

International Food Security & Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism for Relations with the CFS (UN Committee on World Food Security)

DRAFT Terms of Reference for the Coordination Committee

NB. These Terms of Reference are subject to change depending upon feedback received on Draft 1 of the proposal for the Civil Society Mechanism.

Background

During 2009 the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) underwent reform to make it more effective by including a wider group of stakeholders. The vision is for the CFS to become the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all. Its roles include the promotion of policy and strategic coordination and coherence, the sharing of best practices and encouraging accountability for delivery on commitments.

As agreed in the CFS reform document, civil society, which is one of the newly recognised “participants” of the CFS, is building its own autonomous mechanism for participation in the CFS (please see the full draft proposal for the Civil Society Mechanism at <http://cso4cfs.org>). **The essential role of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) is to facilitate the participation of CSOs in the work of the CFS, including input to negotiation and decision-making.** It is understood to be a year-round process, building links between participatory policy spaces at local, national and global levels.

Role of the Coordination Committee

The CSM will be governed by a Coordination Committee, which is responsible for ensuring that the functions of the Civil Society Mechanism are carried out as effectively as possible and according to the organising principles contained in the (draft) CSM proposal.

The Committee will be responsible for facilitating the participation of CSOs in the CFS. This includes overseeing the work of the civil society members of the CFS Advisory Group and the Secretariat of the Mechanism, ensuring access to adequate funding and ensuring accountability for the finances of the Mechanism. It will also be responsible, to the best of its ability, for ensuring that there is effective two-way communication with CSM members world-wide and for supporting their efforts to participate effectively in policy dialogue at all levels.

The Coordination Committee will make decisions on the functioning of the Mechanism such as: criteria for participation in the Mechanism, quotas for participation in/speaking during the CFS Plenary, selection of civil society members of the Advisory Group, providing support to the CSO Advisory Group members, and assisting in the organisation of the civil society forums related to the CFS.

The Committee will be responsible for dialoguing with the CFS Bureau regarding the

allocation of civil society seats/speaking slots in the annual CFS plenary sessions. It should be noted that membership in the Coordination Committee does not guarantee automatic participation in the annual CFS plenary sessions.

When the CSM provides views to the CFS through its Coordination Committee (but CSOs also provide views directly through the annual meetings of the CFS) and the Advisory Group members, it will seek to communicate the range of divergent positions that are held by participants in the Mechanism.

Composition of the Coordination Committee

The composition of the Coordination Committee will ensure representation across 11 constituencies¹ and 16 sub-regions²

4 focal points from smallholder family farmer organizations = 4
2 from each of the other constituencies mentioned above = 20
1 focal point from each of the 16 sub-regions = 16

Total = 40 members

Priority is given to small-scale farmers because they represent 80% of the hungry people in the world and produce the largest proportion of the food in the world.

Gender and geographic balance among the focal points in the CSM Coordination Committee will be ensured. The Committee will ensure that 50% of members are women.

Tenure of members of the Committee

Each focal point will hold the function for 12 months during the interim period of 2010/11 after which new members will be selected, and for a period of 2 years thereafter.

Functioning of the Coordination Committee

The Coordination Committee will meet face to face at least once a year and virtually once every quarter.

Decisions will be made in consultation with participants in the Mechanism as much as possible. Decisions will be made by consensus wherever possible. The Coordination Committee will determine which kind of decisions require consensus and which could be made through voting if no consensus emerges. It should be noted that silence will not be taken for consent, and the views of all Committee members will be clarified when seeking consensus. In any case, all divergent positions will be noted and reported.

¹ smallholder family farmers, artisanal fisherfolk, herders/pastoralists, landless, urban poor, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, consumers, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs

² North America, Central America and Caribbean, Andean Region, Southern Cone, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, West Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, Central Asia, Oceania and Pacific, Southern Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa, North Africa

The Coordination Committee will establish, with the support of the Secretariat, an email list and website. All relevant information will be posted on the website in English, French and Spanish. Any interested CSO will be able to sign up to receive the emails by registering their email address on the website.

Selection criteria for Coordination Committee members

- Senior leader within a civil society organisation, movement, network relating to food security and nutrition
- In depth knowledge and understanding of food security and nutrition related policies and programmes
- Demonstrable commitment to the organizing principles of the Mechanism, especially inclusiveness and prioritizing input from those most affected by hunger and malnutrition
- Ability to network with a broad range of constituencies, organizations, networks and sectors
- Ability to participate regularly in Committee meetings in person or via teleconference and video conferencing facilities
- Communication and networking skills
- Commitment and availability to be an active member of the Committee and to be proactive in facilitating the participation of members of their constituency or sub-region in the Mechanism and in the work of the CFS.

Administrative support

The work of the Coordination Committee will be supported by a lightweight Secretariat based in Rome, which will report to the Committee. The Secretariat's role will be administrative, facilitating the functioning of the CSM by performing financial, logistical and communication tasks. It will be politically neutral and will not perform advocacy and lobbying roles.

Resources

The Coordination Committee members will be responsible for facilitating access to funds to support the work of the Mechanism as a whole as well as the functioning of the Coordination Committee, the Secretariat and the Advisory Group members. Funds should be available to support costs incurred by Coordination Committee members from developing countries during the course of their Committee responsibilities.

Accountability

The Coordination Committee will be accountable to CSOs worldwide working on food security and nutrition on the one hand, and the CFS on the other. Each Coordination Committee member will be required to write reports on how they are facilitating participation within their constituency or sub-region.

The Coordination Committee will ensure that a website and email list are maintained and issue an annual report detailing its activities over the previous year. These tools will be the main devices to facilitate and encourage accountability.

Participants in the Mechanism will be able to feedback on the quality of their participation, the performance of the Coordination Committee and Advisory Group Focal Points and make suggestions as to how to improve the functioning of the Mechanism.