

Policy Brief CFS51

We Effect on the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's & Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security & Nutrition



In relation to the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) decision to endorse the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition We Effect have the following recommendations and analysis to share.

- **We Effect welcome the approval of the guidelines**, and value the strong recognition of gender equality as fundamental for human rights. We Effect is also committed to, in a collaborating manner, to contribute to the promotion and implementation of the guidelines in relative contexts in our area of work to support our gender transformative approach to transform global and local food system and nutrition.
- **It's vital to acknowledge the rights framework in full** by centring language around women's social, political, and economic rights and food rights. Permeate CEDAW GR 37 on gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate, and CEDAW GR 39 on the rights of Indigenous women and Girls into the guidelines. Also, reflect UNSCR 2242 imperative to regard women, peace, and security as a cross-cutting issue in climate change as well as addressing UNFCCC gender Action Plan (LIMA).
- **We Effect want to acknowledge that progress of women leadership** can challenge constraining social norms that either can move towards greater acceptance of women's leadership or towards a stronger backlash against women¹. In tackling backlash, incorporate mitigation strategies and safeguarding mechanisms at national level.
- **We Effect call for the acknowledgment of cooperatives**, not merely the private sector, in advancing job opportunities for women and economic growth contributing to food rights. United Nations General Assembly recognises that cooperatives provide decent employment generation, poverty and hunger eradication, education, social protection, financial inclusion, and the creation of affordable housing options across a variety of economic sectors. The economic status of women tends to improve considerably by belonging to a cooperative, by gaining opportunities through the investments cooperatives make in members' human capital². Furthermore, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) acknowledges the benefits of the collaboration between the care sector and the cooperative movement and having cooperatives expanding care services for specific groups moving beyond child-care. This since cooperatives having innovative solutions that involve active participation to meet their care needs³.
- **We Effect support a gender transformative approach in the context of food security and nutrition. When applying gender transformative approaches, it's vital to build in a set of factors**; addressing harmful or constraining social norms must be carefully woven with long-term commitments within the localities, and changes of norms in communities should match changes in transformative laws and policies. Also, shaping gender equal norms involves changing power dynamics and subsequently creating resistance among actors who fear losing control. Women rights organisations, gender responsive organisations and women-led cooperatives are equipped to manoeuvre this terrain and ought to oversee implementation and monitoring.
- **A successful realisation of food security and nutrition for all requires stakeholders to recognise the agency and vulnerability of sexual identify and orientation** in participation in food systems and accessing food.
- **Pivotal for a successful implementation of the Guidelines is the ensuring of land titling not only by reforming policy but by transforming local customs**⁴, and by challenging patriarchal norms⁵. Local ownership, by civil society, of these processes has proven successful⁶.

- To ensure food security for all include effort to safeguard⁷ and guarantee effective security, integrity and protection for rural and indigenous women fighting for land titling⁸ and gain access and rights to ancestral domains^{9,10}.
- Aligned with the strong commitment in climate change mitigation, now is the time for FAO to level up its interest for increased investment in climate change adaptation and point out the women's role in agriculture and food security.
- We Effect calls for and welcome investments in mechanisms that strengthen resilience of women small-holder farmers such as insurance, energy saving mechanisms, water harvesting, irrigation, and clean fuel.
- We Effect call for FAO, other UN agencies and Member Countries to promote gender responsive financing mechanisms such as revolving funds and policy frameworks to ease access to financial products, and services, and strengthen capacity building for women and young people to ensure inclusion in value chains and business.
- We Effect recommend a gender transformative approach and specifically the application of the 5R's¹¹ since de-feminisation of care work is crucial in achieving gender equality and women's economic rights and goes beyond providing care service and altering patriarchal gender roles with positive masculinities of care work at household level and co-responsibilities of care work.
- Secure food programmes by applying a GBV risk mitigation analysis and ensure Do-No-Harm by adding that preventive GBV work always need to ensure having GBV response mechanisms in place.



Pathmapryia, Ralkuli, Sri Lanka Photo: Rishanthy Renganathan

ENDNOTES

1. UNDP, 'Breaking down gender biases – shifting social norms towards gender equality', 2023, p.5 <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdp-document/gsni202303pdf.pdf>
2. Ibid.
3. International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2017. 'Providing Care through Cooperatives 2: Literature Review and Case Studies'. Lenore Matthew
4. <https://weeffect.org/news/we-effect-stands-up-for-women-land-rights/>
5. <https://weeffect.org/news/tanzania-access-to-land/>
6. Realising Womens' land rights - WeEffect Global
7. United Nation, 'Situation for women human rights defenders – report of the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders', A/HRC/40/60, 10 January 2019. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/004/97/PDF/G1900497.pdf?OpenElement>
8. We Effect, 'Cause of Death: Farmer', 2022. WE_Bonderapport_EN_2022.indd (weeffect.org)
9. Briefing Note 1 Gender and Indigenous Peoples: Overview, United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2010; https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/BriefingNote1_GREY.pdf
10. We Effect, 'Women Feed the World', 2021. we-effect_women-feed-the-world.pdf (weeffect.org)
11. The 5R's refers to recognise, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work, and reward and represent paid care work by promoting decent work for care workers and guaranteeing their representation, social dialogue, and collective bargaining. For recourses per R see A-toolkit-on-paid-and-unpaid-care-work-en.pdf (unwomen.org)