



Statement on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States

**49th session of the Committee on World Food Security
(virtual meeting, 11-14 October 2021)**

Item Vb): CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023) – Update on the development of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition

Mr Chair,

1. I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States.
2. We welcome the CFS workstream on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition, and appreciate the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines. Achieving gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment is fundamental to the realisation of human rights and the right to adequate food.
3. We especially welcome the fact that the Voluntary Guidelines are complementary to and support national, regional and international initiatives, particularly such initiatives that aim to address all forms of discrimination against all women and girls and sexual and gender-based violence that undermine efforts to increase food security and improve nutrition worldwide.
4. We appreciate the high priority that is given to gender transformative approaches, and think that this language could be further strengthened in the text. The Joint Programme of the Rome-based UN agencies for Gender Transformative Approaches for Food Security and Nutrition, funded by the EU, can be a good reference in this regard. We also welcome the fact that the draft text clearly recognises that women and girls often experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

5. The Voluntary Guidelines should duly take into account the gaps and specificities of gender issues with regard to the rural and urban dimension of food security and nutrition. A balanced approach in agriculture as well as other sectors that are relevant for food security and nutrition (e.g. fisheries, aquaculture and forestry) is needed.
6. Universal social protection for the realisation of the right to food is essential and we need to ensure that the progress in terms of food security and nutrition is adequately recognised and not narrowly interpreted in relation to shock responsive food and nutrition assistance.
7. Nonetheless, we also recommend that special attention is given to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment for food security and nutrition in contexts of humanitarian emergencies, crises and conflict.
8. Topics that in our opinion need greater emphasis in the text are: gender responsive budgeting; access to land and financial services, and opportunities to move from the informal to the formal sector; the significance of trade for gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment; healthy diets and the challenges associated with malnutrition; breastfeeding; justice – including basic legal and property rights; feminisation of agriculture; and the integration of traditional knowledge held by women into standard education and training curriculums.
9. We very much appreciate the transparent and inclusive policy process and look forward to future exchanges of views in order to achieve ambitious Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment.

Thank you, Mr Chair.
