



CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition

Comments by the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO)

The WFO appreciates the efforts made to put together this first draft and would like to provide the following comments:

On page 3, para. 4: When reference is made to Covid19, we suggest stressing that due to the pandemic, poverty and food insecurity have increased, also due to the loss of jobs, both in rural and urban areas, with a strong impact especially on families, women and children. This has happened in developing countries, but also in developed countries, with a strong worsening of the problem of food insecurity and the activation of food policies by public administrations. Also, with regards to the education sector for example, the closure of schools due to Covid19 led to the interruption of the school meal service, with strong repercussions on children's food security.

On page 3, para. 5: WFO suggests stressing more how gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is key for improving health, nutrition and education of their children, especially girls, who are usually destined to follow their mothers' path characterized by deprivation and discriminations, with negative impacts for future generation.

On page 4, para. 6: WFO suggests adding "and exposure to violence result in unequal access to food **as well as resources**". Also, it would be worth mentioning the need to emphasize the urgency of legislative, economic, cultural solutions to promote the right to land ownership, access to credit and factors of production, which often constitute a huge barriers for women.

On page 4, para. 7: At the end of the paragraph, when reference is made to the fact that providing support to women is critical to feed world population and increase production, we would like stressing that this is not only about increasing productivity. We already produce enough food to feed global population, although there are two issues: 1- quality of food is also relevant when talking about food security and nutrition, not quantity only; 2- food distribution: empowering women, giving them access to resources, to leadership roles, would also have impact on food production, quality and distribution, as well as on the general development of rural and thus urban areas.

On page 4, para. 8: It is worth stressing that, when referring particularly to rural areas, women face all the indicated barriers and forms of discrimination even though it is proven that resources management and production increase when they have access equal and fair to resources and that they are very innovative, resilient and can contribute to sustainable development.



On page 5, para 9: The described phenomenon is affecting women both in developing and developed Countries. It is important to emphasize the positive role of networks and women farmers' organisations in supporting entrepreneurship and income creation. Also, it is needed to ensure more visibility and advocacy for women in farmers' organisations, also guaranteeing rewards in project funding and facilitate access to public funds to support their empowerment and self-realisation.

On page 6, para. 16.c: WFO suggests not to include farmers' organisations within civil society, giving the specific characteristics of farmers' organisations and the role that farmers' organisations, together with agricultural cooperatives, can play in boosting development of rural areas, including by empowering women and girls in rural areas.

On page 7, para. 17: WFO suggests adding reference to the UN Decade on Family Farming 2019-2028, given the Global Action Plan with a specific pillar on gender equality (Pillar 3: Promote gender equity in family farming and the leadership role of rural women).

On page 9, para. 25: WFO suggests adding reference to women farmers when referring to indigenous communities and marginalised women.

On page 9, para. 28: WFO would add a reference to farmers' organisations and cooperatives here, despite their gender focus. In fact, it is crucial to include organizations where women have a leading role or a strong voice in the decision-making process; otherwise, we exclude all the organizations where gender equality is already present. Also, in order to apply an effective gender-transformative approach, it is essential also to include men and boys in the process of embracing and promoting gender equality.

On page 10, para. 31 (i): It is important to stress more that involving the actors that would be addressed by those interventions in both the designing and implementation, as *partners* and not beneficiaries only (including for example farmers, women, youth), is key for their successful implementation.

On page 10, para. 31 (ii): It is important to stress that education is key. Mainstreaming gender equality and women empowerment from primary school, for both boys and girls, is crucial to promote gender equality and positive masculinity among children and thus future adults.

On page 10, para 31 (iv): The need to ensure increase women farmers' access to technologies for increasing productivity and its sustainability should be stressed.

On page 11, para. 36: WFO suggests mentioning the need to promote food and nutrition education, because the problem is access to healthy and nutritious food but also food culture and knowledge, so to ensure access to more balanced diets.

On page 12, para. 40: WFO suggests adding reference to education rather than just access to resources. Indeed, through education all the people, regardless their gender, have access to information that makes them empowered and agents of change.



On page 12, para. 42 (ii): Although we are aware that these are *voluntary* guidelines, we still think it would be useful thinking of some kind of monitoring mechanism whenever talking about policies implementation, to see the real impact on the ground and the application by national governments.

On page 14, para. 47 (vi): We suggest adding that in order to promote changes in social norms and stereotypes, education and sensitization on these topics is crucial. Also, it would be important to create and strengthen public guidance and reception/assistance services for women victims of violence, in both rural and urban areas.

On page 15, para. 52: We suggest adding a reference to the need to increase specific support provided to women entrepreneurs in agriculture, with technical agricultural trainings.

On page 16, para. 3.5.2. Policies and strategic approaches: We would like to reiterate the importance of mentioning the role of education for boys and girls, women and men, starting from school age.

On page 16, para. 58 (ii): Although strengthen women's organizations and women's collective action is surely relevant to promote gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in decision-making at all levels, we should make sure that women take leadership roles and be heard even in those organisations, including farmers' organisations and agricultural cooperatives, whose focus is not primarily women themselves and their rights.

On page 18, para. 66: WFO suggests stressing that, despite all the challenges indicated, there are examples of women farmers and networks of women farmers who operate in the farming sector and food processing, with very good results in productivity and sustainability at local level. These best practices should be recognised and shared to be scaled up as well as to enhance their role at community level to increase rural livelihoods and thus food systems.
