



## Open Ended Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

30 October 2020, 9.30-12.30 (virtual)

Doc No: CFS OEWG-Gender/2020/10/30/02

### Co-Chairs' Summary

#### 1. Introductory remarks

The **CFS Chair** welcomed all participants and thanked the two Co-Chairs, Ambassador Ouédraogo from Burkina Faso and Permanent Representative Satu Lassila from Finland, for their dedicated leadership of the CFS Workstream on Gender. He recalled that the Gender Workstream had been agreed at CFS 46 in October 2019 as part of the CFS 2020-2023 Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW). He noted that gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) is essential for CFS to realize its vision of ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all. He encouraged participants to share their views and seek consensus for successful results.

**Ambassador Ouédraogo** presented the main objective of the meeting, to discuss draft Terms of Reference for the *Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition*. She underlined that this first meeting was of fundamental importance to start an inclusive and transparent process and that she and Ms Lassila looked forward to participants' comments, advice and views on the draft Terms of Reference (TORs). She noted that these TORs were prepared by the Secretariat with support of a Technical Task Team composed of technical experts nominated by CFS Advisory Group members. She and Permanent Representative Lassila hoped to have a frank and constructive discussion and encouraged participants to voice their views and concerns. She reminded participants that gender equality and women's empowerment is not a new topic but, despite progress made, women are still struggling with basic challenges and are disproportionately affected by food insecurity and malnutrition.

**Permanent Representative Lassila** also called for active participation in the meeting for successful results. It was of crucial importance that these TORs form a solid basis for the future preparation of the Guidelines. She said that they are looking for the Guidelines to be practical, pay attention to the "how", be evidence-based, provide concrete and action-oriented solutions, and focus not only on women but on change of relationships and power balances in society at large.

#### 2. Section A of the TORs: Background and Rationale

Participants expressed general satisfaction with the first version of the draft TORs, though raised a number of issues and caveats. They welcomed the idea of developing actionable Guidelines, encouraged the promotion of gender transformative approaches (as traditional approaches have failed to resolve gender inequalities), and supported the call to all actors to assume joint responsibilities, recognizing that gender inequality was mostly experienced by women and girls.

Participants provided many comments, asking *inter alia*, to recognize that women often face different, overlapping and intersecting forms of discrimination - due e.g. to age, race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, migration status and disabilities - that impact on their food security and nutrition and vulnerability; to use only terms and definitions that are internationally agreed, such as

in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; to refer to the Peace Resolution 1325 of the UN Secretary General and relevant ILO Conventions; and to focus on issues directly related to food security and nutrition.

Participants recommended giving more prominence to women's and girls' rights, versus a focus on their roles; underlying GEWE issues along the value chains - stressing the importance of the full and equal participation of women in agriculture - and the key role of girls in food security, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda. They also called for integrating the term 'women's empowerment' alongside 'gender equality' throughout the document.

### **3. Section B of the TORs: Objective of the Guidelines**

Participants welcomed reference to 'gender transformative interventions,' to the right to adequate food and to the need for greater policy coherence in the Objective section. It was requested to refer to women's and girl's rights in the Objective as per the CFS Multi-Year Program of Work (MYPoW), to mention that the Guidelines will support all stakeholders, not only Member States and development partners, in order to underline the important roles women play in agriculture and food systems, and to make reference to the future Decade of Action on Ecosystems Restoration.

### **4. Section C of the TORs: Scope of the Guidelines**

Overall, participants found the range of topics presented in this section to be quite comprehensive. They recommended, inter alia: maintaining a focus on transformative approaches; retaining the issues of 'digital divide' and access to technologies and innovations; addressing unpaid care work; and promoting women's and girls' safety and security - eliminating violence and discrimination including in emergencies. They asked to recognize the crucial role and potential of civil society, to support evidence-based policies based on disaggregated data, and gender-sensitive indicators and analyses, to mention institutional barriers, to take into account the roles of men and women in the whole value chain, and to have adequate monitoring, impact evaluation, and reporting.

There was overall agreement that the language used in the TORs and the Guidelines should be aligned with terms and definitions agreed in internationally-negotiated documents agreed by Member States. Specific text amendments will be taken into account in a revised version of the TORs.

### **5. Section D: Type of instrument; Section E: Intended users; Section F: Process, tentative timeframe and budget estimate**

There were very few comments on these sections. Participants underlined the fact that striving for gender equality had an impact on everyone while para. 19 suggests that only some stakeholders are affected. They asked to mention in 'Point C' the different groups that are part of civil society. They stressed the importance of holding regional consultations (including in North America), even if required to convene them virtually, in order to ensure inclusiveness.

### **6. Follow-up**

- Participants were encouraged to share comments in writing no later than 6 November. They were informed that all written comments will be posted on the Working Space of the CFS website, under the Gender Section.

- A revised version of the TORs will be prepared by the Secretariat, incorporating comments received during the OEWG meeting and afterwards in writing.
- Once agreed, the TORs document will be submitted for endorsement at CFS 47 Plenary on 8-11 February 2021.