

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

**Open-Ended Working Group
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Thank you, Co-Chairs,

I am Janice Giddens from the Private Sector Mechanism.

The Private Sector would like to congratulate the Co-Chairs, CFS Secretariat, Member States and all stakeholders that are involved in this process for the ambitious set of guidelines that are before us. The Draft for Negotiations captures the multiple range of issues that affect women in food systems today and hinder their effective participation. The private sector remains committed and is well placed to support governments in implementing these guidelines at the national level so that we can make a difference in the lives of women in food systems around the world.

As we draw closer to the adoption of these guidelines at CFS50 in October, we hope the upcoming negotiations will be an opportunity to generate greater commitment and ownership among all stakeholders.

We need to strengthen partnerships to effectively deliver these guidelines. Women and girls must be the first partners. As we create policies, programs, and interventions, it is critical to bring women on board as co-creators. Women possess knowledge in food systems which should be incorporated to ensure interventions respond to their needs and priorities. To make female talent known is to step on the accelerator of equality. Making women's work visible and making them become the mirror in which younger generations see new references must be a priority. That women will be heard and visualize as clearly as men is a joint task.

Partnerships with financial institutions and partners must be further strengthened. Finance actors must be encouraged and incentivized to retool programs to increase access for women. That applies to many more sectors from agri-retail; to processors considering how to source from women produced products; to cooperatives; and, how food retailers are sourcing from women-led businesses.

SMEs have great potential to deliver on many of these interventions, such as workplace safety and provision of maternity, paternity, and parental leave, among others. However, they often lack the capacity and resources for effective implementation. It is critical for governments to incentivize and build the capacity of SMEs to deliver on gender equality.

We look forward to the successful conclusion of the negotiations and adoption in October.

Thank you Chairs