

Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSM)
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Adoption of Terms of Reference for the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment

Miriam Nobre - World March of Women, on behalf of the CSM Working Group on Women

I speak on behalf of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSM) Working Group on Women, which facilitates the representation of women food producers: farmers, peasants, pastoralists, landless, fisherwomen, agricultural and food workers, women who manage ancestral knowledge in food production, indigenous peoples and traditional communities, as well as responsible consumers, human rights defenders, youth, and LGBTQIA. Our diversity makes us aware of the multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination.

Women sustain life and carry it forward in contexts of crisis, and of threat to life, which the Covid-19 pandemic has made more evident than ever. However, the market economy, its data and indicators, are blind to this enormous amount of work, and to the permanent availability of women to care for others, even though the work is carried out in very hard conditions. Conditions are now even harder in this pandemic, as it has worsened gender discrimination, sexist violence and the precariousness of our lives in an unprecedented manner, both in urban and rural contexts.

We know from our very bodies that gender equality and food and nutrition security are inseparable. We know that women's rights and gender equality are the precondition for truly leaving no one behind or alone.

We therefore welcome the adoption of the Terms of Reference for the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition, and would like to express our deep appreciation to the Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group, Satu Lassila, and the previous co-facilitator Josephine Oueaodrogo, for having guided us with determination towards this first stage of the policy process.

Advancing towards a greater commitment to implementing women's and girls' rights is vital for us. At the global level, this concrete policy guidance promotes greater coherence between the agenda of promoting gender equality and food security and nutrition. These Guidelines are courageous, vocal and capable of subverting the existing situation; they no longer frame women as victims, but fully recognize them as rights-holders.

As women's organizations, and from our interwoven feminisms, we call on all CFS members to ensure that the process of developing the guidelines remains open, inclusive and transparent, firmly and soulfully anchored in the reformed CFS, and in the expectations, demands and desires of millions of women on the ground who, through their daily work, enable the social reproduction of all life.

We are especially encouraged by the inclusion of regional consultations, which we believe will help us reach many more feminist organisations, women's networks and peasant and indigenous movements. We invite all CFS actors to commit to this important process by recognising women as political subjects with their own proposals and analyses, and who have the right to self-determination and to their bodies.

We reaffirm our commitment to the process, to which we will contribute with political proposals from a feminist, agroecological and food sovereignty perspective to affirm women's right to land, water, seeds, the exchange of knowledge and know-how, the construction of territorial and local markets, social protection and a life free of violence.