

The Committee on World Food Security
Contribution to the
2018 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
Global Review

“Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”

In depth-review of Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 17

The Committee on World Food Security

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to ensure food security and nutrition for all. CFS strives for a world free from hunger where countries implement the [Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security](#) (Right to Food Guidelines). The unique features of the reformed CFS include expanded participation rules and a specific science-policy interface. The CFS inclusive policy making processes ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders, particularly those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition, are heard in the food and agriculture¹ policy dialogue. The High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) provides independent evidence-based reports to inform and support policy discussions.

¹The term “agriculture” includes crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture.

Key messages

CFS is alarmed by the evidence showing that the world is not on track to achieve the food security and nutrition targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Driven by conflict, climate change and protracted crises, global hunger and food insecurity have recently worsened, and in 2016, an estimated 815 million people were chronically undernourished, compared to 777 million in 2015, while rates of overweight and obesity are continuing to rise.

The pursuit of food security and nutrition - Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG2) - is undermined by alarming gaps in access to natural resources, such as land and forests (SDG15), water and sanitation (SDG6) and energy (SDG7) among small-scale food producers and other vulnerable groups. Food secure and well-nourished communities are essential pillars of sustainable food systems (SDG12) and resilient societies (SDG11). Structural causes of hunger and malnutrition relate to governance, economic and production issues, demographic and social issues, climate, and environmental issues². The use and application of CFS integrated policy guidance and recommendations is conducive to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security and to advance progress in the context of Agenda 2030.

- 1. Enhanced access to natural resources by small-scale food producers and other vulnerable groups will contribute to food security, improved nutrition, stability and resilience. Inequalities in access to land, water, sanitation and energy, unsustainable management of natural resources, and limited economic opportunities in rural and urban areas exacerbate tensions within societies, undermine global food security, and therefore stability, sustainability and resilience, and contribute to the underlying causes of protracted crises.** Policies and investments to tackle these inequalities are essential, with a specific focus on social groups that tend to be left behind: rural and farming communities, women, youth and indigenous peoples.
- 2. Sustainable management and use of natural resources for food security and nutrition – including terrestrial ecosystems, forests and water – are central to building resilience, adapting to the effects and mitigating the drivers of climate change.** Smallholders³ manage a significant share of these resources globally, while being among those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, land degradation and biodiversity loss. An enabling institutional and policy environment is needed for these actors to effectively participate in policy design that support their livelihoods. This will

² CFS Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, rev 2016, Chapter II, A “Structural causes of hunger and malnutrition”

³ Smallholders are understood here to include small-scale producers and processors, pastoralists, artisans, fishers, communities closely dependant on forests, indigenous peoples, and agricultural workers (CFS-RAI, paragraph 4)

enhance the broader sustainability of societies. It is also essential to promote the sustainability and improvement of all systems of production so as to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems and minimize environmental degradation.

3. **Investing responsibly and inclusively in sustainable food systems should be at the heart of rural and urban transformation.** Approaches that work towards sustainable food systems and healthy diets for all should lead to mutually beneficial links between urban and rural areas, especially for those most affected by poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

(a) Are we on track for sustainable and resilient societies in 2030, in which no one is left behind?

At its Plenary session in October 2017, CFS expressed concern with recent trends and warned that the world is not on track to achieve SDG2 and other targets of the 2030 Agenda related to food security and nutrition. Recognizing that conflict, climate change and protracted crises are among the main causes, it called on all stakeholders, including all governments and the UN system, to accelerate efforts to address the root causes of such devastation and contribute to the recovery, sustainability, and resilience of societies, including building and strengthening food systems.

We are moving backwards against the Zero-Hunger Challenge and the elimination of all forms of malnutrition.

The latest reports on global food security and nutrition indicate that the world is not on track to achieve the SDG targets related to food security and nutrition. The two indicators of SDG 2.1, Prevalence of undernourishment and Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity, based on Food Insecurity Experience Scale, both showed a deterioration in 2016 compared to 2015. This could signal a reversal of a long-term trend of gradually improving global food security. In terms of nutrition indicators, global progress on stunting and wasting is too slow, while rising rates of anaemia among women of reproductive age, as well as of overweight and obesity in the world add to the concerns⁴. Today, nearly one in three persons globally suffers from at least one form of malnutrition – undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight or obesity – and a large part of the world’s population is affected by diet-related non-communicable diseases. At a regional level, the number of children who are stunted is increasing in Africa, and wasting is still high in South Asia. Africa also has the highest levels of severe food insecurity in the world (27.4 percent of the population), and – along with Latin America - it is one of the regions in the world where food insecurity is on the rise.

Conflicts are among the main drivers contributing to the reversal in trends.

Conflict is a key driver of severe food crises and recently emerging famines, while hunger and undernutrition are significantly worse where conflicts are prolonged and institutional capacities weak.

⁴ *FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2017. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017. Building resilience for peace and food security. Rome, FAO.*

Nowadays the majority of hungry people live in countries affected by conflict – 489 million out of the 815 million people, and almost 75 percent of the world’s stunted under-five year olds live in countries affected by conflict – 122 million out of the 155 million children⁵. During 2017, about 124 million people in 51 countries were affected by acute food insecurity -- again an increase of many millions. Acute food insecurity refers to hunger so severe that it poses an immediate threat to lives or livelihoods. Such food crises are increasingly determined by complex causes such as conflict, extreme climatic shocks and high prices of staple food, which often occur at the same time.⁶

Uneven progress across the three dimensions of sustainable development can be an important driver of tensions and conflict.

The global economic growth that contributed to progress has not been evenly distributed and was not always accompanied by similar gains in the other two dimensions of sustainable development, with social and environmental progress too often lagging behind. Loss and degradation of natural resources has continued, creating tensions around increasing competition for scarce resources. Globally, 33 percent of the world's farmland is moderately to highly degraded, often due to unsustainable practices - an impediment to realising food security and reducing hunger. While the global net forest loss has slowed over the past two decades, rates of ongoing deforestation remain relatively high, particularly in parts of the tropics. Deforestation may threaten livelihoods and ecosystem services essential to food security and nutrition, and can make competition over other resources more acute. Two-thirds of the bioenergy used worldwide involves the burning of wood and other biomass for cooking and heating. Much of this traditional wood energy is unsustainably produced and inefficiently burned, affecting both the health of poor populations and environmental degradation⁷. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of the world’s rural population lives in river basins that are classified as water scarce⁸. Competition for water is expected to increase between irrigated agriculture (currently accounting for 70 percent of freshwater withdrawals) and growing urbanized areas, thus further slowing the rate of expansion of land under irrigation. Unsustainable natural resource management can severely affect food security and send millions of individuals into hunger and poverty, increasing tensions within and between communities, thus further undermining societies’ resilience and ability to achieve sustainable development.

Given ongoing structural transformations, it is urgent to connect communities, urban and rural, around sustainable food systems.

Against this background of unprecedented natural resource constraints and climate change, urbanization, population increases, migration and income growth are driving important structural and rural transformation. These transformations bring both opportunities and challenges. The continued exclusion of vulnerable groups such as small-scale food producers, urban slum dwellers, informal workers, women and unemployed youth from the benefits of growth and from political processes in general has contributed to their increased vulnerability and limited their ability to continue investing in strengthening the resilience of their livelihoods. This failure to achieve a balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development – specially called for under Agenda

⁵ Joint FAO and WFP briefing to the UN Security Council

⁶ FAO and WFP, Global Report on Food Crises, March 2018

⁷ FAO.2017. *The future of food and agriculture – Trends and challenges*. Rome.

⁸ FAO. 2011. The state of the world’s land and water resources for food and agriculture (SOLAW)

2030 – has contributed to creating the conditions for the instability and conflicts which today risk reversing recent improvements in food security and nutrition globally.

(b) Concrete recommendations from CFS

Achieving a world free from hunger and malnutrition seems further away than in the past decade. Urgent action to empower farmers, achieve social equity, and improve sustainable use of natural resources through better policy convergence and coordination is essential. CFS has several concrete, holistic, voluntary, evidence-based policy guidelines and recommendations which can help to achieve various SDGs in an integrated way (see Annex for the full list). These have been developed and agreed through an inclusive, participatory process. Use by Member States and all non-state actors of the [Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests](#) (VGGTs), the [Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems](#) (CFS-RAI), and the [Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises](#) (CFS-FFA), among others, could significantly advance the achievement of all SDGs. The HLPF should highlight the need for country-level uptake of CFS policy guidelines and recommendations, as befits their national context.

Key Message 1: Enhanced access to natural resources by small-scale food producers and other vulnerable groups will contribute to food security, improved nutrition, stability and resilience

- Inadequate and insecure **tenure rights** increase vulnerability, hunger, malnutrition and poverty, and can lead to conflict and environmental degradation when competing users fight for control of these resources.

In addition to being directly relevant to the achievement of a number of targets under SDG 15 related to the restoration of degraded natural resources and their sustainable management and use, responsible governance of tenure promotes sustainable social and economic development that can help eradicate poverty and food insecurity, and encourages responsible investment. The [VGGTs](#), endorsed by CFS in 2012, seek to improve governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests. Based on a number of principles including gender equality, they seek to do so for the benefit of all. There is an emphasis on small-scale food producers and vulnerable and marginalized people, with the goals of food security and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, rural development, environmental protection and sustainable social and economic development.

- **Conflict and protracted crises** call for specially designed and targeted assistance, combining immediate actions to alleviate hunger and suffering with medium to long-term actions to build resilient livelihoods and food systems, avoid impoverishment, and address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. Such actions should focus on sustainable management and use of

natural resources, disaster risk reduction, addressing structural inequalities, and other medium to longer term actions.

The [CFS-FFA](#) was endorsed by CFS in 2015, and provides guidance to governments and stakeholders on how to improve food security and nutrition in protracted crises while addressing underlying causes. To rebuild livelihoods and strengthen resilience of populations, the CFS-FFA calls for policies and actions to strengthen sustainable local food systems. It fosters access to productive resources and to markets that are remunerative and beneficial to smallholders and calls for inclusive non-discriminatory and sustained access to relevant basic services such as safe drinking water and sanitation. It calls for the respect of existing rights and the ability of affected or at risk populations to access and use their natural resources.

- **Empower women and achieve gender equality**

A world with zero hunger can only be achieved when everyone has equal opportunities, equal access to land (SDG15), water (SDG6), energy (SDG7) and other natural resources, and an equal voice in the decisions that shape their own lives, households, communities and societies. Whether policies, programmes, services and budgets involve mainstreaming gender or targeting gender equality, they must address the needs, priorities, aspirations and demands of women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable) - not solely their practical needs - so that gender roles, relations, responsibilities and command over resources shift towards equality and all persons can achieve food security and nutrition. The [2011 CFS “Gender, food security and nutrition” policy recommendations](#) aim to enhance gender equality, improve the nutritional status of women, adolescent girls, and children in particular, and eliminate any form of discrimination and violence against women. They require systemic action across policies, plans and programmes, from emergency to development contexts. In CFS 44, following the Forum on Women’s Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition, CFS *“took note of the Forum’s outcomes, and particularly drew attention to the need for governments to stand behind their commitments to ensure the equal rights of men and women, boys and girls in the context of food security and nutrition by translating those commitments into national policies, programmes, investments and adequate human and financial resources.”*

- **Achieving both food security and energy security** is an opportunity as well as a challenge.

To address possible trade-offs towards sustainable development, all relevant stakeholders in bioenergy development should ensure that food security and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security are priority concerns, with a special focus on women and smallholder producers. The 2013 [CFS policy recommendations “Biofuels and food security”](#) offer a number of recommendations to Members and stakeholders to guide priority setting and integrated policy programming. Other CFS policy work, such as the VGGTs, also provide guidance on how to ensure that biofuel policies are coherent with food security.

Addressing the interlinkage between SDG2 and SDG 7 “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” calls for carefully considering the multiple and complex links between bioenergy and food security and nutrition, which can occur in different ways.

Key Message 2: Sustainable management and use of natural resources for food security and nutrition is central to building resilience and addressing climate change effects.

- Accelerate efforts for **sustainable agricultural development, including livestock systems**

The CFS 2016 policy recommendations on [“Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: What roles for livestock?”](#) recognize the livelihood and environmental challenges faced by different agricultural production systems, with special emphasis on the livestock sector, and calls for their sustainable transformation. They particularly recognize pastoral systems and call for their protection and support, as well as for the enhancement of the role of grazing systems, leveraging the potential of livestock as a means for sustainable livelihoods for smallholders, and promoting the sustainability of intensive systems. These recommendations are particularly important to help achieve SDG 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns” and its targets related to the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, the reduction of chemical waste released into air, water and soils, and the promotion of sustainable practices and lifestyles.

- **Water** availability will become an increasing challenge for global food security and nutrition, as irrigated agriculture is the largest user globally, totalling up to 70 percent of global freshwater withdrawals (with significant difference between countries), some from non-renewable sources⁹. Ecosystems and landscapes sustain water resources, and forests play a major role in the water cycle, ensuring quantity, quality and stability of water for human use.

Promoting sustainable management and conservation of ecosystems for the continued availability, quality and reliability of water for food security and nutrition is essential, and is key to the achievement of SDG 6 “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”. [The 2015 CFS policy recommendations “Water for food security and nutrition”](#) offer stakeholders guidance on how policies can successfully address the water-food security and nutrition nexus. They emphasize linkages between the right to safe drinking water and sanitation and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food. They also highlight synergies with other goals which national policies can build upon to achieve the SDGs in an integrated manner.

- Sustainable agriculture, food security and improved nutrition cannot be achieved at the expense of and without **forests**.

Forests contribute to dietary quality and diversity generating income for local communities as well as serving as a safety net in times of scarcity, shocks and crises. . Forests also provide ecosystem services that are essential for sustainable agriculture by regulating water flows, stabilizing soils, maintaining soil fertility, regulating the climate and providing habitat for wild pollinators and predators of agricultural

⁹ HLPE, 2015. Water for Food Security and nutrition. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome 2015.

pests. However, land use conversion for agriculture, driven by increased demand and land degradation, remains the main cause of global deforestation, accounting for 70-80 percent of total forest loss, with an adverse impact on the environment and livelihoods of millions of indigenous peoples, local communities and smallholders.

Better coordination of land use policies is needed, so that sustainable agriculture continues to benefit from healthy, sustainable and productive forest and tree ecosystems. The 2017 [CFS policy recommendations “Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition”](#) call on countries to develop, implement and monitor policies that lead to integrated agriculture and forest management, in line with other central policy frameworks such as the [Right to Food Guidelines](#), the VGGTs and CFS-RAI.

Key Message 3: Investing sustainably and inclusively in sustainable food systems should be at the heart of rural and urban transformation

- **Investing responsibly in agriculture and food systems** can produce multiplier effects for complementary sectors, such as service or manufacturing industries, thus further contributing to food security and nutrition and overall economic development.

The CFS-RAI Principles, endorsed in 2014, provide elements for increasing investments in agriculture and food systems in a sustainable manner. This investment is needed throughout the agricultural sector and across all rural areas. They recognize the vital role of smallholders that provide much of the investment. They also call for strengthening and securing this investment with responsible investment by other stakeholders. By promoting an enabling policy, legal, regulatory, and institutional environment, states have a key role in fostering, supporting, and complementing investments by smallholders and other stakeholders, and empowering them to invest responsibly. These principles are relevant to the achievement of all SDGs under review.

- Promote integrated, mutually beneficial **rural transformation and urbanization processes**

A strong gap in the policy architecture relates to the need for policies and research that address inter-sectoral and inter-spatial linkages, to analyse interacting systems and the implications for both rural and urban areas. Such integrated policies are crucial to achieve SDG 11 “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. Their need will increase further in the near future considering the greater connectivity and interdependence across rural and urban areas, including in the agri-food sector.

Supported by its inclusive and evidence-based processes, CFS will continue working in 2018 on identifying issues calling for greater policy convergence and integration, towards the transformation of

food systems that link rural and urban areas for their mutual economic, social, environmental and health benefits.

- **Sustainable food systems for healthy nutrition; healthy nutrition for sustainable food systems**

Healthy, diverse diets are essential to achieving the SDGs, as good nutrition is both a maker and marker of sustainable development. The effects of economic growth, urbanization, and changes in relative prices of food, influence changes in diets and food systems, and lead to an acceleration of the nutritional transition. The impacts of malnutrition on development, society, health and well-being are serious and long lasting, for individuals and their families, for communities and for countries. Different forms of malnutrition co-exist within the same country, community, household or individual.

At the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), countries committed to stepping up efforts to combat all forms of malnutrition, but global nutrition targets are yet to be fully achieved. Nutrition must become a stated objective in national sectoral policies or development plans, and efforts need to be scaled up, nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive investments increased, and greater policy coherence across sectors is required. CFS decided to step up its contribution to global efforts under the framework of the UN Decade for Action on Nutrition 2016-2025, and has agreed at its Forty-fourth Session to develop voluntary guidelines for food systems and nutrition. These guidelines are expected to offer support to countries to develop policies which incentivize more sustainable and healthy diets for all, underpinned by sustainable food systems. The work undertaken by CFS is expected to link directly to most targets of SDG 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”.

- **Strengthen policies and investments targeting smallholders**

[The 2013 CFS policy recommendations on “Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security”](#) and the 2016 [“Connecting Smallholders to Markets”](#) recognize that smallholders supply most of the overall food and therefore play an essential role in ensuring food security and nutrition today and in the future. These recommendations, relevant to the achievement of a number of SDGs (including SDG 11, 12 and 15) call for strengthening targeted policies and investments that address smallholders’ specific constraints and maximize potential for their beneficial access to reliable and remunerative markets, be they local, national, regional or international. They also call for greater policy attention on local and domestic food markets, where 80 percent of smallholders operate, and in which most of the food consumed in the world transits.

- **Reduce food losses and waste, towards sustainable food systems**

Food losses and waste impact the sustainability and resilience of agriculture and food systems and their ability to ensure food security and nutrition for all for this generation and for future generations. It is the focus of a direct target of SDG 12 “By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest

losses”. States and other stakeholders have different roles, and should encourage sustainable patterns of production and consumption, in accordance with national and international human and animal health regulations. [CFS 2014 policy recommendations on “Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems”](#) call on all concerned stakeholders to develop effective strategies and innovations, and take steps to reduce food losses and waste.

- Create opportunities for **rural youth**

In many countries and regions with higher rates of poverty and hunger, more than half of the population is currently under 25, with the majority of these young people living in rural areas and settlements, even as migration to cities increases. Addressing constraints to engaging young women and men in farming, agri-businesses and related non-farm rural sectors through targeted policy interventions is key to making sure that no one is left behind. Enhancing youth access to productive resources, innovation and new technologies, combined with traditional knowledge, as well as appropriate training (agricultural and financial), education and mentorship programmes will increase their opportunities for decent work and entrepreneurship and promote stable, sustainable and resilient societies in the long-term. Principle 4 of the CFS-RAI Principles provides guidance on how, through responsible investment, youth can be engaged and empowered.

Annex: CFS Reference documents

<p>1. CFS endorsed policy guidance and recommendations</p> <p>CFS Policy Guidance</p> <p>Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition – the repository of all CFS policy work</p> <p>Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGTs 2012)</p> <p>Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI 2014)</p> <p>Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis (CFS-FFA 2015)</p> <p>CFS Policy Recommendations</p> <p>Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition (CFS 44, 2017)</p> <p>Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: What roles for livestock? (CFS 43, 2016)</p> <p>Connecting Smallholders to Markets (CFS 43, 2016)</p> <p>Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42, 2015)</p> <p>Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems (CFS 41, 2014)</p> <p>Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition (CFS 41, 2014)</p> <p>Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security (CFS 40: 2013)</p> <p>Biofuels and food security (CFS 40: 2013)</p> <p>Social protection for food security (CFS 39: 2012)</p> <p>Food security and climate change (CFS 39: 2012)</p> <p>Gender, food security and nutrition (CFS 37: 2011)</p> <p>How to increase food security and smallholder sensitive investments in agriculture (CFS 37: 2011)</p> <p>Land tenure and international investments in agriculture (CFS 37: 2011)</p> <p>Price volatility and food security (CFS 37: 2011)</p>	<p>2. HLPE independent reports</p> <p>HLPE Report #12 Nutrition and Food Systems (CFS 44, 2017)</p> <p>HLPE Report #11 Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition (CFS 44, 2017)</p> <p>HLPE Report #10 Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: What roles for livestock? (CFS 43, 2016)</p> <p>HLPE Report #9 Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42, 2015)</p> <p>HLPE Report #8 Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems (CFS 41, 2014)</p> <p>HLPE Report #7 Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition (CFS 41, 2014)</p> <p>HLPE Report #6 Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security (CFS 40: 2013)</p> <p>HLPE Report #5 Biofuels and food security (CFS 40: 2013)</p> <p>HLPE Report #4 Social protection for food security (CFS 39: 2012)</p> <p>HLPE Report #3 Food security and climate change (CFS 39: 2012)</p> <p>HLPE Report #2 Land tenure and international investments in agriculture (CFS 37: 2011)</p> <p>HLPE Report #1 Price volatility and food security (CFS 37: 2011)</p> <p>HLPE Notes on Critical and Emerging Issues: 2014 and 2017</p> <p>HLPE Steering Committee contribution to SDG2 review</p> <p>3. Compilation of experiences resulting from thematic lessons learned events</p> <p>Outcomes of From Agreement to Action Towards Implementing the 2030 Agenda: Learning from the First Voluntary National Reviews (CFS 43 Final Report Page 22)</p> <p>Experiences and good practices in the use and application of the Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGTs) Summary and key elements (CFS 43)</p> <p>Developing the knowledge, skills and talent of youth to further food security and nutrition (CFS 42)</p>
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