

**“VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S AND GIRLS’  
EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION  
Comments received after the OEWG meeting of 7 March 2023**

**AUSTRALIA**

Please find here within comments from Australia on the VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S AND GIRLS’ EMPOWERMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION, Version 24 February 2023.

- As core principles of the document we would like to see reference to the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and outcomes of its reviews**, retained, along with **CEDAW and the Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women**.
  - We also reinforce the emphasis on human rights and addressing structural, systemic and socio-cultural inequalities for transformative, sustained changes.
- Australia advocates for holistic action that addresses the spectrum of food security issues, in an integrated manner through mainstreaming and targeted actions.
  - We notice that the draft Guidelines lean towards inserting women and girls into existing systems and structures, with some education for men and boys. Addressing the inequalities that discriminate and exclude women and girls is critical and justifiable.
  - There are many references to “agriculture and food systems” but the guidelines are opaque on how they will be transformed (possibly with the exception of land).
- Australia supports evidence-based, inclusive and intersectional approaches that are **gender-responsive or transformative** (as opposed to gender-sensitive). This would mean systematic intersectional (power) gender analyses and data disaggregation by gender, throughout the program and policy cycles.
  - The draft refers to disaggregation by sex and isn’t explicit on intersectionality in relation to gender analyses.
  - There is a need for **gender (equality) statistics**, not “gender sensitive statistics”.
  - We are interested to understand the use of *gender sensitive* in paragraph 32 (iv) (is this a compromise already struck?) or if there is any scope for adjusting.
  - Australia proposes the term *gender sensitive* be replaced with **gender-responsive**. Similarly, paragraph 51. iii) that refers to *gender-sensitive investments* and paragraph 84. on *gender sensitive and specific nutrition programmes* would preferably read *gender-responsive*.
- In paragraph 10 of the Objectives of the guidelines, the phrase *women and girls, men and boys* is used to describe the gender binary. Moreover in other paragraphs the groups *women, men, girls and boys* are listed.
  - We strongly encourage the **use of a footnote to note that some CFS members recognise diverse gender identities**. The proposed footnote would have a similar function to that of footnote 6, regarding the non-universality of the term *peasants*.
- On page 24, Guideline 32 (v) the term *gender equal* is used incorrectly. Gender equal (implying ‘gender same’) is not the objective of the guidelines. The issue at hand rather is **gender equality** (of human rights).

- Australia does not intend to raise this in negotiations as we respect the need to avoid re-opening of paragraphs that have been agreed ad referendum.
- However we would like to understand if this is actually an oversight that could simply be corrected? If so we suggest ***gender-inclusive or gender equitable*** as suitable alternatives to replace gender equal.
- We support a focus on sexual and gender-based violence rather than the sub-area of violence against women and girls (although we would have preferred SGBV over just GBV); and we support the reference to SGBV, online (or technology-facilitated GBV) and offline as per paragraph 98 (ii).
  - We strongly endorse the reference in paragraphs 7 and 82 to SRHR – or sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights – in the Guidelines.

We look forward to these comments being considered in the elaboration of the next iteration of the Voluntary Guidelines.