

CFS Food Systems and Nutrition OEWG Meeting

29 January 2020 – 9.30-12.30 and 14.00-16.30 – FAO, Red Room

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

1. Introduction by the OEWG Chair

The meeting was opened by OEWG Chairperson, Dr Liliane Ortega (Switzerland), who presented the agenda and clarified the core objective of the meeting, which was to exchange views and receive feedback on the structure and content of *Draft One* of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN).

The Chair thanked CFS stakeholders for their strong commitment and continuous support to the policy convergence process, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and participation in the development of a legitimate and broadly-owned final product.

All stakeholders were reminded that any written feedback on Draft One should be sent to the CFS Secretariat (cfs@fao.org) by Wednesday, 5 February.

2. Draft One of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition – Parts One and Two

Draft One of the VGFSyN was generally well-received by OEWG members. Many underscored their appreciation for the many updates and improvements in content compared to the Zero Draft. Several commented on the updated draft's clear structure and the helpful inclusion of many inputs received in earlier discussions, leading toward consensus on many key areas to be further refined during upcoming negotiations.

At the same time, some members pointed out that the intention to address all forms of malnutrition from a food system approach should be made more evident throughout the document, and that *sustainability* should underpin the VGFSyN. Likewise, that inter-linkages between different parts of the document need to be strengthened, and that the structure might include guidance on how the end-users might best prioritize among different recommendations.

Different members referred to the need to ensure a balance between the three dimensions of sustainability throughout the document, while others underlined the importance of making reference to internationally agreed human rights terminology.

One member expressed its disappointment regarding the content of the Draft One which does not herald the changes necessary for the expected transition of food systems.

The importance of ensuring coherence with decisions taken in other UN bodies and with other CFS policy products -- including the ongoing work-stream on agroecological and other innovative approaches -- was highlighted.

OEWG members welcomed the revised version of Part 1 and positively commented on the flow between different paragraphs and the inclusion of important drivers such as poverty and inequality. A number of additional topics were suggested for possible incorporation while different members reiterated the need to keep Part One to a manageable length.

Some members pointed out that inclusion of additional statistics would help contextualize, and show the urgency of, developing Voluntary Guidelines. At the same time, it was noted these might change over time and be outdated while the Voluntary Guidelines are expected to be a reference throughout the years.

WHO suggested to consider the [Lancet Series on the Double Burden of Malnutrition](#) launched in December 2019 as additional reference and source of evidence for the preparation of the next draft.

With regards to Part Two, OEWG members discussed the proposed definition of sustainable and healthy diets, with some noting the need to make reference to multilaterally agreed language. The OEWG Chair referred to a UN General Assembly resolution from October 2018 on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases-- [A/RES/73/2](#) -- where agreed wording on “healthy and balanced sustainable diets” is used (paragraph 34).

Various members requested to adjust the text to refer to gender equality vice gender equity in Part Two, as well as in other parts of the document.

3. Draft One of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition – Part Three

OEWG members expressed positive views on Part Three, highlighting the clear structure and organization around six thematic groupings.

They provided a wide range of suggestions, many of which will be incorporated into the next version of the document, including ensuring that a broad, food systems approach is at the core of the final Guidelines. The Chair explained that the proposed structure and areas of focus emerged during the consultation phase, in order to present the broad complexity of food systems and regional/national priorities.

It was requested to further develop the document “chapeau,” as well as the introductory paragraphs of each subsection, in explain the logic behind the proposed structure and the objectives of different sections, to help policy makers prioritize among different parts and recommendations.

Some members raised questions regarding the evidence behind recommendations included in Draft One, and proposed annexing a list of reference documents to the final Guidelines. Likewise, OEWG members were requested to indicate the evidence source of their written suggestions on the text.

Some reiterated the primary role of member states in implementing the Voluntary Guidelines. Others highlighted that relevant actors, such as farmers and nutrition experts, need to be mentioned/included in the text. It was also suggested that reference should be made to “governmental actors” rather than to “states” so as to include sub-national decision makers such as governors or mayors.

4. Draft One of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition – Part Four

OEWG members expressed the need to present clear measures to promote the implementation and uptake of the Voluntary Guidelines as well as to provide indications on possible monitoring strategies.

It was requested to add a paragraph on the importance of ensuring that adequate resources are allocated by member states and participating institutions for the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines.

Different members highlighted the key role of the Rome-based Agencies in the promotion of the Voluntary Guidelines, and welcomed the reference to parliamentarians, requesting to mention them also in the previous sections of the document.

It was suggested to make reference in Part Four to the contribution of the Voluntary Guidelines to the UN Decade of Family Farming.

Attention was also raised to the role of the Voluntary Guidelines in informing the commitments for the second half of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition, noting their potential key role during the upcoming high-level event.

The meeting was closed by the CFS Secretary, Mr Chris Hegadorn, who underlined the importance and complexity of this process, and highlighted the importance of political support and wide engagement across sectors and ministries at national level, to ensure the positive conclusion of this process. Mr Hegadorn requested CFS stakeholders to support the CFS Secretariat in the identification of high-level events and other opportunities to raise the visibility of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.