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“ We are here because of our commitment to our communities, to society and to our planet. And we can only be here because so many others back home support us, and we carry their voices with us. What we bring to this process is first-hand experience of what must change in order to achieve truly meaningful gender equality for a world with food security, in which everyone can realize their right to food. What is at stake in this process is not merely a document, but the rights of women and gender-diverse people to exist and to live free from violence.”

Intervention by the Women and Gender Diversities Working Group of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism at the CFS Guidelines negotiations (2023)



INTRODUCTION

Between 2020 and 2023, within the framework of the United Nations (UN) Committee on World Food Security (CFS)¹, the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition (hereinafter the Guidelines) were developed².

This was the first UN policy process to address gender in a comprehensive and substantial way in relation to food systems and the right to adequate food and nutrition.

Within this framework, the **Women and Gender Diversities Working Group (WG)**³ of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) played a key role by

1. This was the first UN policy process to address gender in a comprehensive and substantial way in relation to food systems and the right to adequate food and nutrition.

2. The CFS Guidelines are non-binding legal frameworks that guide the development of public policies on a range of issues related to food security and nutrition at the national, regional and local levels, as well as the work of United Nations bodies such as Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

3- The CSIPM is the main international space for civil society organizations and Indigenous Peoples for relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). It was created in 2010 as an autonomous part of the reformed CFS. Its objective is to facilitate the participation and articulation of civil society in CFS policy processes. The CSIPM is an open space, any civil society organization working on food security and nutrition can participate. Participating organizations are grouped into 11 constituencies: smallholder farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, Indigenous Peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless people, women, youth, consumers, urban food-insecure communities, and NGOs.

consolidating a proposal with concrete demands to guide the negotiations.

The group was formed before these institutional spaces existed. It emerged within the CSIPM as members came together to share experiences and recognize common oppressions, needs and struggles, helping to make visible the structural nature of gender inequalities in food systems.

The WG was instrumental in bringing these discussions into the CSIPM, making the gender perspective cross-cutting throughout its work and strengthening intersectionality in the defense of the right to food.

The experience of the group and their communities in organizing and participating helped build a strong and shared political position. Meaningful lessons emerged, and a fabric of solidarity, diversity, respect and care was strengthened, challenging the patriarchal and top-down logics that prevail in political organizing. This strength proved essential both for internal self-organization and for facing tense and exhausting negotiations at the CFS, where their voices were not fully heard.

The final text, completed in June 2023 and adopted in October of the same year, did not meet the WG's expectations in terms of addressing gender inequality and gender-based discrimination in a structural way. Even so, the decision was made to support the Guidelines as a tool from which to continue moving forward collectively.

The CSIPM has assessed the quality of the Guidelines in order to define how to engage in disseminating them in different local and territorial contexts, and how to make them useful for future advocacy actions, struggles and feminist movements.

This toolkit bears witness to the journey of the WG, sharing its experiences as a record of what was lived and as an invitation to keep building from feminist perspectives and in defense of human rights.

It aims to support social movements, organizations and communities seeking to strengthen their practices, debates and collective struggles. It is intended as a practical tool for disseminating the Guidelines and for concrete advocacy towards gender justice and the full realization of the right to food.





1.

CSIPM WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSITIES WORKING GROUP

“The CSIPM Women and Gender Diversities Working Group is an inclusive and supportive space. We had already been growing and learning as a group long before the gender workstream began at the CFS. We have been building deep connections among women and gender-diverse people from many geographic and racial backgrounds, with diverse identities as peasants, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, young and older people, feminists, caregivers, survivors, social movement leaders and environmental defenders... This is beautiful, powerful and deeply important!”

Paula Gioia de La Via Campesina (2024)

The CSIPM Women and Gender Diversities Working Group is a space for political articulation that brings together movements and organizations of women and people of diverse genders and sexualities. It is conceived as a space for sharing realities, demands, visions and proposals that can foster agreement and convergence in CFS processes and in CSIPM initiatives.

With a sustained history of struggle for the **autonomy and self-determination** of women and non-cis-heteronormative people, the group seeks to be **as safe and open a space as possible** for women, non-binary and queer identities, where diversity is valued as a fundamental principle.

The collective is made up of a wide plurality of people from multiple regions and cultures, both rural and urban, including peasants, Landless people, Indigenous Peoples, agricultural workers, artisanal fishers, pastoralists, consumers and activists.

It was originally formed under the name Women's Working Group. In 2022, it adopted its current name to better reflect the experiences of its members and to make visible the oppressions faced by people of diverse genders and sexualities in society.



The WG is strongly committed to challenging patriarchal narratives and ways of thinking and operating, and to affirming women and people of diverse genders and sexualities as protagonists of change, capable of transforming food systems towards justice, equity and the full realization of the human right to food.





LA TIERRA ES
UN BIEN COMÚN

EXISTIMOS

CSPIM

NOSOTRXS
EXISTIMOS!

INTERSECCIONALIDAD

LOS DERECHOS LGBTIQ+
SON DERECHOS HUMANOS

2. COLLECTIVE MEMORY: THE WG'S JOURNEY TOWARDS THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE CFS GUIDELINES

This chapter looks back at the journey and key moments through which the demands around the Guidelines were gradually consolidated, leading up to the negotiations and the adoption of the final document.

The WG process began long before the work on the Guidelines. It was built through meetings, spaces for listening, debates and practices of self-organization that made it possible to reach agreements in diversity. All of this unfolded in constant dialogue with the communities, peoples and territories involved.

Complexity and non-linearity were embraced as part of the process, and for that very reason they proved enriching.

At the outset, the members of the WG expressed a range of concerns, while also showing enthusiasm about contributing to the drafting of, and advocacy around, the Guidelines

They saw this as an opportunity to make visible the food insecurity experienced by women and people of diverse genders and sexualities, to bring intersectionality into these spaces and, ultimately, to achieve a direct impact on everyday life.

The CSIPM defended a strong **human rights-based approach** in the Guidelines, emphasizing that the **right to food** is interdependent with the recognition and protection of all human rights. In this sense, the close relationship between the right to food and the rights of **women, girls and people of diverse genders and sexualities** was underscored.

The Women and Gender Diversities WG actively contributed its knowledge and experience, as well as voices from the territories, including through the Regional Consultations carried out within the framework of this policy process.

FUNDAMENTAL DEMANDS

The WG reached collective agreements and consolidated the following demands:

- A solid human rights-based approach, recognizing that the right to food is interdependent and interconnected with the recognition, fulfilment and protection of all human rights.
- A real commitment to the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as all forms of discrimination.

- The incorporation of intersectionality to address the multiple and intertwined forms of discrimination linked to race, caste, ethnicity, age, social class, language, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, migration status and disabilities, among others.
- The guarantee of the right to health, including sexual and reproductive rights.
- A fair and sustainable food system, centered on the realization of individual and collective human rights, free from violence, with agroecology at the heart of work and everyday life..
- The protection of the right to land, water and productive and reproductive natural resources for women, girls, non-cis-heteronormative people, Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities.
- The strengthening of local food systems and territorial markets.
- The inclusion and explicit recognition of diversity in gender identities and sexual orientations.
- The implementation of universal social protection and equal pay.
- The elimination of harmful social norms.
- Guaranteed access to public services, and the reduction and redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work.

Key moments

2017

CFS Forum on Women's Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition. This forum placed women's rights and food sovereignty on the agenda and influenced the Forum's outcomes, with **formal recognition of food sovereignty, and of women's agency and autonomy.**

2018

The WG Vision was consolidated. This document guides and advances the actions of the CSIPM within and beyond the CFS. **It expresses the need to challenge the patriarchal foundations underpinning food systems.**

We want to uphold our self-determination, autonomy and decision-making power in all aspects of our lives, including the food we produce and consume."

2020

Publication by the CSIPM WG of the report "The Impact of COVID-19 from a Feminist Perspective". It documents acts of mutual aid and solidarity, as well as the negative impacts experienced by women around the world. It identifies principles to guide policies and programmes and sets out concrete political demands.

Launch of the CFS policy convergence process on the Guidelines.

2019

Publication by the CSIPM WG of the report "Without Feminism There Is No Agroecology: Towards Healthy, Sustainable and Just Food Systems". It sets out the group's positions on agroecology and feminism as the foundation for food sovereignty, equality and gender justice.

2021

Regional consultations to gather inputs and suggestions on national and regional priorities for the Guidelines, and to present a final draft at the CFS 50 Plenary

2023

Adoption of the Guidelines at CFS 51

“We cannot accept references to numerous crucial issues, forms of oppression, rights violations and lives being made invisible, since doing so allows discrimination and violations to continue unabated. Moreover, if the policy convergence process is based on the premise that we must only adhere to already agreed language, then the patriarchal status quo, which shapes existing oppressive gender norms, will never be transformed.”

2022

Statement by the Women and Gender Diversities WG on Gender Equality at the CFS. In response to the opposition and resistance of Member States, it called for a **real commitment to transforming existing oppressive gender norms**. The statement received the support of almost 500 organizations and social movements from around the world

2022

CSIPM public briefing held ahead of the start of the negotiations. It highlighted the urgency of having Guidelines that help achieve food security, the full realization of the human right to food and gender justice.

2022

Change of name from the Women’s Working Group to the Women and Gender Diversities Working Group.

This change enables the CSIPM WG to challenge a binary view of gender and to render visible those people who have been historically oppressed and marginalized by heterocis patriarchy.

“Care, including food care, is a central dimension of the human right to adequate food and nutrition. Care work comprises the tasks that sustain the reproduction of life for people, living beings and the planet. When these tasks fall unfairly on women, historical inequalities are reproduced, women’s political and economic participation is limited, and the feminization of poverty deepens. Recognizing, redistributing and dignifying care, including food care, is key to ensuring just food systems, strengthening women’s autonomy, protecting the food and nutrition of girls and boys, and advancing towards food sovereignty with structural equality.”

FIAN Colombia.



NEGOTIATION OF THE CFS GUIDELINES.

OUTCOME AND ELEMENTS FOR ANALYSIS

“There is no cause for celebration; rather, the work must continue to eliminate gender-based discrimination, reverse the patriarchal system of oppression and transform gender equality policies.”

_CSIPM Evaluation Report

At the start of the negotiations, it was hoped that the document would address the main barriers linked to gender inequalities, while acknowledging the limitations of that framework. However, in July 2022, the CFS was unable to reach consensus on fundamental issues and could not adopt the Guidelines as planned.

Although the demands put forward by the WG reflected the realities and needs of territories, Member States and observers showed strong resistance, which blocked the negotiation process. It was only in 2023 that discussions resumed, and the final document was adopted that same year.

While the objectives of the Guidelines refer to gender equality as a purpose, the WG considers them to be only a first basis for achieving it.

Significant concerns remain regarding the exclusion of certain groups and the absence of a transformative and intersectional approach. The document neither names nor structurally challenges the gender inequality and gender-based discrimination that lie at the root of the patriarchal system and asymmetrical power relations

Some of the **main limitations** identified are:

- The recognition of land as a common good is omitted.
- The right to **free, prior and informed consent** is weakened, becoming optional through the addition of the clause “as applicable”, which undermines UNDRIP and other human rights frameworks.
- **Non-cis-heteronormative people**, whose rights are not explicitly recognized, are rendered invisible.
- **Intersectionality is diluted**: it is mentioned only once, and not in the guiding principles. In addition, gender-based discrimination is reduced to discrimination “based on sex”, and caste-based discrimination is omitted.
- **Agroecology is minimized** in the document.
- The **reference to “gender-transformative” approaches was removed**, limiting the text to “gender-responsive” approaches, which do not challenge patriarchal norms.
- The document **prioritizes a capitalist approach** centered on partnerships, finance, investment and business-oriented solutions.
- Structural recommendations for addressing gender inequalities are undermined.

- Gender-based violence is framed within a binary perspective and does not sufficiently reflect the diversity of gender identities.
- **Situations of occupation are not addressed**, despite the evidence of their devastating effects on the lives of women and people of diverse genders and sexualities, as well as on their right to food.
- There is **no direct reference to patriarchy**.
- A **multistakeholder¹ approach** to food systems governance is upheld.
- The **risk of limited interpretations remains**; formulations such as “respecting national policies and priorities”, together with broader references to context-specific approaches, could be used to hold back progress on gender equality.

1 “Multistakeholderism blurs the distinctions between public interest and corporate profit, between the rich and the excluded, and between governments and corporations. When everyone is held equally responsible, it becomes impossible to effectively monitor States’ obligations, especially their human rights obligations. As a result, accountability and responsibility are placed out of reach, while power asymmetries and conflicts of interest are ignored. In this sense, multistakeholderism is an attempt to legitimize and institutionalize the corporate capture of global food governance.” Report: Corporate dominance over global food governance: the multistakeholder trap (2023). Available at: https://www.foodsystems4people.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/ES_Analysis-report-2023_FS4P.pdf



3. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CFS GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN FOOD SYSTEMS

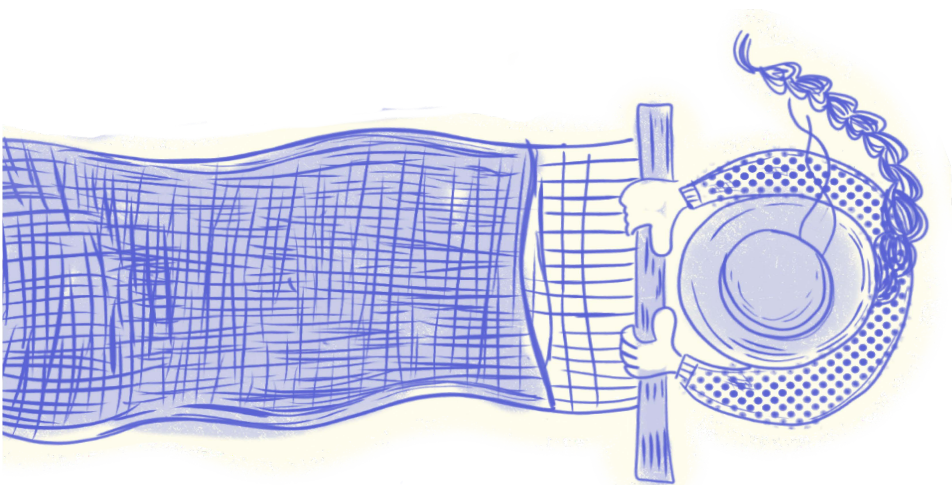
In the CSIPM evaluation report, the following is highlighted:

- **Human rights** language is relatively strong in this document. **Paragraph 1** recognizes that: *“Gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment (GEWGE) is fundamental to human rights and integral to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Ensuring gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment is critical to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) mandate of ending hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all.”*
- A footnote was included with a reference to the **Right to Food** Guidelines, which refer to gender-based discrimination: *“Other examples of bases of discrimination are contained in CFS Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security.”* This could open the door to a more inclusive reading and strengthen the interpretation of the right to food guidelines.

- Discrimination is identified as a factor that worsens food insecurity.
- The Guidelines recognize women's agency and autonomy in food systems. In the Guiding Principles, empowerment is defined through the recognition of women and girls as rights-holders, agents of change and leaders, and through the promotion of their agency and autonomy, both individually and collectively.
- The sections on social protection and unpaid and unrecognized care work are relatively strong.
 - # 1. Paragraph 85 links school meals, social protection and local food procurement.
 - # 2. Paragraph 86 calls for universal social protection to be enshrined in domestic legislation, while recognizing individuals as rights-holders.
 - # 3. Paragraph 94.iv describes the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work through historical and structural inequalities in power relations and gender stereotypes, though it does not explicitly refer to patriarchal norms. Paragraph 94(v) links social protection and public investment to the reduction of women's unpaid work.
- References were included to the risks of land being used as collateral for loans, indebtedness and debt traps linked to loans and microcredit, as well as to solidarity funds as a way to mitigate this approach.

- The right to self-association and self-organization is recognized, and there are references to the role of women’s organizations, women’s rights organizations and social movements. Paragraph 107(ii) highlights the role of women’s organizations in combatting climate change, and calls for direct funding and support to these organizations.
- The section on violence includes references to sexual violence. While this section largely retains a binary framing centered on women and girls, **paragraph 107(v)** may allow for a broader interpretation in referring to the need to “address the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic”, which could potentially be read in connection with wider UN work on violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- **Indigenous Peoples and peasants** are recognized in various parts of the document, although there has been a weakening of previous advances on free, prior and informed consent.
- **Section 3.5** on access to and control over natural resources, including its analysis of the problem, is quite strong, although in some cases, instead of referring to land tenure rights, it refers only to property rights. There is a reference to **Landless women**. In **paragraph 69.i**, a reference was included to **CEDAW General Recommendation No. 34**, which refers to food sovereignty.
- **Cooperatives, territorial markets and producer organizations** are recognized as essential actors in just food systems.

- **Paragraph 74.i** includes a recommendation in the section on education urging governments to address the social norms that perpetuate gender inequality by challenging gender stereotypes and discrimination in education, capacity development, training, access to and generation of knowledge, and information.
- Several inclusions refer to the need to transform/ address discriminatory social and cultural norms. The guiding principle in **paragraph 20** on non-discrimination is strong and does not fall into a binary framing.
- **Paragraph 32.iii** contains a cross-cutting recommendation to address discriminatory gender norms that lends itself to a non-binary interpretation.





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4. CLARIFICATIONS, STRENGTHS AND NEW CHALLENGES

“We have taken part in this line of work with full commitment, bringing together a beautiful mosaic of people and experiences from around the world. We learned what true solidarity means; how to support a diversity of people experiencing multiple and interrelated forms of oppression. And how much it means to make visible those who are rendered invisible and to care for everyone.”

WG Statement - CFS 51”

The members of the WG highlight the richness of the experience of building a common position for the negotiations of the CFS Guidelines. The process was marked by solidarity, mutual learning, care for the space, recognition of diversity and the development of transformative interventions.

This path made it possible to weave a feminist thread into the memory of the CSIPM and the CFS, advancing a collective agenda that brings together local, national, regional and global struggles. Particular value was placed on the opportunity to strengthen intersectional approaches and to recognize the plurality of experiences and analyses.

The WG reaffirms its commitment to horizontal ways of working, exchange and feminist learning, seeking to influence the CFS by strengthening a rights-based approach without giving up on fundamental struggles.

With regard to the Guidelines, it is essential to continue demanding that the governments and bodies involved demonstrate real political will to implement them through effective and concrete measures, including, for example, the allocation of the necessary financial resources.

It is necessary to continue promoting actions that bring these Guidelines into dialogue with the realities and struggles of peoples, making it possible to build alternatives from below in order to align the Guidelines with the vision of a more equitable and just world. With this objective, the WG decided to mobilize so that the document is widely disseminated, creating tools for regional workshops and methodologies that bring this experience closer to territories, through resources such as this toolkit and a popular manual to be published in 2026.

The work must continue in order to eliminate gender-based discrimination, reverse the patriarchal system and transform policies towards equality. This vision extends both within the CFS and beyond it, in every opportunity to deepen the relationship between the right to food, intersectionality and gender justice.

The WG is committed to continue such transformation processes within movements themselves, to keep deconstructing and questioning the patriarchal ways of thinking and operating that often continue to function, and to foster the political participation of women and people of diverse genders and sexualities in spaces of self-organization and internal governance.



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5 . TOOLBOX



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CSIPM Women and Gender Diversities Working Group

Human Rights framework documents



1. Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition



2. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)



3. Human Right to Adequate Food



4. Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security



5. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other Peoples Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP)



6. United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

CSIPM-published documents:



1. Women's Working Group Vision Statement



3. Report "Gender, COVID-19 and Food Systems: impacts,



2. Report "Without Feminism There Is No Agroecology! Towards Healthy, Sustainable and Just Food Systems"



4. CSIPM's evaluation of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment

* Resources on the implementation of the Guidelines:



1. CSW 68. Side event: Feminist reflections on the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality of the Committee on World Food Security and ways forward for social protection and climate action – March 2024



2. CFS 52. CSIPM statement during the Forum on the uptake of the CFS Voluntary **Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment** C

On the negotiation and adoption process of the Guidelines::



1. Analysis of the result of the Guidelines negotiations by Isabel Álvarez



4. Women and Gender Diversities working group interventions during the CFS OEWG (March 2023)



7. WG Declaration (July 2022)



2. CSIPM Women and Gender Diversities Working Group's Statement at CFS 51



5. WG Comments on the revised draft of the Guidelines (March 2023)



8. WG Interventions (March 2022)



3. Final declaration on the Guidelines negotiations by Dee Woods (June 2023)



6. Intersectionality, Gender Equality and the Right to Food. Side Event at CFS 50



9. WG Declaration (October 2022)



10. CSIPM Public Briefing: key messages and priorities regarding the CFS Guidelines negotiations (April 2022)



11. Open-Ended Working Group updates (2020)



12. Intersectionality, Gender Equality and the Right to Food. Side Event at CFS 50



13. Who is worthy of the Right to Food? Statement by Dee Woods during CFS Guidelines negotiations (July 2022)



CFS Forum on Women's Empowerment



1. CSM intervention on the outcomes of 11 October 2017



2. Chair's Summary and draft outcomes of the Forum

Additional material



1. Civil society organizations and Indigenous Peoples call for a world free from sexual and gender-based violence and all forms of discrimination



2. The WG changes its name to reflect all its diversity



3. Christiana Louwa calls for action #InternationalDay ofRuralWomen (2018)



4. We must organize to defend the rights of rural women, Margarita Gómez



5. "Women workers are the most exploited and the worst paid in Italy," Rossana Scaricabarozzi,



6. CSIPM Declaration at the 46th CFS Plenary Session, International Day of Rural Women, 15 October 2019



7. Feminist economic alternatives for a systemic transformation of food systems | Our dialogues, 27 July

