

Agenda item III - Strengthening coordinated policy responses to the global food crisis – The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023

Thank you Chair,

The World Health Organization is proud to contribute to SOFI report as one of the five UN Organizations working together to update the global community on global progress towards ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition.

This year's report revealed that the megatrend of urbanization is shifting diets across rural and urban settings, increasing demand for more diverse and nutritious foods, but also more convenient highly processed foods and foods away from home, which are often high in fats, sugars and salt. Too many people globally remain unable to afford a healthy diet. A coordinated response towards food systems transformation for food security and nutrition must recognize these trends.

WHO advocates for a package of concrete evidence-based policy actions that cross sectors and levels of government to move away from the primary production and consumption of energy-dense, highly processed and unsafe foods towards the promotion of foods that are nutrient rich, safe, diverse, sustainably produced and equitably distributed.

We must also acknowledge the role of international trade in the spread of, and increased demand for, highly processed foods high in fats, sugars, and salt. WHO calls for commitments to ensure coherence between trade and nutrition policy objectives, so that international trade supports rather than undermines affordable healthy diets.

WHO remains committed to continue working with the CFS, and in line with its mandate, to promote sustainable food systems that support the health of people and planet.

[239 words]

Agenda item IV: Global interlinkages dialogues

For information and discussion

- **The 2023 UN SDGs Summit and 2024 “Summit of the Future”;**
- **b) Food and Climate Change: “COP moment - from Sharm el-Sheikh to Dubai”;**
- **c) COP 15: the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;**
- **d) UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment 2023: progress on the National Pathways.**

Thank you Chair,

The World Health Organization would like to reiterate the importance of ensuring that food systems actions need to work towards ensuring good health and adequate nutrition of people, by delivering healthy diets to all.

The first UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment which took place here in July 2023, showed us that there is still a long way to go in ensuring that food security, healthy diets, good nutrition, health and well-being for all are key outcomes of food systems transformation. At the same time, potential negative impacts of the food systems transformation on accessibility and affordability of healthy diets should be carefully monitored and averted.

We welcome the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly that was adopted at the SDG Summit and which called, in paragraph 38 (b), for accelerating actions to end hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, and the realization of the right to adequate food including through the promotion of safe, nutritious and healthy diets.

WHO looks forward to the upcoming COP28 which, we hope, will be more deliberate in bringing to the attention of the negotiators the interlinkages between nutrition and climate, including the importance of healthy diets from sustainable food systems as a smart mitigation and adaptation measure.

In this context, an important initiative on climate action and nutrition (I-CAN) has been established by the COP27 Egyptian Presidency in collaboration with WHO, FAO, GAIN, SUN and other partners. I-CAN envisions fostering collaboration to accelerate transformative action to address the critical nexus of climate change and nutrition and support Member States in delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation policy actions that also contribute to improved nutrition. A clear win-win for people and planet.

[295 words]

Agenda V. Empowering Women and Girls and Promoting Gender Equality: Endorsement and Uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment (GEWE) in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition

Chair,

The World Health Organization welcomes the CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

As stated in these Guidelines (paragraph 34), women and girls have specific nutritional needs throughout the life course. (And para 35) It also highlights that women and young women have additional nutritional needs in both quantity and quality.

For example,

Anaemia is a major public health concern affecting women and girls. Inadequate diets and poor absorption of key nutrients are important causes of anaemia.

A global nutrition target for anaemia in women of reproductive age was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2012 to achieve a 50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age by 2025.

However, little progress has been made in reducing anaemia and if current trends are not reverted, nearly one-third of women of reproductive age will still be affected by anaemia in 2025, thus widely missing the global target of a 50% reduction in the prevalence compared to the 2012 baseline of 28.5%.

In 2019, globally 570 million women of reproductive age (29.9%), 31.9 million pregnant women (36.5%) and 269 million children 6 to 59 months of age (40%) were affected, impairing physical capacity and work performance and, when women were pregnant, increasing the risk of complications and maternal and neonatal mortality. Those affected were more likely to reside in rural settings, in poorer households and to have received no formal education.

This year, WHO has launched a [comprehensive framework for action to accelerate anaemia reduction](#) and an [Anaemia Action Alliance](#), recognizing that this requires coordinated action across sectors such as health, food and agriculture, environment, education and social protection. It also highlights the importance of taking a comprehensive approach of promoting gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, a focus on young children, on greater equity, poverty eradication, inclusive economic growth, and the protection of human rights.

Thank you.

[320 words]

Agenda item VI: Leveraging the Use of Data for Driving Food Security and Nutrition Policy: Endorsement and Uptake of the Policy Recommendations on Strengthening FSN Data Collection and Analysis Tools for Food Security and Nutrition

Chair,

Data collection and analysis is key for WHO's work. WHO works with Member States and partners to prioritize, plan, implement, monitor and regularly evaluate multisectoral efforts to ensure universal access to effective nutrition actions, safe food and healthy diets.

WHO plays an important role in strengthening the capacity of Member States in collecting and analyzing nutrition and food safety data, and we facilitate data access encompassing several areas of food safety and nutrition and related indicators including micronutrients, child growth and malnutrition, key indicators within the Global Nutrition Monitoring Framework, and nutrition-related health and development data.

We define indicators and nutrition surveillance systems, host and maintain nutrition databases, monitor nutrition trends and measure the impact of country food and nutrition policies. We manage INFOSAN and respond to the management of major food safety events.

Many of the data used for the SOFI reports originate from WHO databases. Currently, we are collaborating with FAO and UNICEF to develop [healthy diet metrics](#), as there are no harmonized metrics for tracking how the healthfulness of diets around the world is evolving. WHO is co-custodian of nutrition indicators of SDG2.

The 2022 [HLPE report](#) highlights the *lack of coordination among various agencies that are involved in generating and analyzing FSN-relevant data, including within the UN System*. If we want to ensure healthy diets from sustainable food systems for all and achieve SDG2, we need to apply a holistic systems approach, including on data collection and analysis, also within the UN System.

We would therefore like to suggest a change in the recommendation 2. f) in CFS 2023/51/6 to read as follows:

Recommends that relevant UN system agencies, funds and programmes, such as the RBAs, WHO and UNICEF, in collaboration with other relevant international organizations, continue assisting Members ...instead of “Recommends that FAO and the RBAs”

This signals that we need to break the data silos also within the UN System and acknowledges the role of the various sister agencies.

Thank you Chair.

[331 words]

Agenda item VII: CFS strategic direction - MYPOW 2024 -2027

For information only

Four overall domains of the MYPOW are

- *Enhancing equity and inclusiveness in agriculture and food systems*
- *Fostering resilience of agriculture and food systems to shocks and stresses*
- *Promoting agriculture and food systems actions that protect the planet*
- *Strengthening means of implementation and collaborative action for food security and nutrition*

Chair,

We welcome the CFS Multi-year Programme of Work 2024 – 2027. We agree with the four identified cross-cutting focus areas of enhancing equity and inclusiveness, fostering resilience, protecting our planet and strengthening means of implementation.

Chair,

Amidst our aspirations and meticulously crafted plans, we must pose ourselves a fundamental question: Can we truly attain our objectives when our health falters? Can we effectively fulfil our responsibilities when preventable diseases strain both our health systems and economies?

Health and good nutrition must be a driver of food systems transformation. In fact it should be central in all our endeavours: whether it is tackling climate change, empowering family farmers and fisherfolk, promoting decent work or advocating for increased financing for development. Every time we need to assess the impact on our nutrition, our health.

As the CFS is the foremost inclusive intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all, WHO would like to encourage the CFS and its stakeholders to consider health and nutrition as a driver of food system transformation and suggest that it is addressed in all the MYPOW workstreams.

Thank you.

[190 words]