

PFM intervention during the third panel of item IX. The Forum on the uptake of the CFS voluntary guidelines on gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition

Thank you to the CFS Chair for the opportunity to speak in this forum, and thank you to the Secretariat and all of the stakeholders from across the CFS community who engaged in good faith in the workstream on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment that produced these Voluntary Guidelines.

The Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment across agrifood systems, and we encourage robust commitment from all actors within the CFS to promote the uptake of these Guidelines.

Two recent reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization underscore the importance of these Voluntary Guidelines and their uptake and implementation.

Last year, the Status of Women in Agrifood Systems report sent the stark message that progress has been far too slow in closing gender gaps in access to assets and resources that are key to healthy, sustainable agrifood systems – including access to and control over land, access to high-quality seeds and other inputs, and access to critical services and finance.

If policies, strategies, programs and interventions all focus on closing the gender gaps, it would help lift entire economies -- everyone would benefit. We would reduce hunger faster, and increase prosperity sooner.

A second FAO report published earlier this year, titled *The Unjust Climate*, is a powerful testament to how climate change takes a steeper toll on women and female-headed households. Extreme heat, flooding and other extreme weather events cause women to lose more income, and to take on additional work burdens compared to men.

Both of these reports make clear that it is critical to promote interventions that tackle multiple, intersecting forms of marginalization and vulnerability if we hope to close gender gaps and sustainably end hunger. We cannot do one without the other.

We do wish the Voluntary Guidelines were more ambitious, but we also recognize that their implementation will make meaningful positive differences in the lives, livelihoods, and living and working conditions of millions of women and girls.

We have important opportunities in the coming years to highlight the importance of these voluntary guidelines and urgency of closing gender gaps across agrifood systems. In 2026, we will celebrate women food producers of all types during the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

We encourage all CFS members and stakeholders to view these guidelines as a baseline, and build on them as a foundation for their efforts to work toward gender equality and women's empowerment across agriculture and food systems. As we promote the uptake of these guidelines, we will keep our own ambitions high, and we hope that the work we do now will create momentum to build true gender equality at every level, in every community, all across the world.