

## CIVIL SOCIETY COMMENTS ON THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE PAPER ON GENDER, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

- **Decision box:** we changed the order of recommendations reflecting the most urgent and comprehensive actions to take first. We reiterate our position on leaving out the proposal to prepare a new set of Voluntary guidelines on gender, due to the fact that many international instruments and Conventions already exist and there's more need to implement them than initiating a new process.
- **Structure of the paper:** the document needs to be restructured for better clarity. Gender, and food security and nutrition are mixed continuously in the paper. Both women's role in society and households and the impact on child and nutrition, and food and nutrition security including the role of women and the challenges they face should be mentioned and addressed separately.

The document should start with an **overall picture of food insecurity with regard to women**, the constraints the women face, and then how to address them. The overall analysis should refer to the impact of **food prices volatility, increasing commercial pressure on land**, and mention how socio-economic policies may be exacerbating gender inequality. With regard to the improvement of nutritional status through agriculture, we suggest to refer to the five pathways mentioned in literature: (World Bank, 2007; Hawkes and Ruel, 2006 and 2008; Haddad, 2010):

  1. Increased (nutritious) food production for own consumption. Food and (micro)nutrient consumption is directly affected by the types and quantities of foods that households produce, especially in the case of subsistence agriculture.
  2. Increased income from the sale of agricultural commodities and greater farm productivity. This pathway only contributes to improved nutrition if the greater farm income is translated into adequately purchasing of nutritious foods.
  3. Increased empowerment of women as key contributors to household food security and to the health and nutrition status of household members. Through greater control and decision-making powers by women in both the productive and domestic domains, women's preferences and priorities are more reflected in the agriculture-nutrition chain.
  4. Lower food prices resulting from increases in food supply. A decrease in food prices leads to an increase in *de facto* income. This could lead to improvements in nutrition if this means households are actually purchasing more nutritious foods.
  5. Macroeconomic effects of agricultural growth (i.e. increased national income, macroeconomic growth and poverty reduction). Economic growth might contribute to improvements in the food and nutrition status, however the impacts of growth can be distributed unevenly across households, with many poor not benefiting (Ahmed *et al.*, 2007).
- **Major gaps in the document:**
  1. The document should start at the very beginning with a reference to **international human rights** and to the Five Rome principles adopted at the World Food Summit in 2009 which explicitly refers to the right to adequate food.
  2. Within the document analysis is lacking context, and fails to include the broader circumstances and realities of women from diverse sectors, and backgrounds (indigenous, Dalit, landless, etc.) and how they have been impacted by **food prices crisis** particularly.
  3. **Emergencies** are absent from this completely. Given the situation in HOA at the moment, and the roundtable on protracted crises at last year's CFS, it would be great to have a section on how nutritional status of women and children can be protected/ensured in emergency contexts as well, such as consideration of type and quality of food transfers, modalities of interventions (vouchers/cash/direct food), reserves.
  4. Women's nutritional status is linked with child nutrition in this paper – but it should firstly be about women's own food security, empowerment and that has a spill over effect on children. Otherwise we are just using women's labour; and improving women's nutrition to feed the children and men. Women need to be recognised as farmers in their own right and not just as homemakers, **women are right holders first**.

5. In the other documents that are being drafted at the moment for the CFS policy roundtables, proper attention to gender should take place. We should refer to those documents strengthening mutually the gender aspects.
6. The document addresses the role of women in agriculture, but doesn't mention which model of agriculture best supports their empowerment, food security and nutrition. **Emphasis should be given to promoting ecologically sensitive agriculture, use of indigenous seed varieties and crops grown for ensuring local food security.**