



CFS

COMMITTEE ON
WORLD FOOD
SECURITY



CFS Event

Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition

22 November 2022 | 14:00 – 17:00 Rome time

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Introduction

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) will convene a half-day public event on 22 November 2022 (14.00-17.00, CET) in support of the CFS 2020-2023 Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW), specifically its workstream on Reducing Inequalities for Food Security and Nutrition. Convened in hybrid modality, the event will be open to all CFS interested parties and relevant institutions, including Members, UN bodies, civil society and private sector organizations, international financial and agricultural research institutions.

Objective

The objective of the event is to provide the CFS High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) with substantive inputs and contributions towards the preparation of a report on this topic, which is expected to be released in the summer of 2023 to inform the preparation of related CFS policy recommendations.

The event will present an opportunity to discuss, address and share views on the following questions:

- A) How do political, social, cultural, and economic inequalities around food systems negatively affect food security and nutritional outcomes?
- B) What are the main policy approaches and entry points that are needed, in order to address and reduce these inequalities? And which areas require additional data and further research?

Background

Food security and nutrition are pressing concerns, up to 828 million people face hunger and malnutrition, resulting in high levels of inequalities across national boundaries and among populations within countries¹. At the same time, inequalities undercut the benefits of economic growth in reducing food insecurity².

Inequality encompasses disparities in resources, rights, opportunities, power, agency and voice. In the context of the food systems, inequalities are

- 1 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2022. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022. Repurposing food and agricultural policies to make healthy diets more affordable*. Rome, FAO.
- 2 Holleman, C. & Conti, V. 2020. *Role of income inequality in shaping outcomes on individual food insecurity. Background paper for The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019*. FAO Agricultural Development Economics Working Paper 19-06. Rome, FAO.

evident in issues such as the distribution of land and other food production resources, working conditions for food system workers, and food accessibility and availability.

The relationship between inequality, food security and nutritional outcomes is evident. While inequalities affect food security and nutrition outcomes, inequalities can also be generated by food systems themselves. High levels of concentration in food production, corporate concentration in food trade, transformation and distribution, and uneven distribution of agricultural assets and access to natural resources and finance are all trends that perpetuate and deepen inequalities between different food system actors. In turn, these elements affect the food security and nutrition status of vast portions of the population, especially the most vulnerable groups. This vicious cycle continues as food insecurity and malnutrition further deepen inequalities through lost opportunities in health, education and employment. Thus, recognizing the drivers of inequalities in food systems helps understanding how to address them and, in turn, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The HLPE-FSN stressed the importance of addressing food security and nutrition through a food systems approach, highlighting the linkages between supply chains, food environments, consumer behaviour, and the economic, social and institutional systems that connect to food. Inequalities affecting food systems' drivers can be transmitted to all components of food systems and ultimately affect food security and nutrition outcomes³.

In addition, growing inequalities generated within failing food systems have been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and by current crises which are producing negative economic, social, and health impacts, especially for those who are already most vulnerable.

Furthermore, the HLPE-FSN stressed the importance of using a system lens in analyzing and addressing inequalities: different dimensions of inequalities, based on individual, household, community and country characteristics, intersect and are mutually reinforcing. Reducing inequalities requires addressing the different dimensions of inequality holistically and simultaneously, being aware of the complex power dynamics that generate and sustain inequalities.

In light of the above, addressing and mitigating inequalities is essential to realizing the 2030 Agenda, including SDG2. To this effect, it is clear that specific attention should be given to policies, legal frameworks, and innovative pathways that reduce inequalities. However, inequality reduction will also depend on addressing the dynamics, within food systems, that perpetuate these inequalities.

Proposed schedule

Opening Session (14:00-14:05)

- Introductory remarks by Ambassador Gabriel Ferrero, CFS Chairperson
- Opening remarks by Jyotsna Puri, Associate-Vice President, Strategy and Knowledge Department, IFAD

Session 1: Impacts – and drivers – of inequalities on food security and nutrition (14:05-15:05)

- Presentation of the V0 of the HLPE-FSN Report on Inequalities by Professor Bhavani Shankar, HLPE-FSN Project Team Leader
- Interventions from UN bodies
- Open floor

Session 2: Policy approaches, entry points, research questions and national experiences in addressing multiple dimensions of inequalities and their impact on food security and nutrition outcomes (15:05-16:40)

- Inequalities through a food systems lens: Dr Agnes Quisumbing, Senior Research Fellow (IFPRI)
- Income and wealth inequalities in agricultural development: Mr Matthew Fisher-Post, Research Fellow at Paris School of Economics (World Inequality Lab)
- Intersectional policy pathways to reduce inequalities: Ms Saima Zia, Women Secretary and Central Committee member, Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee
- Research and data on informal workers: Ms Megha Desai, Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA)
- Open floor

Closing session (16:40-17:00)

Wrap-up and closing of the event

3 HLPE-FSN. 2017. [Nutrition and food systems](#); and HLPE-FSN. 2020. [Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030](#). Reports by the CFS HLPE-FSN, Rome.