

**“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**

**USA**

**U.S. Government Comments on the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and  
Girls’ Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition**

**24 February 2023 – Track change version**

15. “The Guidelines are complementary to and support national, regional and international initiatives which aim at addressing all forms of discrimination against women and girls, which negatively impact their food security and nutrition” This statement is somewhat limiting in that the guidelines are not only “addressing all forms of discrimination against women and girls, which negatively impact their food security and nutrition” but also hamper their contributions to the overall food security and nutrition outcomes for their household, communities and countries

20. “Equal rights to the enjoyment of all human rights” is not a concise expression. We would suggest “States should undertake the primary responsibility to ensure ~~the equal right of all persons to the enjoyment of~~ **are able to** enjoy all human rights contained in the UDHR.”

20. Inclusiveness and participation in policy- and law-making processes. The Guidelines foster policies, legal frameworks and practices that promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of all women and girls, including those in vulnerable situations<sup>9</sup> **and** Indigenous women ~~and~~ **as well as** women led organizations, including women’s rights organizations and social movements, while respecting plurality in the development and implementation of policies and laws. [Pending agreement]

41. At the community level, in both urban and rural settings, participation in food production, process, wholesale, retail, trade, ~~and~~ **including through participation** in community, and business associations can be affected by unequal power relations, gender roles and social norms, and discriminatory practices. Challenges may be more pronounced for indigenous and rural women, due to inadequate access to essential and social support services and the lack of opportunities to be represented in decision-making functions, as well as the persistence of historical and structural unequal power relations between women and men and traditional views about women’s and men’s gender roles in society. [Pending agreement] **The para as written lists roles and institutions in the same breath which is not very accurate.**

60. Land serves as a foundation for food security, shelter, income and livelihoods. However, women, including young women, encounter persistent barriers to having their **land and property rights, including ownership, use, transfer and inheritance,** ~~inheritance, ownership, use and property rights~~ respected, even when laws and policies enshrine those rights.

Para 94 (iv) While we support nutrition education programmes, some of what is articulated seems somewhat unrealistic expectations for them. One idea would be to break up the recommendation into 2 and turn the second clause into “Promote initiatives that address the historical and structural inequality ....”

Para 94 iv “**Promote nutrition education programmes that recognize that unpaid care and domestic work should be shared more equitably between women, men, girls and boys, and that men must play a role in ensuring adequate nutrition for their families,**

**(new Para 94 v) Promote initiatives that address the historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men and gender stereotypes that may affect men’s willingness to take on these shared roles around nutrition.”**

Alternatively you could broaden the beginning into “Promote initiatives including nutrition education programmes”, Or you could weaken the second clause by changing “addressing” to “acknowledging”.

Para 94 iv “**Promote initiatives including** nutrition education programmes that recognize that unpaid care and domestic work should be shared more equitably between women, men, girls and boys, and that men must play a role in ensuring adequate nutrition for their families, while also addressing the historical and structural inequality in power relations between women and men and gender stereotypes that may affect men’s willingness to take on these shared roles.”

95. revise “fundamental human rights” to “human rights and fundamental freedoms.” We should avoid suggesting that there is a hierarchy of human rights by indicating that some human rights are more fundamental than others. “Human rights and fundamental freedoms” tracks the language of the UN Charter.

98 (ii) Implementing and strengthening existing national legislation and introducing new legislation and regulations as applicable to prevent, respond and eliminate all forms of violence, including GBV offline and online, ~~taking into consideration its specificities~~ **that take into account/consideration the context specific manifestations and response mechanisms** within agriculture and food systems and in rural areas. Many countries now have laws preventing violence in the workplace and domestic violence laws in place, but some have deficiencies such as exemptions (e.g. marital rape), or too often these are not mobilized when they are most needed. It is therefore vital that States enforce the law in relation to all manifestation of GBV. They should also raise the awareness of police, judiciary, healthcare and education professionals and social care workers and the public, with cultural relevance, in order to improve safeguarding and reporting mechanisms. [Pending agreement] [former status: “All agreed ad ref para but pending overall agreement on controversial gender language”

99 (i) Same comment as above. Furthermore, it would be important to put the emphasis on making our approaches to changing norms sensitive to the context of agriculture and food systems and rural communities and areas.