



Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Information Note

People are food secure if they can produce or buy the food they need and always have enough food for a healthy balanced diet.

Today more than 1 billion people – 15 percent of the world’s population - are hungry. Such high levels of hunger compromise social and economic development and are a threat to global peace and security. Despite these high figures and their impact on development, food security has not been at the top of the agenda. Efforts to ensure food security have been uncoordinated and resources for agriculture - which forms the basis of people’s livelihoods - have been declining.

However, over the last few years, especially in the wake of soaring food prices and the global economic and financial crisis, widespread concerns about food and nutrition security have been raised. This renewed political attention to world food security and its governance has given rise to pledges to increase resources devoted to agriculture and food security, both in times of crises, but more importantly, to address the long-term, structural factors that contribute to hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

At the G8 Summit in Japan in 2008 and again in L’Aquila in 2009, there were calls for a Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition and also for a new design of the governance of world food security building on and reforming existing institutions.



World Summit on Food Security

The World Summit on Food Security in Rome in November 2009 also supports the need for a revised system. It adopted the five “Rome principles for sustainable global food security” as part of the Summit Declaration. Principle 2 states:

“Foster strategic coordination at national, regional and global level to improve governance, promote better allocation of resources, avoid duplication of efforts and identify response-gaps.”

What is the Committee on World Food Security?

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was established in 1974 as an intergovernmental body to serve as a forum in the United Nations System for review and follow-up of policies concerning world food security including production and physical and economic access to food.

Reform of the CFS

During 2009 the CFS underwent reform to make it more effective by including a wider group of stakeholders and increasing its ability to promote policies that reduce food insecurity.

The vision of the reformed CFS is to be the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. It will work in a coordinated manner in support of country led processes that lead to food security. Using a phased approach CFS will:

- Coordinate a global approach to food security
- Promote policy convergence
- Support and advise countries and regions
- Coordinate at national and regional levels
- Promote accountability and share best practices
- Develop a global strategic framework for food security and nutrition

The CFS Framework

The framework of the reformed CFS broadens participation and aims to:

- ✓ Give a voice to all stakeholders in the world food system
- ✓ Be inclusive and encourage an exchange of views and experiences
- ✓ Build on empirical evidence and scientific analysis
- ✓ Monitor the effectiveness of actions towards reducing hunger

The new structure of CFS

The CFS now has a structure that allows input from all stakeholders at global, regional and national levels. It is comprised of a Bureau and Advisory Group, Plenary, a High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) and the Secretariat.

The CFS Bureau and Advisory Group

The Bureau is the executive arm of the CFS. It is made up of a Chairperson and twelve member countries. The Advisory group is made up of representatives from the 5 different categories of CFS Participants. These are:

- 1 UN agencies and other UN bodies;
- 2 Civil society and non-governmental organizations particularly organizations representing smallholder family farmers, fisherfolks, herders, landless, urban poor, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, consumers and indigenous people;
- 3 International agricultural research institutions;
- 4 International and regional financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, regional development banks and the World Trade Organization;
- 5 Private sector associations and philanthropic foundations.

The Advisory Group helps the Bureau advance the Committee's objectives in particular to ensure linkages with different stakeholders at regional, sub-regional and local levels and to ensure an ongoing, two-way exchange of information.



Plenary

The Plenary session is held annually and is the central body for decision-taking, debate, coordination, lesson-learning and convergence by all stakeholders at a global level on food security issues.

The High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE)

The HLPE has two components. The first is a Steering Committee made up of internationally recognized experts in a variety of food security and nutrition-related fields. The second is a roster of experts which is used to build teams that act on a project-specific basis to analyze and report on issues related to food security and nutrition.

The goal of the HLPE is to ensure the regular inclusion of advice based on scientific evidence and knowledge. As directed by the CFS Plenary and Bureau, the HLPE will assess and analyze the current state of food security and nutrition and its underlying causes. It will

also provide scientific and knowledge-based analysis and advice on policy-relevant issues and identify emerging trends. It will also help prioritize future actions and focus attention on key focal areas.

The Secretariat

The CFS has a permanent Secretariat located in FAO Rome which includes members from the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Its task is to support the Plenary, the Bureau and Advisory Group and the HLPE in their work.

Challenges

Effective food security governance will require integration and coordination among countries, organizations and other stakeholders at both the local and global levels. Policies need to be fully integrated into national development priorities and strategies including social protection programmes. They should also be considered in the context of global and regional issues such as climate change negotiations and trade agreements.

Food security governance programmes should be coupled with accountability mechanisms and strengthened linkages with financial institutions so that resources are channeled where they are needed most.

The CFS reform has laid the foundations for a greatly improved global food system. Now is the time to put agreed objectives into action.

Find out more

Visit the CFS website: www.fao.org/cfs

Email the CFS Secretariat: cfs@fao.org