

**Endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition**

**11 October, 2022**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocols Fully Observed.

I join CFS in celebrating all rural women world as we commemorate the International Day for Rural Women this week. For Africa, we will be commemorating the event on 15 October in Mozambique and this year's edition is dedicated to showcasing and empowering women in the blue economy in line with the Africa Union effort to implement our program of *confining the hand held-hoe to the museum*.

I also congratulate CFS for the efforts so far undertaking in the preparation of CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls Empowerment.

Women, no doubt, play a tremendous role in agriculture globally even though it is under-reported. In Africa, women are a key pillar in the continent's food and agricultural systems, comprising at least 50 percent of the agricultural workforce and owning one-third of the SMEs that produce, process and trade in agricultural products and services although they suffer persisting gender inequalities, such as less access to land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets, and high-value agrifood chains and obtain lower prices for their crops constraining women's productivity, food security and nutrition contribution.

The Guidelines as we are informed will generally empower women in agriculture. Specifically, it will support Member States, development partners 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.

The Guidelines will also provide concrete policy guidance based on good practices and lessons learnt on gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive public policies, programmes and innovative.

These are very laudable objectives and we support the Guidelines.

Additionally, in Africa, the guideline will inform the Continental Policy on Women in Agriculture that we are currently putting together in collaboration with UN women.

I strongly endorse the Guidelines and I urge member states to urgently finalize the policy convergence process.

I thank you for your attention.