

## CFS52

### IX. Forum on the uptake of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women and Girl's Empowerment

**DATE:** 24 October 2024

**TIME:** 10.00-13.00 (exact time to be advised)

**LOCATION:** FAO Headquarters, Rome

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Statement by Janice Giddens, Vice President, Sustainable Nutrition of USDEC, on behalf of the CFS Private Sector Mechanism

Thank you Chair.

I echo the comments of the PSM Past Chair Michael Keller, and will add that as a member of our committee, I participated in the long negotiations for the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment. Their passage marked a pivotal moment in our shared commitment to transforming our food systems into platforms of equality and prosperity.

The private sector mechanism believes that empowering women and girls is a matter of rights AND ALSO a cornerstone of economic efficiency and sustainability in food systems globally. Many of our members exemplify this work, from MNEs working to improve equity in their value chains, to women-led SMEs and let's not forget WOMEN FARMERS.

Our commitment is manifested in several key initiatives:

- **Investment in Women-Led Enterprises:** We prioritize investments in businesses led by women, recognizing their potential to innovate and drive sustainable development within agricultural communities.
- **Capacity Building Programs:** The private sector is the largest investor in extensive training and capacity-building programs that equip women with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in agricultural and business leadership roles.

- **Creating Inclusive Supply Chains:** We are dedicated to developing supply chains that are inclusive of women farmers and entrepreneurs, ensuring they have fair and equal access to markets and resources.
- **Advocacy and Policy Engagement:** We actively engage in policy discussions and advocacy efforts that support the removal of systemic barriers to women's full participation in the food sector.

These actions are guided by the principle that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also a linchpin of comprehensive economic growth and social resilience.

We call upon governments, international agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders to join us in this mission. Together, we can build a food-secure world where gender equality is realized as the norm, not the exception.

Madame Chair and colleagues, thank you for your attention and commitment to this transformative agenda.