3.6.1 Empowering women:

- a) Governments should promote equal participation between women and men in policy decision-making, supporting women especially in rural context, and ensuring gender equality in leadership roles in decision making bodies – parliaments, ministries and local authorities at district and community levels.
- b) Governments should promote an enabling environment to generate socio-cultural changes towards gender equality with specific policies, programmes, institutions and advocacy campaigns to deal with the various forms of discrimination and violence women face.
- c) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders should promote adolescent girls' and women's human capital development by supporting access to education, literacy programmes, health and other social services to increase household nutritional status.

### 3.6.2 Promoting and acknowledging women as food system entrepreneurs:

- a) Governments should ensure women's equal tenure rights and promote their equal access to and control over productive land, natural resources, inputs, productive tools, and access to education, training, markets, and information in line with the CFS VGGT.
- b) Governments, private sector, intergovernmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders should enhance women's roles in agriculture by promoting and supporting that women have decision-making power over what they choose to produce, and how they choose to produce those crops/food. Women should be offered equal access to extension and advisory services for crops and animal products that they produce or process, capacity-building to engage with traders, financial services (credit and savings mechanisms), and entrepreneurial opportunities across food systems.

- c) Governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders should promote and increase access of women to time saving technologies<sup>55</sup> that could help improve their livelihoods.
- d) Governments, private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders should facilitate women's equal access to entrepreneurship and employment opportunities across food systems and related activities, leveraging existing business platforms to generate adequate income, as well as increase women's participation in decision-making on the use of household income and opportunities to build and manage savings. This would include business management training, decision-making skill development, scaling of financial services and products both accessible and relevant to women's needs, and tools to help men and women strengthen their intra-household communication.

### 3.6.3 Recognizing and addressing women's nutritional status and deprivation:

- a) Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders should acknowledge and advance the nutritional well-being of adolescent girls and women including through the provision of health and nutritional services through various sectors. This can be done by promoting and supporting that national development strategies are informed by participatory gender and age analyses, and that women and adolescent girls with compromised nutritional status and higher levels of deprivation, access gender-responsive social protection schemes.
- b) Acknowledging the significant time and work burden of women in the preparation of nutritious meals, and their roles in agriculture and food production, governments should acknowledge and value the importance of unpaid care and domestic work at the household level through the effective implementation of protective policies, social protection programmes, and other benefits, and should promote gender-equal and equitable distribution of care work. The equal participation of men in unpaid work should be promoted, especially where women are also active in productive labour.
- c) Governments should create an enabling policy framework, as appropriate, and supportive practices to protect and support breastfeeding, ensuring that decisions to breastfeed do not result in women losing their economic security or any of their rights. This should include implementing maternity protection legislation, including entitlement to publicly-funded paid maternity leave (or paternity leave), and removing workplace-related barriers to breastfeeding (lack of breaks, facilities, and services).

## 3.7 RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

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<sup>555</sup> These include food preservation and processing equipment, cold storage, heat and thermal processing, grinding/blending devices, energy saving stoves, and modern farm equipment for ploughing, cultivating and harvesting nutritious crops/food and raising small ruminants and poultry.

52. Linking food security and nutrition interventions during humanitarian crises (human induced and climate change-related disasters, epidemics/pandemics) with longer-term strategies is essential to strengthen the resilience of food systems. Short or protracted crises displace millions, and increase their risk of food insecurity and malnutrition. The critical focus in this contexts is identify the balance between immediate food security and nutrition needs and impact of response interventions may have on the system. Considering the importance of resilient food systems, this section highlights the importance of strengthening the nexus between humanitarian and development programming and builds upon the 11 principles in the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (FFA)<sup>56</sup>.

#### 3.7.1 Protecting the most vulnerable to malnutrition in humanitarian contexts:

- a) Governments and intergovernmental organizations should pay particular attention, protection, and facilitate access to sustainably produced, safe and nutritious food and nutritional support to most vulnerable groups.
- b) Governments and parties involved in conflicts should facilitate access of all members of affected and at-risk populations to food security and nutrition assistance, in both acute and protracted crises, consistent with internationally recognized humanitarian principles, as anchored in Geneva Convention of 1949 and other UNGA Resolutions after 1949.
- c) Governments, with the support of intergovernmental organizations and international assistance and cooperation where appropriate, should ensure access to nutritious food and nutritional support for refugees, internally displaced people and asylum seekers in their territory, in accordance with governments' obligations under relevant international mutually agreed instruments. Governmental actors should have, where appropriate, contingency plans in place to ensure food security and nutrition of the most vulnerable groups during crises such as epidemics and pandemics.

#### 3.7.2 Improving the quality of food and nutrition assistance:

- a) Governments, all parties involved in conflicts, climate-related disasters, epidemics and pandemics, and food assistance, including intergovernmental organizations, should underline and support that food security and nutrition assessments and analyses are undertaken to inform the food and nutrition response as well as any components of the local food system requiring rehabilitation.
- b) Governments should acknowledge nutrition as an essential need and humanitarian assistance and should aim to meet and monitor nutritional requirements of the affected population, particularly the most vulnerable to malnutrition. Any food items provided should be of appropriate nutritional quality and quantity, be safe

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<sup>56</sup> CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises

and acceptable, and not harm local markets. Food should conform to the food standards of the host country's government, in accordance with para 33 of the VGFSyN.

- c) Governments and intergovernmental organizations should support social protection mechanisms and acute malnutrition management programmes purchasing locally produced food and promote and support adequate coverage during times of crisis. Fortification should be used only in limited times and places and should not disrupt local market and accessibility of nutritious food in the longer term.
- d) Governments should, as appropriate, implement policies on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in emergencies and, together with intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, and should support that such policies on IYCF practices are coordinated, and promoted during humanitarian crises.
- e) Governments and intergovernmental organizations should support that when implementing cash and voucher assistance, the minimum expenditure basket and transfer value is promoting sustainably produced, nutritious and safe food that is locally available and sufficient to provide a healthy diet for all stages of the lifecycle.

### 3.7.3 Ensuring food systems are resilient in humanitarian contexts:

- a) Governments in partnership with intergovernmental and other relevant organizations should, where appropriate, undertake food system analysis, develop and use early warning systems, climate information services, and food and agriculture information systems, including food price monitoring systems, that detect and monitor threats to food production, availability and access as well as food safety hazards and tampering. These early warning systems should be integrated into broader food analysis systems including the monitoring of the availability and affordability of nutritious foods that contribute to healthy diets at the local level.
- b) Governments and intergovernmental organizations should, as appropriate, invest in disaster risk reduction measures that benefit those most at risk/need. In particular, productive assets should be protected from severe weather and climate impacts and other disasters in a way that strengthens the resilience of affected populations and their ability to cope with shocks due to conflicts and climate change-related disasters as well as economic shocks. Measures include social safety nets, investment in protecting fragile livelihoods, emergency fiscal and food reserves, reduction of transaction costs, and identification of platform for integrated interventions. Governments should aim to restore local food production and market accessibility as rapidly as possible.
- c) Intergovernmental organizations and development partners should involve local non-governmental organizations, private sector and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of humanitarian food assistance and livelihood programmes to

support economic recovery and development, strengthen sustainable local food systems and foster the ability of smallholders and/or family farmers to access resources to bolster production and markets.

## **PART 4 - IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE USE AND APPLICATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES**

### **4.1 POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VGFSyN**

53. All CFS Members and stakeholders are encouraged to support and promote at all levels within their constituencies, and in collaboration with other relevant initiatives and platforms, the dissemination, use and application of the VGFSyN to support the development and implementation of coordinated and multisectoral national policies, laws, programmes and investment plans to achieve sustainable food systems that deliver healthy diets and improve nutrition.

54. The VGFSyN are intended to support the implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 with the objective of increasing the visibility, coordination and effectiveness of nutrition actions at all levels, as key aspects toward the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

55. Governments are invited to use the VGFSyN as a tool to undertake new initiatives toward the transformation of food systems to make them more sustainable and capable of delivering healthy diets. These include identifying policy opportunities, fostering a transparent and open dialogue, promoting coordination mechanisms, and establishing or strengthening existing, multistakeholder platforms, partnerships, processes and frameworks, promoting and supporting the involvement and engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including representatives of most vulnerable groups.

55. Parliamentarians and their national, regional and sub-regional alliances play a key role in promoting the adoption of policies, establishing appropriate legislative and regulatory frameworks, raising awareness and promoting dialogue among relevant stakeholders, and allocating resources for the implementation of policies and programmes dealing with food systems and nutrition.

### **4.2 BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

56. Governments need to mobilize, as appropriate, adequate financial, technical and human resources, and encourage international cooperation, to increase the human and

institutional capacity of countries to implement the VGFSyN and to identify priorities toward their operationalization and monitoring at the national and local levels. Technical agencies of the UN, bilateral cooperation agencies and other development partners can assist in this regard. The organization of multistakeholder workshops and training, as well as the development of user-friendly and technical guides, deployed via extension services and digital means, are important to contextualize and adapt to local contexts.

57. Donors, financing institutions, intergovernmental organizations and other funding entities are encouraged to apply the VGFSyN when formulating their policies for loans, grants and programmes to support both rights holders' and duty bearers' endeavors. The VGFSyN should contribute to the design of responsible investments that aim to increase the production, affordability, and access to diverse, nutritious and sustainably produced food, as well as to promote the integration of nutrition and health dimensions into agriculture and food sector investment plans, as well as to promote the integration of sustainable agriculture and food system dimensions into nutrition and health investment plans.

58. Development partners, intergovernmental organizations, including the Rome-based Agencies, and regional organizations, private sector, civil society and other relevant stakeholders are encouraged to support, within their existing resources and mandates, efforts by governments to implement the VGFSyN. Such support could include research and technical cooperation, financial assistance, the provision of evidence-based policy advice, institutional capacity development, development of monitoring frameworks, knowledge sharing and exchange of experiences, and assistance in developing national and regional policies. Actions should be taken to improve partners' capacity to design, manage and participate in multistakeholder partnerships, to ensure transparency and accountability and promote good governance for effective results. Moreover, UN interagency coordination mechanisms for nutrition could be leveraged to support the uptake of the VGFSyN at country level.

59. National and international research organizations, intergovernmental organizations, universities and other academic institutions, should support the availability and accessibility of knowledge, including indigenous, traditional and local knowledge, innovation, science and evidence on all dimensions of food systems (including citizen/consumer demand and behaviour change) to enable governments and other food system stakeholders to develop monitoring frameworks, examine the evidence, prioritize issues to be considered, evaluate impacts, and address potential synergies and trade-offs.

60. The dissemination and uptake of the VGFSyN can be facilitated through the identification of "champions" and "change agents", especially among civil society, that could raise awareness and organize advocacy campaigns across sectors and different governmental levels.

### 4.3 MONITORING USE AND APPLICATION OF THE VGFSyN

61. Governments, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, should, where appropriate, define national policy priorities and related indicators, mobilize regional and local structures to report on these indicators, and establish or strengthen, where appropriate, existing monitoring and reporting systems in order to assess the efficiency of laws, policies and regulations, and implement appropriate remedial actions in case of negative impacts or gaps.

62. By applying the VGFSyN, governments are expected to contribute to the achievement of the six Global Nutrition Targets (2025) endorsed by the WHA in 2012<sup>57</sup> and its diet related NCD targets<sup>58</sup>. The VGFSyN should support countries in defining priority actions and formulating specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound commitments<sup>59</sup> in order to achieve nutrition, health and environmental objectives to accelerate and align efforts linked to the Nutrition Decade and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This can be done through advocating for policies and legislation, allowing the exchange of best practices and experiences, highlighting successes and lessons learned, and providing mutual support to accelerate implementation.

63. CFS should include the VGFSyN in its ongoing work on monitoring, relying as much as possible on existing mechanisms and resources, as well as making relevance to the five principles on monitoring and accountability systems, as defined in the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF). ]

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.who.int/nutrition/global-target-2025/en/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.who.int/beat-ncds/take-action/targets/en/>

<sup>59</sup> In the context of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and ICN2 follow-up process, country commitments for action should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. [https://www.who.int/nutrition/decade-of-action/smart\\_commitments/en/](https://www.who.int/nutrition/decade-of-action/smart_commitments/en/)