



CFS VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON  
**GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S  
AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT**  
IN THE CONTEXT OF  
**FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**





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# FOREWORD

**The Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in Food Security and Nutrition (GEWGE VGs)** were endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) at its Fifty-first Plenary Session on 24 October 2023. This milestone marks a significant achievement in the global efforts to promote gender equality and empower women and girls in the context of food security and nutrition.

The development of these Guidelines was envisaged in the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023. To initiate this important work, an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) was established between October and December 2020. Led by Co-Chairs selected from among the CFS Membership, the OEWG was composed of representatives from Member Countries, the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs), the CFS mechanisms (CSIPM, PSM and PFM) and other CFS stakeholders. The OEWG's first task was to review existing CFS policy guidance and other relevant documents to inform the development of Terms of Reference (ToRs), which were adopted in October 2020. These ToRs prioritized the most relevant issues to be addressed in the final version of the Guidelines.

The development process was inclusive, transparent, and consensus-based, involving several meetings of the OEWG, six regional consultations, an electronic consultation, and four negotiation sessions. Throughout this process, the CFS Secretariat played a key role in drafting the diverse consecutive versions of the Guidelines – from the Zero Draft to the Draft for Negotiations. This work was supported by a Technical Task Team (TTT), composed by experts nominated by the CFS Advisory Group, and guided by the Co-Chairs of the OEWG, ensuring that the Guidelines reflected a wide range of perspectives and expertise.

The CFS GEWGE Voluntary Guidelines stand as the first inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder negotiated global policy agreement specifically focused on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment within the context of food security and nutrition. While not legally binding, these Guidelines are voluntary and designed to be adaptable, allowing countries to implement them in line with their national contexts, priorities, and legal frameworks. They provide practical recommendations that can be tailored to different national realities, driving real change in food systems worldwide.

By endorsing these Guidelines, CFS Members have committed to tackling gender inequalities, promoting women's and girls' empowerment, and fostering greater policy coherence between GEWGE and food security and nutrition agendas. These Guidelines are designed to support mutually reinforcing policy measures that drive progress in these critical areas.

However, the work of the CFS does not conclude with the endorsement of these policy tools. The real impact of the GEWGE Guidelines will be realized through their implementation at regional, national, and local levels. CFS Members and stakeholders have the country ownership and bear the voluntary responsibility of translating this global policy agreement into concrete actions. Achieving the objectives of the Guidelines will require sustained commitment, adequate resources, and supportive policies and programs.

The Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in Food Security and Nutrition are presented as a strategic tool for all stakeholders – governments, civil society, the private sector, and beyond – to collaborate in advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls in food systems. These Guidelines aim to inspire action, driving progress towards a future where all women and girls can achieve their full potential and enjoy their right to adequate food and nutrition.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
EAS	Extension and Advisory Services
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEWGE	Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment
GSF	CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition
ICERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
MSMEs	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises
RBAs	Rome-based Agencies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOFI	The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNDROP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund



# PART 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and rationale

- 1 Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment (GEWGE) is fundamental to human rights and integral to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)<sup>1</sup>. Ensuring gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is critical to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) mandate of ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all. GEWGE is critical to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. GEWGE is also essential to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 5.
- 2 In order to transform this mandate into reality, at its 46th Session in October 2019, the CFS endorsed a policy process that will result in Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition (referred to as the "Guidelines" in this document).
- 3 The importance of GEWGE for sustainable development was acknowledged by the international community through the adoption of gender equality as a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Agenda (SDG5).
- 4 Currently, the global food system produces enough food to feed every person on the planet. However, due to a range of challenges, an increasing number of people in both rural and urban areas are failing to realize their right to adequate food as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living and meet their daily food and nutritional needs. Discrimination and inequalities worsen food insecurity and various forms of malnutrition<sup>2</sup>, particularly for women and girls. Food insecurity, which had grown in 2020 under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, worsened even further in 2021, exacerbating gender inequality and disproportionately affecting women and girls<sup>3</sup>, in particular among Indigenous Peoples, local

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1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, preamble and Article 1.

2 Malnutrition includes undernutrition (child stunting and wasting, and vitamin and mineral deficiencies) as well as overweight and obesity. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 (SOFI 2022) – Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*, FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO.

3 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022.

communities, migrants, displaced persons and refugees, older women, and persons with disabilities. In this challenging global context, addressing gender inequality and achieving the realization of women's and girls' rights is urgent and more important than ever to achieve food security and nutrition for all.

- 5 A growing body of evidence demonstrates the mutually reinforcing links between GEWGE and food security and nutrition. Supporting the rights and empowerment of all women and girls, particularly those in vulnerable situations, is also one of the most effective ways to improve food security and nutrition outcomes for all – women themselves, their family, community and society – and to lower infant mortality, reduce child malnutrition and prevent non communicable diseases. These are central to break intergenerational cycles of malnutrition, with special attention to the nutritional needs of children under two years of age, and of women, including during pregnancy and breastfeeding, and of girls throughout their life course.
- 6 GEWGE are essential to poverty reduction, economic growth, social wellbeing, access to and management of natural resources, climate change adaptation and mitigation and ecosystem and biodiversity protection, conservation, and sustainable use. Achievement of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is positively correlated with increased productivity and improved efficiency in many sectors – including in agriculture<sup>4</sup> in a context where small-scale and family farming is increasingly feminized – whereas inequality and discrimination in access to, and control over, resources continue to undermine economic development, leading to below-potential economic outcomes<sup>5</sup>. Women, including Indigenous women, and women from local communities, play active roles as agents in food systems as farmers, producers, peasants, family farmers, fisherfolks and pastoralists, processors, traders, wage workers, smallholders and entrepreneurs throughout food systems and value chains, and as consumers and providers for their families.
- 7 Despite progress made over decades, women and girls, particularly those in vulnerable situations, continue to face violence and discrimination,

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4 Agriculture includes crops, forestry, fisheries, livestock, and aquaculture. UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/242. Paragraph 20.

5 *The cost of the gender gap in agricultural productivity*, UN Women, UNDP, UNEP and World Bank. 2015.

and inequality across the world, manifested through multiple challenges. These include barriers to decision-making processes; unequal access to, and control over, key productive resources, assets, technologies, education and financial services, and economic opportunities; unequal access to social protection; unbalanced and unrecognized responsibilities in terms of unpaid care and domestic work; limited access to essential health-care services, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. These all contribute to food insecurity and malnutrition, negatively impacting various pillars of food security: availability, access, utilization and stability, creating barriers to food system inclusiveness, innovation and sustainability and limiting women's agency and preventing them from benefitting equally. Part 3 explores these challenges and offers strategic entry points for change.

## 1.2 Objectives of the guidelines

- 8 The core objective of the Guidelines is to support Member States, development partners<sup>6</sup> and other stakeholders to advance gender equality, women's and girls' rights, empowerment and leadership, as part of their efforts to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.
- 9 The Guidelines will provide concrete policy guidance based on good practices and lessons learnt on gender mainstreaming<sup>7</sup>, gender-responsive public policies, programmes and innovative solutions. They aim to address the root causes of gender inequalities, including by promoting impactful gender-responsive and gender-sensitive approaches improving legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, national plans and programmes, and promoting innovative partnerships and increased investments in human and financial resources that are conducive to promoting GEWGE, as applicable.
- 10 The Guidelines aim to foster greater policy coherence among GEWGE and food security and nutrition agendas, and promote mutually

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6 Development partners include, among others, UN System Organizations, International Financial Institutions, and other organizations that provide development assistance.

7 Gender mainstreaming is defined in the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2.

reinforcing policy measures. Generating and disseminating evidence on the diverse situations and experiences of women and girls, men and boys and recognizing their differentiated opportunities, constraints and outcomes in the context of food security and nutrition help to transform discriminatory social norms, raise awareness, and support appropriate responses including targeted policies and programs.

- 11 The Guidelines will contribute to accelerating action by all stakeholders at all levels, including farmers' and women's organizations, to achieve the CFS mandate and the goals of the 2030 Agenda, as part of the United Nations Decade of Action for Sustainable Development (2020-2030). Given the important roles that women and girls play in agriculture and food systems, family farming as well as in household food security and nutrition, the Guidelines will also contribute to the implementation of the Action Plans of the UN Decades of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), on Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028), on Family Farming (2019-2028), and Ecosystems Restoration (2021-2030).

### **1.3 Nature of the voluntary guidelines and their intended users**

- 12 The Guidelines are voluntary and non-binding.
- 13 The Guidelines are intended to be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law, with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable international and regional instruments. Nothing in the Guidelines should be read as limiting or undermining any legal obligations or commitments to which States may be subject under international law, including the UDHR and other international human rights instruments.
- 14 The Guidelines are intended to be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions. They should be implemented within countries and at regional and global levels, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.
- 15 The Guidelines are complementary to and support national, regional and international initiatives which aim at addressing all forms of discrimination

against women and girls, which negatively impact food security and nutrition for themselves and for their families, households, communities and countries. In particular, CFS guidance builds upon, integrates and complements existing multilaterally agreed upon instruments adopted on this topic within the context of the UN system.

16 The Guidelines are intended for all stakeholders that are involved in addressing food security and nutrition, gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and leadership. They primarily address governments at all levels to help design and implement public policies, as their primary objective is to strengthen coherence between and across public sector policies at local, national, regional and global levels. They are also of added value to other actors involved in policy discussions and policy implementation processes. These actors include:

- a. Governments;
- b. Intergovernmental and regional organizations, including UN agencies and bodies;
- c. International and local civil society organizations, including women's, women's rights', farmers' and small-scale food producers', landless, pastoralists', peasants', fisher-folks', migrant workers', and consumers' organizations, professional associations, trade unions including domestic, rural and agricultural workers, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities;
- d. Private sector, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) and large companies;
- e. Research organizations and educational institutions including universities;
- f. Development and humanitarian agencies, development partners, and international, regional and local financial institutions;
- g. Philanthropic foundations.

## PART 2 CORE PRINCIPLES THAT UNDERPIN THE GUIDELINES

17 The Guidelines are intended to be applied, consistent with the following instruments as far as each of these instruments are relevant and applicable and as far as they have been agreed, acknowledged and/or endorsed by respective Member States:

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015);
- ECOSOC – AC 1997/2 – Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations System;
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights – adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), including the General Recommendation 34;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- Convention against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT);
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), 13 September 2007;
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, 17 December 2018 (UNDROP);
- UNGA Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 28 July 1951;
- UNGA Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 13 December 2006;
- UNGA Resolution 76/140: Improvement of the situation of women and girls in rural areas, 16 December 2021;
- Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women
- ILO Conventions 100, 111, 156, 169, 183, and 190;



- ILO Resolution concerning Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work, 17 June 2009;
- ILO Resolution concerning the Promotion of Gender Equality, Pay Equity and Maternity Protection, 8 December 2008;
- Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2417;
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995, and the outcome documents of their review conferences;
- International Conference on Population and Development, 1994, the ICPD Programme of Action and its review conferences;
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);
- UN Decade of Action for Nutrition 2016-2025;
- UN Decade for Family Farming 2019-2028;
- Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development;
- UNGA Resolution 217/77.

18 The Guidelines are intended to build upon and contribute to the work of other international bodies, and related guidance contained in other policy products, including:

- CFS Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of 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 (2012);
- CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (2015);
- CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (2015);
- Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, 2015;
- CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (2017);
- CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (2021);
- All endorsed CFS policy recommendations.

The core principles that underpin the Guidelines are:

- 19 **Commitment to human rights and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.** Achieving GEWGE contributes to the realization of human rights, which are indivisible and interdependent. The Guidelines are consistent with, and draw upon, international and regional instruments, including the SDGs that address human rights.
- 20 **Non-discrimination:** No one should be subjected to any form of discrimination under law and policies as well as in practice. It is one of the primary responsibilities of States to ensure that all persons are able to enjoy all human rights regardless of their sex, while acknowledging differences between them and taking specific temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality as appropriate.
- 21 **Empowerment of all women and girls.** The Guidelines rest integrally on supporting the empowerment of all women and girls, recognizing them as rights-holders, agents of change and leaders. They build on the positive relationship between women's and girls' empowerment and achieving food security and nutrition. They recommend actions to promote women's and girls' agency and autonomy, individually and collectively, participating actively and meaningfully in decision-making to control their own lives and to strengthen strategic choices affecting their lives and livelihoods as well as their communities and societies.
- 22 **Tackling structural barriers to gender equality.** The Guidelines promote the application of innovative gender equality approaches that challenge and tackle both the symptoms – including women's restricted access to land, financial services and other productive resources – and the structural causes of gender inequality, including discriminatory laws, policies, social norms, attitudes, harmful customary practices and gender stereotypes, for sustainable food systems for all in respect of cultures, and local and national laws. This requires the collective engagement of all, including men and boys, as well as local and traditional authorities, recognizing and respecting leadership of women and girls, to strengthen joint responsibility and commitment for successful transformation of unequal power relations between men and women.

- 23 **Country ownership.** The Guidelines are to be implemented taking into account each country's development priorities and specific context. They are intended to be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions as well as legal obligations under international law applicable to the country, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.
- 24 **Strengthening policy, legal and institutional coherence.** The Guidelines contribute to improving and strengthening policy, legal, and institutional frameworks that promote coherence in mainstreaming GEWGE on aspects related to food security and nutrition. This will help to enhance synergies, avoid duplication, mitigate risks and prevent unintended or contradictory effects from one policy or legal area to another.
- 25 **Context-specific gender analysis and approaches.** Effective efforts to achieve change must be based on an understanding of the specific nature of the problem in a particular society. The Guidelines therefore promote inclusive and participatory context-specific gender analysis and actions – avoiding generalizations and stereotypes – that take into account all women's and girls' lived experiences, context at local, national, regional levels and their impact on gender relations, roles and norms in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions.
- 26 **Multidimensional approaches.** The Guidelines recognize that women and girls often experience multiple forms of discriminations simultaneously based on, inter alia<sup>8</sup>, race, colour, sex, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status which affect their food security and nutrition outcomes. The Guidelines promote a multidimensional and integrated approach that address these interrelated and mutually reinforcing characteristics. Notably, women and girls of local communities, and of Indigenous Peoples, women and girls with disabilities, as well as older women are often particularly marginalized and disadvantaged also in the context of food security and nutrition.

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8 Other examples of bases of discrimination are contained in *CFS Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security*.

- 27 **Gender mainstreaming combined with targeted actions.** Alongside fostering transformative approaches, the Guidelines support mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and interventions while recognizing that achieving gender equality requires complementing gender mainstreaming with targeted interventions that focus on women and girls.
- 28 **Evidence-based approach.** The Guidelines are based on and promote the use of sound evidence that enables informed decision-making and the development of evidence-based monitoring and evaluation systems and effective responses and policies. They promote the collection, analysis and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender statistics, and other variables to produce accurate and context-specific gender analysis.
- 29 **Inclusiveness and participation in policy- and law-making processes.** The Guidelines foster policies, legal frameworks and practices that promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of all women and girls, including those in vulnerable situations<sup>9</sup>, Indigenous women, local communities, as well as women-led organizations, including women's rights organizations and social movements, while respecting plurality in the development and implementation of policies and laws.
- 30 **Multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnership.** The Guidelines recognize the importance of promoting effective multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships and engaging with all stakeholders and leaders as allies in processes to advance GEWGE in the context of food security and nutrition. Effective partnerships with all actors require transparent rules of engagement and accountability, including safeguards for the identification and management of potential conflicts of interest.

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9 Women in vulnerable situations most often include, among others, pregnant and lactating women, women of reproductive age and adolescent girls, women caregivers, women in armed conflicts, the elderly, women with disabilities, Indigenous women, women migrants, women refugees, displaced women.

# PART 3 ISSUES, CHALLENGES, POLICIES AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES

## 3.1 Cross-cutting recommendations



- 31 Governments are urged to:
- (i) **Strengthen the implementation of existing obligations under national and international law**, including human rights law, with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable international and regional instruments.
  - (ii) **Implement, strengthen or introduce legislation promoting non-discrimination and gender equality.**
  - (iii) **Ensure equal access to justice and legal assistance so that all women and girls have their rights protected, including the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, and on issues related to property, in particular land tenure, in rural and urban areas, inheritance and financial services.**
  - (iv) **Ensure, where possible, that targeted health and universal social protection measures<sup>10</sup>** are in place to support all those in need, particularly women and girls especially during emergencies, shocks and protracted crises<sup>11</sup>.
  - (v) **Promote gender mainstreaming across different relevant sectors**, including agriculture and food sectors at all governmental levels as this supports women's and girls' participation and empowerment and creates impetus to address inequality across a range of connected issues.
- 32 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, are urged to:

10 UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/2, 10 October 2019 on Universal Health Coverage. ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202).

11 CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (2015).

- (i) **Design and implement gender-responsive or gender-sensitive public policies and programmes based on country-specific and country-owned gender assessments** guided by inclusive and participatory approaches taking into account different national contexts, necessities, capacities, and levels of development.
- (ii) **Promote the full engagement of men and boys as agents and beneficiaries of change and as strategic partners and allies** in addressing the structural barriers to gender equality, and as actors and participants in processes and strategies, especially those led by women. Considering cultures, and local and national laws, their active involvement is essential for successful transformation of unequal power relations and discriminatory social systems, institutions, structures and norms. Promote and give more visibility to positive participation of men and boys.
- (iii) **Address gender discriminatory socio-cultural norms at all levels of the food system** that perpetuate gender inequality in the context of food security and nutrition, including engagement with all stakeholders and relevant leaders as allies in change processes. In order to achieve gender equality, transformation needs to go from individual to systemic change and across informal to formal spheres of life. Ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and men in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of food security and nutrition programmes and policies.
- (iv) **Regularly collect, analyse and use data disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other variables** related to all forms of discrimination as well as gender-sensitive statistics and indicators, including reflecting women's and men's current and traditional Indigenous and local knowledge, with the free, prior and informed consent, as applicable, in accordance with the prevailing laws and regulations including data protection and rights to privacy.
- (v) **Promote sustainable food systems that are gender equal** and, as appropriate, support local, regional and national enterprises in production, processing, consumption and distribution of food, and the production of affordable nutritious food that meets food preferences, as nationally applicable, and that contributes to healthy diets through sustainable food systems. Build the capacity of micro, small and

medium scale enterprises (MSMEs) to promote sustainable production by enabling the roles of women as MSMEs entrepreneurs in respect of local and national laws and institutions.

- (vi) **Ensure adequate financial, technical and human resources**, supported by political commitment and public policies that promote an enabling environment to generate social, economic and cultural changes with specific policies, programmes and institutions that address the symptoms and root causes of gender inequalities. Measures to support gender-sensitive or gender-responsive budgeting should be put in place and implemented where possible.
- (vii) **Undertake strategic and comprehensive communications on gender mainstreaming** and a gender perspective in national agriculture and food systems including investment opportunities<sup>12</sup>, where appropriate and applicable.

## 3.2 Women's and girls' food security and nutrition



### 3.2.1 Issues and challenges

#### Unequal access to and distribution of nutritious and healthy food

33 Worldwide, the prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition is higher for women than for men. The gender gap in food insecurity persists even after controlling for other socio-economic factors, such as education or income, household decision-making, distribution of food and workload, as well as lack of access to health services and of control over resources. Women play a critical role in household food security and are often responsible for food consumption within the family. They tend to prioritize the needs of other household members, especially in time of scarcity, and reduce their own food intake, which is detrimental to their own nutritional status. As a result, women and girls may eat a lower quantity and/or lower quality food, exposing them to greater risk of hunger and malnutrition. Therefore, there is the need to confront the underlined gender discrimination in tackling food insecurity<sup>13</sup>.

12 FAO's Strategic Framework 2022-31, endorsed by Conference in June 2021.

13 FAO Data snapshot "Using sex-disaggregated data to better understand gender gaps in agriculture" 2022

## **Women's and girls' specific nutritional needs throughout the life course**

- 34 Women's and girls' nutritional needs vary depending on their life course and women's labour activities. Gender discriminatory norms prevailing in many communities and societies, combined with poverty, often prevent women and girls from accessing, demanding and consuming healthy diets and put them at risk of different forms of malnutrition that are partly shaped by gender (e.g. many women have high risks of anaemia), which in turn are risk factors that put women and girls at risk for other diseases. Malnutrition in girlhood and motherhood can lead to complications later in life, in particular throughout pregnancy of women and young women, especially during labour and delivery.
- 35 Women and young women have additional nutritional needs, in quantity and quality, when pregnant or breastfeeding and when they engage in physically demanding work such as farm labour. Their nutritional status during pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, and breastfeeding, impacts the nutritional status, cognitive and physical development of their child.

## **Empowerment of all women and girls for improved food security and nutrition for all**

- 36 There is evidence<sup>14</sup> that women's and girls' empowerment is a pathway to improved nutrition and wellbeing for the entire household, in both rural and urban areas, and also evidence of positive links between women's empowerment and child and maternal health.
- 37 While some aspects of the decisions on food production, procurement, and preparation of food may be controlled by women, in many societies some of the key decisions are predominantly men-dominated due to social norms and structural inequality. Women should be in a position to make decisions over their own nutrition and be able to contribute to the improvement of their families' nutrition.
- 38 Conventional approaches to nutrition education tend to reinforce existing gender roles, focusing on women's roles as mothers and caregivers of young children and often ignoring boys and men in nutrition education programmes. Nutrition education should support gender-responsive approaches that challenge harmful gender norms.

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14 e.g. p. 93 and p.104 in FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 2021.



### 3.2.2 Policies and strategic approaches

39 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:

- (i) **Design and implement policies and inter-sectoral programmes that acknowledge women and girls' specific nutritional needs linked to their life course and circumstances (e.g. widows, divorced women and single mothers).** These should recognize and contribute to improve the nutritional status of women and girls throughout the life course. Targeted measures for those that are in the most nutritionally vulnerable situations, for example pregnant and lactating women (particularly during the first 1,000 days for mother and child) should be a priority.
- (ii) **Promote a coordinated and integrated policy approach to effectively reducing gender inequality, supporting the empowerment of women and girls and improving their nutritional status in urban and rural settings.** Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration and coordination are essential for achieving desired results. Sectoral programmes, such as health, education, science, innovation, economic, agriculture, food safety and accessibility, energy, environment, water and sanitation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and social protection should incorporate and respond to gender equality in the context of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- (iii) **Complement existing proven programmes by promoting, designing, or adapting gender-responsive programmes that facilitate the provision of nutritious and adequate food in the context of national food security,** especially in contexts of scarcity, addressing health-related dietary needs, cultural patterns and contexts, food preferences and dietary customs.
- (iv) **Promote and ensure adequate, culturally relevant, inclusive, quality education on healthy diets and nutrition for women, men, girls and boys** to strengthen their ability to make informed choices over their own and their household's nutrition.

- (v) **Support targeted gender-responsive research in the context of food security and nutrition, co-creation of knowledge and extension and advisory services (EAS)** to enable women to access and produce affordable and nutritious food.



### 3.3 Women's and girls' full, equal and meaningful participation, voice and leadership in policy- and decision-making at all levels

#### 3.3.1 Issues and challenges

- 40 Participation of women in high-level decision-making bodies on food security and nutrition in public and private spheres remains low in many countries. Promoting women's full, equal, effective and meaningful participation and leadership is vital to advancing food security and nutrition for themselves, their household and society, enabling them to influence policies, strategies and investment plans and to take into account their specific knowledge, interest, needs and priorities.
- 41 At the community level, in both urban and rural settings, participation in food production, processing, wholesale, retail, trade, including through meaningful participation in community, and business associations can be affected by unequal power relations, gender roles and social norms, and discriminatory practices. Challenges may be more pronounced for rural women, women from local communities, and for Indigenous women, due to inadequate access to essential and social support services and the lack of opportunities to be represented in decision-making functions, as well as the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations, and views about women's and men's traditional roles in society.
- 42 Women's decision-making power relating to household spending is associated with healthy diets and better nutrition, education, health, and in general wellbeing outcomes for themselves and for other household members<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> *Is women's empowerment a pathway to improving child nutrition outcomes in a nutrition-sensitive agriculture program?* IFPRI, 2019.

- 43 All forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls represent serious barriers to women's leadership and full participation in public and community life.

### 3.3.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 44 Governments should:

- (i) **Consider promoting, developing, adapting and implementing** new and existing **affirmative action measures as appropriate**, such as gender parity in decision-making processes and positions at all levels and in all spheres related to agriculture, food security and nutrition to promote and strengthen women's equal representation in leadership and managerial positions, including in public and private sectors, and ensuring gender equality in access to inclusive, quality education and participation in relevant organizations.
- (ii) **Promote the full, equal, effective inclusive and meaningful participation and engagement of all women and girls and their organizations** in the process of policy design, implementation, oversight and programmatic decisions for food security, nutrition, agriculture and food systems, as applicable. A wide range of measures will be needed to effectively support women's leadership and women's and girls' empowerment, such as training and capacity building including South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
- (iii) **Empower young women as the next generation of leaders.** This means promoting and funding leadership training for women and girls, and ensuring they complete secondary education and supporting their entry to tertiary education in order to be able to participate in decision-making at all levels.
- (iv) **Strengthen women's leadership and women's – and women's rights' – organizations**, including Indigenous women's and rural women's organization, such as by institutionalizing and funding awards systems for the recognition of women leaders and women's organizations.

- 45 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:

- (i) **Strengthen the role of relevant women's and women's rights' organizations, and women's collective action in the context of food security and nutrition**, recognizing the importance of self-association and the role of relevant civil society and social movements to promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in decision-making at all levels of agriculture and food systems. Analyse constraints – prior to funding – faced by women in self-organizing (e.g. unequal domestic responsibilities, other context specific constraints arising from social norms and discrimination) and address them as applicable. Support may include direct funding for women's empowerment organizations, so they take leadership roles in decision-making process at local, national, regional and international levels, including women from Indigenous Peoples, and local communities' women, as appropriate.
- (ii) **Address all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and particularly discriminatory gender norms, biases and attitudes, including among men leaders** through awareness raising, training and introduction of gender policies and action plans. Set examples of women's leadership in all areas including in civil service, government, scientific research, technological development, academia, businesses and local communities, among other areas. Strongly encourage the full, equal and meaningful participation of all women and their leadership in all these processes.



## 3.4 Women's economic and social empowerment in the context of sustainable agriculture and food systems

### 3.4.1 Women's access to the labour market and decent work

#### 3.4.4.1 Issues and challenges

- 46 Access to secure and decent work in conditions of dignity and safety is vital to human welfare and well-being and is a key contributor to food security and nutrition. Women are more likely than men to be engaged in informal and insecure jobs, including in agriculture and food systems, with less access to social protection. They are often subject to a gender

pay and wage gap, earning less than men for equal pay for equal work, or work of equal value, and are vulnerable to discrimination, occupational segregation, and unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, exploitation, and all forms of violence and harassment in the workplace, particularly against those working in agriculture and food systems. This is due to multiple factors that women and girls face, including discrimination, gender stereotypes, horizontal and vertical segregation of the labour market, unequal distribution of paid work and unpaid care work, lower levels of education, lack of knowledge of their rights as employees and lack of enforcement of these rights.

- 47 Women and young women in agriculture are affected by the lack of adequate health and safety measures. Agricultural work performed without proper training, without access to clean and safe drinking water, to toilets, to protective clothing and equipment can expose agricultural workers to accrued risks.
- 48 Gender-biased social norms, discriminatory laws and practices and other structural barriers often limit women's participation in workers' and producers' organizations and in organized labour institutions such as trade unions.
- 49 Migrants, particularly women and girls, migrant workers, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons, and stateless persons, particularly women and girls, are more vulnerable to severe labour exploitation and other forms of abuse. These women and girls often experience situations of vulnerability due to gender-based discrimination, trafficking, and all forms of violence and discrimination.

### 3.4.1.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 50 Governments are urged to:
  - (i) **Ensure there is a strong legal framework in place**, establishing protection for internationally recognized workers' rights and principles of work and safeguarding key principles, such as equal pay for equal work or work of equal value and safe working conditions, including the zero tolerance of harassment, **and proactive enforcement of the laws.**
  - (ii) **Encourage the collection, analysis, and use of sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender statistics** including from Indigenous

Peoples on the informal sector including work and living conditions in agriculture.

51 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:

- (i) **Take steps to ensure GEWGE and respect for human and labour rights within** the workplace, including to consider ratification of related ILO Conventions.
- (ii) **Promote decent work in public and private sectors**, including through respect of workers' rights, including the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work<sup>16</sup>, social dialogue and other measures including access to social protection systems.
- (iii) **Adopt specific public policies, programmes and strategies to increase women's access to farm and non-farm employment and to entrepreneurship opportunities and farm ownership in the agriculture sector**, including technical and vocational education and training and skills development, suitable labour intermediation services, as well as increased public and private gender-sensitive investments that consider women's specific needs and priorities.
- (iv) **Support women's transition from informal to formal economy, while undertaking efforts to reduce** labour market segregation. **Recognize and protect the labour rights of women** working in the formal and informal economy **and enable their roles as entrepreneurs**.
- (v) **Introduce and strengthen gender-responsive public policies and programmes across sectors with a transformative approach, including in agriculture and food value chains to address the gender wage gap and to promote decent work**. These can include safer and labour-saving technologies and practices across agricultural sub-sectors, adoption of occupational safety and health measures, access to social protection, adequate living wages that are not discriminatory, and measures to reconcile paid work and unpaid care work responsibilities, such as flexible working arrangements

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16 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Eighty-sixth Session, Geneva, 18 June 1998.

for women and men and the provision of high-quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive childcare.

### 3.4.2 Women's involvement in agriculture and food systems as producers and entrepreneurs

#### 3.4.2.1 Issues and challenges

- 52 Women face inequality and discrimination in many dimensions of food systems. They face unequal access to and control of resources of all kinds – water, land, capital, knowledge and traditional knowledge and technology. Investments are often directed at supporting food systems, which are dominated by men for a variety of reasons, including discriminatory gender norms and gender stereotypes, discrimination in women's access to resources and the unequal burden of care and domestic responsibilities. Gender inequality in food systems limits women's and girls' – especially Indigenous women's – access to resources, affecting productivity and their ability to manage risks; women's participation and voice in producers' groups; and women's access to, as well as time and energy for remunerated activities, constraining their contribution to their family's income and the households' food security and nutrition. The collection of sex and age disaggregated data and gender statistics on women and girls in agriculture and food systems would help to better address these inequalities and discrimination.
- 53 Women are actively engaged across agriculture and food systems as producers and entrepreneurs. They contribute to agriculture and food systems as well as to food security and nutrition not only with their labour but also with their knowledge of agricultural practices and biodiversity, in particular by local communities, and Indigenous Peoples. They play a central role in natural resource management and food production, processing, conservation, and marketing<sup>17</sup>. However, these roles are too often unpaid and unrecognized and are often not protected by labour laws because the majority of work in small-scale food production and processing where women tend to engage is undertaken in the informal economy. Women engaged in agriculture face constraints to full, equal and meaningful participation in value chains, agriculture and food systems.

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17 United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028. *Global Action Plan*. Rome. Action Plan Pillar 3 - FAO and IFAD, 2019.

54 Women's ability to participate in food systems is constrained by unequal property rights; a gender imbalance in education, particularly in higher and technical education; lack of role models; lack of women working in organizations that support businesses, particularly in decision-making roles; lack of confidence to expand their business due to the lack of support from within their family or community; and time poverty because of unequal distribution of domestic and care work. Women's access to physical and other necessary complementary resources and services for their full participation in value chains and food systems is also determined by their inclusion in networks and their social capital. Producer groups, agricultural extension agents, transportation and other services, are often more accessible to men than women. Often service providers do not engage women as clients and fail to consider and address the differentiated needs and priorities of women and men.

### 3.4.2.2 Policies and strategic approaches

55 Governments should:

- (i) **Facilitate the participation of women in investments in food systems as agents and actors**, including in agriculture and territorial markets, in collaboration with other actors such as private enterprises, through cooperatives and producer organizations.
- (ii) **Promote investments in technologies, rural infrastructure, transport and specific activities** (across food systems and along value chains) that support women producers including young women producers and entrepreneurs and strengthen women's capacities to use and adopt technologies, including information and communication technologies (ICTs), and other methods that reduce their work burden and strengthen their productive and income generating capacities/roles.
- (iii) **Promote the collection, analysis and use of sex and age disaggregated data, and gender statistics in food systems**, including from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, with free, prior and informed consent, as applicable, in order to have accurate understanding of existing gender gaps, norms and roles. Designing effective public policies and programmes for women's and girls' empowerment requires context-specific gender analysis with quality data.



56 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, are encouraged to:

- (i) **Address negative social norms and gender stereotypes** that condition women's involvement in agricultural investments, food systems and access to local, regional and global markets, to facilitate women's equal participation in and control over the various components of the value chains and agriculture and food systems as well as their control over the benefits from their engagement and to empower women to exercise this control.
- (ii) **Establish and implement strategies in food security and nutrition aimed at fulfilling the rights and strengthening capacities of women and girls for successfully engaging in food systems and in the various components of the value chains**, including for the labour market.
- (iii) **Facilitate women's and young women's equal, full, effective and meaningful participation in social and economic networks**, including formal and informal producers' organizations and cooperatives, with recognition and support to local traditional financial systems as well as regional and multilateral financing, and attention to effective participation and leadership of women when in mixed networks. These networks can contribute to real change towards financial autonomy of women.
- (iv) **Support analyses of agriculture and food systems and value chains** focusing on from production, processing packaging, storage, transportation, distribution processes and retail to end-user from a gender perspective. These analyses should take into account implications of all forms of discrimination against women and girls.
- (v) **Promote cross-sectoral policy coherence and policy dialogue** towards resilient and productive employment and decent work of women in food systems, in particular among agriculture, employment, social protection, climate adaptation and mitigation, youth and gender related policies.
- (vi) **Foster recognition of and support for the knowledge and capacities of Indigenous Peoples as well as their meaningful inclusion and**

**economic empowerment** in food processing, conservation, use of natural resources, and land tenure systems, with their free, prior and informed consent, as applicable.

- (vii) **Support women's equal access to opportunities across food systems** by strengthening their agency and building their collective power facilitating their access to resources and service provision including training, enhancing their business capacities, mindsets and skills, and supporting their effective engagement with agribusiness, food systems' and other agricultural and value chains' actors.

### 3.4.3 Access to financial services and social capital

#### 3.4.3.1 Issues and challenges

- 57 Lack of financial capital and financial inclusion are significant constraints to women's entrepreneurial activities and engagement all along the food system and value chains, from investment in land to agrifood businesses. Structural constraints to women's access to financial services such as credit and insurance are often based on restricted access to assets, including land and property, that could be used as collateral for loans; family indebtedness; limited knowledge and training of financial services; restricted availability of appropriate loan products for women-led micro, small, medium businesses and smallholders; statutory and customary laws that are discriminatory and/or do not respond adequately to women's needs and priorities; and negative social norms that prevent women from developing and growing their enterprises and productivity. At the same time, fair and equitable access to financial services is a prerequisite for overall societal economic security and prosperity.

#### 3.4.3.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 58 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:
  - (i) **Address legal barriers, gender norms and gender biases for women's financial inclusion in agriculture and food systems.** For example, improve women's access to credit and bank accounts, saving schemes, solidarity funds and cooperatives and agricultural insurance, including through **specific financial programmes for women**

**involved in all aspects of value chains individually or collectively**, with more flexible collateral requirements, minimal documentary requirements, alternative data to assess credit worthiness, and customized disbursement schedules that fit women's crop and cash flow needs.

- (ii) **Analyse risks and opportunities to increase women's income and savings**, including through revision of policies of micro-credit and other financial providers, and to advance programmes to increase women's savings. This analysis should consider evidence of harassment, debt traps, and other challenges faced by women especially from weaker socio-economic backgrounds and opportunities for credit provision at equitable interest rates, flexible and longer-term repayment terms and debt waiver.
- (iii) **Foster and support innovation in financial products and services provision** to diversify offerings available to women in agriculture and food systems. Support and raise awareness among financial product and service providers to allow and enhance financial inclusion, and encourage them to create financial products and services tailored to the needs of women, in particular rural micro-, small- and medium-scale producers and entrepreneurs.
- (iv) **Promote women producers' and entrepreneurs' capacity, building in financial literacy as well as developing appropriate and accessible information on financial services and products**. This should include training in e-commerce. It is important to provide ongoing support and enable knowledge sharing among women producers and processors, as they move through different stages of business development.
- (v) **Facilitate women micro-, small- and medium-scale food producers' and entrepreneurs' meaningful participation and empowerment and access to local, regional, and international markets**, including through collective associations and cooperative associations, promotion of business knowledge and the support of appropriate, targeted financial products and services that are tailored to their specific needs and circumstances, to improve their control over incomes and food security and nutrition for themselves and their families.



## 3.5 Women's and girls' access to and control over natural and productive resources, including land<sup>18</sup>, water, fisheries and forests

### 3.5.1 Issues and challenges

- 59 Women's restricted access to and control over key natural and productive resources undermine their rights and economic capacity, affecting the efficiency of the agricultural sector and limiting economic growth overall, failing to tap into women's enormous productive potential.
- 60 Land serves as a foundation for food security, shelter, income and livelihoods. However, women, including young women, encounter persistent barriers to having their land and property rights, including ownership, use, transfer and inheritance respected, even when laws and policies enshrine those rights. Many women are landless, and when women do have access, ownership/or control of agricultural land, their plots are usually smaller, and of poorer quality than men's, and often with less secure rights. The poorest people, including women and notably Indigenous women, women in local communities, and women in contexts of conflict, protracted crises and shocks are affected by land misappropriation and often do not have the power or resources to fight these practices.
- 61 The adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, loss of biodiversity, ecosystem degradation and desertification have severe impacts on agricultural production and the productivity, value and availability of natural resources, which are disproportionately affecting women, in particular Indigenous women, rural women and women in local communities, for example by increasing the time they need for fetching water, collecting fuelwood, food and medicinal plants and herbs.
- 62 When climate-related disasters result in outmigration of men, it leads to feminization of agriculture thus women are often obliged to assume additional on-farm responsibilities but have limited power to request and receive government support or financial and EAS as well as have limited access to production, inputs and land.

18 CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, CFS, 2012.

- 63 Women's access to water is crucial for agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture production and for household and domestic purposes. Women's access to water is often unequal, in particular for Indigenous women, women in local communities and women in situations of conflict, protracted crises and shocks. Women represent up to half of the labour force in aquaculture, largely in processing and trading, but typically receive lower labour returns and income than men.
- 64 Women also often have unequal access to forests and their resources. Forests provide crucial and important resources of fuel, food, fiber, medicines and other raw materials in particular for Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and rural people. However, activities related to commercial objectives and household well-being, such as timber production or collecting fuelwood, are unequally distributed among all women, men, girls, and boys. When women are equitably involved in sustainable resource management, development, and conservation, outcomes improve.
- 65 The differential uses of land, water, fisheries and forestry resources by men and women often lead to different specialized knowledge of resource management needs of these resources. Failure to take into account this knowledge in policy and planning can lead to poor outcomes, including loss of biodiversity, water pollution, soil degradation, loss of forest cover, and a failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 66 Men and women often grow different crops and/or different varieties and have different uses for the crops they grow. Typically, breeding and crop management programmes largely work with men farmers, while women's priorities are rarely considered.
- 67 Most farm implements, including mechanized tools, have been designed based on the height, strength and body type of men and are inappropriate for use by, or even harmful to, women. Moreover, mechanization for women's activities in drying, storage and processing may be unavailable.
- 68 Through their transformative potential, agroecological<sup>19</sup> and other innovative approaches<sup>20</sup>, and all other sustainable innovations and technologies, including climate-resilient agriculture, can improve the

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19 *The 10 elements of Agroecology. Guiding the transition to sustainable food and agricultural systems*, FAO, 2018.

20 Innovative approaches include among others, sustainable intensification, no-till farming, organic agriculture, and other innovations and technologies to promote sustainable agrifood systems, CL 170/4 Rev1, Para. 56.

sustainability and inclusiveness of agriculture and food systems provided that they encompass an holistic approach and emphasis on gender equality, embracing the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environment) and contributing to the local regional and global production and availability of diverse, affordable, nutritious, healthy, and culturally appropriate food.

### 3.5.2 Policies and strategic approaches

69 Governments are urged to:

- (i) **Design, strengthen, and implement legislation or introduce new legislation<sup>21</sup>**, as appropriate, to promote equal access to and control over<sup>22</sup> natural resources for all women. Ensure respect of women's land tenure rights and property rights, ownership, use and transfer –including through inheritance and divorce, taking into consideration national legal frameworks and priorities. At the same time, it is vital to expand the exchange of the experience and best practices with different legal systems and engage local authorities and customary leaders, when applicable, as partners to identify where laws offer protection to women's access to resources and ownership of property, and support these leaders in working to achieve that these provisions are respected and enforced.
- (ii) **Promote that all women and girls, including from Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, have equal, secure and transparent legitimate tenure rights<sup>23</sup>, as applicable, and safe access to and control over and use of land, water, fisheries and forests, as applicable, independent of their civil and marital status.** When tenure rights are formalized, women and girls should be granted equal tenure rights as men and boys – for instance through the provision of title deeds or land tenure certificates in accordance with national laws. All women and girls, including widows and orphan girls, should be treated equally with regards to access to and control over and use

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21 UN Women and OHCHR, *Realizing Women's Rights to Land and Other Productive Resources* (Second edition, 2020).

22 CEDAW General Recommendation No. 34 on the rights of rural women, para 64.

23 *CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. First revision. FAO, 2022.

of their land under all governance structures, including in existing regimes as applicable. It will be necessary to determine in each context the best mechanisms for achieving this, including how this is best achieved, through formal land administration or through customary land law and administration and through building greater coherence between the customary and formal systems as applicable.

- (iii) **Support tenure rights of all women and girls** in accordance with the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (CFS-VGGT) and CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI), including protecting holders against the arbitrary loss of their tenure rights, including forced evictions, that are inconsistent with their States' existing obligations and commitments under national and international law.
- (iv) **Support priority access for women fishers, fish processors and retailers to locally landed fish resources to sustain their livelihoods and food security.**
- (v) **Respect land tenure systems of Indigenous Peoples, in particular women in local communities, and Indigenous women, consistent with the existing obligations and commitments under national and international frameworks** and promote their greater control and decision-making powers and obtaining of free, prior and informed consent, as applicable, critical for their food security, livelihoods and culture.
- (vi) **Promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and girls in the development of Emergency Preparedness and Response and Rehabilitation Programmes (EPRP) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies.**

70 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector, and development partners, should:

- (i) **Advance knowledge on land tenure as well as user rights in fisheries** as a crucial step towards achieving gender equal governance of fisheries and attaining food security and nutrition and livelihood benefits.

- (ii) **Promote and support full, equal and meaningful participation of women, including young women, Indigenous women and women with disabilities, in the management, transmission and governance** of natural resources at all levels, including of customary institutions, recognizing the importance of traditional and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems.
- (iii) **Encourage equal investments in agricultural development that integrate and respond to the priorities, capabilities and constraints of women.** Promote agroecological and other innovative approaches<sup>24</sup>, climate resilient agriculture and knowledge and technologies for women across the agriculture and food systems and its value chains in particular micro-, small- and medium-scale food producers and entrepreneurs that respond to their needs.
- (iv) **Promote and fund**, especially in regions with permanent or regular lack of water, **innovation and technologies and facilities for access to and sustainable management of water** – such as cisterns – for household consumption and food production, with a focus on the rights and needs of women and girls. **There should be no discrimination on any basis**, inter alia age, class, race, disability and gender-based and ethnic discrimination and stereotypes, in matters of access to and use of equitable distribution of water for both consumption, food production, and of sanitation and hygiene.
- (v) **Promote and support investments in gender-responsive climate change resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures** responsive to local needs, priorities, capacities and circumstances.
- (vi) **Promote the full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership of women**, including Indigenous women, in all aspects of climate and environmental policy formulation and actions at all levels.

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24 Innovative approaches including among others, sustainable intensification, no-till farming, organic agriculture and all other innovations and technologies to promote sustainable agrifood systems (CL 170/4 Rev.1). FAO. *The ten Elements of Agroecology* (2019).



## 3.6 Access to education, capacity building, training, knowledge and information services



### 3.6.1 Women's and girls' access to formal education

#### 3.6.1.1 Issues and challenges

- 71 Education of all persons, particularly of women and girls, is a strategic and critical development priority for food security and nutrition. Women with more years of schooling tend to be more informed about nutrition and adopt healthier dietary practices for themselves and their families. Literacy and school attendance correlate with greater understanding of nutrition, breastfeeding, better farming practices and improved production methods, including increased likelihood of developing and using seeds and crops appropriate for their particular ecological environment and cultural context. Education, including civic education, also increases women's and girls' ability to access information and knowledge, enhancing their capacity to participate in the formal labour market and in decision-making, and to be informed about their rights. Inclusive and equitable quality education is essential for all women's and girls' empowerment, for achieving gender equality and for reducing women's poverty, and thus for improving their food security and nutrition.
- 72 Girls' education is associated with future economic and social prospects and lower early and repeated pregnancies and fertility rates, as well as with improved food security and nutrition. Yet, persistent inequality in education and high drop-out rates for girls continue to affect the lives of millions of women and girls worldwide. Obstacles to girls' education include child, early and forced marriage and pregnancy, all forms of violence, including GBV, discriminatory social norms, laws and policies, and gender stereotypes economic and social inequality, poverty, living in rural areas, conflicts, protracted crises and shocks, lack of gender-sensitive school facilities such as a lack of safe bathrooms and menstrual hygiene management for girls, particularly for Indigenous girls, girls with disabilities and girls in local communities. Shocks and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic have negative impacts on girls' education.

### 3.6.1.2 Policies and strategic approaches

73 Governments are urged to:

- (i) **Implement and/or strengthen existing legislation or introduce new legislation**, as appropriate, providing gender equal access to culturally diverse and relevant inclusive quality education for all that respects cultural heritage and background.
- (ii) **Develop and implement counter measures to child, early and forced marriage.**
- (iii) **Foster transformative and gender-responsive curricula and education systems**, resources and processes to promote gender equality, eliminate discriminatory gender norms and deliver more equal education results for girls and boys.
- (iv) **Eliminate barriers and prioritize efforts** to address negative social norms and gender stereotypes to ensure that girls enrol in and complete primary and secondary school education and to support their entry to tertiary education, including through social protection measures such as child benefits, student stipends or free school meals, transportation to school, access to safe and clean toilet facilities, access to sanitary products, counter measures against sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment in and to/from school, as well as promoting intercultural education, including teaching in indigenous languages.
- (v) **Seek greater school attendance, promote literacy programmes for women**, girls, men and boys, and specifically integrate literacy classes into agriculture and nutrition programmes, including reading and understanding food and nutrition labels, in their curricula.

74 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:

- (i) **Address social norms** that perpetuate gender inequality by challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination in education, capacity building, training, knowledge access and generation, and information.
- (ii) **Promote practical life, leadership and entrepreneurial skills training** for girls and women including through North–South, South–South and Triangular Cooperation.

## 3.6.2 Women's and girls' access to extension and advisory services

### 3.6.2.1 Issues and challenges

- 75 Capacity building through gender-responsive agricultural extension services and other forms of technical and vocational education and training is vital for improving women's knowledge, skills, leadership and production, and strengthening their agency, particularly for micro-, small-scale and medium-scale food producers and other value chain participants. Yet many women have less access to rural EAS than men often because of discriminatory gender norms that prevent women from being recognized as legitimate clients of EAS. The services they are able to access are often not well adapted to their needs and realities<sup>25</sup>. In addition, there is a limited pool of available women extension service providers, agricultural technicians, researchers, planners and policy makers.
- 76 Women also often have limited access to market information, affecting their ability to realize their potential as producers, entrepreneurs, processors and traders. In addition, capacity building, training, knowledge and access to information on healthy diets are crucial tools for all, particularly women and girls in rural areas and Indigenous Peoples for gaining knowledge to improve food security and nutrition and prevent especially non-communicable diseases.

### 3.6.3.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 77 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:
- (i) **Promote extension and advisory services (EAS)** designed to provide knowledge and technical support to improve food security and nutrition outcomes with particular attention to the special nutritional needs of women and children.
  - (ii) **Promote systemic changes in the design and delivery of EAS ensuring they are gender-responsive.** For example, EAS policies and programmes should include concrete gender equality objectives and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation frameworks informed by

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25 *The Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool*, FAO, 2018.

women producers and gender-responsive budget. When applicable, encourage investments in digital agricultural extension services and the infrastructure to support this, including equitable access to internet, ICT and digital capacity building. Traditional and ancestral knowledge of women producers, including from local communities, and from Indigenous Peoples as well as producer-to-producer knowledge exchange, should be recognized, encouraged and respected as part of these processes. Service providers should promote the use of the participatory, reflective and experiential methodologies and design, deliver gender-responsive services and technologies that address discriminatory or negative social norms, take into account women's time, mobility and educational constraints and respond to women's specific needs and priorities, as appropriate.

- (iii) **Reform and resource, as appropriate, inclusive research and EAS** to ensure that they are responsive and accountable to the needs and interests of all women and girls, including through the recruitment and training of female extension and advisory agents. This should also involve the scale out of innovative extension models such as Farmer Field Schools that specifically address the needs of all women and girls.
- (iv) **Support EAS organizations to develop gender equal organizational cultures**, including putting into place mechanisms to recruit and retain women advisors and address specific barriers they face in adequately carrying out their work and promoting their participation and access to decision-making positions.

### 3.6.3 Women's and girls' access to appropriate ICTs-based, digital and innovative technologies

#### 3.6.3.1 Issues and challenges

- 78 ICTs and digital technologies and solutions can often benefit women and girls in many ways. They can gain access to technical and vocational education and training, knowledge and capacity building opportunities, credit and new economic and employment opportunities, information on health care, nutrition and agriculture, including – for instance – pricing of products as well as early warning messages related to weather conditions, through online information resources and networking opportunities. ICTs and targeted digital content, as well as digital literacy and digital market

access, can help women entrepreneurs in rural and remote communities, as well as in urban centres, to achieve access to new markets and consumers. ICTs can also facilitate cash transfers and mediate secure transactions, including the receipt of remittances and purchase of agricultural inputs. However, the knowledge gained through use of ICTs cannot replace EAS.

- 79 Access to ICTs varies significantly across regions and between women and girls, and men and boys. Women and girls located in rural or remote areas in particular face significant barriers in access and use of technologies and digital solutions, due to unaffordability, lack of electricity and connectivity, low digital literacy, as well as inequitable social norms. The gender gap in access to ICTs – and structural factors that cause it – need to be urgently addressed if the benefits of ICTs to GEWGE are to be realized. It is vital to ensure that new technologies do not result in gender-based discrimination and GBV against women and girls, and do not worsen existing inequalities.

### 3.6.3.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 80 Governments, with the support of all other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector, and development partners, should:

- (i) **Increase girls' and women's access to affordable, accessible, context-specific, safe and secure digital connectivity**, reaching out to rural and remote areas, with the aim of closing the digital gender gap.
- (ii) **Promote access to and implement programmes for digital literacy for women and girls in education and financial services, and women's and young women's career orientation and employment**, and address the gender norms and negative stereotypes as well as structural and infrastructural barriers that undermine women's and girls' access to digital technologies.
- (iii) **Analyse how women in agriculture including entrepreneurs prefer to access and gain new knowledge** (including through ICTs) to increase efforts to reach the intended target group and respond to their priorities and realities.
- (iv) **Design agri-tech and other digital platforms and tools for women entrepreneurs** with equitable participation in its co-designing to

address and recognize all women's and girls' needs, preferences, opportunities and constraints. Foster innovation and encourage investments and funding for this.



## 3.7 Social protection and food and nutrition assistance

### 3.7.1 Issues and challenges

- 81 The rights to social security and an adequate standard of living are enshrined in relevant international and regional human rights frameworks. Social protection is fundamental to progress in terms of poverty eradication, the achievement of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and achieving food security and nutrition and healthy diets for everyone.
- 82 Social protection policies and programmes that address discriminatory or negative social norms, gender stereotypes and unequal power relations between woman and men, can address risks and all forms of discrimination faced by women and girls over their life and support them with measures to prevent poverty, overcome social exclusion and manage risks in relation to different types of shocks and constraints. Social protection instruments include pensions, unemployment and agriculture insurance, labour market and livelihood enhancement interventions, child and family support payments, maternity protection and paid parental leave, employment injury benefits, sickness and health care, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. Social protection instruments can also include cash or food transfers in times of crisis, public distribution systems and school meals.
- 83 Social protection can also be a transformative lever that can be used to challenge and transform gender relations. It can have direct positive impacts on food security and nutrition by helping people's access to adequate, safe, sufficient, and nutritious food and healthy diets for all women and their families, particularly in times of crisis. In combination with access to nutrition knowledge, social protection programmes can

have a long-lasting positive impact on food security and nutrition and thus contributes to preventing all forms of malnutrition as well as non-communicable diseases.

- 84 The first 1,000 days of life are critical for children's nutrition. Therefore, public policies and gender-sensitive and specific nutrition programmes that support a healthy pregnancy, safe childbirth, provision of parental leave, exclusive breastfeeding for six months followed by nutritionally adequate and safe complementary feeding practices with continued breastfeeding for up to two years, or beyond, and diversified healthy and nutritious complementary feeding are crucial.
- 85 The provision of school meals, one of the most common social protection programmes, incentivizes parents and caregivers to send children, especially girls, to school. Furthermore, nutritious and healthy school meals can improve students' physical growth, and cognitive development, increase concentration and academic achievement, and reduce absenteeism; when delivered with nutrition education, they can lead to a lifetime of healthy diets choices. When school food is sourced from local smallholder farmers/ food producers it can foster increases in local production.
- 86 Universal social protection should be enshrined in domestic legislation as a set of permanent entitlements defining individuals as rights-holders and guaranteeing them access to independent claims mechanisms if they are denied the benefits for which they qualify.

### 3.7.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 87 Governments are urged to:
- (i) **Ensure equal access to adequate social protection through a comprehensive legal framework.** Social protection programmes should be comprehensive and accessible by all who need them throughout their life course. They should also be agile enough to respond to shocks, paying attention to women's and girls' special needs, including their specific dietary and nutritional needs.
  - (ii) **Ensure social protection programmes address women's and girls' specific life course transitions and risks,** and the diversity of women's experiences, informed by relevant, disaggregated and up-to-date data.

- (iii) **Provide adequate and sustained financial investments and allocations** to support long-term universal social protection programmes.

88 Governments, with the support of all other relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:

- (i) **Enable women and men to participate equally in decision-making on social protection**, including in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies.
- (ii) **Enhance women's control of food acquisition, provision and distribution and nutrition assistance** by ensuring that women are able to be the household food entitlement holders, on an equal basis.



## 3.8 Recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work

### 3.8.1 Issues and challenges

89 Women disproportionately carry significant responsibilities in terms of unpaid care and domestic work in addition to their employment and other work. This often hampers women's ability to participate in paid work, decision-making processes and public life, education and training and activities aligned to their own health and wellbeing.

90 Unpaid care and domestic work is critical to food security and nutrition. It includes the production and/or preparation of food for the family, feeding and caring for children, older people, people with disabilities, illnesses or injuries in the household and community; and many other activities essential to human well-being and society as a whole. These activities are often unrecognized and under-valued despite the reality that economies and wellbeing depend on them.

91 Activities undertaken by all women relating to food production, including Indigenous women using their traditional knowledge such as planting, tending, irrigation and harvesting crops and processing fish, are also often unpaid and unrecognized despite their enormous economic and social value.



- 92 In some developing countries and in the context of limited infrastructure as well as in situations or places where increased impacts of climate change, loss of biodiversity, ecosystems' degradation and desertification are occurring, rural women and girls spend an enormous amount of time accessing water, fuel wood, edible and medicinal plants, and other kind of food for domestic and agricultural use, which also has a negative impact on girls' school attendance<sup>26</sup>.
- 93 The challenges that women face in undertaking unpaid care and domestic work with paid work often have a major negative impact on the persistent undernutrition among children under five, because it undermines their ability to practice breastfeeding and to ensure healthy diets for young children.

### 3.8.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 94 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners, should:
- (i) **Recognize, make visible and value women's unpaid work, including their crucial contributions to agriculture, food production, provision and preparation**, through measures that may include counting and including it in national statistics.
  - (ii) **Support more flexible working arrangements in workplaces in the public sector and encourage and support them in the private sector and in decision-making spaces** through the provision and implementation of effective gender policies that reflect ILO standards or guidance. This will enable women and men to achieve a better balance between unpaid domestic and care responsibilities and paid employment, and create more opportunities for women in the workplace.
  - (iii) **Promote the provision and uptake of maternity, paternity and shared parental leave** and other valuable social benefits linked to parenthood in all workplaces including informal economic sectors, as well as introducing supportive workplace policies for breastfeeding.

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26 Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2017, WHO and UNICEF, 2017.

Encourage employers, particularly SMEs and start-ups to provide parental leave.

- (iv) **Promote initiatives, including nutrition education programmes, that recognize that unpaid care and domestic work should be shared more equitably between women, men, girls and boys, and that men must play a role in ensuring adequate nutrition for their families,** while also addressing the historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men and gender stereotypes that may affect men's willingness to take on these shared roles.
- (v) **Reduce women's unpaid work through public investments in social protection, provision of child and elder care services, and rural infrastructure** including the provision of essential services (water supply, sanitation and hygiene facilities and access to electricity and broadband) **and social services** (access to inclusive, quality education, health care, long-term care and other support services) that can reduce the burden, drudgery and many hours of unpaid work.
- (vi) **Fund the provision and support the dissemination and uptake of labour-saving technologies** for domestic work as well as agricultural and aquatic food production and processing, for reducing the amount, drudgery and burden disproportionately shouldered by women and girls, as appropriate. Technology should be accessible for women and girls and adapted to their needs and priorities.



## 3.9 Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including gender-based violence, both online and offline, in the context of food security and nutrition

### 3.9.1 Issues and challenges

- 95 Every human being should be able to live a life free from all forms of violence. GBV against women and girls includes physical, sexual, psychological, economic abuse and harmful practices<sup>27</sup>, and persists in every country. It is an extreme manifestation of gender inequality and can violate or abuse

27 GBV is defined in CEDAW, General Recommendation N°35.

human rights and fundamental freedoms. It reinforces the vicious cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

- 96 Poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and GBV against women and girls, including sexual violence,<sup>28</sup> are linked in multiple ways that will vary depending on context. Violence and the fear of it, reduce people's capacity to work, their productivity and livelihood assets, increases household expenditures (e.g. medical treatments) and also restricts access to community support and service delivery of all kinds. Deterioration in food security status can contribute to the increase in all forms of violence, including GBV at individual, household, community and societal level. Multiple factors such as discrimination based on ethnicity or disability can intensify the risk of GBV. There is extensive evidence documenting GBV, including sexual violence, in the agriculture and food sectors<sup>29</sup>, for example when women and girls collect water, food and fuelwood. Food insecurity itself can exacerbate tensions within the household leading to domestic violence. At the same time, women and girls living in urban areas can also face high risk of GBV. This may result from factors that include greater social fragmentation, extreme poverty, poor quality and congested living conditions.
- 97 All forms of violence, including GBV, severely undermine women's and girls' physical, psychological, emotional and mental health, dignity and well-being, compromising their capacity to take advantage of opportunities to further contribute to food security and nutrition and undermining their livelihoods and right to an adequate standard of living. Yet it often remains shrouded in a culture of shame and silence.

### 3.9.2 Policies and strategic approaches

- 98 Governments are urged to support the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including GBV and harmful practices<sup>30</sup>, in the context of food security and nutrition by:

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28 How can we protect men, women, and children from gender-based violence? Addressing GBV in the food security and agriculture sector. FAO, 2018.

29 FAO, *ibid.*

30 Harmful practices can be, among others, female genital mutilation and child, early, and forced marriage.

- (i) **Implementing existing international legal obligations, commitments and guidelines** relevant to food security, nutrition, agriculture and food systems and rural areas, including those related to CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action, and ILO Conventions, which call for the provision of legal frameworks to address and criminalize GBV and to protect survivors.
- (ii) **Implementing and strengthening existing national legislation and introducing new legislation and regulations as applicable to prevent, respond and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, offline and online**, that take into consideration the context specific manifestations and response mechanisms within agriculture and food systems. Many countries now have laws preventing violence in the workplace and domestic violence laws in place, but some have deficiencies such as exemptions (e.g. marital rape), or too often these are not mobilized when they are most needed. It is therefore vital that States enforce the law in relation to all manifestation of GBV, including sexual violence. They should also raise the awareness of police, judiciary, healthcare and education professionals and social care workers and the public, with cultural relevance, in order to improve safeguarding and reporting mechanisms.
- (iii) **Ensuring measures and services are in place for supporting and protecting victims and survivors of GBV** against women and girls, including sexual violence, which take into account specific manifestations within agriculture and food systems, as well as for supporting their needs within the context of legal proceedings, including criminal proceedings against perpetrators and investing in preventive measures. This requires providing effective survivor-centred reporting mechanisms such as emergency helplines, in Indigenous languages, when applicable, shelters for survivors and their children and ensuring there are 'one-stop-centres' where they can receive the support they need in an integrated way, with cultural relevance. It means not only punishing perpetrators but engaging them in processes to change harmful behaviours and attitudes.
- (iv) **Protect and advance all women and girls' food security and nutrition by ensuring the security and safety of all women and girls from the onset of crises**, with targeted approaches for survivors of violence and to the most disadvantaged, promoting their protection,

dignity and integrity. Special attention should be given to women and girls who are at risk to suffer from any all forms of violence and discrimination, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, particularly young and older women, women with disabilities, Indigenous women, women in local communities and those in vulnerable situations.

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Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders including civil society, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, private sector and development partners, are urged to take all appropriate measures to eliminate harmful practices and all forms of violence against women and girls by:

- (i) **Addressing and promoting changes in negative and discriminatory social norms and stereotypes that generate and perpetuate all forms of violence against women and girls in the context of food security and nutrition.** Investing in preventive measures should include addressing its root causes, including discriminatory gender norms and gender stereotypes. Initiatives could include campaigns and training programmes to achieve the objectives of these Voluntary Guidelines, through raising public awareness of GBV, including on sexual harassment and bullying, online and offline, and taking a zero-tolerance attitude to all forms of violence. They should address structural inequality in power relations between women and men—for example challenging the normalization of violence as a manifestation of male behaviour – and elimination of harmful practices. Men and boys should be actively engaged in these processes.
- (ii) **Promoting gender equality by supporting women’s and girls’ rights and empowerment, as well as strengthening women’s rights organizations and associations, social movements, civil society, local communities’, and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, as appropriate,** working to prevent, mitigate, respond to and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls in the context of food security and nutrition.



## 3.10 Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment across food security and nutrition in conflicts, humanitarian crises and emergencies

### 3.10.1 Issues and challenges

#### Climate change and natural disaster impacts for women and girls

- 100 Weather-related events linked to climate change are increasingly among the drivers of global hunger and food insecurity. Women and girls are distinctly and uniquely affected by climate change, earthquakes, climate-related shocks, like droughts and floods, water scarcity, sea level rise, loss of biodiversity, land degradation, desertification, and production damage and loss. The adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, further exacerbate existing gender inequalities. Women and girls, particularly women in local communities, and Indigenous women have less ownership and control over assets, lower access to EAS and weather information. Gender roles often leave them with more unpaid care work while simultaneously threatening their participation in sustainable development and reducing their own adaptive capacity. Women producers are often least able to withstand these impacts due to lack of access to technology and financial and other resources, including limited ability to access financing for climate-related disaster risk management and recovery, including agricultural insurance. Furthermore, this results in increasing levels of chronic hunger and poor dietary diversity.
- 101 The adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, are magnifying and exacerbating fault-lines of gender inequality which hamper development<sup>31</sup> on a global scale, while at the same time gender inequality is deepening the impacts of climate change, particularly for Indigenous Peoples, local communities and the most disadvantaged, with serious implications for food security and nutrition often resulting in the increase of the triple burden of malnutrition.
- 102 Women and girls play a key role in climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction in many communities, for example through

31 See for example UNGA Resolution 76/163 on "The Right to development" adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2021.

the management of early warning systems. Many women farmers and fisherwomen have gained vital knowledge of what works in the face of climate change that they are applying to their production techniques, yet too often they are not consulted or included in decision-making processes.

### **Impacts of zoonotic diseases on women and girls**

- 103 The COVID-19 pandemic and other zoonotic diseases have shone a spotlight on the full extent of gender inequality and women's and girls' exposure to all forms of violence, including sexual violence, globally<sup>32</sup>. The pandemic and related containment measures have exacerbated pre-existing drivers of fragility, widened inequality and exposed structural vulnerabilities of local and global agriculture and food systems, hitting the most economically vulnerable households particularly hard, with women and girls often the most affected.
- 104 While important to limiting the spread of COVID-19, mobility restrictions and other public health measures, including lock downs, have left many women and girls in already difficult situations unable to escape from abusive situations in the home, and also with reduced support networks and financial capacity.

### **Conflict impacts for women and girls in the context of food security and nutrition**

- 105 Conflicts, protracted crises and shocks cause hunger and food insecurity globally, disrupting supplies of nutritious and healthy food, economic activity, and food production leading to rising food prices and creating additional challenges for women to feed their families. At the same time, there is a circular relationship between conflicts, food crises and food insecurity that can drive conflicts, protracted crises and shocks. Children born in fragile or conflict-affected states are twice as likely to be malnourished. Conflicts are also a major contributor to displacement which negatively impacts access to nutritious and healthy food and livelihoods and can lead to long-term food insecurity and malnutrition for women and girls, including Indigenous women, and local communities' women. Conflicts also leave women and girls at a heightened risk of GBV, including sexual violence.

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32 UN Women report "Measuring the shadow pandemic: violence against women during Covid19" 2021.

106 Gender based discrimination in access to and control over natural resources, productive assets such as land, property and financing often results in women having fewer resources to cushion against the loss of productive capacity caused by conflict. In addition, women are often less able to protect land and property from forcible seizure during conflict and they may have difficulty establishing and defending property claims in post-conflict environments. As a result, their ability to meet both their own nutritional needs and those of their families is severely compromised and may lead to negative coping strategies.

### 3.10.2 Policies and strategic approaches

107 Governments, with the support of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, private sector and development partners should:

- (i) **Strengthen gender-responsive resilience, adaptation and mitigation policies and programmes** in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss and environmental degradation, particularly for women in agriculture, including Indigenous Peoples, and local communities with more support and investment in climate-resilient agriculture, agroecological and other innovative approaches<sup>33</sup>, as well as affordable, local sources of clean water in accordance with local needs, priorities, capacities and circumstances to achieve food security and nutrition targets.
- (ii) **Provide direct funding and support** to local civil society and community-led organizations, including women's and women's rights organizations that are leading mitigation and adaptation efforts to climate change, conflict-induced risks, the COVID-19 and future pandemics.
- (iii) **Consult women and girls in rural and urban areas about their needs in the face of crises.** Their local knowledge gained from adapting to crises should be respected and taken into account.
- (iv) **Support the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and**

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<sup>33</sup> *Agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems that enhance food security and nutrition*. CFS Policy Recommendations. 2021.



**girls in discussions and decisions on climate change adaptation and mitigation.** This includes discussions under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its gender action plan, and other relevant international processes<sup>34</sup> related to agriculture and the development of climate-related policies in their countries and communities.

- (v) **Address the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic and possible future zoonotic diseases, as well as other natural disasters** and climate change and extreme weather events in conflict or humanitarian crisis settings, and the impacts on women's economic needs, including forcibly displaced women and girls and women from Indigenous communities.
- (vi) **Support sustainable and resilient local and regional food systems** to improve women farmers' market power and complement the important role of international value chains in enhancing household food security and nutrition.
- (vii) **Adopt and implement social protection measures, including cash and food transfers that are available and easily accessible for those most affected by humanitarian crises,** especially women and girls.
- (viii) **Provide safe spaces for all women and girls and in every humanitarian response. Promote measures that prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment** in the needs assessments, targeting or delivery of assistance. This means risk mitigation of and response to, all forms of violence, and reducing other security risks related to food logistics and distribution, and including all women and girls in the process of selecting the location of the distribution points.
- (ix) **Ensure that gender analysis and needs assessments are at the core of humanitarian crisis response planning, frameworks and programming, including humanitarian assistance.** Promote availability of sufficient resources during and after the acute phase of crises, strengthening ability of women and girls including Indigenous women, and local communities' women, to cope and rebuild.

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34 Other relevant global platforms include CSW66 and InsuResilience Global Partnership for climate and disaster risk finance and insurance.

## PART 4 PROMOTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE USE AND APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES

108 Governments have primary responsibility for promoting CFS and the use and application of CFS policy products and policy recommendations at all levels, working in collaboration with Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) and other relevant actors. To increase linkages between CFS and the regional and country levels, Governments are encouraged to establish or strengthen existing multidisciplinary national mechanisms with the active engagement of the RBAs headquarters and decentralized networks<sup>35</sup>.

### 4.1 Implementation of the guidelines

109 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 Guidelines. The Guidelines are intended to support the development and implementation of relevant coordinated multisectoral national policies, laws, programmes and investment plans that will contribute to the achievement of gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

110 Governments at all levels, and intergovernmental organizations are invited to use the Guidelines as a tool to undertake initiatives toward achieving gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition at all levels. These include implementing existing national strategies, laws and programmes and designing new ones where needed; identifying policy opportunities and fostering transparent and open policy dialogue; enhancing policy coherence and coordination; establishing or strengthening multistakeholder platforms, partnerships, processes and frameworks, with safeguards for the identification and management of potential conflicts of interest; and supporting women's meaningful participation, agency and leadership in policy processes

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35 CFS 2018/45/3, para. 28.

including representatives of women's organizations and all people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity and those in vulnerable situations<sup>36</sup>.

## **4.2 Building and strengthening capacity for implementation**

- 111 Governments are strongly encouraged to mobilize adequate financial, technical and human resources, and to put in place gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms, with support of international cooperation and local actors to increase the human and institutional capacity of countries at the international, regional, national and local levels to implement the Guidelines and to identify priorities toward their contextualization, operationalization and monitoring.
- 112 Technical agencies of the UN, including the RBAs (in collaboration with UN agencies, Funds and Programmes, including UN Women, UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, UNFPA, UN Nutrition) bilateral cooperation agencies, intergovernmental and regional organizations and other development partners, are encouraged to support – with their resources and within their mandates – efforts by governments to implement the Guidelines, upon request.

## **4.3 Monitoring the use and application of the guidelines**

- 113 Governments, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to define national policy priorities and related indicators, mobilize regional and local structures to report on these indicators, and establish or strengthen, where appropriate, existing national monitoring and reporting systems in order to assess the efficacy and effectiveness of policies and regulations, and implement appropriate actions in case of negative impacts or identified gaps. Governments are encouraged to use science and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation approaches focused on learning what works, and adaptation to maximize results.

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36 See Part 3 for more detailed policy recommendations.

- 114 CFS is encouraged to include these Guidelines in its ongoing work and its existing resources on monitoring, at the request of countries or regions, and reporting on the implementation of the Guidelines will be in line with CFS mandate and the agreed principles in the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)<sup>37</sup>.

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37 See section 5.5 of *CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)*, 2017.





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