

CFS 51 – ITEM V – U.S. STATEMENT:

- Thank you Chair.
- We express our appreciation for the work of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment and acknowledge the hard work and effective leadership of the Chair, the co-Facilitator and the previous co-Chairs of the OEWG.
- The United States recognizes the tireless efforts of Ambassador Ferrero, Berioska Morrison Gonzalez, Tanja Gren, Tomas Duncan Jurado, and the entire CFS Secretariat as central to getting us to today’s endorsement.
- We are very pleased to see the workstream come to a successful conclusion and support the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women and Girls’ Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition.
- The United States prioritizes the advancement of gender equality because it is fundamental to every individual’s economic security, safety, health, and ability to exercise their most basic rights.
- It is also essential to economic growth and development, democracy and political stability, and the security of nations everywhere AND for the realization of the global food security and nutrition agenda.
- Across the globe, women, in all their diversity, make significant contributions to the productivity, sustainability and resilience of agriculture and food systems.
- More often than not, they do so under considerable and persistent challenges such as:
 - limited access to key productive resources such as land, to advisory and educational services, and to finance;
 - disproportionately higher unpaid care and domestic work burden, which was laid bare by the COVID pandemic; and,
 - a significantly higher risk of gender-based violence.

- The Voluntary Guidelines challenge us to address these inequities and to level the playing field for women and girls across agriculture and food systems.
- The Voluntary Guidelines provide a menu of options for strengthening women’s capacities, opportunities and agency, which include improved access to social protection systems and programs; efforts to recognize, reduce and redistribute women’s unpaid care work; and elevating women and girls as leaders at all levels of the agriculture and food system.
- In 2021, the United States issued our first ever National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. The strategy adopts an intersectional approach that considers the barriers and challenges faced by those who experience intersecting and compounding forms of discrimination and bias related to gender, race, and other factors, including sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, and socioeconomic status.
- We believe incorporating an intersectional gender lens improves our programming by identifying—and strategically addressing—the ways in which gender and other inequalities can limit certain people’s access to, participation in, and benefit from development interventions.
- We believe more men and women could have seen themselves reflected in the Voluntary Guidelines and benefited from it had there been an inclusive and intersectional lens applied to the document. We regret that this was not possible.
- We also see a missed opportunity in not elevating gender transformative approaches as part of the Voluntary Guideline’s recommendations. A strong and growing evidence base is clearly showing us that for true and lasting equality, we need to address the norms and rules that discriminate against women and girls.
- Despite these shortcomings, the United States believes that the Voluntary Guidelines will promote partnerships, foster greater policy coherence and spur accelerated action by all stakeholders at all levels.

- Once these recommendations are endorsed by the CFS Plenary, we must work diligently to ensure that this product is disseminated for use by policy makers and implementers. We look forward to seeing this happen in the near future and stand ready to support such efforts.
- Thank you.