Comments to**: Consultation for the development of the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition** **[1]**

**(**<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/consultations/CFS-voluntary-guidelines-GEWE>**)**

Contributor:Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra **[2]**

**[1] Comments submitted on September 19, 2021 to (a)** Françoise Trine, (b) Marina Calvino, and (c) Alyson Brody, Facilitators, CFS Secretariat, FSN Forum Team at Email: fsn-moderator@fao.org, and mail.giwjgljecbtxlexmq@newsletters.fao.org

**[2]** **Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra (Ph. D.)** (He/his), Independent Researcher (Post-retirement from the Population Education Resource Centre, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension [previously known as Department of Continuing and Adult Education and Extension Work], S. N. D. T. Women’s University, Mumbai, India, <https://sndt.ac.in>)

Mailing Address: **Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra (Ph. D.)** (He/his), Gomes Residency C. H. S. Ltd., Flat No. 11, 2nd Floor, Lourdes Colony, Orlem, Off Marve Road, Malad (W), Mumbai-400064, Maharashtra, India [**Email:** drskmishrain@yahoo.com **|Tel.:** (+91) 9224380445 (Whatsapp)]

**Note**: The inputs are being submitted by Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra in his individual capacity.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**:

**(a)** Comments below are being offered by Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra from academic and research points of view.

**(b)** Wherever possible, well verified research facts have been presented in support of review comments.

**(c)** Point-wise and specific comments have been presented in response to the text given in the document (titled “Zero draft of the CFS VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S AND GIRLS’ EMPOWERMENT in the context of food security and nutrition”), published online at: <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/consultations/CFS-voluntary-guidelines-GEWE>).

**(d)**  Views presented in the following pages are based on (1) research findings, & (2) first hand experiences of Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra, learnt while interacting (in-person) with various stakeholders during his study visit to the USA, Ireland, the UK, Sweden, etc.

Does the Zero Draft appropriately capture the main challenges and barriers that hinder progress in achieving gender equality and the full realization of women’s and girls’ rights in the context of food security and nutrition? If not, what do you think is missing or should be adjusted?

The Zero Draft document covers all relevant areas.

**Additional Point**: Refer to first sentence of point no. 4 (page 3), of the published document (on: <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/activities/consultations/CFS-voluntary-guidelines-GEWE>): I do not agree with this sentence (statement): **Currently, the global food system produces enough food to feed every person on the planet**. There is no scientific data available to support this. I am of the determined research view that the global agriculture-sector is not able to, till date, produce enough for everyone on the globe, except for some countries.

Does **Part 2 of the Zero Draft** satisfactorily reflect the core principles which should underpin the Guidelines? If not, how do you propose to improve these principles?

The guiding principles reflect all core and key issues of concern and relevance in the context of gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment for the purpose of food security and nutrition. However, I find one meaningful aspect missing. It is about family life education (FLE). I suggest following text be included:

30. **Family life education (FLE) for inculcating values among women and girls in order to enable them take rational decisions in matters pertaining to food security and nutrition (FSN), at all times and everywhere**. The Guidelines recognize the significance of FLE approach that can be used by policy makers and relevant stakeholders as an educational tool for imparting value-based skills among children (including adolescent boys and girls of all ages). In broader perspective, the Guidelines promote FLE for all on the planet for securing FSN, *in general*, and healthy living (HL), *in particular*, now and for the future.

**Rationale (justification) behind adding above guiding principle on FLE**:

I am of the considered view that FLE should be imparted to everyone in all countries and continents. Education of this type should be imparted by parents, responsible family members, civil society stakeholders, and others involved. FLE starts from home; it is informal in nature which can form part of extension and outreach activities (initiatives) that are carried out across the regions of the globe at various levels of education. This type of education should necessarily be provided (both within and outside of the university, college, & school system) to young boys and girls at appropriate stages during their childhood days. The broad subject areas of relevance (in the context of FSN (food security and nutrition) and HL [healthy living]) to be covered in FLE; include (a) *“negotiating skills”*, (b) *“communication skills”* and (c) *“values for healthy and responsible living”*. I argue that the end product of the FLE should be equip boys and girls with skills needed for taking right and rational decisions in all matters from day one till remaining years of their lives. This is of increased significance, especially in the present day situation wherein family disintegration, changing social behaviour, disrespect for parents, deviation from well-defined and established social norms are frequent occurrence in many countries. I, in my individual capacity, witnessed these events occurring during my travel, in the past, to the USA, Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, Kenya, Tanzania, Philippines, Hong Kong, Australia, and Greece. I travelled to these countries as a party of study visits. I had an opportunity to interact (in-person) with scholars and researchers on the relevant issues of FLE. Often, tools suggested by national governments, policy makers, and inter-governmental agencies for empowering women and girls (in all countries) pertain to (a) institutional reform, (b) legislative measures, (c) advocacy efforts, and (d) imparting relevant education and skills through formal and non-formal channels (streams) of education. Nevertheless, my academic and research experiences of over 32 years and my personal interaction with stakeholders and collaborators, both in India and elsewhere, are suggestive of the fact that traditional tools used for empowering women and girls does not, in many cases, lead to significant and meaningful outcomes (to the desired levels). This is because of the fact that required value changes does not take place in the lives of women and girls (and boys and girls), especially in the context of FSN and HL. These changes can be ensured through FLE. However, I make a specific point, at this juncture, that devising mechanism for imparting FLE must involve, among others, counsellors, as they are better informed about psychological framework of children and the ways in which FLE should be imparted among them, keeping in mind the individual learning skills.

Do the nine sections of **Part 3 of the Zero Draft** comprehensively cover the policy areas to be addressed to achieve gender equality and the full realization of women’s and girls’ rights in the context of food security and nutrition? If not, what do you think is missing?

I agree with the aspects covered under nine sections of Part 3 of the Zero Draft. It comprehensively covers relevant policy areas.

Does **Part 4 of the Zero Draft** provide all the elements necessary for effective implementation and monitoring of the use and application of the Guidelines? If not, what do you propose to add or change?

Part 4 of the Zero Draft includes all the elements necessary for effective implementation and monitoring.

**Biography of Dr. Santosh Kumar Mishra**

****I retired on June 30, 2020 from the Population Education Resource Centre, Department of Lifelong Learning and Extension, SNDT Women's University (SNDTWU), Mumbai, India (<https://sndt.ac.in/>). I underwent training in demography, with award of Government of India Fellowship, during 1986-1987 from the International Institute for Population Sciences (Deemed University) at the IIPS, Mumbai (<https://www.iipsindia.ac.in/>). Also, I acquired Ph. D. from University of Patna in 1999. My other qualifications include (a) Post-Master’s Diploma in Adult & Continuing Education, (b) Certificate Course on Hospital and Health Care Management, & (c) Diploma in Human Resource Development. Professional training that I underwent abroad with grant of scholarship/bursary are (a) 5th European Policy Conference (Swedish Society of Medicine, Stockholm, Sweden, October 18-19, 2012); & (b) Healthy Life Expectancy from Longitudinal Data: Understanding how Health and Mortality Evolve Workshop (AN University, Canberra, Australia, 17-19 June, 2014). My prime area of interest and expertise include population & development, sustainable development, gender issues & allied subject areas. I have authored (some co-authored) 5 booklets, 4 books, 22 book chapters, 77 journal articles, and 49 papers for conferences (some with bursary for presenting research papers at international events held at Sweden, Australia, Tajikistan, USA, Tanzania, Philippines, Ireland, Nepal, and Pakistan). I was invited as **Guest Speaker** (with award of scholarship) to present research paper at the 11th International Convention on Quality Improvement, which took place in Karachi, Pakistan, during November 26-27, 2007. Also, I have contributed to 196 e-discussions. I served as Judge for the 2021 IHA Health Literacy Awards. After retirement from the SNDTWU, I am presently involved, in my individual capacity, with academic activities, such as authoring manuscripts (research papers), contributing to online consultations, & serving as international conference organizing committee member. Also, I am involved as collaborator for over 50 international agencies, including: (1) Ecosystem based Adaptation for food security in Africa Assembly, Kenya; (2) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Switzerland; (3) Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Germany; (4) International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics, Sweden; (6) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Italy; (7) Institute for Healthcare Advancement, USA; (8) International Institute of Knowledge Management, Sri Lanka; (9) North American Association for Environmental Education, USA; (10) **Wisconsin Health Literacy (**a division of Wisconsin Literacy, Inc.), USA; & (11) Technical Program Committee of the 2021 International Conference on Preschool Education and Child Development, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China. I can be reached at (a) email: drskmishrain@yahoo.com, & (b) via tel.: (+91) 9224380445 (Whatsapp).

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India September, 2021