



CFS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON REDUCING INEQUALITIES FOR FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

ZERO DRAFT

General comments

Switzerland welcomes the Zero Draft, its structure of the four main policy areas and its conciseness – including the insertion of a thematic label -.

We consider the Zero Draft as a good basis for the development of the CFS policy recommendations. We would like to reiterate some of our priorities we consider as important for this policy convergence process:

- Leave no one behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and should guide the development of the CFS policy recommendations.
- The proximate and systemic drivers of inequalities, including power imbalances, must be recognized and addressed, ensuring that human rights, and in particular the right to food, are protected, respected and fulfilled. A clearer distinction between these drivers should be sought.
- Reducing inequalities requires systemic changes in food and other systems relevant to FSN. This includes addressing the different dimensions of inequality and their intersectionality.
- Switzerland is convinced that the transformative elements of agroecology are key for reducing inequalities, as well as agency. Agroecology and agency are therefore key concepts to be addressed in the policy recommendations.
- The policy recommendations should be comprehensive and address inequalities across the food systems and other relevant systems, including in fragile contexts and along the HDP-Nexus, to ensure that FSN in all its 6 dimensions can be achieved.

Furthermore:

- A human-rights based approach needs to be strengthened throughout the document¹.
- Terms like “Inequalities” and “Inequities” need a definition on how they are used in the document.
- The VG GEWGE should be referenced as basis for the policy recommendations, a sole para on the women’s care and domestic role is not sufficient.
- The rationale should also address the aim of these policy recommendations “to support a fundamental transformation of food systems, making them more equitable and inclusive, leading to reduces inequalities and improved FSN outcomes.

¹ See several clear recommendations on this in the HLPE report e.g., 6.1 c)

“FSN policies and programmes should be grounded in a rights-based approach, informed by existing human rights instruments focused on the right to food and other interdependent rights.”

- The HLPE-Recommendations build on "Principles for Equity-Sensitive Policy and Action that Reduce FSN Inequalities". The Zero Draft does not reflect them appropriately. Without these principles, the framing of the recommendations is missing. Principles A – H should be better reflected in the rationale.
- In the rationale of other PR, we made reference to whom these CFS policy product is addressed. We suggest to add a para on this as this would increase the uptake, e.g., the PR provides recommendations for different groups involved in FSN-related policymaking, research and action – including governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and research institutions.
- sometimes the PR mention "disadvantaged groups" and sometimes "marginalised groups". Do we mean the same thing or different things?
- Our additional comments, wording proposals and amendments can be found in the attached Zero Draft

Specific comments

Rationale

Rising inequalities within and among countries is recognized as a major challenge to sustainable development.

It is evident that inequalities across food systems and related systems affect food security and nutritional outcomes. High levels of concentration in food production, corporate concentration in food trade, transformation and distribution, and inequitable distribution of agricultural assets and access to natural resources and finance are all trends that perpetuate and deepen inequalities among different actors in agriculture and food systems.

Inequalities in food security and nutrition (FSN) reduce people's life chances and quality of life, decrease productivity, perpetuate poverty, hinder economic growth and tend to systematically disadvantage and exclude certain groups: women, smallholders, farmworkers, informal workers, migrants, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and chronic illnesses, elderly people and youth. Many important inequalities are intersectional and often multiple sources of disadvantages are compounded, amplifying marginalization and exclusion.

Comentado [A1]: Add other factors, such as economic status, ethnicity, minorities, location, educational status, etc.

This vicious cycle continues as food insecurity and malnutrition further deepen inequalities through lost opportunities in other sectors such as health, education and employment.

Sustained disparities across countries and between vulnerable and other social groups can slow growth and lead to political instability, migration fluxes, with related adverse consequences on food security and nutrition and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, in high, medium and low-income countries.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which calls for "a just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met", the following CFS policy recommendations are envisioned as a focused, action-oriented document that provides guidance on developing and strengthening policies that explicitly focus on reducing inequalities and addressing their systemic drivers and that creates an enabling environment for all to live with dignity and agency, in order to guarantee food security and nutrition to all.

Comentado [BLC2]: Rational: Inequalities in FSN are often accompanied by a lack of agency in food systems (HLPE Report, page 14)

In working towards this goal, the importance of grounding actions that address the drivers of FSN inequalities in a rights-based approach, informed by existing human rights instruments should be recognized, as well as the need to take into account national, sub-national and local contexts.

Based on the understanding that all stakeholders share the responsibility to reduce inequalities in agriculture and food systems, these policy recommendations are addressed to Governments (relevant ministries, national, regional and local authorities and institutions), global international economic and financial institutions, the private

sector (including micro, small and medium as well as larger-sized-entities), philanthropic foundations and civil society.

These policy recommendations are voluntary and non-binding. They should be applied consistently with existing obligations under national and international law. They aim to build upon and complement relevant existing instruments of CFS policy recommendations and guidelines. The policy recommendations are informed by the CFS High-level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) Report 18 on “Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition” (2023).

A. TACKLE INEQUALITIES WITHIN FOOD SYSTEMS

Access to natural resources and access to markets

1. Promote-Ensure equitable tenure rights, including protection of collective tenure rights, free, prior and informed consent, legal recognition and inheritance rights, and monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and equitable access to land, water, fisheries, forests, aquatic resources and other food production resources for all, women and men, youth, Indigenous and vulnerable and traditionally marginalized people within the national context, in accordance with the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries, and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (CFS-VGGT) and other relevant frameworks; (*tenure rights*)
2. Develop and strengthen policies that foster a more enabling environment for vulnerable and marginalized groups to improve their access to and the functioning of markets for land, inputs, services, and water while monitoring, preventing and mitigating concentration of resources; (*access to resources*)
3. Increase smallholders’, vulnerable and marginalized groups’ capacity to access markets by strengthening cooperatives, associations and networks, and other organizations which can expand their bargaining power and participation in value chains, prioritizing nutritious foods to address all forms of malnutrition; while monitoring, preventing and mitigating concentration of ownership; (*access to markets*)
4. Foster public procurement programs for public institutions, food assistance and school feeding and implement policies that prioritize nutritious food, agroecological approaches, women, youth, family farmers and smallholders and contribute to sustainable food systems. (*public procurement*)

Institutions and partnerships

5. Facilitate formal and informal organizations of disadvantaged groups and build inclusive institutions and partnerships to foster their agency and collective action and participation in decision-making processes by empowering individuals and communities to actively participate in shaping food systems; (*participation and representation*)
6. Promote, strengthen and implement FSN strategies, policies and programmes for supporting and enhancing the social and solidarity economy ²recognizing their role in providing decent work opportunities, particularly to the most disadvantaged, and in eliminating poverty; (*social and solidarity economy*)
7. Promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation, as well as North-South Cooperation, to improve disadvantaged groups’ productivity and capacity to engage in all markets. (*cooperation for development*)

² Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) definition available at [Resolution II, International Labour Conference – 110th Session, 2022](#). Additional information can also be found at: [UNGA 77/281](#).

Comentado [A3]: Add research organisations, global and regional intergovernmental organizations

Comentado [BLC4]: To be formulated more actively: “All stakeholders – government, international organizations, civil society and the private sector – are responsible for reducing inequalities in food systems. Each has a role to play, individually and collaboratively, with due consideration given to conflicts of interest.”

Comentado [BLC5]: To be consistent with wording of other PR and VG

Comentado [BLC6]: As the right to adequate food is far from guaranteed for the most marginalised groups in rural and urban areas, the overall protection and promotion of food rights should come through more explicitly in the recommendations, e.g.:

“Engage in policy advocacy at the international and national levels to raise awareness about the fundamental human right to adequate food, including through the development of suitable policy frameworks, support for the identification and monitoring of food-insecure and vulnerable groups, and strengthening the voice and capabilities of civil society organisations and networks that advocate for food rights. (protecting and promoting food rights)”

Comentado [BLC7]: Issues related to access to resources could be merged with or addressed only in Para 2.

Comentado [BLC8]: Concentration of resources and ownership (para 2 +3) could be addressed in a separate para.

Comentado [BLC9]: The para on «access to market» should include: “create a judicious mix of local and distant market opportunities for small-scale producers and to benefit local consumers”.

Comentado [BLC10]: South-South and Triangular Cooperation should be addressed in a more general manner, not only under the heading “institutions and partnerships” and not only focusing on productivity and engagement in markets.

Investments in supply chains and in disadvantaged areas

8. Increase **responsible investments** in inclusive value chain approaches, **including in disadvantaged areas**, labor rights protection, **equity-sensitive storage**, food processing and distribution to **that reduce inequalities and ensure access to affordable and healthy diets from sustainable food systems for all in food supply chains; (inclusive value chains)**
9. Increase responsible investment in infrastructure, logistics and supply chains and in disadvantaged areas by adopting territorial approaches and strengthening regional and local trade and market connections; *(improved connectivity)*
10. Create opportunities for smallholders, vulnerable and marginalized groups and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to access finance, including through credit, savings and insurance; *(access to finance)*
11. Invest in inclusive information systems across agriculture and food systems, leveraging digital technologies – such as market price information services, weather **and climate services forecasting** and video-based extension – to enable all stakeholders to make informed decisions and help overcome asymmetries in access to information; **with consideration of upholding data privacy and data ownership** *(access to information)*
12. ~~Strengthen~~ **Increase** responsible investments in support of agroecological and other innovative approaches that contribute to the transition to more sustainable, resilient, inclusive agriculture and food systems, while also recognizing their role in facilitating equitable access to **affordable** healthy diets; *(agroecological and other innovative approaches)*
13. Increase investment in **research, extension, innovation**, and technical assistance in collaboration with universities, research institutions, and civil society organizations, with the aim of improving linkages between institutional markets and disadvantaged groups, particularly smallholders. *(inclusive research and extension)*

Food environments including processing, retail and trade

14. Undertake proactive planning of food environments, **including** in areas of rapid demographic growth, to ensure that all populations, particularly those most at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, have equitable access to sufficient, affordable, safe and nutritious food. Depending on the specific context, this may include **clear and non-misleading** labelling and restricting marketing of unhealthy foods, **in particular for children; (healthy food environments)**
15. Protect the rights and recognize the role of informal vendors in meeting the food security and nutritional needs of populations and develop planning and policy tools that enhance their capacity to sell healthy, nutritious and safe foods; *(informal vendors)*
16. **Promote better access by disadvantaged groups to knowledge and innovation** (e.g through training and capacity building), markets, financial services, logistics (e.g. storage, processing, packaging, and transport) and other services which are important to reducing food losses and waste at all stages of the food chain; *(FLW)*
17. Develop and strengthen programs and partnerships, such as state, community, or public-private food banks and popular kitchens, that foster the recovery and redistribution of food fit-for-human consumption, in order to promote the access to healthy food by disadvantaged groups. *(food recovery and redistribution)*

Comentado [BLC11]: What is equity-sensitive storage?

Comentado [-12]: To be coherent with VGFSN

Comentado [BLC13]: Add new para: Invest in rural, non-farm employment opportunities

Comentado [BLC14]: We suggest to keep this note broader. Weather forecast is just one aspect.

Comentado [BLC15]: Research and innovation could only be addressed in Para 40.

Comentado [BLC16]: The aim should be broader than only focusing on improving market linkages

Comentado [BLC17]: Title speaks of trade but para 14 to 17 do not really make reference to trade in the title. Delete reference to trade in this sub-title. Para 22-26 are about trade.

Comentado [-18]: We consider as equally important, that consumers also have access to knowledge related to nutrition and health and suggest to add a new para:

Promote nutrition education and ensure that consumers, in particular people in situations of vulnerability, are provided with clear, non-misleading information about the health risks related to unhealthy diets.

B. TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN RELATED SYSTEMS

Access to services and resources that impact food security and nutrition

18. Foster universal access to services that are relevant to food security and nutrition, including primary healthcare, immunization, nutrition education, housing, sanitation and safe drinking water; (*universal access to services*)
19. Foster universal access to social protection as direct support to food security and nutrition among the most vulnerable. This involves analyzing specific barriers to accessing social protection systems and promoting the participation of community organizations and actors in the design, implementation, and monitoring of social protection policies and programs; (*social protection*)
20. Promote access to decent work for all in agriculture and food systems based on careful consideration of, and with a clear plan to address local contexts and power asymmetries by strengthening regulatory frameworks and the enforcement of laws and regulations in practice; (*decent work*)
21. Leverage fiscal space, including through progressive taxation, to prioritize basic public services and use the available resources to support those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition and address the drivers of inequality. (*fiscal space*)

Trade, investment and debt governance related to food security and nutrition

22. ~~Incorporate~~ Embed an equity focus into trade, investment and debt governance related to food security and nutrition by addressing existing disparities of opportunity, wealth and decision-making power within food systems governance; (*equity focus*)
23. Foster increased transparency and inclusion in the negotiation of multilateral trade and investment agreements to promote sustainable food systems and access to healthy diets and healthy food environments for all, while also prioritizing the needs of the most affected; (*transparency and inclusion*)
24. Strengthen the rules-based, non-discriminatory, open, fair, inclusive, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core; (*rules-based multilateral trade*)
25. Assess the food security and nutrition constraints associated with national debt and undertake appropriate measures for its restructuring, swap or cancellation; (*debt relief*)
26. Continue efforts to reorient decrease agricultural subsidies which negatively affect production, food prices, nutrition, trade and environment, with the objective to support positive effects, especially the provision of public goods and contribute to sustainable food systems. (*subsidies*)

C. TACKLE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND OTHER DRIVERS OF INEQUALITIES

Systemic drivers of inequality

27. ~~Leverage SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities within and among countries) to address the systemic drivers of inequalities by promoting inclusion of~~ Proactively include marginalized groups in policymaking and practice and strengthen their agency and engagement, as a means of addressing the systemic drivers of inequality and achieving SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities within and among countries) and ensure that policies target the most marginalized people; (SDG10)
28. Promote a strong focus on reducing inequalities within interministerial and international platforms on food security and nutrition to enhance policy coherence and coordination with a focus on reducing inequalities

Comentado [BLC19]: The monitoring and regulation, as appropriate, of power asymmetries in food systems governance and decision making should be addressed in an additional para, e.g., "In strengthening the agency and engagement of marginalized groups, policies and programmes should have an explicit focus on addressing power asymmetries between stakeholders," HLPE Recommendations B.6.i and B.6.ii could be better reflected in the PR.

Comentado [BLC20]: Not only should agricultural subsidies with negative effects be decreased, they should be reoriented to support positive effects, especially the provision of public goods and contribute to a transition towards sustainable food systems. See also SOFA Report (2023): [The State of Food and Agriculture 2023 \(fao.org\)](https://www.fao.org/state-of-food-and-agriculture-2023)

Comentado [BLC21]: "Leverage SDG10" is a bit of a hollow, meaningless phrase.

"Proactively include marginalized groups" is stronger and more direct than "promoting inclusion of marginalized groups."

across sectors such as agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forest, health, economy, environment, finance, and trade; (*multisectoral approach*)

29. Identify and manage conflicts of interests, including in research, by developing and strengthening safeguards against power imbalances in agriculture and food systems, and other safeguards to prioritize public interests and promote participatory decision-making; (*conflicts of interest*)
30. Increase responsible and equity-sensitive investments from all sources that foster the potential of developing countries, including through appropriate financing instruments, such as climate financing, blended finance, sovereign risk insurance, loss and damage funds; (*financing for development*)
31. Develop and strengthen policies that pay specific attention to women's unequal burden of care and domestic responsibilities in food security and nutrition. These can include measures to reconcile paid work and unpaid care work responsibilities, such as flexible working arrangements for women and men and the provision of high-quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive childcare. (*gender equality*)

Climate, ecological, political and economic crises and FSN related actions

32. Prioritize populations whose livelihoods and safety are threatened by climate change, conflict and other contemporary global crises through targeted policies and resource allocations, including by increasing, adapting and diversifying incomes and by increasing access to early-warning systems, anticipatory actions, climate risk management services; (*protecting livelihoods*)
33. Promote the participation of the most affected populations in climate action decision-making; (*participation in climate action*)
34. Address the multiple drivers of food security and nutrition inequalities by working across fragile contexts and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus; (*HDPnexus*)
35. Foster funding mechanisms to support the transformation towards more equitable climate resilient food systems. (*funding mechanisms*)

D. STRENGTHEN DATA AND KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS TO ENABLE IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING AND MONITORING OF EQUITY IN FSN-RELEVANT DOMAINS

FSN data collection and analysis

36. Prioritize capacity building on FSN data collection and analysis in areas where current relevant food security and nutrition data availability is poor, with a focus on those countries which are lacking resources, infrastructures, data literacy and skills, in order to guide decision-making related to FSN; (*FSN data capacity building*)
37. Identify and fill data gaps through investment in FSN collection and analysis, sampling adequately along the major axes of inequality within each context, with the aim of assessing which groups have the poorest FSN outcomes in different contexts, paying special attention to historically marginalized groups and disadvantaged regions, in order to guide decision-making related to FSN; (*closing FSN data gaps*)
38. Collect and share data to monitor agriculture and food systems market trends, including market concentration; (*market trends data*)

Comentado [BLC22]: Why would we single out research in this context?

Comentado [BLC23]: One paragraph on Gender Equality with a focus on unpaid care work is insufficient. There is scope to more explicitly champion women's empowerment with a separate recommendation, e.g.:

"Empower women to contribute to reduced chronic child malnutrition, to respond to gender discrimination around land access, to take advantage of economic opportunities, and to better negotiate access to services, technology and markets by improving their education and skills and supporting their collective mobilisation, for example through self-help groups. (women's empowerment)"

Comentado [BLC24]: "Skills Development" to access employment opportunities in food processing, services, retail trade and other activities in the rural economy deserves its own standalone recommendation/paragraph and should not be framed solely through the climate lens.

Helping marginalised groups to both diversify their livelihood strategies within the farm and off-farm and their sources of income is a way of overcoming risks associated with any single activity and to cope with the seasonality of farm income.

39. Promote innovative and inclusive governance frameworks for FSN data which strike the right balance between access and sharing and protection, privacy, and security, whit the aim of creating trust and confidence, while facilitating equitable access to data benefits. *(FSN data governance)*

Comentado [BLC25]: Use wording of the PR on Data.

FSN related research

40. Increase responsible investment in agricultural and food systems research, including on harmonizing FSN data collection and analytical methods and indicators on important FSN domains ~~FSN indicators and metrics~~ that facilitate globally standardized reporting, with focus on inequalities in FSN outcomes and tailored to the most marginalized groups and areas; *(equity-sensitive research)*
41. Promote the development and use of research that focuses on the systemic drivers of FSN inequalities, with special consideration to research carried out in and by developing countries, including qualitative research, engaging with local universities and local knowledge institutions, while also taking into account diverse knowledges, such as those of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. *(diverse knowledge)*