

# Terms of Reference for CSO members of the CFS Advisory Group

(amended by the CC meeting in May 2017)

## 1. BACKGROUND

According to the founding document of the CSM<sup>1</sup> endorsed by CSOs in October 2010, the Coordination Committee (CC) is ultimately responsible for facilitating and overseeing the political, financial and administrative work of the CSM in support of all CSOs wishing to participate in CFS events and processes.

As agreed by the CC in October 2011<sup>2</sup>:

*“the whole CC should be involved in making decisions on which there is limited urgency and on critical political and strategic decisions. However, for urgent and routine decisions, for which it is not possible to involve the whole CC, there is a need for a smaller core group(s).”*

In October 2012<sup>3</sup>:

*“Recognizing the specific political mandate of the Advisory Group members, and the time constraints they face in overseeing the routine financial and administrative work of the CSM, the CC decided to establish a Finance and Administration sub-working group of the Coordination Committee. ...The sub-working group will liaise closely with the civil society members of the CFS Advisory Group and other Coordination Committee members on all major financial and administrative decisions and actions.”*

Therefore, recognizing the time constraints that they face in overseeing the work on a routine basis, the CC delegates responsibility to both the CSO members of the Advisory Group (AG) and the Finance and Administration sub-Working Group (FWG) of the Coordination Committee. Both groups report directly to the CC. The CC requires close collaboration between the 2 groups to ensure coherence between the political, financial and administrative work of the CSM.

## 2. COMPOSITION

The Advisory Group consists of 8 persons identified by and from CC members during the Annual Coordination Committee meeting and endorsed in the Annual CSM Forum prior to the CFS plenary. Social movements have the priority to be selected as Advisory group member. At least 75% of the members in the official group of 4 and the wider group of 8 should be from social movements. 8 CC

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1 [http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/1/csm\\_proposal\\_en.pdf](http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/Pagine/1/csm_proposal_en.pdf)

2 [http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/SottoPagine/32/summary\\_report\\_ag\\_cc\\_meetings\\_october2011\\_en.pdf](http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/SottoPagine/32/summary_report_ag_cc_meetings_october2011_en.pdf)

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[http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/SottoPagine/32/en\\_report\\_2012\\_csm\\_cc\\_meeting.pdf](http://www.csm4cfs.org/files/SottoPagine/32/en_report_2012_csm_cc_meeting.pdf) (p6, section 3.2)

members are selected to represent CSOs in the Advisory Group for each 2-year period with the acknowledgment that although only 4 CSO members can participate and speak on behalf of CSM in the session of the CFS Advisory Group/Bureau. In case of absence of one of them, they can only be replaced by other members of the CC. All 8 CSO AG Members will share responsibility and participate in the meetings on a rotational basis.

### **3. Selection of Advisory group members**

The Civil Society members of the Advisory Group will be elected by and among the members of the Coordination Committee, according to their ability to perform the role expected of them and respecting the priority given to small food producer constituencies.

Key selection criteria include:

- i. Ability to participate regularly in Advisory Group meetings in person or via tele-conference and video conferencing facilities, i.e. must be able to spend up to 20% of time / 1day per week on average and be available to travel to CFS meetings
- ii. The organization / movement of the individual must make the commitment to provide technical support
- iii. Demonstrable commitment to the organizing principles of the CSM, especially inclusiveness and prioritizing input from those most affected by hunger
- iv. Ability to network with a broad range of constituencies, organizations, networks and sectors
- v. Communication and networking skills
- vi. The overall balance of the Advisory Group seats should reflect the principle of gender and regional balance, and the priority given to constituencies representing those most affected by food insecurity.

The advisory group members should have the following skills:

- Strong experience in the work of CFS and CSM
- Coordinate and bring the common positions of civil society on important policy matters related to food security and nutrition.
- Influence the decisions of Bureau and other governments and regional groups
- Support and link with the work of different policy working groups
- Maintain regular contact with various CFS constituencies
- Commitment to undertake the role objectively on behalf of all CSOs, constituencies and sub regions and not seek to use the position solely in the

interests of their own organization, constituency, sub region, region or working group although they will bring the experience of, and consult with, members of their regions and constituencies.

- Strong commitment to the mandate, role and organizing principles of the CSM
- Time available to undertake the role effectively, most especially to participate in the Bureau and Advisory group meetings and other relevant processes (please refer to point (i) above).

#### **4. ROLE**

As described in the CSM founding document paras 30 and 32):-

“30. The role of the Advisory Group is to bring the views of the non-voting CFS participants, including civil society, to the Bureau of the CFS and “to provide input to the Bureau regarding the range of tasks which the CFS Plenary has instructed it to perform” (CFS:2009/2 Rev.2, para.32). It also has a role in nurturing and maintaining linkages with different actors at regional, sub regional and local levels (CFS:2009/2 Rev.2, para. 23), including the large number of civil society networks operating at the regional and national levels (CFS:2009/2 Rev.2, paras. 25 and 28).”

“32. The role of the civil society members of the Advisory Group will not be one of representation but rather of facilitating two-way communication between the Bureau and the CSM. The essential tasks of the civil society AG members will be to share information and to present the range of views of the CSM and any common positions that CSOs may have developed. They will share the agendas of upcoming Advisory Group and Bureau meetings with all members of the CSM via the website and other means of communication and solicit comments which they will share with the Advisory Group. Other aspects of their role may be clarified progressively as the functioning of the Advisory Group itself is clarified. It is essential that, as much as possible, all regions, constituencies, organizations, networks and sectors have the opportunity to follow and feed into the work of the Advisory Group through the Coordination Committee. The civil society Advisory Group members will coordinate among themselves and through the Coordination Committee to ensure as a collective the maximum possible participation. The AG will respect the organizing principles of the CSM. In line with the CFS:2010/97 organizational principles of the CSM it will be essential to ensure that organizations and networks from affected constituencies in developing countries are given priority in being able to participate in and inform the work of the AG.”

Furthermore, the founding document explains: "The 4 AG members play a key role in inter-sessional activities and would therefore help to ensure efficiency of decision-making in the Coordination Committee". (footnote #5, p. 5, English version)

In addition to these roles in relation to the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group, it has become clear that the CSO Advisory Group members, on behalf of and in consultation with the other members of the Coordination Committee, have a role to play in relation to some aspects of the internal functioning of the CSM. These are described in the functions below.

## **5. FUNCTIONS**

The Advisory group will:

- i. Consolidate the overall CSM common positions on relevant policy matters, in consultation with the Coordination Committee and appropriate working groups, and present it during the Bureau and Advisory group meetings. AG members have the responsibility of following all discussions/processes within the CFS and CSM in order to adequately represent and facilitate CSO views in Bureau/Advisory Group meetings.
- ii. Share the agenda of upcoming CFS Advisory/Bureau Meetings with CC and Working Groups, as well as briefing notes and minutes of these meetings, with support of the secretariat;
- iii. Report annually to, and be held accountable by the CC.
- iv. Facilitate the establishment of an ad-hoc organizing committee, including some AG members for the preparation and organization of CSM annual CC meeting and CSM forum.
- v. Supports the Finance Working Group to ensure that there is timely allocation of CSM resources in coherence with the political strategy and budget agreed by the Coordination Committee.
- vi. On behalf of the Coordination Committee and together with the Finance Working Group, supports, oversees and evaluates the work of the CSM Secretariat and facilitates the establishment of an ad-hoc committee to select new Secretariat staff as necessary.
- vii. Facilitates the selection process of the CC members, in line with procedures agreed by the Coordination Committee.
- viii. Recognizing that the CC is the overarching, political body of the CSM, the AG can take decisions on matters that concern the CSM between the sessions of the CC, in coordination with the secretariat and based on strategic decisions of the CC. In case, decisions have to be taken in matters to which no general guidance is available by decisions of CC, the AG shall consult the CC with a proposal for decision, requesting feedback within a reasonable timeline. Lobbying of governments, UN agencies, regional groups and other stakeholders on CFS related issues, in coherence with CSO common priorities and positions

developed through CSM working groups and Coordination Committee, and consistent with the role of the CSM as a facilitation space, rather than a platform.

## **6. CSM Secretariat link with Advisory Group**

The functions of the Advisory Group are supported and legitimized through the daily work of the Secretariat. The Secretariat ensures and supports regular and proper communication channels between the AG members and CC for coordination and follow up. The Secretariat copies in AG members on all relevant communications relating to their role.

Civil society Advisory Group members, particularly those from social movements, need significant support in order that they are able to participate effectively (e.g. translated documents, interpretation, flights, accommodation, etc.) and in order that they can facilitate the participation of other civil society actors (through emails, administration of websites, organization of telecoms, face to face meetings etc). Much of this support will be provided by the CSM Secretariat but they may also require some support from within their own organizations and movements as well as costs of participation in meetings being covered by the CSM. The CSM secretariat will strengthen its capacity to give technical support to the Advisory Group.

## **7. Finance and Administrative Working Group link with the Advisory Group**

The FWG facilitates financial and administrative processes of the CSM in coherence with the political priorities and strategies agreed by the Coordination Committee and in consultation with CSO members of the Advisory Group. In order to help facilitate coherence between the political strategy of the CSM and the allocation of resources, two AG members should be included in the FWG. In addition to including 2 AG members in the FWG, the FWG should consult with the AG on who can help take decisions and provide feedback on proper political utilization of resources. AG members themselves can decide internally by consensus who will be participating in the FWG sub working group based on the capacity and time availability.

## **8. COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COORDINATION COMMITTEE and WAYS of WORKING**

There should 2 CSM AG meetings every month:

- 1 skype meeting with all 8 AG members
- 1 full day meeting prior to every CFS Bureau / AG meeting with 4 AG members present in Rome and the other 4 AG members participating via skype

Skype calls will focus on more operational issues. The face-to-face meetings will focus more on political & strategic issues.

The whole CC should be involved in making decisions on all critical and long-term political, financial and administrative issues. Any matters that need long term decisions or have long term impact should be decided by CC by providing minimum 15 days for the majority opinion. However, for urgent and routine decisions, for which it is not possible to involve the whole CC, the Advisory group will assume responsibility, in coherence with the political priorities, strategy and budget agreed by the CC. The FWG takes responsibility for urgent and routine financial and administrative decisions, also in coherence with the political priorities, strategy and budget agreed by the CC.

Advisory group members are selected to represent the whole CC and CSM and not only their own organisations. The advisory group members are collectively responsible for consulting and communicating with all other CC members and CSM with the support of Secretariat.

Furthermore, when taking decisions on behalf the whole CC, Advisory Group members should not use their position solely in the interests of their own organization, constituency, sub region or region or working group, although they will bring the experience of, and consult with members of, their regions and constituencies.

Advisory group decisions should be taken following the consensus rule. When this is not possible, because one of the members did not provide his/her opinion within the due deadline, decisions could be taken with 75% of the members.

## **9. DURATION OF MANDATE**

The members of the advisory group should serve a 2-year mandate renewable only once for a further two year period. This is in line with the term for focal points of the Coordination Committee and will help ensure all regions/constituencies are able to feed into the work of the Advisory Group. All advisory group members should go through a process of re-election if standing for a second term. For the periodic renewal process of the AG, the balance between experienced and new members of the AG shall be taken into account, in addition to the selection criteria outlined under chapter 3. Within the Advisory Group, members will decide according to their time availability who will be the 4 representatives for the first and second years. In the case that the initial 4 members are not able to participate, to ensure the full participation in the Bureau and Advisory group meetings, someone from the second-year group of advisory group members can participate, or if there is a need an alternate person can be identified from the CC/CSM constituencies.