

**Potential areas for CFS further involvement in nutrition**  
**Draft proposal prepared by the CFS Secretariat with inputs from the Technical Task Team on Nutrition**

**1. Role of the OEWG on nutrition**

The role of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on nutrition is defined in the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2016-17 that was endorsed at CFS 42. The role of the OEWG is to prepare a proposal on a CFS workstream on nutrition which “*should result in a clear vision for CFS role on nutrition, with a workplan leading to concrete outcomes for 2017 and beyond*” (CFS 2015/42/12)<sup>1</sup>.

Extracts from CFS MYPoW for 2016-17:

*Para.20: After CFS 42 in October 2015, a Task Team which will include, among others, representatives of the Rome-based agencies and UN agencies and bodies with a mandate in nutrition will be invited to identify, with the support of the CFS Secretariat, the opportunities arising from the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action adopted at ICN 2, and relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for greater CFS involvement, and present a proposal on potential areas where CFS can play a major role, in line with its mandate, particularly addressing issues of policy convergence and coordination at global level. The Task Team should conclude its work by the end of December 2015.*

*Para.21: The work of the Task Team will be discussed within the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on nutrition which will be formed to prepare a proposal on a CFS workstream on nutrition to be discussed by the Bureau, in consultation with the Advisory Group, and presented for endorsement at CFS 43 in October 2016. The proposal should result in a clear vision for CFS’ role on nutrition, with a workplan leading to concrete outcomes for 2017 and beyond. The OEWG will report to Plenary at CFS 43 and CFS 44.*

*Para.47: In consideration of the recognized compelling need to foster a solid technical background in support of the CFS workstream on nutrition, the HLPE will prepare a report on nutrition and food systems.*

*Para.48: The Technical Task Team responsible for setting the technical stage for the OEWG on nutrition is also requested to propose the area of focus of this HLPE report as well as how it will feed the discussion of the CFS workstream on nutrition. In this regard, the Task Team will present a proposal to the OEWG on nutrition by the end of December 2015. The OEWG will present its proposal to the Bureau which, following discussion with the Advisory Group, will submit the request to the HLPE. The report is expected to be presented at CFS 44 in October 2017. After CFS 44 the OEWG on nutrition will present a proposal to the Bureau which in consultation with the Advisory Group will agree on further work to be undertaken arising from the report, including possible CFS outcomes that should be presented for endorsement in the next biennium.*

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<sup>1</sup> As per MYPoW, the role of the OEWG on nutrition is also to discuss the proposal of the Technical Task Team on nutrition (TTT) on the area of focus of the High Level of Panel Experts (HLPE) Report on Nutrition and Food Systems (see para. 47 and 48 of MYPoW) and to present its proposal to the Bureau. The TTT proposal has been prepared separately and has already been submitted to the OEWG on nutrition for discussion on 14 January 2016.

As requested in the MYPoW for 2016-17, a draft proposal on potential areas for CFS expanded involvement in nutrition was prepared for discussion by the OEWG on nutrition during the first meeting on 14 January 2016. Two other OEWG meetings have been scheduled end of February and end of April to further develop the proposal. The final version will be discussed by the Bureau and Advisory Group and presented for endorsement at CFS 43 in October 2016.

## 2. CFS further involvement in nutrition

There is a growing consensus on the paramount importance of nutrition to human well-being. Good nutrition is essential to human beings to achieve their full potential<sup>2</sup>. The relatively slow progress in reducing malnutrition and the increasing recognition of the multiple ways in which malnutrition impacts on both individual life opportunities and collective well-being - including through lost productivity - has contributed to nutrition moving dramatically up on both the global political and development agendas. Nutrition is considered as a powerful driver of sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>3</sup> that was adopted by the United Nations member states in September 2015.

Momentum for improving nutrition has been increasing at all levels over the last few years and, in November 2014, UN member states recommitted to work to end hunger and malnutrition in all its forms at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), *“reaffirming the right to everyone to have access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger...”* (ICN2, Rome Declaration on Nutrition). Member states also agreed on a set of comprehensive recommendations in the ICN2 Framework for Action.

At CFS 42, in October 2015, all CFS constituencies confirmed their support for CFS to further contribute to advancing nutrition, stressing the need to take into careful consideration CFS mandate and comparative advantages, and the work conducted by other institutions and bodies<sup>4</sup>.

While mainstreaming nutrition into CFS work was not fully achieved in early CFS workstreams, nutrition-related issues are now being increasingly addressed directly or through mainstreaming nutrition across different sectors in CFS work. Specifically, nutrition is taking on increased visibility in the independent science-based reports produced by HLPE and in the policy recommendations.

CFS vision is defined in the CFS reform Document: *“CFS strives for a world free from hunger where countries implement the voluntary guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”*<sup>5</sup>. CFS comparative advantages<sup>6</sup> are derived from the

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<sup>2</sup> Why is it important to address malnutrition? Malnutrition negatively affects people’s life. It worsens health status, leads to chronic illnesses, impairs school performance and limits earning potential as an adult, perpetuating poverty. Most importantly, undernutrition has irreversible consequences for children during the first 1,000 days of life, from pregnancy to two years of age when nutrition requirements are substantial.

<sup>3</sup> Nutrition is explicitly addressed in the Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, which includes an ambitious target of ending malnutrition in all its forms. Nutrition has also a role to play in achieving other goals of the 2030 Agenda, such as the goals related to poverty, health, education, gender, work, growth, inequality and climate change.

<sup>4</sup> A range of UN institutions have an executive mandate on nutrition such as FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. Their work is complemented by interagency platforms at global or country level focusing on nutrition, such as the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN), UN System Network for Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) and the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH) Partnership.

<sup>5</sup> CFS:2009/2 Rev.2

<sup>6</sup> CFS comparative advantages are based on its roles:

- Coordination to strengthen collaborative action among all actors at global, regional and national levels;

fact that CFS “constitutes the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings”<sup>7</sup>. CFS therefore plays a central role in contributing to policy convergence in food security and nutrition, providing a dynamic and functional platform for multi-stakeholder and multisectoral coordination to strengthen collaborative action.

Considering CFS mandate and comparative advantages, food systems and food value chains offer a good starting point for CFS expanded engagement in nutrition, which can be extended to other areas at a later stage. This approach responds to the need for an early priority focus. A focus on food systems is also justified by technical expertise of CFS constituencies in food systems and value chains through their previous work in a number of relevant areas. Moreover, a broad group of stakeholders with a mandate in food and agriculture are represented at CFS. CFS has also privileged access to technical support from the three RBAs.

Food systems play an essential role in determining diversified, balanced and healthy diets and ensuring good nutrition<sup>8</sup>. Understanding how food systems can contribute to healthier food outcomes was identified as one of the critical and emerging issues in the Note prepared by the HLPE for the CFS: “*Note on Critical and Emerging Issues for food security and nutrition*”<sup>9</sup>. The Note however underlines the fact that “*the evolution of food systems is guided by the sum of the objectives of a wide variety of actors. Improved health and nutrition is only one among these objectives. In tension with this goal is the need for economic viability, for example, which includes a drive to cut costs and increase efficiency*”.

The importance of sustainable food systems for nutrition was also acknowledged in the ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition<sup>10</sup>. Member states recognized that CFS, in partnership with others, has a role to play in support of national and regional efforts to accelerate progress in addressing malnutrition and committed to “*enhance sustainable food systems by developing coherent public policies from production to consumption and across relevant sectors to provide year-round access to food that meets people’s nutrition needs and promote safe and diversified healthy diets.*”

Discussions were already held during the 2015 intersessional period and a session was organized during CFS 42 to identify potential areas for CFS to step up its work on nutrition. These discussions have led to the identification of several functions that could be fulfilled by the Committee, taking into account CFS mandate and comparative advantages and building on the work of other institutions and bodies involved in nutrition.

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- Policy convergence, including through the development of international strategies and policy guidelines in key areas for food security and nutrition;
  - Support and advice to countries and regions in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their own plans for the achievement of food security and nutrition.

<sup>7</sup> CFS:2009/2 Rev.2

<sup>8</sup> Food system is defined in the HLPE Report on “*Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems*” as followed: “*A food system gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.*”

<sup>9</sup> The Note is available at:

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

<sup>10</sup> Member states “*Acknowledge that current food systems are being increasingly challenged to provide adequate, safe, diversified and nutrient rich food for all that contribute to healthy diets due to, inter alia, constraints posed by resource scarcity and environmental degradation, as well as by unsustainable production and consumption patterns, food losses and waste, and unbalanced distribution.*” (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-mm215e.pdf>).

These discussions have also highlighted the importance of improving mainstreaming of nutrition in on-going CFS work, ensuring that CFS policy recommendations and decisions in the different workstreams are nutrition-sensitive<sup>11</sup>.

Activities for CFS future work on nutrition have been identified starting from the results of the discussions mentioned above and are presented in Sections 3 and 4 hereafter. An activity for strengthening the capacity of CFS stakeholders in nutrition and food systems is proposed in Section 5.

### **3. Proposed functions for a CFS workstream on nutrition**

#### **(i) Policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems**

There is increasing evidence of the causal relationship between different food systems<sup>12</sup> and malnutrition. Food-based approaches are considered essential to address malnutrition in a sustainable way. They are complemented by interventions that aim at ensuring a sanitary environment, adequate health, education and care. The salience of food systems for malnutrition in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity, were given high prominence by ICN2.

CFS is well placed to contribute to policy convergence work on food systems and nutrition, which requires a multisectoral and multistakeholder approach, through its coordination role and its expertise in food value chain approaches. CFS role in policy convergence is achieved through the formulation of policy recommendations, the development of international strategies, voluntary guidelines, principles and other policy frameworks, based on best practices, lessons learned, inputs from the national and regional levels, expert advice and opinions from different stakeholders. Policy convergence work will also take advantage of the HLPE report that will be prepared on nutrition and food systems.

CFS policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems will contribute to ensuring that nutrition actions across sectors are more coherent, and are in line with and complement other initiatives. It will rely on independent and evidence-based knowledge and will be carried out with strong linkages to the field, based on actual experiences and approaches in implementing successful public policies. This will ensure that CFS work is based on the reality on the ground and results in policy changes that impact on nutrition.

CFS policy convergence work will recognize the key role of women in the nutrition and health of their families, through their important involvement in food systems activities related to both food supply and demand (including food growing, processing, marketing, consuming). This implies giving special attention in the design and targeting of policies that shape food systems interventions for good nutrition to: (i) safeguarding and increasing women's access to, and control over, incomes and other resources; (ii) reducing women's time constraints, which is critical for women to perform

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<sup>11</sup> A multi-sectoral comprehensive and integrated approach to improve nutrition typically includes: (a) nutrition-specific actions that address the immediate determinants of nutrition (e.g. inadequate food intake and health status) primarily delivered through the health sector, and (b) nutrition-sensitive actions that address the underlying determinants of nutrition (e.g. food prices; availability and economic access to food and use of food), to be delivered through other sectors (e.g. agriculture, social services, water and sanitation, women's empowerment, education, health, child protection and development) within sector-specific objectives. [based on Marie Ruel et al: "Nutrition-sensitive interventions and programmes: how can they help to accelerate progress in improving maternal and child nutrition?", Lancet Series, 2013]

<sup>12</sup> The Global Nutrition Report, 2015, proposes for instance a typology based on five types of food systems: industrial food systems, mixed food systems, transitioning food systems, emerging food systems and rural food systems.

nutrition-related activities including breastfeeding<sup>13</sup>; and (iii) enhancing women’s understanding of good nutrition.

CFS policy convergence work will identify and address the causes of vulnerability to all forms of malnutrition in different food systems, profiling vulnerability according to socio-economic determinants and across the life-cycle (including children, adolescents, the elderly, pregnant and lactating women, overweight and obese adults). It will be recognized that women have special needs related to their reproductive role that make them and their children more susceptible to malnutrition.

Proposed activities:

- Set the basis for a multistakeholder consensus-driven discussion that lays the foundation for CFS work on nutrition and leads to collaborative action and partnerships, through the preparation of an HLPE report.
- Reach consensus on policy recommendations based on the HLPE report, best practices, lessons learned and inputs from different levels and stakeholders.

What	Who	When
Set the basis for a multistakeholder consensus-driven discussion that lays the foundation for CFS work on nutrition and leads to collaborative action and partnerships, supported by in-depth analysis of available evidence and identification of policy implications	HLPE	Report to be launched during CFS 44 in October 2017
Reach consensus on political recommendations based on the HLPE report, best practices, lessons learned and inputs from different levels and stakeholders	TTT on nutrition, OEWG on nutrition, Plenary	Following CFS 44 in October 2017

**(ii) Sharing of lessons and good practices that are relevant to CFS work on nutrition and food systems**

Sharing successful lessons and practices during plenaries and intersessional periods will support CFS policy convergence work on nutrition and food systems, ensuring that this work is based on reality. It is also a powerful way to stimulate CFS stakeholders to adopt similar, proven and effective approaches in line with CFS policy recommendations, taking into account country-specific circumstances.

In parallel to a global level exchange between member countries, south-south exchanges (or field trips) could also be considered among groups of two, three or more member countries to provide a more in-depth learning experience. There may be interesting opportunities to group countries that have made less progress in nutrition with those that are a few steps further along but face similar challenges. CFS might play a role in helping countries identifying contextual differences and analysing how these differences influence potential for replicability and the need for adjustments. The results could feed into CFS policy convergence work, making it more relevant for countries.

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<sup>13</sup> Early, exclusive and continued breastfeeding plays an important role in the first six months of life in mitigating malnutrition and preventing child illnesses and deaths.

CFS is well placed to fulfil this lesson-sharing function considering its role in global coordination as an inclusive and evidence-based platform for discussion and coordination among governments, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders, in alignment with country needs.

Proposed activity:

- Countries to share their experiences in implementing multisectoral policies that contribute to implementing ICN2 recommended actions, in particular the nine actions for sustainable food systems promoting healthy diets<sup>14</sup>; the methodology, success factors, constraints, outcomes and effects of the experiences will be analysed as well as the potential for replicability in other countries.

What	Who	When
Countries to share their experiences in implementing multisectoral policies that contribute to implementing ICN2 recommended actions through global level exchanges (during CFS plenaries and intersessional periods) and south-south exchanges	This activity could be implemented in collaboration with existing mechanisms that represent ICN2 countries including low, middle and high income countries (e.g. regional groups of countries) <sup>15</sup>	Continuing, during plenaries and intersessional periods

### (iii) Reporting on the implementation of ICN2 recommendations for sustainable food systems promoting healthy diets

Tracking progress in implementing ICN2 recommendations for sustainable food systems that promote healthy diets will contribute to accountability. It will enable countries and the international community to monitor the implementation of the ICN2 recommendations that are relevant to CFS work on nutrition and food systems and assess their impact on nutrition at global and country level, and identify - and possibly shape - the factors that influence the results.

CFS is well placed to fulfil this function, as promoting accountability is one of its roles: “CFS should help countries and regions, as appropriate, address the questions of whether objectives are being achieved and how food insecurity and malnutrition can be reduced more quickly and effectively”<sup>16</sup>.

WHO and FAO have the overall responsibility for tracking progress in implementing ICN2 recommendations, in close collaboration with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other relevant regional and international organizations<sup>17</sup>. WHO and FAO are in the process of developing objective and verifiable SMART indicators, to monitor the implementation of the ICN2 recommendations that are relevant to CFS work on nutrition and food systems. CFS could use its convening capacity to provide space to WHO and FAO to report on progress during plenaries or intersessional periods.

<sup>14</sup> Recommendations 8 to 16 in the ICN2 Framework for Action.

<sup>15</sup> A collaboration could be envisaged with the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement for SUN countries, possibly taking advantage of the fact that their Global Gathering is being held back to back with CFS Plenary. In its new strategy for 2016-20, SUN is also looking to capitalize more on learning exchanges between countries. In the context of South-south exchanges, it could be interesting for countries to specifically consider how different countries plan to implement ICN2 Framework For Action or how it is already being accounted for.

<sup>16</sup> CFS:2009/2 Rev.2

<sup>17</sup> ICN2 Framework for Action

CFS could also provide space to ICN2 countries to report on their nutrition and food systems' related commitments and actions in implementing ICN2 outcomes for sustainable food systems promoting healthy diets. WHO and FAO would decide in collaboration with countries on a possible format for this reporting.

It is also proposed to establish a two-way communication between CFS and WHO/FAO, with the CFS Chair reporting to the governing bodies of both UN agencies (WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly; FAO Council) on ICN2 follow-up work of CFS. This would demonstrate active engagement into multisectoral collaboration on nutrition, bringing agriculture, food security, nutrition and health together. It would give a strong signal to countries and support their efforts of working across sectors for improved nutrition and health for all.

Proposed activities:

- WHO and FAO to report on progress in implementing ICN2 recommendations for sustainable food systems promoting healthy diets.
- CFS Chair to report on ICN2 follow-up work of CFS to WHO executive Board and World Health Assembly and FAO Council.

What	Who	When
Report on progress in implementing ICN2 recommendations that are relevant to CFS work on nutrition and food systems	CFS offers space to WHO and FAO	Continuing, starting from CFS 43 in October 2016, either during plenaries or intersessional periods
Report on ICN2 follow-up work of CFS	CFS Chair	WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly and FAO Council

#### 4. Improving nutrition mainstreaming in all CFS work

A series of activities are proposed to improve nutrition mainstreaming into new and on-going CFS workstreams, including in the HLPE reports, ensuring that CFS policy recommendations and decisions are nutrition-sensitive and contribute to the implementation of ICN2 recommendations within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mainstreaming nutrition requires strengthening the capacity of member countries to contribute to policy convergence work across different levels (global, regional, country levels) and sectors (agriculture, health, social protection) and to implement recommendations and decisions. This entails improving member countries understanding of: (i) the multidimensional nature of nutrition and the social, political, economic and environmental determinants of malnutrition; (ii) the pathways through which food systems may affect nutrition; (iii) the main factors in each pathway that cause economic and nutrition goals to differ; and (iv) promising policy recommendations that may aim to change the socioeconomic environment within which food systems operate or focus on changing system-specific physical and behavioral factors.

Proposed activities to improve nutrition mainstreaming in CFS work:

- Develop a robust conceptual framework for mainstreaming nutrition into CFS workstreams.
- Review new and on-going CFS workstreams with a nutritional lens and implement agreed actions.
- Mainstream nutrition into the Global Strategic Framework (GSF).

- Include nutritional expertise in HLPE Steering Committee at renewal and in HLPE project teams.
- Ensure that UN institutions (such as FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO) and interagency platforms (such as REACH, SUN, UNSCN) which have an executive mandate on nutrition are more represented in the CFS Advisory Group (AG) on an *ad hoc* or permanent basis.

What	Who	When
Develop a robust conceptual framework for mainstreaming nutrition into CFS workstreams	CFS Secretariat with support from TTT	Intersessional period before CFS 43 in October 2016
Review new and on-going CFS workstreams with a nutritional lens and implement agreed actions	CFS Secretariat with support from TTT; decision from Bureau in consultation with AG	Intersessional period before CFS 43 in October 2016
Mainstream nutrition into the Global Strategic Framework (GSF)	CFS Secretariat with support from TTT; OEWG on GSF; decision from Bureau in consultation with AG	Intersessional period before CFS 44 in October 2017
Include nutritional expertise in future HLPE Steering Committee renewals and in HLPE project teams	Selection panel of HLPE Steering Committee	Continuing/every 2 years
Ensure more UN institutions and interagency platforms dealing with nutrition are represented in the CFS AG on an ad hoc or permanent basis	CFS Bureau/OEWG Rules of Procedure for permanent change	Intersessional period before CFS 43 in October 2016

### 5. Raising awareness/ ensuring good understanding/ developing capacity of CFS stakeholders in nutrition

The effective engagement of CFS in the new nutrition workstream requires raising awareness, ensuring good understanding and developing capacity of CFS constituencies in nutrition and food systems to fulfil the three proposed functions which are presented in Section 3 and to mainstream nutrition in all CFS work.

It is proposed to organize a special event on nutrition and food systems during CFS 43. This could be a joint RBAs event, possibly organized together with Biodiversity, with the engagement of other organizations that are working on connecting nutrition to food systems.

Raise awareness/ ensure good understanding/ develop capacity of CFS stakeholders in nutrition and food systems through the organization of a special event at CFS 43	Joint event organized by RBAs possibly in collaboration with Biodiversity, with the engagement of other organizations that are working on connecting nutrition to food systems or do research on nutrition and food systems (IFPRI, Wageningen University, IDS, Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH) <sup>18</sup> )	Plenary special event at CFS 43
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<sup>18</sup>The Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH) is a new intersectoral and interdisciplinary platform for research on integrating agriculture and health, with a focus on international development goals. LCIRAH helps promote sustainable and healthy food systems through new inter-university postgraduate teaching

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and learning programme. The basic question they address is: How do we achieve sustainable food and agriculture systems which promote health and well-being for all people?

LCIRAH works on an intersectoral approach to developing strategies and policies where agriculture and health interact and address some historical and institutional barriers where agriculture and health sectors have developed policies independently over the past century, often with little interaction. A team of experts from different disciplines in both agriculture and health sectors are organizing monthly seminars, annual conferences, research and teaching on agriculture-health-nutrition issues.