



Open Ended Working Group (OEWG)

Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW)

Document No: CFS OEWG- MYPoW/2017/02/06/03

CFS OEWG-MYPoW Meeting # 1

Date: 6 February 2017

Time: 14.00 – 17.00

Location: German Room, FAO

Outcomes

First meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW)

Agenda

1. **Analysis of proposed themes and activities, objectives and expected outcomes of potential CFS workstreams**
2. **Analysis of current CFS workstreams and budgetary implications**
3. **Implications of a longer-term MYPoW**

Outcomes

The meeting was opened by the MYPoW OEWG Chair, Dr Md Mafizur Rahman (Bangladesh), who explained the objectives of the meeting, being the analysis of proposed themes and objectives of future activities and the discussion of implications of a longer-term MYPoW. He presented the agenda which was adopted by the OEWG.

1. **Analysis of proposed themes and activities, objectives and expected outcomes of potential CFS workstreams**

The OEWG Chair invited the participants to have a substantive discussion on what really deserves to be included in the next programme of work and focus on potential objectives and outcomes of future workstreams. They were reminded that the selection criteria are set out in the guidance note agreed at CFS 42 in 2015. An additional criterion was adopted at CFS 43 last October concerning the relevance and potential contribution of the proposed activity to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

OEWG participants reiterated the importance of selecting themes on which the Committee presents a clear value added, with a stronger sense of likely outcomes and the sort of policy deliberations expected, leading to practical solutions that would have a strong impact on the ground. Some commented on the need to empower CFS to stay relevant to the 2030 Agenda.

It was recognized that, in order to develop a feasible and realistic MYPoW, it is key for the OEWG to prioritize and agree on a limited set of activities. It was reiterated that it is important to better integrate the work of the HLPE in the CFS MYPoW by identifying what is expected to be achieved and defining the elements of the follow-up work to be carried out after the launch of the reports. Some noted the benefit of a longer term horizon for planning. It was highlighted that, according to agreed plans, no further ranking exercises are envisaged as it is now time to focus on the content of the proposals.

Attention was dedicated to discussing the HLPE first-ranked proposal on agroecology. The proponents and other members clarified that this is an approach which is intended to promote sustainable models of production and consumption and presents strong linkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was pointed out that the proposal should be clearer on the aspects that the HLPE might have to consider as well as on the focus, objectives and expected outcomes of a CFS workstream. It was also highlighted that agroecology presents clear linkages with other proposals currently on the table, such as those on innovation, resilient agricultural practices and sustainable consumption. A number of members suggested a broader perspective dealing with innovative approaches for agriculture and food systems to improve food security and nutrition, as a narrow focus on one approach was insufficiently outcome oriented and not necessarily a good use of resources.

Several expressed interest in continued work in the next biennium on urbanization and rural transformation, either through follow-up to the current workstream or by requesting the HLPE to produce a report. No guidance was provided on the objectives and expected outcomes of this activity. Mixed views were expressed over one versus two HLPE reports.

Some elaboration was provided to the existing proposal on food systems and nutrition, noting that in addition to the follow-up to the HLPE report which will be presented this October, the nutrition workstream should also focus on the contribution to the Decade of Action 2016-2025. OEWG members were reminded that the OEWG on Nutrition is likely to continue in the next biennium and that more information on the objectives of this workstream should be first elaborated by the nutrition OEWG based on the outcomes of its work this year.

OEWG expressed their appreciation for the recognition received by the proposal on engaging youth in agriculture and stressed the possibility to follow-up on the outcomes of the event held during CFS 42 in 2015. The key role of food safety and trade for food security and nutrition was also highlighted by various members.

2. Analysis of current CFS workstreams and budgetary implications

OEWG members confirmed the need to develop a realistic and feasible MYPoW which is in line with anticipated resources and a manageable workload of the Committee. Some noted that it wasn't realistic to keep everything going as well as adding new issues, and CFS should look to go in depth on fewer topics, where it could really add value. The CFS evaluation draft recommendations were referenced in this regard. An overview of what can be covered through the core budget provided by the three RBAs was presented on the assumption that basic workstreams, without regional consultation, interpretation and translation services, are implemented. In this regard, it was noted that this skeleton budget already exceeds the RBAs contribution, if RBAs continue to contribute at current levels.

In light of the general agreement that the Committee is carrying out too many activities, OEWG members were reminded that the prioritization and the selection of what goes into the MYPOW is in their hands.

OEWG members provided their views concerning those activities that might continue in the next biennium, noting nutrition was already foreseen in the current MYPOW as continuing.

A follow-up process to the HLPE report on multistakeholder partnerships to finance and achieve food security and nutrition was raised, but no guidance was provided on the type of process or expected results.

Some suggested limiting or merging the number of workstreams that focussed on CFS internal work (eg MYPOW, GSF, monitoring, rules of procedure), though this would be unlikely to decrease the actual workload. A lighter process for developing the annual contribution to the HLPF was suggested as feasible in the future, together with better mainstreaming of the 2030 Agenda across CFS work. It was also suggested that alternatives to OEWGs could be considered to advance work. Others suggested the monitoring work should continue as a standalone OEWG. It was suggested that follow-up to the forum on women's empowerment be considered, but no proposals on the type of activity or the expected outcomes were made.

It was suggested to merge the plan of action on the CFS evaluation and the Working Group on Rules of Procedure, as they might have complementary mandates.

3. Implications of a longer-term MYPOW

Following the request made by the CFS plenary last year, the OEWG had an initial discussion on potential implications of a longer-term MYPOW with a view to submitting a response on the matter to CFS 44.

In response to questions, it was clarified that a longer term MYPOW did not inherently present challenges to the FAO biennial budgetary cycle, and several other committees already had longer term MYPOWs. The MYPOW would need to note the budgetary constraints (eg where budget wasn't secured beyond a certain time), and presently the MYPOW is approved without secure financing. The need to further explore the implications of a MYPOW whose term is longer than the mandate of the Bureau and Advisory Group was expressed. Alternative solutions, such as a five-year strategic plan in support of a two-year MYPOW or the development of a rolling-plan MYPOW, were also put on the table for future consideration.

Many felt a longer term horizon would improve planning and reduce pressure to overload CFS in the short term, but some had reservations. It was highlighted that this discussion would benefit from an in-depth analysis of the outcomes of the CFS evaluation which is expected to provide useful inputs on this matter.

Independently from its length, the importance of a flexible MYPOW where emerging issues can be accommodated throughout the process, was highlighted.

NEXT STEPS

A Chair's proposal will be prepared based on the discussions held on 6 February. The document will be circulated by the end of March and presented for discussion at the MYPoW OEWG meeting on 18 April where consensus is expected to be reached on the activities of the next CFS programme of work.

OEWG members are strongly encouraged to promote informal consultations among interested stakeholders in advance of the 18 April meeting in order to clarify the objectives and outcomes of preferred proposals.

An additional meeting will take place on 1 June to agree the last details and finalize the response on the longer-term MYPoW that will have to be presented at CFS 44 next October.