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Summary of CFS 49: 11-14 October 2021

The [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World \(SOFI\) 2021](#) report provides some staggering numbers: about 720-811 million people faced hunger in 2020; 660 million people may still be facing hunger in 2030; nearly 2.37 billion people lacked access to adequate food in 2020; approximately 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet; and millions of children under 5 years are affected by stunting, wasting or overweight. The COVID-19 pandemic added challenges across the food system. These numbers led to repeated calls to action at the 49th Plenary Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), with its Members considering in depth what needs to be done to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by 2030. The 49th session of the CFS had a full agenda. Participants discussed SOFI 2021, the [CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition \(VGFSyN\)](#), the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), follow-up to the [Second International Conference on Nutrition \(ICN2\)](#), the [CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work \(MYPoW\)](#), [Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems](#), and monitoring [CFS Policy Recommendations on Climate Change and Water](#).

Members considered the SOFI 2021 report and what it would take to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 (zero hunger). Overwhelmingly, Members identified the need to transform food systems through an integrated approach that acknowledges and takes account of interlinkages between sectors on agriculture, climate change, food security, health and water. They identified a range of actions towards achieving food system transformation including sustainable agriculture and agro-ecology, improved agriculture research and innovation, and recognizing and ensuring the rights of youth, women and indigenous communities. In a keynote speech, Jeffrey Sachs, Columbia University, reminded all that achieving zero hunger by 2030 requires a financial strategy, with timelines and specific policies for short-term emergency and long-term cash transfers, and proposed a 2% wealth tax on billionaires.

CFS 49 also discussed the outcomes of the UNFSS and considered the implications for CFS. Members expressed a range of views on CFS' role related to follow up for the Summit. Some Members want CFS to take a key or leadership role in UNFSS follow-up, others prefer CFS focus on its mandate leave the coordinating or leadership role to either the Rome-based Agencies (RBAs) – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP) - or the High-

Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). A few opined that CFS dissociate itself completely from UNFSS. Ultimately, a clear position on the role of CFS in the UNFSS follow-up was not found and Members will continue to discuss the issue within the CFS Bureau, in consultation with all Members, the Advisory Group, and other participants.

The roles of women and youth, especially ways to encourage and enable women's and girls' empowerment, and youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems, were matters also addressed by CFS 49, with women and youth from different backgrounds and regions taking the floor to identify what CFS and its Members can do to achieve these objectives. The zero draft of the voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, which was considered during the session, was well received by Members

In This Issue

An Introduction to CFS.	2
CFS 49 Report.	3
State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021.	3
Uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition.	6
Follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2))	7
UN Food System Summit and its Implications for CFS.	8
CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023	9
Update - Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment.	9
Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems	10
Monitoring - CFS policy recommendations on Climate Change and Water	12
CFS Secretariat's Special Event	14
Other Matters	17
Upcoming Meetings	17
Glossary.	18

who looked forward to endorsing a final draft at CFS 50 in October 2022.

CFS 49 took place virtually from 11-14 October 2021, with 1319 people registered for the session, including 124 Member States, and many others informally following the session via public webcast. This report summarizes CFS 49 and the actions proposed by Members to achieve food security and nutrition for all.

An Introduction to CFS

CFS was established in 1974 as an intergovernmental body to serve as a forum in the UN system for review and follow-up of policies concerning world food security, including production and physical and economic access to food. Its first session was held in 1976. In response to calls for a revised food policy governance system from the 2008 and 2009 G8 Summits and the 2009 World Summit on Food Security, CFS was reformed in 2009. The reform aimed at making CFS more effective by: including a wider group of stakeholders through the creation of the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) and the Civil Society Mechanism and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM); and increasing its ability to promote policies that ensure food security and nutrition (FSN) for all, through the establishment of its High-Level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition (HLPE) which provides independent scientific evidence to inform the policy work of CFS. These reforms saw CFS transition from an FAO Committee with its ownership and support expanded to include WFP and IFAD.

CFS now serves as an inclusive international, intergovernmental and multistakeholder platform. Its vision is to end hunger and ensure food security and nutrition for all for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. Its role is to: coordinate a global approach to FSN; promote policy convergence; support and advise countries and regions; coordinate at national and regional levels; promote accountability and share best practices; and develop a global strategic framework for FSN. The framework of the reformed CFS broadens participation and aims to: give a voice to all stakeholders in the world food system; be inclusive and encourage an exchange of views and experiences; and build on empirical evidence and scientific analysis.

In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) reaffirmed CFS's "important role and inclusive nature" regarding the world's determination to "end hunger and to achieve food security as a matter of priority and to end all forms of malnutrition" as reflected in targets 2.1 and 2.2. of SDG 2 (end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture).

CFS's structure includes: the annual Plenary, the main decision-making body; a Bureau (comprised of Member States); an Advisory Group, including representatives from UN bodies, civil society, international agricultural research institutions, international and regional financial institutions, the private sector, and philanthropic foundations; the CFS HLPE; and the Secretariat, supported by the three RBAs. Non-governmental actors are represented through the CSM and PSM.

Major CFS outcomes include: the [2012 Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security](#) (VGGTs); the

[2014 Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems](#) (CFS-RAI); the [2015 Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises](#) (CFS-FFA); the 2021 [CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition](#) (VGFSyN); and the [Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition](#) (GSF), a reference document containing practical guidance on recommendations, policies and strategies for FSN, that is updated annually.

CFS 30 endorsed use of the [Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security](#), which were developed and adopted by the FAO Council in 2004.

CFS 42 (12-15 October 2015) endorsed the [CFS-FFA and recommendations on Water for Food Security and Nutrition](#). The meeting also launched new areas of work, including on CFS's role in nutrition and in the 2030 Agenda. In 2018, CFS adopted use of the [Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security](#), which were developed and adopted by the FAO Council in 2004.

CFS 43 (17-21 October 2016) adopted [recommendations for policy convergence on the role of livestock in sustainable agricultural development for FSN](#), and on [promoting smallholder access to markets](#); and terms of reference (TORs) to share experiences and good practices in applying CFS decisions and recommendations by organizing events at all levels. The meeting also mandated intersessional work on CFS's contribution to the 2030 Agenda, on nutrition, and on urbanization and rural transformation.

CFS 44 (9-13 October 2017) adopted decisions on, among other issues: the 2017 report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI 2017); lessons learned from implementing the 2030 Agenda; the CFS [HLPE report on Nutrition and Food Systems](#); and good practices and lessons sharing for improved nutrition.

CFS 45 (15-18 October 2018) endorsed the TORs for developing policy guidance on food systems and nutrition and adopted decisions and conclusions on, *inter alia*, implementation of the response to the CFS evaluation; critical and emerging issues for FSN and a strategic Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW); and the use of the [right to food guidelines](#).

CFS 46 (14-18 October 2019) marked the 45th Anniversary of the Committee, and 10 years since the CFS reform, and focused on the theme "Accelerating progress on SDG2 to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals." Members received an update on the process of developing the VGFSyN.

In 2020, the CFS HLPE released a special issues paper on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition. The 2020 CFS plenary was postponed until 2021 due to the pandemic.

CFS 47 (8-11 February 2021) took place virtually. CFS 47 endorsed the VGFSyN and decided to transmit them to the Governing Bodies of FAO, WFP and IFAD to consider implementation at country level.

CFS 48 (4 June 2021) was a special virtual session, convened to advance work delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. CFS 48 endorsed [recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches](#).

CFS Chair **Thanawat Tiensin**

CFS 49 Report

On Monday, 11 October, CFS Chair Thanawat Tiensin (Thailand) opened CFS 49.

Organizational Matters: Plenary adopted the provisional agenda and timetable ([CFS/2021/49/1 Rev.1](#); [CFS 2021/49/INF/1](#) and [CFS 2021/49/INF/2 Rev.1](#)) and established a drafting committee to be chaired by Maarten de Groot (Canada). CFS Secretary Chris Hegedorn announced that CFS now has 131 Members.

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

The CFS took up the SOFI 2021 report ([CFS 2021/49/Inf.13](#)) on Monday morning. In opening remarks, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, speaking via video, called for transformative action to ensure all people benefit from the world's food systems, and said food systems must be critical engines for economic recovery, poverty eradication, decent work, and addressing climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. He said CFS policy products are key for this as they have placed urgent issues, from land tenure, to responsible agricultural investment, to emergency nutrition response and famine prevention, front-and-center.

Collen Kelapile, President, UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), said building back better from COVID-19 will be an opportunity to look at SDG 2 (zero hunger) and integrated

UN Secretary-General **António Guterres**

food systems, which are relevant to all SDGs and the pandemic's continuing impacts. He noted there is much to learn from the CFS approach of ensuring science- and evidence-based and inclusive dialogue among all key stakeholder groups impacted by food systems.

Thanawat Tiensin, CFS Chair, cited the need for fundamental systemic change to address hunger, malnutrition, sustainability, and inequalities while supporting human rights for all. He noted that during the recent UNFSS, 150 countries committed to transform their food systems to enhance participation and equity, and called for development of global policies to achieve this and for promoting their uptake at the local and country levels.

Qu Dongyu, Director-General, FAO, noted that 2.4 billion people lack year-round access to adequate food and 3 billion cannot afford healthy diets. He said the food security of millions of people, and the interlinkages of challenges to the planet and people, require integrated solutions and changes in agrifood systems. He called for partnerships for greater synergy and effectiveness, noting CFS's unique role as an inclusive global platform for multi-stakeholder engagement toward global coherence on food security.

Gilbert Hounbo, President, IFAD, expressed alarm at the 2021 SOFI Report's findings of increasing hunger, noting the UNFSS reaffirmed that food security must be approached from a food system perspective. He called for starting with rural areas which include the world's poorest and most vulnerable people and are crucial for nutrition, and for ensuring that investments are effective.

David Beasley, Executive Director, WFP, commented that 200 years ago 94% of the world's people were in extreme poverty but by 2016 only 80 million people were at the brink of starvation. He lamented that manmade conflict and climate change spiked that number to 135 million, with the COVID-19 pandemic bumping it to 270 million. He said the crisis cannot be solved without spending USD 6.6 billion to address hunger, mass famine, mass migration, and disaster. Beasley said that in a world economy of USD 400 trillion, with billionaires' wealth increasing by over USD 5 trillion during the pandemic, it is disgraceful that we must beg for money to help starving people.

Martin Cole, Chair, CFS HLPE Steering Committee, spoke on the role of the science-policy interface between the CFS and the HLPE which led to production of the VGFSyN. He said food systems must be made sustainable, noting their current impacts on greenhouse gas emissions, natural resource degradation, biodiversity loss, health, and lack of equity for primary producers. He cautioned that inaction will lead to disaster many times more costly than preventive action.

In a keynote address, Jeffrey Sachs, Columbia University, noted the food security crisis includes not just millions of people without access to food but also billions of people suffering from lack of adequate food and access to healthy diets. He said achieving zero hunger by 2030 requires a financial strategy, including timelines and specific policies for short-term emergency and long-term cash transfers, and proposed a 2% wealth tax on billionaires.



Jeffrey Sachs, Columbia University

Máximo Torero Cullen, Chief Economist, FAO, presented the SOFI report, stating that 720-811 million people faced hunger in 2020, which was around 161 million more than in 2019. He said nearly one in three had no regular access to adequate food in 2020, an increase between 2019 and 2020 equaling that of the previous five years combined. On nutrition, Torero reported some progress but noted the world is still not on track, and that the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened challenges.

Torero said addressing hunger and food insecurity requires USD 40-50 billion per year, assuming countries invest a similar amount and that interventions are properly targeted and effective. He also identified transformation pathways including: integrated humanitarian development and peacebuilding policies in conflict areas; scaling up climate resilience; strengthening economic resilience; intervening along supply chains to lower the cost of nutritious food; addressing poverty and inequality; and changing consumer behavior. Torero concluded that hunger will not be eradicated by 2030 unless action is taken to accelerate progress, especially with regard to inequality in access to food.

In statements on the report, Members highlighted the need to transform food systems globally, taking local contexts and indigenous knowledge and practices into consideration, and outlined national policies and initiatives undertaken already. Most Members also highlighted the role of the CFS and called for increased support for CFS and for the RBAs.

María Juliana Ruiz Sandoval, First Lady of Colombia, said COLOMBIA has launched a concrete sustainable, equitable, and resilient pathway toward development, including fortification



María Juliana Ruiz Sandoval, First Lady of Colombia

of food systems, prevention of food waste, innovation, maternal nutrition, consumption of locally-produced food, and tackling malnutrition through alliances.

FRANCE said transforming food systems is essential and that his country is fully mobilized toward more sustainable and fair production systems. He called on everyone to fully commit to the CFS's work and use its two 2021 policy products - VGFSyN and the policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches - to produce an ambitious roadmap.

MEXICO called for intersectoral efforts, including on globally standardized regulation of warning labels on processed and ultra-processed food, support for breastfeeding for the first 1000 days, consumption of locally-produced food, sustainable agricultural and agroecological production, and valuing traditional and indigenous systems.

Kenya, for the AFRICAN REGIONAL GROUP, said malnutrition is a major impediment to achieving the SDGs. She noted food security is a casualty of climate change, reporting that Africa produces only 2-3% of greenhouse emissions but is the most vulnerable to malnutrition. She emphasized systemic mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment.

CHINA drew attention to those who regressed into poverty due to the impacts of COVID-19, especially in developing countries.

ARGENTINA highlighted the issue of international trade, noting the Latin America and Caribbean region produces a large amount of healthy, safe food but this production is affected by the subsidies that restrict trade. NEW ZEALAND called for fair, open and inclusive trade, and elimination of trade-distortive and environmentally-harmful agriculture and fishery subsidies. CUBA, VENEZUELA and NICARAGUA lamented the use of unilateral trade measures by some countries, noting they have a negative impact on the food security and development of the recipient countries. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA urged solidarity among governments, civil society, and the private sector, with, *inter alia*, fair rules-based trade, local production and consumption, and transformation of energy use in food production. JAPAN called for strengthening food supply chains, particularly regional ones, based on free and fair trade rules, and for limiting imports to the minimum necessary through a science-based approach.

Slovenia, on behalf of the EUROPEAN UNION (EU), welcomed a systemic, holistic and cross-sectoral approach which builds on synergies between food, health, the environment and livelihoods, while taking into account the different national and local contexts. BRAZIL highlighted the importance of family and smallholder farmers, and called for their increased support.

The CSM called for the CFS to organize a high-level special event on the development of a coordinated global, political response to COVID-19 and to prepare a document responding to the food security and nutrition crisis for adoption during CFS 50.

AUSTRALIA noted the strengths of current food systems, and expressed its commitment to open markets and rules-based international trade for solutions appropriate to national needs and priorities. SPAIN, NORWAY, the PHILIPPINES and CSM said

CFS should be at the center of global efforts to achieve SDG 2. SOUTH AFRICA called for radical transformation, including: local production and consumption of indigenous foods; integration of policies, legislation, planning and governance; support for small-scale producers and women's empowerment; and nutrition as a human right. MALI noted COVID-19's impact was harsh in Africa due to weaknesses in health systems, high poverty, small budget allocations, and COVID-19 protocols making food imports impossible.

The CSM noted the problems of capital flight, conditionalities that lead to higher debt, extreme weather events, and global corporate control of food systems and markets that serve the interests of profit rather than food security.

The PSM called for greater investment in digital agriculture, with public and private sectors working together to produce a framework for innovative technology, address external factors, and promote prosperity.

COSTA RICA said young people "must fall in love with agriculture" in a green, inclusive, resilient planet, because supporting an engaged youth can help catalyze action. He also noted the importance of school feeding programmes.

Chair Tiensin opened discussion on the draft conclusions on the SOFI report in the afternoon. Most paragraphs were approved with little or no comment or discussion.

On a proposal from the CSM for a bullet noting that COVID-19 has severe and lasting impacts on food security and nutrition and the ability to lead healthy lives, the US objected to including wording on COVID-19's impacts on "the right to food and related rights." An Argentinian proposal to compromise on already agreed language on "the right to adequate food in the context of national food security" was eventually accepted. The US objected to reference to "the multidimensional and multilevel nature" of the crisis and "calls for a multilaterally coordinated policy response." Ultimately a compromise "recognizing the need for multilateral coordination" was agreed.

A proposal from CUBA for language that "many countries took note of unilateral measures contrary to international law and actions taken under COVID-19 that undermine food security in a number of countries" engendered much

discussion. The US objected strongly to any mention of this topic while several countries, particularly VENEZUELA and NICARAGUA, supported including this reference and/or alternative wording. The Chair suggested that the US could dissociate itself from the statement.

On Tuesday morning, the US stated that inviting dissociation in a draft report on discussions regarding the SOFI violates the principle of consensus. She noted there was no "consensus minus one" but, rather, wider disagreement. She said the SOFI report does not mention sanctions and is not exhaustive, and asked the chair to ensure CFS operates in the spirit of consensus.

When discussions on the Cuban proposal continued, CUBA, supported by MEXICO, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, and VENEZUELA, proposed an alternative paragraph with language from Agenda 2030, paragraph 30, on the "need to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial, or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the UN, that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries." The US, supported by CANADA, GERMANY, ISRAEL, and the PSM, continued to prefer dropping the paragraph.

Successive suggestions were made for reaching consensus. Ultimately, a CANADIAN proposal to note that "several countries expressed divergent views on the impact of policy measures during the COVID-19 pandemic" was accepted as a starting point. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by CANADA, proposed adding wording on "including sanctions" to this, along with a statement referring to the importance of open, resilient, diversified, secure, and efficient global supply chains across the whole value chain related to food and agriculture to address public emergencies including the pandemic. CUBA preferred reference to "unilateral economic, financial, and trade measures" over "policy measures" and this was accepted. The final text, which is contained in the CFS 49 Report, notes there was extensive discussion, with divergent views expressed, on the impact of economic, financial, and trade measures on food security and nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic and that Members' positions were posted on the CFS website.

Final Outcome: In the report, the CFS:

- welcomes the collaboration between FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the preparation of SOFI 2021;
- expresses deep concern over the numbers of people facing hunger and inadequate food access, those unable to afford healthy diets, and the increasing gender gap in the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the year of the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- takes note that the SOFI report underlines that food system transformation is required to address the problem of millions of people that are unable to afford healthy diets, and calls for a systemic and holistic approach to food systems transformation.



Rebeca Cutie Cancino, Cuba

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

Chair Tiensin introduced the Forum on Uptake of the VGFSyN (CFS 2021/49/4) on Tuesday morning.

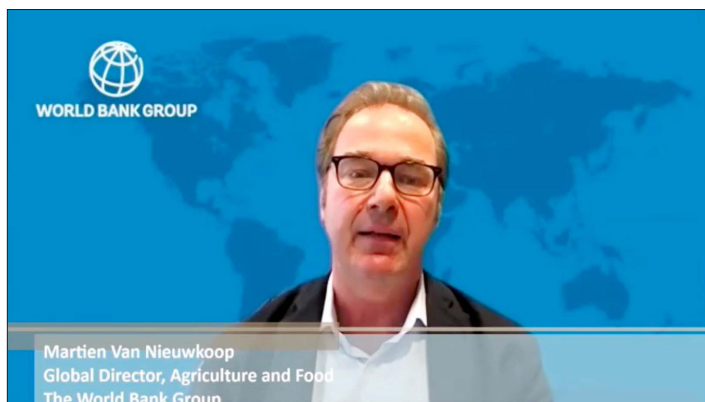
Marielaure Crettaz Corredor, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, presented a Swiss proposal to promote uptake of the VGFSyN, highlighting a project that uses them with subnational stakeholders to raise nutrition and reduce poverty in six cities in Bangladesh, Rwanda, and Kenya. She noted benefits from translating the Guidelines for country and regional levels. She said the VGFSyN is a complement to: international human rights instruments; country-level awareness-raising, mobilization, training, and capacity-building, particularly for marginalized populations; and raising awareness in regional and global processes.

Mariam Almheiri, Minister of State for Food and Water Security, United Arab Emirates (UAE), said governments are responsible for driving new consumption behavior and healthy, sustainable eating patterns, calling the VGFSyN part of the UAE's strategy for this. She said the UAE uses the VGFSyN in its agri-tech system of controlled agriculture and its food tech valley for innovation.

Máximo Torero Cullen launched the FAO Evidence Platform for Agri-food Systems and Nutrition, giving countries an "evidence toolbox" to monitor uptake of VGFSyN recommendations. He said the platform is "live," continuously updated with new evidence and documents from evidence-informed, normative, operational/technical, and other sources, both peer-reviewed systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

Martien van Nieuwkoop, Global Director, Agriculture and Food, World Bank Group, said the CFS's strength is its well-grounded scientific evidence from the HLPE and its broad multi-stakeholder consultations. He said that taking sufficient action will cost USD 10 trillion annually, with costs of inaction already at USD 12 trillion annually. He said the World Bank has started measuring its investments against the VGFSyN.

Members then discussed the Guidelines, with most welcoming them and urging countries to implement them through concrete actions to help transform their food systems. A few countries stated they have commenced implementation of the Guidelines and its recommendations, which were finalized in early 2021, and were identifying policies and strategies to align with them.



Martien van Nieuwkoop, Global Director, Agriculture and Food, World Bank Group

JAPAN informed participants about the upcoming Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit in December 2021, which will address undernourishment and overweight as human security issues. He noted five themes: health, food systems for safe and climate-smart nutrition, conflict, data for driving accountability, and promotion of new investment, calling the VGFSyN the essence of the summit.

MEXICO said its actions include reducing ultra-processed food and drinks, a campaign on healthy foods and good consumption, reduction of genetically-modified organisms, assistance in forestry and agricultural transition, a school health program, a transition program promoting local production from agroecological systems, and development of a multilateral investment cooperation plan with regional partners.

ARGENTINA said the VGFSyN provide clarity and multilateral consensus on the historical and cultural roles of healthy food systems, calling on the RBAs to ensure the realization of goals on food security, lower malnutrition and increase consumption of healthy foods in each country. He cautioned against including statements not agreed by consensus, however, such as a recommendation for locally-produced food.

The PHILIPPINES said the country is developing a national nutrition information system that can serve as a platform to promote uptake of the Guidelines by providing available updated and accessible data on food systems and nutrition, especially on food consumption. The US noted that the Guidelines lay the foundation for sustainable food systems, providing an approach to food security and nutrition that recognizes the complexity of food systems. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC expressed the country's commitment to implement the Guidelines, stating it will incorporate their recommendations into national actions and reiterating its commitment to improve the lives and livelihoods of farmers.

The WHO said the recommendations in the Guidelines need to be translated into context-specific responses to transform food systems for healthy diets and improved nutrition. He highlighted WHO's role in mobilizing country-level uptake of the Guidelines. The WFP expressed readiness to work with governments and other partners to implement the Guidelines by leveraging the organization's reach, especially in countries affected by shocks and stresses. She said the WFP is in contact with their country



Azucena M. Dayanghirang, the Philippines

officers in over 80 countries to encourage them to support governments, enabling them to deliver and implement the Guidelines.

INDONESIA said the Guidelines have reinforced Indonesian legal frameworks on food security and nutrition established to improve national food systems, and suggested that CFS develop a platform to enable everyone to share experiences and lessons learned in using the Guidelines, for assessing their relevance, effectiveness, and impact.

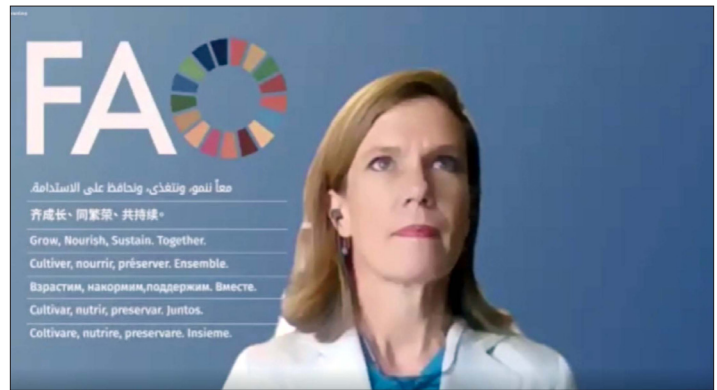
The CSM lamented the process for discussing and adopting the Guidelines, which oriented to the timeline of the UNFSS instead of to the CFS's mandate. She also lamented the Guidelines' content, saying they do not provide the necessary direction for food systems transformation, as they, *inter alia*, do not recognize the negative impact of industrial agriculture, or the positive role of agroecology and the right to water. The PSM said they have turned to the uptake and implementation of the Guidelines, highlighting an outreach session for business that took place the previous week for Asia, with two more sessions planned for the Americas and Africa.

The EU said sustainable food systems cannot be achieved solely by increasing efficiency, but require addressing other aspects such as food loss and waste, food safety, balanced and healthy diets, socio-cultural aspects, and education, labelling and marketing. She said the EU and its Member States, guided by the European Green Deal and its "Farm to Fork" Strategy, pledge to continue promoting sustainable and resilient food systems for healthy diets for all, with the Guidelines and other CFS products playing an integral role.

GERMANY said the Guidelines reinforce the holistic European approach of addressing the whole food chain. He listed VGFSyN-aligned national strategies, including on food loss and organic farming. FRANCE lamented increasing food insecurity from the pandemic, urging a collective response given our common responsibilities. She requested that everyone disseminate the VGFSyN to ensure implementation.

CUBA stressed that the Guidelines support scientific analysis of food systems and diets, and called for North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation to enhance productivity, innovation, and knowledge exchange. The SUN MOVEMENT noted it has submitted the VGFSyN to its members and stressed building on existing efforts at the country level.

Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chair of the FAO Council, and Chair of the CFS Open-ended Working Group that produced



Nancy Aburto, Deputy Director, Food and Nutrition Division, FAO

the Guidelines, said the VGFSyN are the only global negotiated policy instrument with national impact, providing concrete guidelines to implementation where change must be achieved.

Final Outcome: In the report, CFS recognizes the role of the VGFSyN as a useful tool in the hands of policy-makers and development partners and highlighted the importance of various actors and coordination mechanisms in promoting their effective utilization and uptake.

Third progress report on follow-up to the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

Nancy Aburto, Deputy Director, Food and Nutrition Division, FAO, and Francesco Branca, Director of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO, jointly presented the third progress report on the follow-up to ICN2, including implementation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025 ([CFS 2021/49/6](#)). They focused on progress made since CFS 46, highlighting that the Work Programme of the Nutrition Decade, which is built on the ICN2 Framework for Action, encourages country-led action networks, noting action networks on marine food, traditional diets, school food and nutrition labelling. They concluded by underscoring the role of the CFS in bringing together multiple constituencies and convening dialogues to achieve the aims of the Nutrition Decade and the related SDG targets.

CHILE said it has developed policies to address malnutrition, ranging from policies educating consumers to environmental and structural policies such as regulations on unhealthy foods and their commercialization. She highlighted Chile's compulsory food labelling policy, which she said is based on science and uses a pioneering model developed in the country.

ITALY highlighted that the Mediterranean diet and other traditional healthy and sustainable diets can be health policy tools for preventing non-communicable diseases and tackling the effects of the pandemic. She highlighted that during its G20 Presidency, Italy focused on the impact of COVID-19 on food security and nutrition and made recommendations to achieve sustainable food systems and improve access to safe and healthy diets.

Final Outcome: In the report, CFS:

- takes note of the findings of the third progress report on ICN2;
- recognizes the contribution of the VGFSyN in helping to translate commitments for action made in the ICN2 Rome



Hans Hoogeveen, Independent Chair of the FAO Council

Declaration on Nutrition in the context of national food systems and nutrition-related policies;

- reiterates its request to FAO and WHO that CFS be periodically updated on further progress in the implementation of ICN2; and
- takes note of the country-led Action Networks established under the umbrella of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition and their potential to promote policy coherence and reduce policy fragmentation between sectors relevant to food systems and nutrition, and to drive the uptake and context-specific operationalization of the VGFSyN during the remaining years of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition by 2025.

The UN Food System Summit and its Implications for CFS

This item was considered on Tuesday morning and afternoon. Chair Tiensin opened consideration of the CFS's role in the aftermath of the Food System Summit and the ongoing UN Decade of Action on Nutrition ([CFS2021/49/INF/15](#)). Barbara Stinson, President, World Food Prize Foundation, moderated the session.

By video message, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said business-as-usual is no longer an option after governments and other actors made bold commitments to transform their food systems at the UNFSS. She said this is the start of a wider process to translate commitments to action and reiterated that the CFS remains an essential platform to encourage food security and nutrition through its knowledge and policy tools.

ARGENTINA expressed concern over: constructing new bodies, such as a new "coordination center" and its unclear links to CFS; the Summit's marginalization of the VGFSyN; the lack of clear Summit results; and the possibility of changing the CFS's structure or mandate.

MALAYSIA said the UNFSS put food systems at the center of efforts to achieve the SDGs, drawing on broader UN capacities, but noted the CFS remains the highest intergovernmental multi-stakeholder platform to ensure food security and must not be sidelined. He queried the UNFSS's process for reviewing progress.

On the role of the CFS in the UNFSS follow-up, there were three main points of view held by Members. Some Members suggested that the CFS, together with the HLPE, should play



UN Deputy Secretary-General **Amina Mohammed**

a key or leadership role in the follow-up, in conjunction with the RBAs. The EU said there must be follow-up to build on the UNFSS outcomes and the CFS is the best platform for this. She requested views on possible roles for the CFS and HLPE, saying the Summit's momentum can increase global awareness of CFS guidelines and policy recommendations, thus improving CFS's impact.

Supporting the EU, FRANCE called for a key role for the CFS and HLPE in UNFSS follow-up, noting the CFS Plenary has legitimacy to be an open forum for all members. She said the stocktaking exercise, as the Summit follow-up, could be discussed regularly with the RBAs and other organizations, and that the HLPE should be involved and should be able to review its options when it comes to the science-policy interface. GERMANY supported the EU but called for open debate involving all CFS members and stakeholders on the issue of the role of the CFS. SOUTH AFRICA recommended that the CFS support Member States to advance the transformation and consider how to integrate its reports and guidelines in Summit follow-up.

Others expressed a different view, calling for the CFS to continue focusing on its role as a multi-stakeholder platform while the RBAs or the HLPF lead the follow-up to the Summit. These Members said CFS leadership on this would dilute its mandate and overload its already ambitious MYPoW, and also cited lack of funds. Supporting this view was the PHILIPPINES, who recommended the CFS take a complementary but pragmatic approach, using current funding levels, and possibly focus on monitoring and evaluation. BRAZIL and CHILE said the Summit's follow-up should be taken up by the HLPF, with BRAZIL adding that the CFS cannot absorb the myriad of actions proposed by the Summit without losing its focus. CHILE emphasized the need to avoid creating new structures. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the RBAs should lead the follow-up, noting they have the management, finances and field representatives to carry out this work. She stressed that the follow-up should not turn into a competition between CFS and other UN bodies, calling for complementarity of efforts. The US supported this view, saying the CFS's role should be as a multi-stakeholder platform to bolster food security and that the follow-up should not be added to the CFS work programme.

A third set of views opposed the CFS participating in any form of follow-up, with some questioning the process and content of the Summit, stating it overlooked developing countries' needs and was overly influenced by developed countries and philanthropies. Members holding this view included CSM, who said the Summit failed member states and that there are significant divergences regarding its follow-up. He stressed that CFS involvement in the Summit follow-up could undermine the years of work undertaken by CFS.

The UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON HUMAN RIGHTS criticized the Summit for: lack of clarity, global vision, or discussion of COVID-19; marginalizing human rights and many stakeholders; and its *ad hoc* nature with no clear outcomes. He cautioned against devoting CFS resources to Summit follow-up.

Several countries called for further discussions and consideration of relevant issues such as the CFS's mandate and availability of funds, before deciding what, if anything, would be CFS's role in the UNFSS follow-up process.

Moderator Simpson noted a diversity of views, with, among other things, support for CFS focusing on food security and nutrition issues at the global level, giving attention to strengthening awareness and impact at the local level, as well as attention to maintain the integrity of the CFS participatory processes for the development of policy convergence products.

Final Outcome: In the report, CFS, *inter alia*:

- congratulates the UN Secretary-General, his Special Envoy, and all those involved in organizing the UNFSS; and
- takes note of the potential implications of the UNFSS on the CFS and its HLPE, and looks forward to further analysis and consideration of next steps within the Bureau, in consultation with all Members, the Advisory Group, and other participants.

CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023: Update of the Rolling Section

The Chair introduced discussion on the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2020-2023 – Update of the Rolling Section ([CFS 2021/49/8](#)) on Tuesday afternoon.

The EU, with FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, and the PSM, welcomed the rolling update, urging the CFS to maintain its medium- and long-term objectives for providing timely responses to emerging issues such as COVID-19's effects on nutrition, with France adding that the HLPE should likewise continue its active work on this.

The US, supported by Argentina, supported the updated rolling section of the MYPoW as complementing the nature and ambition of the current MYPoW. ARGENTINA requested discussion on international sales of food and their contribution to food systems in the next MYPoW, said labelling issues should not divert CFS attention, and called for working more efficiently on already agreed activities.

AUSTRALIA, stressing data collection to support evidence-based delivery of the SDGs, recommended integrating CFS work on cross-cutting issues into existing workstreams and tackling them in succession to allow participation by smaller delegations.

ZAMBIA noted existing agreement that full implementation is “contingent upon sufficient financial and human resources” with “a manageable workload.” He recommended measuring CFS's importance by uptake of its policy recommendations, calling for a realistic number of activities.

The PSM said data analysis shows a need for better data and information to improve decision-making at the farm, investment, and policy levels.

The CSM, supported by CABO VERDE, the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, MALI, and the UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ON HUMAN RIGHTS, proposed that CFS establish a task force to prepare a high-level event on COVID-19 and prepare a policy coordination document for discussion at CFS 50. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC stressed financial support for the CFS and HLPE.

Delegates considered the draft conclusions on the MYPoW ([CFS 2021/49/8](#)) on Wednesday afternoon. After a CSM



Jordan Treacle, Civil Society Mechanism

suggestion for text on due procedures to avoid conflicts of interest, in a paragraph requesting efforts to expand and diversify the CFS financing base, delegates agreed to add wording from the CFS Resource Mobilization Strategy agreed at CFS 46, on a robust resource mobilization strategy “to prevent potential conflict of interest regarding funding.”

The CSM proposed an additional paragraph establishing a task force to prepare a high-level special event on developing a globally coordinated policy response to COVID-19 and prepare a draft policy coordination document on COVID-19's exacerbation of the food security and nutrition crisis for discussion and adoption by CFS 50. The US favored integrating the issue into current workstreams, noting the lengthy process to develop guidance and already full agenda of the MYPoW. After some discussion this proposal was not accepted.

Final Outcome: In the report, CFS:

- endorses the MYPoW as presented;
- notes that implementation will be contingent upon sufficient financial and human resources, with a manageable workload;
- encourages the RBAs to share equally the costs of the CFS Secretariat budget;
- requests continued deliberation on COVID-19's impacts on food systems, agriculture, and nutrition; and
- requests efforts to expand and diversify the CFS financing base.

Update on the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment

Chair Tiensin opened discussion on the update on progress in developing CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition ([CFS 2021/49/9](#)) on Tuesday.

Tomás Alberto Duncan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Panama to the RBAs and Co-Chair of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment, on behalf of himself and Co-Chair Tanja Grén, Permanent Representative of Finland to the RBAs, reported on progress in developing the guidelines. He noted the zero draft was discussed in July 2021 with the OEWG and then shared as background document for the regional and electronic consultations to best align the Voluntary Guidelines

with regional and national needs. He said these regional consultations and e-consultations will inform the first draft, to be discussed by the OEWG in January - March 2022. Negotiations among Members will take place in May-July 2022 the final draft presented to CFS 50 in October 2022.

Ana Luisa Castro, Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Cooperation, Panama, said mainstreaming the guidelines will be key to fulfilling the SDGs and reported on Panama's progress in strengthening the role of women.

NORWAY, INDONESIA, ARGENTINA and JAPAN outlined examples of national policies and activities to promote women's rights and empowerment, such as policies to promote women's leadership in areas such as agriculture, forests and fisheries, and a ministry dedicated to gender equality. Several participants, including BRAZIL, the PSM and MALAYSIA, called for ensuring women's access to financing. INDONESIA said the guidelines should: use agreed language, especially in relation to human rights; focus more on issues related to food security and nutrition in line with the CFS mandate; and not create additional reporting burdens for member countries. CANADA highlighted the linkages between women's empowerment and food systems transformation, and said existing CFS workstreams can effectively intersect with the systems approach advocated at the UNFSS and in the CFS VGFSyN.

The US said when women have the tools to succeed, they reinvest in their families and communities, creating a multiplier effect, and said gender equality and women's empowerment are key pillars of the US approach to food security and one of the highest priorities of the US' whole-of-government food security initiative, "Feed the Future."

CSM said gender-inclusive language and approaches must be included in the guidelines. Stressing that current global food systems build on and perpetuate inequalities, she said policy recommendation on women's and girls' rights and gender equality must be grounded on already-recognized human rights and key principles such as non-discrimination, participation and recognition. The PSM called for practical measures to ensure women's and girls' rights, including access to finance and means for women to become producers.

The FAO said the dialogues leading to the recent UNFSS called for ensuring equitable transformation, which these guidelines will support. He commended the Secretariat's engagement with diverse stakeholders and organization of the consultations.

SWEDEN, supporting the EU, called for improving gender equality because women are hardest hit by food crises. She noted that food security cannot be disconnected from nutrition, urging a systematic approach.

MALI said every step taken together for gender equality is a qualitative leap forward for the dignity of the human race.

The UK noted that full implementation of the MYPoW depends on sufficient financial and human resources and called for a manageable workload, prioritizing key workstreams where the CFS adds value. He noted positive correlation between women's and girls' education and reducing child malnutrition, while adult literacy is a powerful tool for fighting hunger.

Final Outcome: In the report, CFS:

- takes note of the "Zero Draft of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition" and the update on the preparation of the Voluntary Guidelines;
- reiterates the importance of the multi-stakeholder nature of the CFS Regional Consultations and the electronic consultation as a way to strengthen the ownership and success of the process of preparing and implementing the Voluntary Guidelines;
- recommends that the OEWG on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment; and
- continues working on the development of the Voluntary Guidelines and that a final draft be considered for endorsement at CFS 50.

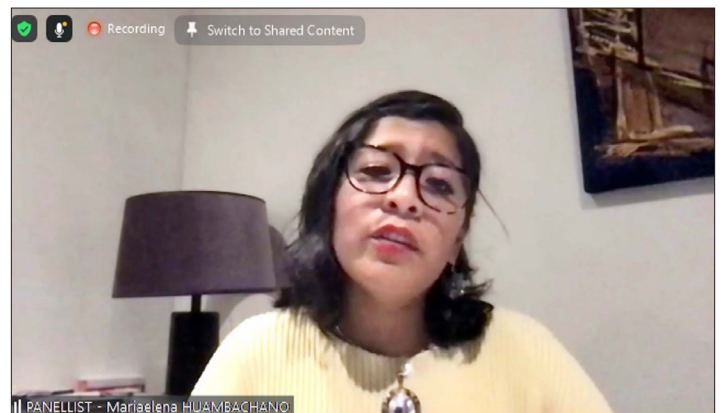
Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems

On Wednesday morning, CFS Chair Tiensin introduced this agenda item. He recalled that the CFS MYPoW for 2020-2023 commissioned a report on this issue to the HLPE. He explained that the report, which was launched in July this year, is intended to inform a CFS policy process that will lead to the development of a set of policy recommendations on engaging, recruiting and retaining youth in agriculture and food systems, intended to be presented to CFS 50 in October 2022 for its endorsement. He said today's session is the beginning of this policy convergence process.

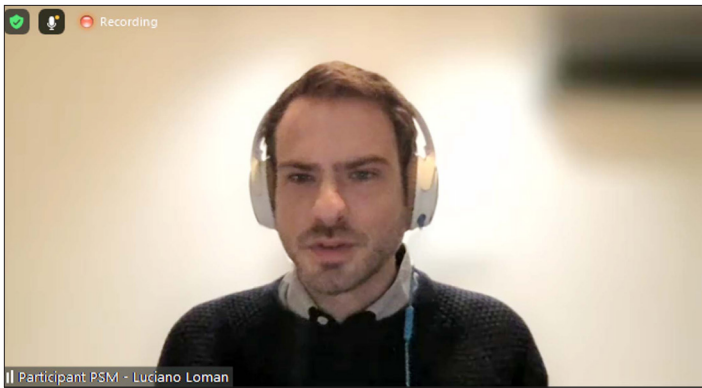
Chair Tiensin also announced that the Bureau appointed Pio Wennubst, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Rome-based agencies, as the Rapporteur to facilitate this policy process.

Martin Cole introduced the HLPE Report, "Youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems ([CFS 2021/49/Inf.17](#))," highlighting its key messages on the need to: put youth at the center of the policy convergence process based on the pillars of rights, equity, agency and recognition; ensure context-specific employment and labor market policies that are economically rewarding and intellectually satisfying; ensure youth have equitable access to resources; and promote youth-centered innovation for sustainable food systems.

Subsequently, Project team leader Hannah Wittman, University of British Columbia, and team members Indika



Mariaelena Huambachano, Syracuse University, US



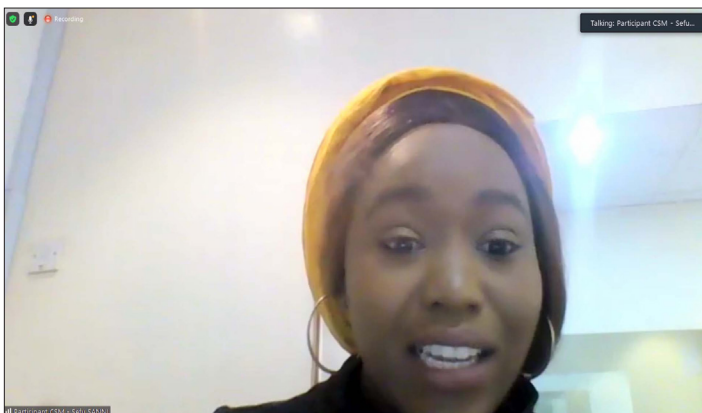
Luciano Loman, PSM youth representative

Arulingam, International Water Management Institute, and Mariaelena Huambachano, Syracuse University, US, presented the conceptual framework and recommendations of the report, highlighting that the collective challenge is to envision new pathways for sustainable food systems with youth leading as agents of change. They detailed the report's policy recommendations in the areas of: providing an enabling environment for youth; securing dignified and rewarding livelihoods; increasing equity and rights to resources; enhancing knowledge, education and skills; and fostering sustainable innovation; while overcoming the digital divide.

Luciano Loman, PSM youth representative, and Sefu Sanni, CSM youth representative, then presented on the youth perspectives, priorities and challenges to address in the upcoming CFS policy workstream.

Loman called for: youth access to training and innovative financing; providing youth, women and new farmers with a hand up to penetrate new markets and territories; and adapting food systems through creating and using new technologies. He said youth need to receive "living wages" in order to see a future in the sector, stressing that conventional employment is not the only possibility.

Sanni reported on challenges youth are facing, including employment, rural-urban migration, socio-political transformations, gender and nonbinary equity, and COVID-19. She briefly described an alternative model to the oppressive capitalist system that idealizes the isolated individual, saying nature cannot satisfy all human "wants."



Sefu Sanni, CSM youth representative

Rapporteur Wennubst urged inclusion of youth throughout development of policy recommendations to be endorsed in October 2022, noting that youth are "often ahead of us," and everyone will profit if they are empowered to strengthen general wellbeing. He called for everyone to engage with youth and facilitate their engagement in the process.

Youth representatives then made presentations outlining ways the international community can encourage youth to participate in agriculture and food systems. They called for: land tenure reforms that increase youth's opportunities; dialogue between youth and the public and private sectors; involving youth in policymaking and decision-making; recognizing youth's rights to dignity and self-expression; showcasing career opportunities in the agriculture sector, such as agricultural engineering, economics, marketing, and plant science; and equipping youth with the skills to deal with the current crisis. CFS Members also highlighted their efforts in this regard, such as provision of financial support to encourage college students and migrant workers to return to their hometowns to work in China, and the Russian Federation's Alliance of Rural Youth, which aims to involve youth in decision making processes.

CANADA called for land tenure reform that increases youth's opportunities to invest, deeper understanding of drivers for engaging youth in agriculture, and modernized agriculture's potential for retaining them.

A youth delegate from CANADA noted the current model of agriculture has limitations, saying the priority is providing adequate livelihoods to attract youth. He called for involving youth in finding solutions today to challenges of the future and for dialogue between youth and the public and private sectors.

ISRAEL said by 2030 youth will be taking charge and must be provided with skills to deal with the consequences the current generation has caused.

ARGENTINA called for: putting youth at the center of policy negotiations; using multilaterally-agreed concepts rather than terms such as "green lifestyle;" and varied tools that can adapt to various contexts and needs. He objected to statements that "agroecology" is the only way to achieve sustainability, citing lack of evidence, and that technology may hamper the participation of youth.

The PHILIPPINES urged recognition of youth as agents of change, beginning agricultural education in primary schools, and technology and financing to support agriculture for careers and sustainable livelihoods. Cabo Verde said youth must be empowered to innovate in agriculture and fisheries to achieve SDGs 1 (no poverty) and 2.

FAO praised the report, noting the organization is already engaging with youth. He said youth can regenerate agriculture, uptake new technologies, and ensure transition to more sustainable consumption and production patterns. He called for removing barriers to youth leadership in agriculture-related areas.

IFAD called for coordination and collaboration among UN agencies to enable the UN to speak with one voice on this topic, and for focusing not on economic empowerment of youth but on their participation in nutrition and a holistic approach.

The EU said food systems are still the largest employer of people in the world and provide a huge potential for youth employment and engagement. She called for innovative approaches and tools, knowledge-sharing, and enhanced access to land, vocational training, finance, and markets.

The CATHOLIC RURAL YOUTH MOVEMENT OF GERMANY said youth in agriculture need adequate salaries and good working conditions. She called for examining global trade's effects in depriving countries of their own agricultural economies, and for involving youth in political decision-making as agents of change with an equal voice.

The FEDERATION OF GERMAN RURAL YOUTH noted youth can make a difference, saying adult members of the Commission for the Future of Agriculture in Germany accepted youth's recommendations. She called for making such processes more "volunteer-friendly" for youth engagement.

UGANDA urged the CFS to address the situation for youth in developing countries, such as hand hoe use in Africa and small family farms that are less than one acre. He called for extension services and access to land and other resources for youth.

The US objected to the report's focus on "narrow" concepts of "wellbeing" and "sovereignty" and called for the role of youth in the private sector and markets for achieving transformation to feature more prominently in the workstream.

INDONESIA noted that while the youth population is increasing their participation in agriculture is decreasing. She endorsed the report, particularly its recognition of youth as agents of change and the need for context-specific recognition of youth's roles.

The CSM said youth expect some governments to add caveats to some terms and concepts in negotiations on the youth workstream, noting this will make the workstream inadequate to achieve the holistic solutions needed to address the crises facing youth. He highlighted the report's calls for redistribution of power and support for young people "beyond economic growth" and called for food sovereignty, comprehensive agrarian reform, and land redistribution for the right to food.

The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC said rural youth need quality education, and access to knowledge, emphasizing that their fundamental rights, including the rights to adequate food and representation in trade unions and cooperatives.

Chair Tiensin closed the session highlighting that youth are the present and hope for the future in agriculture and food systems,



Siragi Wakaabu, Agriculture Attaché and Alternate Permanent Representative of Uganda to the Rome-Based Agencies

and urged countries to support and empower them. He introduced the draft conclusions which generated discussions around issues of diversity and rights. Many youth representatives urged reference to "the pillars of rights, equity, agency and recognition" from the HLPE's report, while CHINA, the US, ARGENTINA and other Members preferred reference to the SDGs instead. There was also discussion about the need to recognize the diversity of contexts and of youth, "including by gender," with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION suggesting deleting "including by gender." She said if the purpose of this is to refer to women's and girls' empowerment, then the text should state this clearly.

Final Outcome: In the report, CFS, *inter alia*:

- acknowledges the work of the HLPE in the report on "Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems;" and
- recognizes the importance of an inclusive process, open to all interested stakeholders, leading to the endorsement of an agreed set of CFS policy recommendations to be presented for endorsement at CFS 50 in October 2022.

CFS also takes note of the comments made during the Plenary discussion, including about the need to:

- put youth at the center of the policy convergence process by building on existing initiatives and experiences, as well as on the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda;
- recognize the diversity of contexts and cultural, social and economic multiplicity of youth, and to promote context-specific employment and labor market policies that target young people, enhance entrepreneurship, employment outcomes, and dignified livelihoods including, but not limited to, farming and fishing, at all levels; and
- ensure that youth have equitable access to land, inputs, water, forests, markets, labor, education, knowledge, information, agricultural extension, finance, credit and technology.

Monitoring Event - CFS policy recommendations on Climate Change and Water

On Wednesday afternoon, delegates participated in a session on Monitoring CFS Policy Recommendations on "Food security and climate change" ([CFS 2021/49/Inf.19](#)) endorsed in 2012 and on "Water for food systems and nutrition" ([CFS 2021/49/Inf.20](#)), endorsed in 2015. William Moseley, Macalester College, US, and HLPE Steering Committee member, delivered a keynote presentation on the nexus between water, climate and food



William Moseley, Macalester College, US, and HLPE Steering Committee member

security and nutrition. He addressed the extent to which the recommendations are known and used, and whether they need updating, particularly in light of the recent publication on the Physical Science Basis of Climate Change as part of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

He concluded that there was limited attention to how agriculture production and associated activities affect climate change and on agroecology as an accepted term, and that challenges remain, including: insufficient data, particularly sex-disaggregated and local-level 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.

Responding to questions and comments, Moseley said: there is ongoing discussion about where climate change adaptation should be addressed but there is now more explicit incorporation of sustainability as a pillar of food security and nutrition. He noted no comprehensive review of uptake was done given lack of time. He suggested that two conceptual changes - adopting “agency” as a dimension of food security to increase the number of voices heard and adopting a more holistic view of food systems - will lead to better governance of water resources given competition among different interests. He praised the fact that the recommendations have “stood the test of time,” which the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) has demonstrated.

Subsequently, in a panel discussion moderated by Chair Tiensin, speakers shared their experiences in applying the recommendations from these reports, followed by delegates sharing some of their own experiences.

Carlos Bernardo Cherniak, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Argentina to the RBAs, underlined that efficient use of soil and water resources is indispensable to improving production efficiency and farmers’ livelihoods. He described his government’s plans to promote conservation, restoration and sustainable management of agricultural soils while promoting the sustainable development of irrigated agriculture throughout the country, with the aim that 4 million hectares of land will operate under this system.

Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO, said the FAO’s work in this area focuses on institutions; investment in information, statistics and data; and innovation and technical capacity. She outlined various FAO activities using a food systems approach that links, *inter alia*, water, soil, climate, and food security, and supports countries to: undertake policy analysis and reform, and strengthen governance; implement a more inclusive water tenure regime; and formulate strategies and investments to increase farm irrigation and reduce impacts of climate change.

Fred Yoder, US farmer, Chair, North American Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance, and PSM representative, called for a systems approach that improves soil health and water, among



Recording
FAO - Maria Helena Semedo
Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO

other benefits. He highlighted that to get farmers’ buy-in it is essential to show them the economic benefits of climate-smart agriculture, and urged the private sector to finance some of the new practices that can sequester carbon.

Emeline Siale Ilolahia, Executive Director, Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations, and CSM representative, said she uses CSM-shared knowledge to advance the advocacy role her organization plays for farmers, family farms, fisherfolk and women. She also noted that her organization advances the role of peasants and addresses water quality and access in pursuit of the SDGs. She highlighted CFS policy recommendations on the unique needs of family producers, movement of food in trade, and challenges for water resources due to climate change.

Members then shared their own experiences. The PHILIPPINES called for embedding climate change in food security and asked the biggest emitters to provide accessible finance to ensure food and water security for the lowest emitters taking the brunt of climate change impacts.

The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC urged policy designers and implementers to increase resilience, with CFS support. She urged everyone to increase international cooperation for resilience and adaptation and to promote CFS policy products at COP 26. The EU called for integrating gender equality and youth empowerment into implementation of the recommendations and for empowering all stakeholders in decision-making processes.

ANGOLA urged knowledge-sharing on management of water and soil. She stressed the CFS is uniquely suited to help countries



Talking ANGOLA - Maria JARDIM
Maria Jardim, Minister of Environment, Angola

on the impacts of climate change on agriculture, nutrition and water and on mainstreaming social justice in national programmes.

Kenya, for the AFRICAN REGIONAL GROUP, said climate change threatens severe impacts on food systems, water, and ecosystem services in Africa, which affect human health and have already displaced many people. She called for integration of the recommendations on risk mitigation strategies into discussions at the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Final Outcome: In the report, CFS, *inter alia*,

- pledges to make additional efforts to promote much broader and more systematic dissemination, use and application of policy recommendations on climate change and water, and seeks similar commitments and support from UN Water, and other relevant UN agencies and secretariats, as appropriate, towards a joint and coordinated uptake campaign; and
- encourages all Parties attending UNFCCC COP 26 to more prominently feature the role of agriculture in climate change, and to use CFS policy recommendations when making pledges to climate action that can increase implementation of sustainable agricultural practices to achieve food security.

CFS Secretariat's Special Event

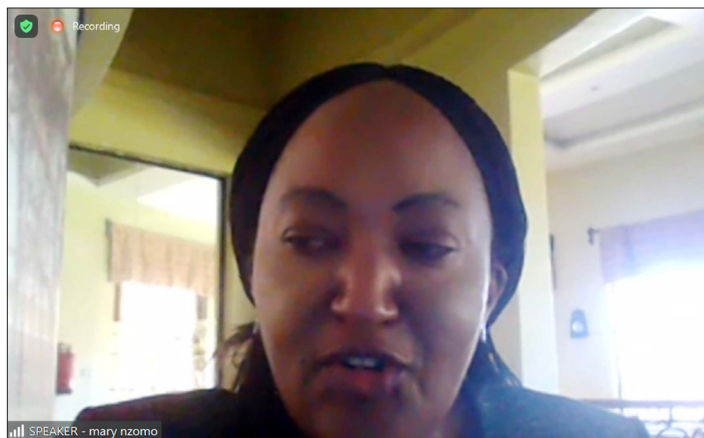
On Thursday morning, the CFS Secretariat held its annual Special Event, which was hosted by Chris Hegadorn, CFS Secretary. The first half of the Special Event was held to mark the 13th International Day of Rural Women taking place the following day.

Ndaya Beltchika, IFAD, moderated the segment which discussed the important contributions of rural women and the challenges they have faced in the context of COVID-19 and its recovery.

Jyotsna Puri, Associate Vice-President, IFAD, gave a keynote address commending CFS for bringing the topic of women's and girls' empowerment to the fore and calling on everyone to contribute to achieving this goal as a right, an economic necessity, and the foundation for almost all SDGs as well as an SDG in itself. She called for financial instruments to target women, noting that giving women equal access to resources would increase crop yield and the resiliency of both women and men and lift 50 million people out of hunger.



Ndaya Beltchika, IFAD



Mary Nzomo, Minister of Agriculture, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya

Subsequently, CFS delegates and stakeholders heard from four women, from Africa, Asia, and South America, about their on-the-ground experiences.

Mary Nzomo, Minister of Agriculture, Trans Nzoia County, Kenya, said COVID-19 lockdowns compromised women's livelihoods, food production, and business activities in Africa, noting that measures taken against the pandemic resulted in lower food production, higher prices for inputs, and difficulty accessing inputs, markets or financing. She said governments, the private sector, and others gave support, including subsidies, free inputs, food handouts, and cash transfers, and that open-air markets were opened, with more hand-washing facilities, so they could continue to sell during the pandemic.

Karmen Ramírez Boscán, Fuerza de Mujeres Wayuu, Colombia, said the pandemic exacerbated the difficult situation of women in her community, where the air and soil is already contaminated from the largest open-air coal mine in South America. She said some of her community's habits that help protect the land, including their semi-nomadic lifestyle in times of drought, were halted due to COVID-19. She also noted that available water was privatized for mining coal, which compounded the situation.

Tonthoza Uganja, CEO, Sustainable Farming Solutions, Malawi, spoke on how her organization is addressing land restoration for rural women through research, including experimenting and monitoring outcomes of projects. She recommended that local groups diversify crops to spread risk, mobilize external resources through collective action, and design their own initiatives in order to have ownership over them and because they have the best knowledge of their own landscape.

Kehkashan Basu, Founder, Green Hope Foundation, Nepal, said in some ultra-conservative communities, education is seen as intrusion, not as an aid to resilience-building, so education is needed but must be geared to them. She cautioned against dismantling local social structures instead of working to convince communities that action is for the greater good. She noted that COVID-19 has made communities more ready for change and lowered resistance to accepting women's ability to contribute to food security.

In subsequent discussion, CSM called on the CFS to ensure a central role for women's grassroots organization to make women in agriculture visible. Uganja said women are the backbone of the global food system and should receive training in nutrition to better feed the community. Regarding common indicators to measure improvement and respond to challenges, Basu said a one-size-fits-all solution will not work and called for gender disaggregated data. Nzomo said women must be economically empowered for full participation along the value chain, not just considered "farm laborers." Ramirez said one indicator is the possibility of building capacity in local communities, given that some are quite remote. She also called for information to be translated into indigenous and local languages.

In closing key messages, Ramirez called on everyone to take care of land, hand it down to the next generation, and keep protecting traditional knowledge. Basu called for challenging discriminatory ideas to change mindsets and build resilience in women and rural communities. Uganja called for research in the context of different landscapes, communities, and problems, continually adjusting as needed.

Her Royal Highness, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Zero Hunger, addressed participants via video, stressing that women's and girls' empowerment gives the greatest return on investment because of their multiple roles in society. Noting increasing challenges to progress in this area, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, she said it is an issue of fundamental rights, and that it is essential we keep our commitments to "our mothers, daughters, future generations, and society as a whole."

Roundtable Discussion on Building Synergies Between the CFS, UNEP and Rio Conventions: The second half of the Special Event featured a roundtable discussion on building synergies between the CFS, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the three Rio Conventions: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the UNFCCC.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP, noted that food systems contribute to planetary crises, which in turn affect the food systems, particularly creating hardships for farmers and driving up consumer food prices. She called for strengthening action around the commitments in the Rio conventions, highlighting that food production contributes 30% of emissions, so embedding climate change actions into food systems can be an effective and cost-effective way to tackle the climate crisis and build resilience. She reminded participants that: food systems should be a component of nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; driving changes in food systems and nature must be fast-tracked; and land degradation neutrality targets under the UNCCD require systems thinking. She called for a focus on supply chains. She also noted that excessive subsidies on chemicals and fertilizers and excessive use of plastic cause pollution and affect our water and health.

Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, said food systems are a human achievement that have enabled human



Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary

progress and longevity, and commended farmers and everyone involved in food production for their role in ongoing efforts to feed the planet. She cautioned that the challenges of feeding 8 billion people on the planet are having a detrimental impact, however, saying countries must step up climate action in order to meet food security goals, including through more ambitious NDCs to reduce emissions. She noted that the UNFCCC is mainstreaming regenerative agriculture and a systemic approach to the NDCs, integrating them with the SDGs. She said approaches to food security must change how water is used and called for more ambitious NDCs, long-term strategies to get to zero emissions by 2050 and for more climate finance.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary, underlined that biodiversity is the foundation of food access and that food production is the single largest driver of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. She called for integrating policies to deal with this triple crisis, highlighting the VGFSyN and the CFS policy [recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable agriculture and food systems](#) as examples of integrated approaches. Mrema urged all state and non-state actors to come together to resolve the food, biodiversity and climate crises, stressing that "we need all hands on deck" to strengthen synergies.

Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, by video message, said the VGFSyN are crucial in the responsible governance agenda and are a key tool for achieving land degradation neutrality. He noted that UNCCD Parties have



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary

embraced the Guidelines and the excellent work of the CFS more generally. He urged parties to provide more financing for land tenure rights, because people will invest in the future if they are assured of reaping what they sow.

Martin Frick, Deputy to the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the UNFSS, updated CFS 49 about the Ministerial Roundtable that was held on 28 July 2021, as part of the UNFCCC Pre-COP 26 Summit. He highlighted the main findings of the roundtable, including the need to: strengthen synergies between the Rio Conventions; raise global ambition, noting this is a priority of the UK COP 26 Presidency; ensure national implementation of the policy instruments of the directives coming from the three Rio Conventions; and boost finance. Frick also highlighted that food systems are the key to implementing the Rio Conventions and that nature-based solutions must work for people to be effective. He highlighted the work of the CFS in this regard, saying it is available and there is no need to "reinvent the wheel," calling for making CFS products better known by, for instance, bringing them directly into COP processes.

Subsequently, a panel discussion took place, focusing on initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders in implementing the Rio Conventions, as well as CFS policy products at all levels. The discussions were moderated by Ismahane Elouafi, Chief Scientist, FAO, who said the goal of aligning with the work of the Conventions is better production, better nutrition, better environment and a better life, noting the need to transform to sustainable, resilient agri-food systems to achieve these "four betters."

Franz Perrez, Head, International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland, said "food unites us all" and that food systems, climate change and biodiversity are all inherently interlinked. He stressed transition to sustainable consumption and production patterns and sustainable food systems as critical success factors to address climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation and meet the goals and objectives of the Rio Conventions and Agenda 2030. Highlighting the need for coordination across these interlinked areas, he described the "Bern process" initiated by Switzerland. He said as part of this process, UNEP and the CBD Secretariat organized workshops of the biodiversity-related conventions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. He reported that



Franz Perrez, Head, International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

these workshops resulted in recommendations such as the need for the new biodiversity goals to speak to all biodiversity-related agreements, processes, and institutions.

Basile van Havre, Director-General for Biodiversity Policy and Partnerships, Environment and Climate Change of Canada & Co-chair, CBD OEWG for the development of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, called for governments to engage more in discussions on agriculture and also highlighted the need to balance the objectives of the Rio Conventions: ensuring nature meets people's needs for food, fiber and protection. He described his dream of a triple COP implementation conference.

Francis Ogwal, National Environmental Management Authority of Uganda and Co-chair of the CBD OEWG for the development of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, said agriculture is a critical element of the framework, noting that the world population is constantly increasing, as is food production. He highlighted the need for balance between agriculture and biodiversity conservation.

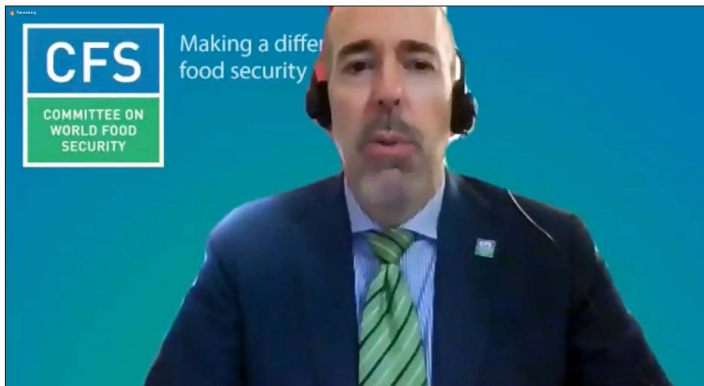
Rob Vos, International Food Policy Research Institute, discussing the role of research in supporting the Rio Conventions, said a lot of today's challenges are a result of under-investment in research, especially research focused on environmental challenges. Noting that governments currently spend more than USD 700 billion annually to support farmers and food production, he said less than 3% of this goes towards agricultural innovation, and called for incentives to induce a change.

Paula Gioia, peasant farmer, Member, International Coordination Committee of Via Campesina, and CMS participant, said all food systems are not equal, underlining that industrial food systems contribute to 30-50% of climate change, large-scale monocultures are a leading driver of biodiversity loss, and the chemicals used cause desertification. She cautioned against the concept of nature-based solutions, saying it is a vague umbrella term and will enable harmful practices such as monoculture of tree plantations and industrial agriculture, supporting "climate and nature" "new colonialism" and corporate greenwashing, and a new wave of land grabbing, mainly in the global South.

Mateusz Ciasnocha, CEO, European Carbon Farmers and PSM participant, noted many challenges but also many opportunities for farmers to make money in ways which protect the ecosystem base. He said the Rio Conventions need to move from deliberation to action, and this happens in the private sector in a timely manner. He invited everyone to join the Race to Resilience and Race to Zero along with 4475 businesses, governments, and other participants. He said farmers are committed, calling for farmer representation at CFS.

In ensuing discussions, van Havre addressed how to ensure food security and uptake of CFS policy products, saying the Bern process: aims to ensure the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is relevant for the multilateral environmental agreements; builds on existing indicators and reporting already taking place, in an integrated system; and deepens cooperation among the multilateral environmental agreements.

On UNFSS-related national dialogues and the Rio conventions' objectives, Perrez said national-level activities are most important but international-level dialogue can stimulate



Chris Hegadorn, CFS Secretary

national information exchange and actions, so they should build on each other.

On subsidies, CGIAR said most were provided by high-income countries before but today the larger developing countries, including China, India, and others, provide most and they take various forms, including trade protection and direct payments to farmers coupled to inputs or outputs, with few directly supporting environmental outcomes. He said subsidies should be repurposed to increase research funding and provide incentives to adopt better practices.

Moderator Hegadorn said the Rio Conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements should take advantage of the CFS as a mechanism for bringing their agendas into alignment with Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

Other Matters

On Thursday afternoon, Chair Tiensin announced the results of the election of the CFS Chair, which took place during the day. Gabriel Ferrero, Ambassador-at-Large for Food Security, Spain, received 73 of the 121 votes cast, and Médi MOUNGUI, Cameroon, who was the other candidate, received 48 votes. Ferrero was declared the new CFS Chairperson for the next two years. Delegates also confirmed the CFS Bureau for the period 2021-2023 and agreed, by acclamation, that CFS 50 will be held from 17-21 October 2022.

Pilar Cancela Rodriguez, Secretary of State for International Cooperation, Spain, said the CFS has a crucial role to play over the next few years in the joint endeavor to achieve the 2030 Agenda and SDG 2.

QU Dongyu, FAO Director-General, congratulated the new CFS Chair and pledged FAO's support to CFS including by: ensuring CFS features in its regional conferences; and continuing to promote and advocate for CFS products through its country offices world-wide. He also thanked Tiensin for his great leadership that has made CFS more effective and inclusive.

Numerous Members made closing statements, during which it was noted that the traditional CFS principle of rotating the chairmanship among the three global South regions had not been upheld but that the principle of democracy had been. There was general concurrence, congratulations and thanks expressed to both candidates for this.



Chair-Elect **Gabriel Ferrero**, Ambassador-at-Large for Food Security, Spain

Addressing Members, Chair-Elect Ferrero underlined that everyone is an agent of change and called on all Members to join forces and work together, particularly during the ongoing pandemic.

Chair Tiensin then thanked everyone for their support, confidence and trust over his two years as Chair. He recalled the need to radically change CFS working modalities to virtual meetings, calling himself the “virtual chairperson” because there were no in-person meetings during his tenure. He noted today's severe and multilinked crises--climate change, conflict, COVID-19, and others—and said CFS work does not end with approval of its policy recommendations, but that CFS must promote the uptake of its products and convergence into concrete actions at all levels.

Delegates adopted the draft report of the meeting by acclamation.

Chair Tiensin bade everyone farewell and closed CFS 49 at 16:45.

Upcoming Meetings

Opportunities of Climate Finance to Foster Forest-Positive Agriculture:

This webinar, organized by the FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF), will be held on the theme “Climate finance to foster forest-positive supply chains.” **dates:** 20 October 2021 **location:** virtual **www:** www.fao.org/redd/news/detail/en/c/1436982/ and fao.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8SN3---uTQKKrhJNRKW7wQ

Glasgow Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 26): COP 26, the 16th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) are convening one year after the conference was postponed due to COVID-19. **dates:** 31 October-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, Scotland, UK **www:** unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference and enb.iisd.org/Glasgow-Climate-Change-Conference-COP26

Water and Climate Pavilion at COP 26: Organized by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and many partners, the Pavilion will take place in the sidelines of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC, which is taking place from 1-12 November 2021. It will include a range of events demonstrating the numerous ways that water is enabling transformative climate action at all levels. **dates:** 31 October-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, Scotland, UK, and virtual **www:** www.siwi.org/what-we-do/siwi-at-cop/water-pavilion-at-cop26/

2021 Global Conference on Health and Climate Change: The 2021 Global Conference on Health and Climate Change will be held on the theme “Healthy and Ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement” and will have a special focus on climate justice. **dates:** 6-7 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, Scotland, UK **www:** www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2021/11/06/default-calendar/2021-global-conference-on-health-and-climate-change

XVII World Water Congress: The International Water Resources Association (IWRA) is scheduled to convene its XVII World Water Congress is now scheduled to take place at the end of 2021 after being postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event is jointly organized with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, Daegu Metropolitan City, K-water and the Korea Water Resources Association and will be held jointly with the Korea International Water Week (KIWW). **dates:** 29 November – 3 December 2021 **location:** Daegu, Daegu-Gyeongbuk, Republic of Korea **www:** www.worldwatercongress.com/index.php

World Soil Day 2021: World Soil Day is held annually on 5 December as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources. **dates:** 5 December 2021 **location:** worldwide **www:** www.un.org/en/observances/world-soil-day

Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021: The Nutrition for Growth Year of Action kicked off with a December 2020 launch event in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the UN Call to Action on malnutrition. This year will culminate in the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit in Japan in December 2021. **dates:** 7-8 December 2021 **location:** Tokyo, Japan **www:** nutritionforgrowth.org/events/

Ninth World Water Forum: Organized by the World Water Council, the 9th World Water Forum is the first of its kind in sub-Saharan Africa. The event will focus on the theme, “Water Security for Peace and Development,” and will consider four priorities: water security and sanitation; cooperation; rural development; and means tools. **dates:** 22-27 March 2022 **location:** Dakar, Senegal **www:** www.worldwatercouncil.org/en/dakar-2022

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15) (Part 2): CBD COP 15 will review the achievement and delivery of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also anticipated that the final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be taken, together with decisions on related topics including capacity building and resource mobilization.

dates: 25 April-8 May 2022 **location:** Kunming, Guizhou, China **www:** www.cbd.int/article/new-dates-cop15-virtual-2021-facetoface-2022

Ninth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA): This session will address items on general policy and implementation of the Treaty and the Multilateral System, and administrative and budgetary matters. **dates:** 9-15 May 2022 **location:** India **www:** www.fao.org/plant-treaty/en/ and www.fao.org/plant-treaty/meetings/meetings-detail/en/c/1259571/

UNCCD COP 15: The fifteenth session of the COP to the UNCCD was originally expected to take place in the final quarter of 2021. Due to the global pandemic, it was postponed until May 2022. **dates:** 9-21 May 2022 **location:** Côte d’Ivoire **www:** www.unccd.int/convention/conference-parties-cop

CFS 50: The 50th session of CFS will convene from 17-21 October 2022. **dates:** 17-21 October 2022 **location:** TBA **www:** www.fao.org/cfs/en/

For additional meetings, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

CFS	Committee on World Food Security
COP 26	26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
CSM	Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples’ Mechanism
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FSN	food security and nutrition
HLPE	High-Level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition
HLPF	High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MYPoW	Multi-year Programme of Work
OEWG	Open-ended Working Group
PSM	Private Sector Mechanism
RBAs	Rome-based Agencies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOFI	State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
VGFSyN	CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization