

Version 1 of Draft Zero – CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

1. Advancing gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment is critical to achieving CFS’ vision of ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all, and for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

2. In order to transform this vision into reality, at its 46th Session in October 2019, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) endorsed a policy process that will result in *Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girl’s Empowerment in the context of Food Security and Nutrition* that are targeted for adoption at its 50th Session in October 2022.

3. Gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment is essential to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as ensuring food systems that are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. The importance of gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment for sustainable development was acknowledged by the international community through the adoption of gender equality as a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Agenda (SDG5). Realizing gender equality and empowering women and girls will make a crucial contribution across all of the Agenda’s goals and targets. Thus, systematic mainstreaming of gender equality in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is critically important.

4. Currently, the global food system produces enough food to feed every person on the planet. However, due to a range of diverse challenges, an increasing number of people are failing to realize their right to adequate food and meet their daily food and nutrition needs. In 2019, almost 690 million people were estimated to be hungry, up by nearly 60 million since 2014, representing 8.9 percent of the total population¹. The COVID-19 pandemic may have added an additional 83 to 132 million people to the ranks of the undernourished in 2020², disproportionately affecting women and girls in part as a result of gender inequality and discrimination. Malnutrition in all its forms - undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight and obesity - is now the number one factor contributing to the global burden of disease and reduced life expectancy. In this challenging global context, addressing gender inequality and ensuring women’s and girls’ rights is urgent and more important than ever to achieve food security and nutrition for all.

5. A large body of evidence demonstrates the positive links between gender

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Commented [BN3]: Women are also disproportionately economically affected with the loss of employment and covid related restrictions which impacted rural economies (reduction in input supplies, market closures) and increase of GBV

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¹ The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI), 2020

² SOFI, 2020.

equality and food security and nutrition. Gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is not only fundamental to the realization of human rights, it is also essential for poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable natural resource management, mitigating and adapting to climate change, protecting ecosystems and conserving biodiversity. Empowering women is one of the most effective ways to improve nutrition outcomes not only of women but of all family members, lowering infant mortality and reducing child malnutrition, thereby helping to break intergenerational cycles of malnutrition, with special attention to the nutritional needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women. Measures are also required to improve women's maternal health while recognizing women's sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.³ Investing in women and girls and promoting gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment are not only the right things to do to achieve food security and nutrition, they are the smart things to do.

6. Discrimination against women and girls⁴, pervasive gender inequalities and exposure to violence result in unequal access to food, with higher prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition among women and girls. Rural girls face the triple disadvantage of location, gender and age. The gender gap in accessing food increased from 2018 to 2019⁵ and is expected to widen as the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures to contain it are having a negative and gender-differentiated impact on food security and nutrition.⁶

7. Achievement of gender equality is positively correlated with increased production and improved efficiency in many sectors, including in agriculture, whereas inequality and discrimination in access to, and control over, resources continue to undermine economic performance, leading to below-potential economic outcomes. Women play active roles as agents in food systems as farmers, producers, processors, traders, wage-workers and entrepreneurs throughout the value chains. Giving women the same access as men to agricultural resources would raise total agricultural output by 2.5–4 percent, and potentially reduce the number of hungry people by 12–17 percent.⁷ Providing adequate support to women in food systems is critical for the planet to feed nine

³ GA Resolution 70/1-2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994. Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, 1995. CSW 62 and 63 Agreed Conclusions

⁴ United Nations, 1979. 'Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women' (CEDAW), Article 1 - Discrimination against women is defined as: "Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." Discrimination can stem from both law (de jure) or from practice (de facto). The CEDAW Convention recognizes and addresses both forms of discrimination, whether contained in laws, policies, procedures or practice.

⁵ SOFI, 2020

⁶ [FAO Policy Brief on Gendered Impacts of COVID-19 and equitable policy responses in agriculture, food security and nutrition](#), FAO, 2020

⁷ The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-11. WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE - Closing the gender gap for development

billion people in 2050 and produce 50 percent more food.⁸

8. Despite positive progress made over decades, gender inequalities persist as women and girls continue to face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in many areas. This manifests itself in unequal access to, and control over, key productive resources, assets, technologies, services, economic opportunities, and participation in decision-making processes at household, community and national levels, as well as unbalanced and unrecognized responsibilities in terms of unpaid care and domestic work - all negatively impacting various dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization and stability.

9. Gender inequality disproportionately impacts women and girls, who continue to have lower social status and economic and political power in many parts of the world. However, discriminatory barriers and limiting societal gender norms and expectations prevent everyone from fulfilling their full potential. Thus, changing gender roles and relations towards equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities will benefit the whole society. It is crucial that all actors, including men and boys, take joint responsibility and have an active role in this process.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES

10. The objective of the Guidelines is to support Member States, development partners and other stakeholders to advance gender equality, women's and girls' rights, and women's and girls' empowerment, as part of their efforts to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security.

11. The Guidelines will provide concrete policy guidance based on good practices and lessons learnt on gender mainstreaming⁹, gender transformative interventions and innovative solutions. They aim to contribute towards a gender-responsive approach, improving legal and policy frameworks, institutional arrangements, national plans and programmes, and promoting innovative partnerships and increased investments in human and financial resources that are conducive to promoting gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment.

12. The Guidelines aim to foster greater policy coherence among gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment and food security and nutrition agendas, and promote mutually reinforcing policy measures. Generating and disseminating evidence on the diverse situations and experiences of women and girls, men and boys and recognizing their differentiated opportunities, constraints and outcomes in the

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⁸ The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges, FAO 2017

⁹ Gender mainstreaming is, as defined in the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2 - Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"

context of food security and nutrition helps to transform societal norms, raise awareness and supports appropriate responses including targeted development of policies and programs.

13. The Guidelines will contribute to accelerating action by all stakeholders at all levels, including farmers' and women's organizations, to achieve the vision of CFS and the goals of the 2030 Agenda, as part of the United Nations Decade of Action for Sustainable Development (2020-2030). Given the important roles that women and girls play in agriculture¹⁰ and food systems, family farming as well as in household food security and nutrition, the Guidelines will also contribute to the implementation of the Action Plans of the UN Decades of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), on Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028), on Family Farming (2019-2028), and Ecosystems Restoration (2021-2030) and benefit from the 2021 Food System Summit.

Commented [BN8]: Include Gender Equality Forum Action Coalitions Blue Prints (2021 – 2026)

1.3 – NATURE OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES AND THEIR INTENDED USERS

14. The Guidelines are voluntary and non-binding and should be interpreted and applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law, and with due regard to voluntary commitments under applicable regional and international instruments. These Guidelines are intended to be interpreted and applied in accordance with national legal systems and their institutions.

15. The Voluntary Guidelines are complementary to and support national, regional and international initiatives, which aim at addressing all forms of discrimination against women and girls that negatively impact upon food security and nutrition. In particular, CFS guidance should build upon and integrate existing instruments adopted on this topic within the context of the UN system.

16. The Guidelines are intended for all stakeholders that are involved in addressing food security and nutrition, gender equality and women's empowerment. They primarily address governments at all levels to help design and implement public policies, as their primary objective is to provide concrete instruments to build policy coherence between and across public sector policies at national, regional and global levels. They are also of value to other actors involved in policy discussions and policy implementation processes. These actors include:

- a) Governments;
- b) Intergovernmental and regional organizations, including UN agencies and bodies;
- c) Civil society, including women's, farmers' and small-scale food producers' organizations, trade unions of domestic, rural and agricultural workers, and indigenous peoples;
- d) Private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SME);
- e) Research organizations and universities;
- f) Development agencies, including international financial institutions; and

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¹⁰ Agriculture includes crops, forestry, fisheries, livestock and aquaculture. UNGA Resolution A/RES/74/242. Paragraph 20.

g) Philanthropic foundations.

PART 2 –GUIDING PRINCIPLES

17. The Guidelines include a number of guiding principles in support of the recommendations presented in Part 3. To achieve food security and nutrition outcomes for all, policies and intervention should be aligned with the following overall principles:

18. **Realization of the Right to adequate Food.** Achieving gender equality is fundamental to the realization of the Right to Food. Gender equality considerations should be at the centre of all food security and nutrition policies and interventions. The right to adequate food will not be fully realized without parallel progress regarding women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

19. **Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and interventions.** Any planned action or intervention for food security and nutrition should be assessed in terms of the implications for women and men, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels, making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres.

20. **Coherent and Context-specific policies.** Strengthen the policy coherence between gender equality policy and sectoral policies related to food security and nutrition and promote context-specific approaches that take into account the national, regional and local context.

21. **Empowerment of Women and Girls and transformative approaches.** Promote women's and girls' empowerment, recognizing them as agents of change. Advocate, promote and strive for the use of transformative approaches that tackle both the symptoms and the structural causes of gender inequalities and disempowerment as to achieve lasting change in terms of the agency, power and choices women have over their own lives.

22. **Active engagement of men and boys.** Engage all actors to take joint responsibility and play an active role for the successful transformation of unequal and discriminatory social systems, institutions and structures.

23. **Evidence-based policies.** Design policies and interventions based on gender analysis, using sex- and age-disaggregated data and gender sensitive statistic and indicators¹¹, which capture the multiple dimensions of empowerment and specificity of women and men's lives. Take evidence from a range of participatory assessments and rigorous studies, based on scientific, interdisciplinary, traditional, indigenous and local knowledge.

24. **Risk analysis and Do no harm.** Ensure that a measure intended to address one dimension of gender inequality and empowerment will not negatively impact another

¹¹ For example Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index and Women's Empowerment in Nutrition Index.

aspect of gender equality [and empowerment](#).

25. **Inclusiveness and participation.** Promote policies that are peoples centered and based on participatory approach. Enabling and promoting the participation of [women of all ages](#) in vulnerable situations in the process of policy design is not only critical to ensure that policy goals respond to their priorities, but also a strategic means for overcoming social exclusion.

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26. **Holistic and multidimensional approach.** Promote holistic approach taking into account that women often experience different multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination across and throughout countries due, for instance, to age, race, ethnicity, social class, religion, gender, migration status and disabilities that impact differently food security and nutrition outcomes.

27. **Collective Action.** Recognize and support the important role and potential of civil society, farmers and women's organizations, and their collective action in promoting gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment.

28. **Adequate financial, technical and human resources.** Ensure sufficient resources are available to institutions, groups, organizations and movements dedicated to advancing gender equality to implement the recommendations presented in Part 3.

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28-29. **Learning, knowledge management.** [Share good practices and lessons to promote learning and understanding across geographies and facilitate the adoption of these voluntary guidelines. Adopt innovative communication strategies to effectively reach and influence the diverse stockholders.](#)

PART 3 – THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

3.1. Women's participation in decision-making, leadership, and policy-making in food security and nutrition

29-30. **Problem statement:** *Globally, women are not well represented in the decision-making processes for food security and nutrition, which is an obstacle to the design and implementation of effective related policies to support the realization of their rights and promotion of women's interests. Promoting women's leadership is vital in advancing agricultural development and food and nutrition security,*

30-31. Promoting the empowerment of women in the food security and nutrition and agricultural sectors is often hampered by their limited number in decision-making processes. Therefore, women's enhanced participation and leadership in public and private sector is central to addressing gender specific challenges and embedding women's concerns in key strategies and policies related to food security and nutrition.

31-32. Globally, the number of women in public and private political-level decision-making bodies has increased, although it is still low in many [countries](#). Under-representation of women at decision-making level, and women's limited voice and

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participation, in the food security and nutrition policy processes - at all levels - can lead to invisibility of their concerns in the national policies and strategies, as well as limit their effective implementation. This applies to development of national development plans and sectoral policies as well as to financial and macro-economic policies and budgets, and decisions over public spending.

32.33. Rural women face particular obstacles despite their significant contribution to community development. This is partly due to their multiple roles and heavy workload, but also to the persistence of traditional views about women's and men's roles in society. In many societies, several key decisions at household level - e.g. distribution of household work, access to productive resources, engagement in income-generating activities - are made by males. The lack of rural women's voices in planning and decision-making processes is a major impediment to addressing the challenges they face. In particular, women's engagement in food producer organizations and farmer cooperatives should be strengthened.

33.34. Possible policy area:

- i. **Coordinated action across multiple fronts and levels** Galvanizing women's voices and leadership requires coordinated action across multiple fronts and levels including transforming cultural norms and attitudes, providing relevant training to women and their organizations, engaging women in producer organizations, creating safe spaces in policy processes for women to advocate for the realization of their rights, and introducing quotas.

3.2 Women's Economic Empowerment in food security and nutrition-sensitive value chains

34.35. **Problem statement:** Gender norms and practices, together with legal inequalities, often result in women earning lower returns on natural resources and productive assets throughout the value chains. Lack of investments in appropriate technologies that support women's activities in the rural and agriculture sector impacts household food security and nutrition.

35.36. Throughout the value chain, gender norms and engendered patterns of behavior condition men's and women's roles and responsibilities, the distribution of resources, and the benefits they derive from agriculture and food production. Developing gender-equitable value chains requires an accurate understanding of existing gender relations in a specific context.

36.37. Women's economic empowerment interventions need to consider the whole value chain, and the gender division of labour within it in a specific legal, social and cultural context, from production, processing, storage, transportation, distribution processes, to household redistribution and use, to identify the constraints to women's entry and full participation at each node of the value chain.

37.38. For example, production from the crops managed by women is often retained for household consumption, offering marginal income opportunities. Moreover, as agricultural produce moves from farm to market, evidence indicates that women often lose

Commented [SS12]: References to social norms and unequal power dynamics are also pertinent here

Commented [BN13]: Consider highlighting the different levels and include possible recommendations for each recognizing that the transforming societal norms requires both top down and bottom up approaches:

National: Changing laws and providing the space and resources for equitable, inclusive, participatory and informed decisions.

Regional/Provincial: Developing strategies to change laws and policies; train for, promote and adopt inter-gender dialogues

Community: Changing institutional practices. Provide the enabling environment for fostering coalitions and networks. Promote the use of providers, champions and facilitators and train them; promote and adopt inter-gender dialogues

Organizations: Reaching groups with information and resources. Scout for men and women who can model the change expected and put them in position of leadership to lead by example;

Households: raise awareness, strengthen knowledge and skills to achieve equity and empowerment. Promote the adoptions of transformative approaches such as household methodology to enlist all household members and break the cycle of inter-generational poverty and food insecurity.

Purposefully engaging with men: shifting the view that men are the problem from men are part of the solution. Gender inequality, prevent men from achieving their full potential with dominant social constructs of ideas on masculinities and gender stereotypes.

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control, and related income along the value chain. Men usually sell crops at the market, including those grown by women, reducing their return on labour. Furthermore, even if women often grow high-value horticultural crops, such as vegetables for urban centers, lack of packing materials, cold chains and transportation result in high losses and limit earnings.

38.39. Women's engagement in value-added food processing activities is constrained by a lack of technology and agri-food microenterprise training, reducing their ability to access markets. Lack of investment in technologies and processes that focus on women's activities along the value chain, such as crop drying and storage technology, not only results in loss of food, but increases potential food safety hazards for them and their families, undermining food and nutrition security. It is also a missed opportunity for investments to positively shift gender norms.

39.40. There are many legal constraints that restrict women's ability to access and accumulate. Globally in 2019, women enjoyed only about 75% of the legal rights of men, across a range of indicators including mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets and pensions. Legal gender equality is usually associated with better outcomes and incomes in the labour market for women and consequently with higher spending on food and children's goods

40.41. Possible policy areas:

- i. **Legal rights to women's ownership, access to and control over natural and productive resources including land, as well as their access to services and knowledge to capitalize on them.**
- ii. **Investments in appropriate rural agricultural technologies that support women's activities, informed by a context analysis that applies a gender lens throughout the value chain.**

3.3 Recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work

41.42. **Problem statement:** *Unequally distributed unpaid care and domestic work places a significant burden on women, hampering their ability to participate into productive activities.*

42.43. Unpaid care and domestic work are critical to food and nutrition security. It includes preparation of food and processing, fetching fuelwood and water, cleaning, caring for children, the elderly and sick members of household, and many other activities necessary for human well-being and the society as whole.

43.44. However, this work is not equally shared. On average, women do nearly three times as much unpaid work as men¹². These unpaid productive activities are significant, and can contribute the equivalent of 60% of Gross Domestic Product¹³. Despite their

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Commented [BN18]: add the following consideration:

1. Promotion of gender-sensitive value chains – support and professionalize the commodities where women are heavily involved.
2. Inclusion of women in high value commodities
3. Promotion of women in higher value activities within value chains

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Commented [SS21]: References to the importance of labor saving tools and technologies are also useful

¹² <https://blogs.imf.org/2019/10/15/the-economic-cost-of-devaluing-womens-work/>

¹³ Alonso C., M. Brussevich, E. Dabla-Norris, Y. Kinoshita, K. Kochhar. 2019 Reducing and Redistributing Unpaid Work: Stronger Policies to Support Gender Equality. IMF

importance, these activities are not reflected in the national statistics. They place heavy burden on women by taking a significant portion of their time, hampering women's participation in (recognized) productive activities.

44.45. Redistribution of unpaid work between women and men and reducing the 'drudgery' of women's unpaid work is vital for the empowerment of women and girls. Investment are needed in technologies and in rural infrastructure, including improved water supplies, sanitation and hygiene facilities, access to electricity and mechanization of processing tasks.

45.46. Changing gender norms requires active engagement of men and boys. It is important to involve men and boys in domestic work and in child-care and move towards equal sharing of maternity and paternity leave. Investments into child-care facilities are also required. Bringing men into the caring economy will not only redistribute the care work but foster greater gender equality and support maternal and child health and nutrition, as well the closer relationship with father and children, and provide a positive role-modelling for boys.

46.47. Measures are also required to calculate and recognize the financial value of unpaid work. Without recognition that the value of care work in low-income economies can amount to more than 50% of GDP, the assumption will continue that men are productive and women, who stay home to raise families, are consumers.

47.48. **Possible policy areas:**

- i. Recognize, monitor, report and value unpaid or care work.
- ii. Redistribution of unpaid work.
- iii. Investments in rural technologies, that render unpaid work more effective and efficient, including improved water supplies, sanitation and hygiene facilities, access to electricity, mechanization of processing tasks.
- iv. Engagement of men and boys in relation with children and household care.
- v. Institutionalize the measurement of women empowerment index in agriculture at national level to socialize the different dimension of empowerment and ways to strengthen them.

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3.4 Access to agricultural labour markets and decent work

48.49. **Problem statement:** *In terms of food security and nutrition related employment, women are often concentrated in service sectors and vulnerable, insecure, and part-time jobs with lower payment. Consequently, women are less likely to have access to social protection benefits, including maternity benefits and pensions.*

49.50. Access to secure employment in conditions of dignity and safety is vital to human welfare and well-being. Around half of the world's women and three quarters of the world's men are in the labour force. However, women are more likely to be unemployed and to struggle to find paid work. Women are often concentrated in service sectors,

vulnerable employment and insecure jobs that are lowest paid, such as seasonal labour, family labour or part time work.

50.51. Generally, agricultural workers - including women - suffer from lack of adequate safety and health measures, which may lead to high rates of fatal accidents, injuries and exposure to pesticides. However, the nature of women's work means they are even less likely to have access to social protection benefits, including maternity benefits and pensions. This results in lower incomes and less protection in the event of shocks, compromising women's ability to deliver food security and nutrition for themselves and their households.

51.52. Women are frequently affected by gender wage gap, due to sectoral and occupational segregation, and to women's overrepresentation in low-wage and part-time jobs. In rural areas, women are more likely to be employed in labour intensive tasks, earning lower wages than men, and more likely to be paid a piece rate than a daily wage. In casual labour markets, women's wages can be as low as half of that of men. Women have less access to off-farm rural employment, critical to supplementing low farm incomes.

52.53. The time burden of unpaid household activities can significantly limit women's involvement in the labour market. The gendered division of labour within the family and burden of unpaid care work prevent women from having enough time for education, productive farming, off-farm paid work, leadership participation, and leisure time.

53.54. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, in particular, can be vulnerable to severe labour exploitation and other forms of abuse. In the case of women, this situation is further compounded by gendered dynamics and power relations.

54.55. **Possible policy areas:**

- i. **Reconciliation of paid work and unpaid care responsibilities.** National employment policies do not generally explicitly address the main challenges related to female employment, nor are they complemented by interventions and policy measures to enable women to reconcile paid work and unpaid care responsibilities. Consider setting targets for professions with flexible work arrangements, employments with childcare facilities.*
- ii. **Specific policy interventions to eliminate gender-specific barriers.** The elimination of gender barriers requires dedicated policy interventions beyond those aimed at promoting economic growth and the efficiency of labour markets. Enhancing the skills of the women workforce and offer incentive for participation in the re-skills training.*
- iii. Institutionalize the measurement of women empowerment index in agriculture at national level to socialize the different dimension of empowerment and ways to strengthen them.*

ii.iv.

3.5 Access to and control over natural and productive resources

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55.56. Problem statement: *Women in rural areas and in agriculture have less access to an array of resources than men. This includes natural resources as well as inputs and services. This could deliver a 12 – 17 percent reduction in the world’s hungry. Women are also often more vulnerable or disproportionately affected by climate-related shocks, as the resources they control are often the most marginal and fragile from the onset.*

3.5.1 Natural resources, including land, water and forests

56.57. If women and men had the same access to all resources and services, women’s agricultural production yields would increase 20 – 30 percent, raising overall agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 – 4 percent. This could deliver a 12 – 17 percent reduction in the world’s hungry.

57.58. Around the world, land serves as a foundation for security, shelter, income and livelihoods. However, rights to land are not equitably distributed and women encounter persistent barriers to land rights in over half the countries in the world, sometimes despite laws and policies that enshrine those rights.

58.59. In agriculture, women own, access to or control less land than men, as well as complementary natural resources including water and trees. Women’s land tenure and access is often uncertain, limiting options to sustainably manage it. Where women do have access to agricultural land their plots are usually smaller, and of poorer quality than men’s, and with less secure use rights.

59.60. Access to water is important for both agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture production and for household and domestic purposes (drinking, sanitation, cooking and hygiene).

60.61. Fisheries and aquaculture account for 10-12 percent of global livelihoods and are key contributors to food and nutrition security. Women represent up to half of the labour force in aquaculture, with processing and trading, but women have fewer opportunities and receive lower returns and income than men.

61.62. In low-income countries women and girls are usually responsible for the management of the household water supplies for domestic purposes and in 8 out of 10 households, with offsite water sources, for collecting water¹⁴. Such time-consuming chores not only keep girls away from school but, particularly in fragile contexts, put women and girls at risk of abuse or attack.

62.63. Forests, and their resources, provide different services for women -linked to the well-being of the household, including fuelwood for domestic use, food and medicine for the family, and fodder for livestock, compared to men (often linked to commercial objectives, including timber extraction).

63.64. The differential uses of land, water, trees and forestry resources by men and women lead to different specialized knowledge of resource management needs of those resources. Failure to include women’s specialized knowledge in land, water, and forestry

¹⁴ WHO and UNICEF 2017 Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

policy and planning can lead to poor outcomes, including loss of biodiversity, water pollution, soil degradation, loss of forest cover, and a failure to mitigate and adapt to climate change. A failure to ensure fair gender representation in community management and user groups results in women being excluded from resource use, undermining the imposed community rules, and consequent suboptimal management of the resources.

64.65. Climate induced weather-related events will have more severe impacts on availability of natural resources and consequently on women, increasing the time they need to use for fetching water and fuelwood. When climate related disasters result in male outmigration, women are obliged to assume on-farm responsibilities without commensurate resources.

65.66. **Possible policy areas:**

- i. **Land rights** for women, associated with opportunities for investment, in agriculture and other business enterprises, closing the gap between law and practice to improve women's economic empowerment, including facilitating access to legal advice and services to secure women's rights and ensure registration.
- ii. **Equal tenure rights** and access to land, fisheries and forests for women and men, independent of women's civil and marital status. (4th principle of implementation of VGGT).

iii. **Inclusion of women and girls in the development of EPRP and DRR strategies.** When climate change preparedness, adaptation and mitigation strategies fail to include women in their preparation, implementation is less effective and will foster ongoing gender inequities.

iv. **Recognize the importance of underutilized seeds and traditional knowledge which should be included in participatory research to promote resilience in marginal lands.**

3.5.2 Agricultural inputs and productive and advisory services

66.67. **Problem statement:** Women have less access to inputs and **services**, and they are often not well adapted to their needs and realities.

67.68. Agricultural researchers are critical to improving farm productivity for all farmers, and gender balance among them is key to ensuring that both women and men's farming challenges are recognized. Yet, in many countries female agricultural researchers are scarce, often less than a quarter. Even where there are more female agricultural researchers, they are far less likely to hold PhDs or be in senior and management positions¹⁵.

68.69. Both men and women grow crops but they often grow different crops and/or varieties and have different uses for the crops they grow. Most farm implements, including mechanized tools, have been designed based on the height, strength and body type of men,

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Commented [SS23]: This includes technical trainings and capacity building services. Although there is a specific section below, I was wondering if it should be mentioned that this productive dimension is affected by the limited access to technical knowledge and training

¹⁵ ASTI CGIAR

inappropriate for use by, or even harmful to, women. Moreover, mechanization for women's activities in drying, storage and processing may be unavailable.

69.70. Livestock is a key asset for rural households, often representing a wealth accumulation instrument, as well as a key nutrient source for households. Most animal care is usually done by women and children, with women often taking more prominent role in the care of small livestock and poultry.

70.71. Women often lack access to critical agricultural extension services. Female farmers receive little direct agricultural extension provision with most assumed to access information through their husbands.

71.72. **Possible policy areas:**

i. ***Incorporation of both women and men's desired crop traits into plant breeding programmes*** - *Agricultural researchers engaged in crop breeding, especially those in the public sector, should always engage both men and women in the process, including the evaluation of different varieties under trial. This includes ensuring that there are female-managed demonstration plots as well as ensuring they have equitable access to research stations.*

ii. ***Adapted and appropriate tools and technologies*** – *appropriate ergonomic tools and mechanization are developed for female farmers*

iii. ***Institutionalize the measurement of women empowerment index in agriculture at national level to socialize the different dimension of empowerment and ways to strengthen them.***

iv. _____

3.5.3 Credit and other financial services

72.73. **Problem statement:** *Women's limited access to resources such as finance, knowledge, social networks and transportation exacerbates their limited ownership of, access to or control of natural and productive resources. This results in lower returns on their productive resources and limits their ability to invest in their farms and add value to their postproduction activities.*

73.74. Section 3.5 has so far examined constraints that limit women's ability to generate revenues from engagement in agriculture, livestock and aquaculture. However, an exhaustive gendered analysis of the value chain, from input suppliers, producers, traders, processors to retailers, is required to identify constraints and opportunities of women to ensure they can participate and benefit equally.

74.75. Financial capital is a significant constraint to women's entrepreneurial activities all along the food system value chain. Women often face more restrictive collateral requirements, shorter maturity of loans, and higher interest rates than men. For women to not only improve productivity but translate it into improved incomes and livelihoods, they need access to markets.

75.76. Lack of financial inclusion for women also limits their ability to access disaster risk financing instruments to address climate related agricultural risks, although they are often more exposed to those risks, and their assets likely to be sold first to cope with risks.

76.77. A key aspect of women's access to physical and the necessary complementary resources are determined by their access to networks, or social capital. Producer groups, agricultural extension provision, transportation are often more available to men because they are better connected to those (usually men) who control many of those domains. For example, men may obtain lifts to local towns on trucks picking up commercial agricultural production, which is unavailable to women. Agricultural extension agents, who often facilitate access to market and services, are usually male and less likely to make these connections for women farmers.

77.78. The cooperative model offers low-income rural women important opportunities for employment, enhanced livelihoods and access to productive resources and services, as they often begin informally. Cooperatives can grow into organized structures that enable effective bargaining with suppliers and retailers to get better services, generating profits for their farm and rural enterprises.

78.79. In many countries weak sectoral capacities limit engagement, particularly with women in productive sectors. Yet women have more engagement with social sectors, including health. Leveraging women's existing sectoral community groups to deliver agricultural, financial and digital services is an opportunity to break sectoral silos. Women are often part of community nutrition and health groups, which offer an opportunity to engage with them on broader topics. In some countries, community nutrition promoters engage with agricultural producer groups that include female members to link agricultural production, the food system and diet composition.

79.80. **Possible policy areas:**

- i. **Women's underrepresentation at all levels of the global financial system, from savers and borrowers to bank board members and regulators.**
Women account for less than 2 percent of financial institutions' chief executive officers and less than 20 percent of executive board members. Yet the presence of women appears associated with greater financial resilience and a higher share of women on boards of banking-supervision agencies is associated with greater bank stability¹⁶.
- ii. **Specific financial programs for rural female entrepreneurs, such as specialized funds to access seeds, or newer technologies and mechanization; more flexible collateral requirements, alternative data to assess credit risk, and customized disbursement schedules that fit women's crop and cash flow needs; establishment of gender quotas within their financial service programs; from a focus on women to a focus on specific segments of women, by age, or value chain, or economic activity to ensure more tailored financial services.**

¹⁶ Sahay R. and M. Cihak, 2018 Women in Finance: A Case for Closing Gaps IMF

iii. **Women's participation to and organization through cooperatives:** these may be specific to women or mixed, in which case attention should be paid to effective participation of women (including quotas for women in leadership, and incentives for women's participation in terms of trade-off to unpaid work and care responsibilities).

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iv. Institutionalize the measurement of women empowerment index in agriculture at national level to socialize the different dimension of empowerment and ways to strengthen them.

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iii.

3.6 Access to education, capacity building, training, knowledge and information

80-81. Problem statement: Women's education has been recognized to contribute more to reducing child malnutrition than improvements in food availability. Despite progress, girls remain more likely to be out of school than boys and are also less likely to complete primary school. Women account for two thirds of the 750 million illiterate adults. Capacity building, training, knowledge and access to information are crucial tools for female farmers, so that they can make informed choices and realize their potential in food production.

81-82. Persistent inequalities in education continue to affect the lives of millions of women and girls worldwide. Women's education is a key factor to reducing child malnutrition. A child born to a literate mother is 50 percent more likely to survive until the age of 5 years. Girls' education is associated with reduced injury and mortality, and increased family and community resilience from natural disasters and extreme weather that results from climate change. Obstacles include poverty, early marriage and pregnancy, gender-based violence (GBV) and traditional attitudes about women's status and roles.

82-83. Women account for two-thirds of the 750 million illiterate adults. Women farmers are hampered in taking advantage of and using extension services and information because of low literacy rates and lack of access to basic education. Literacy correlates with greater understanding of nutrition, breastfeeding, better farming practices and improved crop production methods, including a 30 percent increased likelihood of using fertilizers. Literate farmers also have greater negotiating capacity to deal with actors in the agriculture value chains.

83-84. Lower schooling levels restricts their ability to access information and knowledge, and fully participate in agriculture and food policy and programme formulation. This reduces agricultural productivity, food security and nutrition improvements for them and their families. Women can greatly benefit from women focused training and capacity building programmes. These range from literacy programmes, to farmer field schools, to appropriate and safe crop protection application, to agri-food small enterprise management training.

84-85. Attention should be paid to the low percentage of women in higher agricultural education as it translates into a limited pool of available women extensionists,

agricultural technicians, researchers, planners and policy makers. Gender-responsive extension services are important to channel information and technologies to female farmers.

85-86. It is also important to ensure that school curricula do not reinforce current gender norms and stereotypes by directing girls toward lower paid sectors of the economy and excluding boys from care work.

86-87. **Policy areas:**

- i. **Female literacy programmes by governments, development partners and civil society.** *The most successful programmes are locally owned, designed around empowering the beneficiaries, and challenging gender inequality. Integrating women's literacy classes into agriculture and nutrition programmes enables women to participate in those programmes more effectively.*
- ii. **Promotion of school curricula at all levels that challenge and expand gender social norms:** *School curricula should encourage girls to pursue non typical careers such as in science and research, and by also educating boys in the care responsibilities.*
- iii. **Promote a multi-prong approach to education: universal primary and secondary with school feeding; develop new curricula to take advantage of the opportunities on the horizon, encourage vocational training.**
- iv. **Media should be sensitize to promote images and programmes which challenge and expand gender social norms.**

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3.7 Access to appropriate technologies, including ICT-based, digital and agri-innovations

87-88. **Problem statement:** *Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital revolution are transforming people's lives, offering new opportunities to foster wider communication, knowledge sharing, and collective action. However, technologies are not gender neutral, but mirror the societies that they are transforming. Gender lens is crucial to reap the transformational potential that technologies can offer women and girls.*

88-89. ICT and digital technologies have a lot to offer to women, by enabling them to have access to online information resources and opportunities. ICT can provide access to new economic and employment opportunities for women, and connect female farmers with new markets to sell their produce.

89-90. Mobile phones for instance can contribute to increasing women's safety and sense of security. Digital messages can be sent to women with respect to agriculture, but also regarding child nutrition and health care. Smart phones enable women to see their children's growth charts on their phone and graphics of healthy diets. Women can also receive early warning messages with respect to disasters to enable them to protect their families.

90.91. However, digital technologies can also exacerbate existing gender inequities in the food system, if gender aspects are not paid sufficient attention to. Women and girls are less likely to have access to mobile phones than men and boys and consequently they can be excluded from the information it can provide. Currently, over 250 million fewer women are online than man. The gender gap in access to ICT needs to be urgently addressed if the benefits of ICT to gender equality and gender empowerment are to be achieved.

91.92. **Policy areas:**

- i. **Design of agtech platforms to also address women's needs, opportunities and constraints** to ensure *the delivery of e-extension services*, that their agriculture, processing and marketing activities are not further marginalized.
- ii. **Messages targeted to both men and women** as farmers and with respect to child nutrition and health care.

#iii. **Invest in agricultural technologies to reduce the drudgery of agricultural work. They would need to be informed by a thorough gender assessment.**

3.8 Safety, security and elimination of violence and discrimination against women and girls

92.93. **Problem statement:** *Discrimination and violence against women and the lack of safety and security for women form a significant barrier to their social, economic and political development, profoundly shaping women's lives and opportunities, at great cost to individuals, families, communities and economies. Women living in contexts of conflict or disaster are at heightened risk of violence¹⁷.*

93.94. Gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against women and girls is a universal problem that globally affects one in three women in their lifetime. GBV undermines the health, resilience and productive capacity of survivors and their families. Women living in households with domestic violence are likely to have poorer nutritional status together with their children. GBV comes with a significant human rights, health and financial cost to the whole society. School-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls.

94.95. Crises often exacerbate underlying gender inequalities and gender specific vulnerabilities. In times of emergency, risks of violence to women and girls increase. Conflicts and disasters are major contributing factors to insecurity and malnutrition. Children born in a fragile or conflict-affected state are twice as likely to be malnourished. Gender-inequitable access to land, property or credit mean that women and female-headed households have few buffers against shocks due e.g. to the loss of production, food

¹⁷ A number of UN Security Council Resolutions have been passed to address these issues. The first, Resolution 1325, passed in 2000, calls for both participation and gender mainstreaming in all UN peace and security efforts, including peace negotiations, training of peace keepers, and reporting systems. CEDAW General Recommendation 30 (GR30) provides authoritative guidance to member states that have ratified CEDAW to protect women's human rights before, during and after conflict. GR30 affirms CEDAWs link with the UN Security Council work on women, peace and security as outlined in its Resolutions.

shortages and prices fluctuations. As a result, women's ability to meet their own and their families' nutritional needs may be compromised.

95-96. Food, water and fuelwood shortages often force women to travel longer distances, exposing them to a higher risk of rape and sexual assault, particularly in conflict zones. Food scarcity itself may exacerbate tensions in the household, leading to domestic violence. In order to feed their husband and children, women may reduce their number of meals per day and their food uptake.

96-97. Sexual exploitation and trafficking of women often increase during crises, due to the fracturing of governance, social and family structures. Refugee and internally displaced women and girls are particularly vulnerable to violence. Sexual and gender-based violence can also be used as a tactic of war.

97-98. In some contexts, women may adopt negative coping strategies for survival, engaging in transactional sex for money to buy food, exposing them to further violence and increased susceptibility to HIV and AIDS. Raising poverty and food and income scarcity also increases the risk of forced and early marriage of girls, with devastating impacts on their education, health and development.

98-99. **Possible policy areas:**

- i. **Legal prohibitions to combat GBV.** *In combatting GBV, legal prohibitions are essential, but insufficient, if alone¹⁸. Proper attention needs to be paid to measures strengthening protection of women and girls from all forms of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse.*
- ii. **Application of the "do no harm" principle.** *The provision of food and nutrition assistance in humanitarian situations should not put women and girls at greater risks, ensuring the protection, safety, dignity and integrity of the women and girls in crisis situations.*
- iii. **Equal benefits for women, men, girls and boys.** *All should benefit equally from food assistance and have the opportunity to participate equally in the decision-making and the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies.*
- iii-iv. **Promote the adoption of gender transformative approaches in agriculture to engage men and boys for a world with gender based violence.**

3.9 Social protection schemes and food and nutrition assistance

99-100. **Problem statement:** *The majority of the world's population, in particular in rural areas, are unprotected by any form of social protection, women being over-represented in this group. Social protection can enhance food security and address malnutrition, increase*

¹⁸ Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls should be ensured in support of food security and nutrition in protracted crisis situations, as recognised by relevant international legal instruments, in particular the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

resilience to shocks and incentivize agricultural production. Access to gender-responsive social protection has a significant impact on women's and girls' empowerment and opportunities. Social protection schemes need to recognize and address women's and girls' specific life-cycle transitions and risks and tackle the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

100.101. Social protection can support communities, households and individuals to prevent, manage and overcome risks and vulnerabilities related to food security and nutrition. Household incomes and livelihoods are often impacted by economic, health, climatic shocks and conflicts. The shock absorbers in most households are women, who may reduce their own food consumption to protect children and other family members. Social protection programmes, including cash and in-kind food and nutrition assistance, which can be scaled up quickly and reduce the likelihood of women's asset sales, while protecting food and nutrition security for all household members, are critical.

101.102. Social protection systems can also address risks faced by women and girls over their lifecycle and support them with child and family benefits, maternity protection, employment injury benefits, sickness and health protection and old-age benefits as well as unemployment insurance. A comprehensive set of social policies can significantly contribute towards advancement of gender equality in a society and address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls.

102.103. Social protection schemes in the form of food and nutrition assistance can have a direct positive impact on food security and nutrition of giving access to more and better food for women and their families. The first 1,000 days are critical for children's nutrition and interventions that support a healthy pregnancy, safe child birth, exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and diversified nutritious complementary feeding should be prioritized. In addition, school feeding can support children and especially girls to enrol in schools and benefit from learning, and safe, diverse, and nutritious food.

103.104. Nutrition assistance and interventions are vital for poverty reduction. Women and girls are twice as likely to suffer from malnutrition as men and boys, due to a combination of biological, social and cultural factors. Biological needs vary with women's life cycle, with for instance special needs in iron and folic acid, micronutrients like iron and iodine for pregnant women and adolescent girls. Malnutrition in mothers, especially those who are pregnant or breastfeeding, can set up an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. Therefore, establishing policies and intervention to support women's and girls' specific nutritional needs are of critical importance.

104.105. *Possible policy areas:*

- i. ***Addressing women's and girls' specific life-cycle transitions and risks and the diversity of women's experiences through social protection.***
- ii. ***Promotion of social security systems that promote gender equality. – one which does not discriminate against women.***

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PART 4 - IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE USE AND APPLICATION OF THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES

4.1 POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES

~~105.106.~~ Governments are encouraged to stand behind their commitments to ensure the equal rights of men and women, boys and girls in the context of food security and nutrition and translate them into national policies, programmes, and investments with sufficient human and financial resources.

~~106.107.~~ All CFS Members and stakeholders are encouraged to support and promote at all levels within their constituencies, and in collaboration with other relevant initiatives and platforms, the dissemination, use and application of the Guidelines to support the development and implementation of coordinated and multisectoral national policies, laws, programmes and investment plans to achieve gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

~~107.108.~~ Governments are invited to use the Guidelines as a tool to undertake initiatives toward achieving gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition. These include implementing national strategies and programmes, identifying policy opportunities, fostering a transparent and open dialogue, promoting coordination mechanisms, enhancing policy coherence, supporting innovative technologies, and establishing or strengthening multistakeholder platforms, partnerships, processes and frameworks¹⁹, promoting and supporting the involvement and engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including representatives of most vulnerable groups.

4.2 BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

~~108.109.~~ Governments are strongly encouraged to mobilize adequate financial, technical and human resources, and encourage international cooperation, to increase the human and institutional capacity of countries to implement the Guidelines and to identify priorities toward their operationalization and monitoring at the international, regional, national and local levels. Technical agencies of the UN, bilateral cooperation agencies and other development partners can assist in this regard.

4.3 MONITORING THE USE AND APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES

~~109.110.~~ Governments, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to define national policy priorities and related indicators, mobilize regional and local structures to report on these indicators, and establish or strengthen, where appropriate, existing monitoring and reporting systems in order to assess the efficiency of policies and regulations, and implement appropriate remedial actions in case of negative impacts or gaps.

Commented [BN26]: Creative solutions on how to disseminate, use and apply the guideline should be considered and should include:

1. Animation
2. Mangas,
3. Simplified briefing
4. Infographics
5. Pocket flip charts

¹⁹ These frameworks include the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and Nutrition for Growth (N4G)

~~110.111.~~ CFS is encouraged to include the Guidelines in its ongoing work and its existing funding resources on monitoring, as defined in the CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF).