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**Implementation of and follow-up to major
United Nations conferences and summits**

Main decisions, outcomes and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith a report on the main decisions, outcomes and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security.**

* [A/77/50](#).

** The report is being issued without formal editing.



Report on the main decisions, outcomes and policy recommendations of the Committee on World Food Security

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English,
French, Russian and Spanish]

Introduction

1. This report responds to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decision 2011/217, in which the Council invited the Chair of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) to transmit to ECOSOC every year a report on the main decisions, policy recommendations, and the results achieved by the Committee in the area of food security and nutrition, in accordance with its roles and vision. More information regarding the roles and vision of the Committee can be found in documents [A/66/76-E/2011/102](#) and [A/65/73-E/2010/51](#). More recently, the Committee re-affirmed its commitment to these roles and vision as described in document CFS 2018/45/3, and endorsed at CFS 45 in October 2018.
2. This report describes the main outcomes and decisions taken by the Forty-ninth Session of CFS held in October 2021 and, where relevant, provides updates on follow-up actions. The Final Report of the Session is available at CFS 49/Report.

Main decisions, recommendations and results

State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2021, its policy implications and the role of the CFS in the context of COVID-19

3. The Committee expressed deep concerns for the numbers of hungry and malnourished in the world: the estimated 720 to 811 million people facing hunger in 2020; nearly 2.37 billion people without access to adequate food in 2020, representing an increase of 320 million people in just one year; and 660 million people who may still be facing hunger in 2030, in part due to lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on global food security, adding up to 30 million more people than in a scenario in which the pandemic had not occurred.
4. In his address at the opening of the CFS-49 plenary session, the United Nations Secretary-General called for “transformative actions to ensure that the world’s food benefits all people” and called upon CFS to “drive change across food systems, with the full force of the United Nations family standing by”. He added that “food systems must be critical engines for economic recovery, for ending poverty and reducing inequalities, for decent work, and for addressing the planetary emergencies of climate change, pollution and shocking biodiversity loss”. He then commended the CFS products for “putting the issues of land tenure, responsible agricultural investment, emergency nutrition response and famine prevention front-and-centre”.
5. At CFS-49, the President of ECOSOC recalled the extent to which “global solidarity, multilateralism and cooperation are our greatest assets”, for which CFS is an instrument, and added that “we have much to learn from the CFS approach to science and evidence-based policies, and inclusive dialogue among all key stakeholder groups impacted by food systems”. Last, he reminded us that we – the international community – “need to take bold and transformative actions to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to embark on the path to achieve the SDGs”, and “we need to look at SDG 2 and integrated food systems, given their relevance to all SDGs and the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic”.

6. The Director General of UN FAO highlighted the role of “CFS as a crucial partner of FAO for achieving successful food systems transformation”, and stressed the value of CFS policy products for accelerating the Decade of Action on Sustainable Development, such as “the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition”, and its most recent report of the CFS High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (CFS HLPE) on “Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems”.

7. During the plenary session, the Committee discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition, and expressed its appreciation for the analysis of the HLPE of the severe and lasting impacts of COVID-19 on: food security and nutrition; the ability to lead healthy lives, and; the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, particularly of the most vulnerable. The pandemic has revealed and exacerbated existing structural fragilities and injustices in food systems, beyond and in addition to the continuous impact of conflicts, diseases, poverty, inequalities, economic downturns and climate change.

The UN Food Systems Summit and its implications for CFS

8. CFS Members and stakeholders congratulated the United Nations Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for organizing the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), which put emphasis on the food systems transformation required to address the problem of millions of people unable to afford healthy diets, and called for a systemic and holistic approach to food systems transformation, encouraging that it be done in a coherent manner, and in accordance with national context and capacities.

9. The Committee also took note of the potential implications of the UNFSS on the CFS and its HLPE and agreed to make further analysis and considerations of next steps within the CFS Bureau, in consultation with all Members, the Advisory Group, and other CFS participants.

10. In this respect, the Chairperson established an informal Group of Friends of the Chair, comprising CFS Members and Participants, and tasked this group to discuss a number of open questions to help identify key options and potential actions for CFS to fulfil its mandate in a more effective and responsive way, in view of the momentum created by the UNFSS at the global and national levels, and among different constituencies. Following wider consultations of the Chair with all Members, the (ad hoc) Advisory Group, and other participants, conclusions will be presented to the Bureau for consideration in 2022.

Forum on the Uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN)

11. As the Committee strives to show the impact of its policies on the ground, one of the main items on the agenda of the 49th Session was a discussion on the uptake of the recently approved Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition (VGFSyN).

12. The Committee welcomed a number of concrete activities that have already been implemented by CFS stakeholders, and the evidence platform developed by FAO to link the agreed recommendations with existing evidence; it reiterated the role of the VGFSyN as a tool to enhance policy coherence and address policy fragmentation across sectors; and re-affirmed that their use could foster and guide concrete actions to promote healthy diets through sustainable food systems.

13. Finally, the Committee stressed that the use of the VGFSyN is a shared responsibility of all CFS stakeholders – Members and Participants –, who must

equally make sure that the guidance endorsed at global level is translated into concrete context-specific actions at regional, national and local levels. The Nutrition for Growth Summit, later that year, was highlighted as an opportunity to raise the relevance of the VGFSyN and foster its uptake.

14. FAO and WHO also jointly presented a progress report on “Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) and on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition”, in which they recognized the contribution of the VGFSyN in helping to translate commitments for action made in the ICN2 Rome Declaration on Nutrition in the context of national food systems and nutrition-related policies.

CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020–2023

15. The Committee reviewed and updated its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for 2020–2023, which includes current and future thematic workstreams on (i) Food systems and nutrition; (ii) Agroecological and other innovative approaches; (iii) Gender equality and women’s empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition; (iv) Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems; (v) Data collection and analysis tools; and (vi) Reducing inequalities for food security and nutrition.

16. With reference to the ongoing pandemic, the Committee requested continued deliberation on, and due attention to, the impacts of COVID-19 on food systems, agriculture and nutrition at all stages of the implementation of the approved MYPoW workstreams.

17. Further, the Committee noted that the full implementation of the MYPoW 2020–2023 will be contingent upon sufficient financial and human resources, strongly encouraged the three Rome-based Agencies to honour their verbal agreement to share equally the costs of the CFS Secretariat budget, as a symbol of joint ownership, shared commitment to the Committee, and effective Rome-based Agency collaboration; and requested the Chair and Secretariat to continue their efforts to expand and diversify the CFS financing base, consistent with the CFS Resource Mobilization and Outreach Strategies.

CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition

18. The Committee reiterated the importance of advancing gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment to achieve CFS vision of ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all, and for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Advancing gender equality and women and girls’ empowerment is also essential to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

19. The CFS Voluntary Guidelines are now being prepared through a transparent and inclusive consultation process, allowing for constructive dialogue between all actors concerned with food security and nutrition in accordance with the CFS mandate. This will contribute to building ownership and success in the preparation and implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines.

20. The CFS organized multistakeholder and inclusive regional and electronic consultations in September–November 2021, which ensured that the Voluntary Guidelines are aligned with global, regional and national priorities, other relevant initiatives, good practices and experiences, in support of sustainable development.

21. A draft of the Voluntary Guidelines is currently being discussed by CFS Members and Participants. They will then be negotiated starting in May this year, and are anticipated to be presented for consideration and endorsement by CFS plenary in October 2022.

Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems

22. With regard to its new workstream on “Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems”, the Committee expressed appreciation for the work of the HLPE to prepare its report, the findings and the recommendations, and recognized the importance of an inclusive process, open to all interested stakeholders, leading to the endorsement of an agreed set of policy recommendations to be presented to the Committee for endorsement at CFS 50 in October 2022.

23. Some of the comments shared in the plenary discussion underscored: i. The need to put youth at the centre of the policy convergence process; ii. The need to recognize the diversity of contexts, and to promote context-specific employment and labour market policies; and iii. The need to ensure that youth have equitable access to land and other inputs, such as: water, forests, agricultural extension services, finance and credit, technologies, markets, labour, education, knowledge, and information.

Monitoring CFS Policy Recommendations on Climate Change and Water

24. During the Session, the Committee also organized an event to take stock of the use and application of two sets of CFS policy recommendations: (i) Food Security and Climate Change (CFS 39, 2012); and (ii) Water for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS 42, 2015).

25. A keynote presentation on the nexus between water, climate and food security and nutrition, reviewed the extent to which the CFS recommendations are known and used, and whether they need updating, particularly in light of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

26. The presentation also revealed that in previous reports there was limited attention to how agriculture production and associated activities affect climate change, and on agroecology as a possible solution to some of the issues; and pointed that some of the challenges still remain, including: insufficient data; issues of governance, rights, and power relations still being overlooked; lack of integration of water and climate change and their impacts on food security and nutrition into national policies and programmes; and lack of integration of major global initiatives on food, water, and climate change.

27. Following this debate, the Committee agreed that climate change and water scarcity threaten food security and nutrition, and require special attention and appropriate responses.

28. It pledged to make additional efforts to promote a much broader and more systematic dissemination, use and application of relevant CFS policy products, also seeking similar commitments and support from other UN agencies and bodies.

29. It encouraged all Parties attending the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) – and subsequent ones – to more prominently feature the role of agriculture in climate change, including finance for climate adaptation, and to use CFS policy recommendations when making pledges to climate action that can increase implementation of sustainable agricultural practices to achieve food security.

The CFS High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition

30. After CFS 49, the 15-member HLPE Steering Committee has been finalizing its report #17 on “Data collection and analysis tools for food security and nutrition”, which will be the basis for a new policy convergence process, starting this year, with the aim to increase collection, analysis, use and dissemination of data to fight hunger and malnutrition in all its forms.

31. The Panel is also preparing its third note on “Critical, Enduring and Emerging issues” for food security and nutrition, which will determine the next programme of work of the Committee 2023–2027.

32. Last, reacting to the call by the UN FSS for strengthening science-policy interface for food systems, the HLPE is discussing ways to strengthen itself, for example by enhancing both its horizontal integration, with other panels of experts – like IPCC, IPBES, etc. –, and its vertical integration with regional and sub-regional groups of experts.

Report of the Forty-ninth Session of the Committee on World Food Security (11–14 October 2021)

33. The full Final Report of the forty-ninth Session of the Committee on World Food Security, which was held virtually, from 11 to 14 October 2021, can be found at the following link: <https://www.fao.org/cfs/plenary/cfs49/report/en/>.

34. Further information on the Session and all activities of the Committee can be located at: <https://www.fao.org/cfs>.
