

Australia is committed to gender equality and the human rights of all women and girls, and persons of diverse gender identities. Gender equality in itself is a goal we must collectively strive for. At the same time, we recognise that gender equality is essential for security, stability and sustainable development.

Gender inequality compounds the most pressing global challenges. No country can meet its development potential without ensuring all its people, regardless of gender, race or beliefs, have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Australia is dismayed by the continued gender disparity in food insecurity, with more women than men being moderately or severely food insecure. This is despite the fact that agrifood systems constitute a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries. The FAO's report on the Status of Women in Agrifood Systems has shown that empowering women and closing gender gaps in agrifood systems thus enhances the well-being of women and their households, reducing hunger, boosting incomes and strengthening resilience.

Addressing food insecurity requires a global approach to eliminating social barriers and inequities which limit access to food. Australia has a target for 80 per cent of all development investments to address gender equality effectively and has recently introduced a requirement for new investments of more than \$3 million to include gender equality objectives.

Finalising *The Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girl's Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition* took significant compromise from everyone. Australia sought a document that was truly inclusive and ambitious; at the same time we negotiated with a spirit of compromise. The result is a document with comprehensive, cross-cutting recommendations, and Australia believes that through its implementation the guidelines can be an important tool for governments, international organisations and policy makers to make strides towards the achievement of SDG 5 and many interrelated SDGs.

Australia reiterates our commitment to achieving gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment to achieve food security and nutrition. Accordingly we support the endorsement of the guidelines.