

CFS OEWG on Nutrition

14 April, 2020, Rome

Delivered by Dirk Jacobs, Deputy Director General, Food and Drink Europe

Thank you Chair and good afternoon distinguished delegates. My name is Dirk Jacobs and it is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the Private Sector Mechanism.

The PSM welcomes the Negotiation Draft and notes the following:

- its higher-level approach and recognition of the importance of national context regarding policy recommendations;
- its acknowledgement of the complexity of food systems and the many drivers that impact them, as well as the need to take a holistic and evidence-based approach and to foster dialogue among the different sectors; and
- its inclusion of all stakeholders in the shift towards toward sustainable food systems, and the private sector as an important stakeholder in transforming systems. However, recommendations to Government actors to ensure transparent, appropriate dialogues with the private sector should apply more broadly to all stakeholders. Transparency in roles and responsibilities benefits all parties.

Let me briefly highlight some key challenges that remain:

The need for greater policy coherence. The COVID pandemic has provided a strong reminder of this and it also holds true for the Voluntary Guidelines—whose impact could benefit immensely from greater policy coherence globally.

A few examples of how the Text would benefit from improved policy coherence:

- The inclusion of the positive role of Trade in the text, and its importance in policy making processes that aim to improve nutrition, ensure consistent food supplies and transform food systems. As such, PSM asks greater consideration in the Voluntary Guidelines of the role of trade;

- Greater alignment with UN products, including the UN NCD Political Declaration of 2018, the Global Health and Foreign Policy Resolution of 2018, and the UN Declaration on Universal Health Coverage of 2019, which requires further changes throughout the text; and
- While PSM notes the positive addition of references to Codex as well as WTO obligations, additional references and refinement of the text is necessary which PSM will provide in writing.

Another challenge is the inclusion of unclear, undefined concepts or which have not yet reached globally accepted scientific and/or political consensus:

- Unhealthy versus healthy: We believe that no single food or beverage products are, on their own, inherently healthy or unhealthy. Rather, it is diets that can be healthy and balanced, or not;
- In that respect, certain nutrients of concern should be limited (including sodium, free sugars, saturated fats and industrially produced trans fats, and certain nutrients should be encouraged (including fibers, protein and unsaturated fats). Reformulation efforts with attention to nutrient profile or preserving inherent beneficial nutritional qualities of various foods and beverages is important to take into account when considering the overall diet quality.

Lastly, there remains a lack of evidence for some recommendations including, but not limited to:

- the scientific and empirical evidence to underpin the recommendation to limit marketing to anywhere other than around 12 years, which is the widely accepted standard for advertising restrictions, whether regulatory or voluntary; and
- the scientific evidence to substantiate positive health outcomes from the use of fiscal instruments to influence nutrition policy

Chair, I limit my comments to these key points, as the PSM secretariat looks forward to taking the floor one last time. Thank you for your attention.