

Australia is pleased to provide the below input to the guiding question: “Which priority issues and policy-relevant areas should be addressed through this CFS policy convergence process and included in the policy recommendations?” ahead of the first Open Ended Working Group meeting scheduled for 12 January 2023.

Australia recognises the significant benefits that enhanced data collection and analysis capacity can have for achieving Agenda 2030, in particular SDG2. We look forward to participating constructively in the upcoming policy convergence process for the data workstream. In relation to the guiding question “Which priority issues and policy-relevant areas should be addressed through this CFS policy convergence process and included in the policy recommendations?” – we offer the following comments:

- We consider that the policy-convergence process should focus on addressing the specific challenges associated with FSN data collection and use, in countries and regions where there are persistent FSN data gaps and difficulties including in the South-West Pacific, and other regions with significant rural agricultural sectors.
- In this regard, we recommend focusing the process to the development of specific and clear policy recommendations for national authorities to:
 - improve their production, analysis and use of agriculture, rural, food security and nutrition statistics;
 - increase the use of innovative tools and techniques; and
 - enhance the data-literacy of relevant stakeholders.
- We consider there would be value in identifying and defining the FSN datasets and indicators that, in a tight-resourcing context, offer the greatest return and should therefore be prioritised at the national-level. We also consider there to be value in agreeing a set of high-level principles that would help promote harmonization across countries and institutions, including for UN agencies undertaking FSN data monitoring and reporting. Improving the alignment and interoperability of FSN datasets and indicators at the global level, allows for more efficient and timely monitoring and analysis of global food security, and the provision of support to the most affected and vulnerable in times of need.
- We underscore the importance of ensuring this process involves sufficient coverage across all relevant components of food security. While there is a strong focus on FSN data relating to access (e.g. incomes and prices) and availability (e.g. production statistics) – trade is a critical component for determination of FSN outcomes and as such, market transparency datasets, including databases tracking trade policies, will also be critical for enhanced FSN policy-making and outcomes.
- We recommend that CFS should leverage existing work in the data space, particularly from the OECD, and avoid duplication across other International Organisations and the broader UN system. Strong engagement and participation from relevant FSN data and policy experts (including from the UN Statistical Commission) during the policy convergence processes will help to ensure the delivery of valuable, scientific and evidence-based policy recommendations that are achievable, action-oriented, concrete, and consistent with the CFS mandate. Further it will be essential to ensure that these take into account national priorities, capacities and contexts.