Civil Society at CFS

Contributions and Assessments of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) on the 41st Session of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
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The UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2014 dealt with important and often controversial topics related to food insecurity and malnutrition. Many of these issues are directly linked to the struggles of social movements and civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in changing realities at the national and local level, and thus are highly relevant for CSO. The CFS reform of 2009 opened up this body on global governance of food security and nutrition to those that were traditionally excluded from decision making related to food security and nutrition policies that affect them directly. This positive development has generated enormous expectations, raised hopes and renewed commitments among the constituencies of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) who include: farmers, smallholders, pastoralists, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure, and NGOs.

The CSM presents in this publication some of its contributions to, and assessments of, the 41st Session of the CFS, held from 13-17 October 2014 in Rome. The document starts off with providing some impressions from the CSM Forum, held from 11-12 October at FAO headquarters. The Forum focused particularly on the questions related to how the CFS is functioning five years after its reform. The essential parts of civil society contributions to the CFS plenary and short analyses of the outcomes from a civil society perspective are presented on each of the topics of the CFS 41 agenda. Finally, a brief outlook for 2015 is provided.

The contributions to this publication were prepared by different CSM working groups that are engaged in different areas of work. These contributions were then further consolidated and edited by the CSM Secretariat. The document is meant in first place for the civil society organizations that participate in the CSM, as a means of sharing information and analysis. It is also made available for CFS member countries, UN institutions and other actors involved in the CFS, as a contribution to strengthening mutual understanding.

INTRODUCTION

Questions on the agenda of the 41st session of the CFS

The key questions on the agenda of the 41st Session of the CFS (CFS 41) in October 2014 were:

- Where do we stand today with the realization of the right to adequate food, ten years after the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines?
- How can the contribution of fisheries and fisherfolks to food security and nutrition be fostered and strengthened?
- How can food losses and waste be avoided, and which changes in the food systems are needed for this purpose?
- How can responsible agricultural investment be ensured, and how can natural resources grabbing be prevented?
- How can food security and nutrition be supported in countries suffering from protracted crisis?
- How can the CFS comply with its monitoring and accountability mandate?
The Opening Session of the CSM Forum

The CSM Forum was introduced during the opening session by civil society panelists Zola Bustamante and Naseegh Jaffer from the two World Fisherfolk Forums (WFF and WFFP). They dedicated the Forum to Chandrika Sharma, a tireless advocate for the human rights of small scale fisheries and for gender equity. Chandrika was known for her right to a better life said Naseegh, while Zola read out the poem “Keeping quiet” from Pablo Neruda, which poem Chandrika was known to like very much.

This tribute was well deserved as Chandrika was highly committed to the struggles of communities and social movements. She was the Executive Secretary of the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), and has been one of those persons who was actively involved in the process towards the CFS Tenure Guidelines on Land, Fisheries and Forests. Chandrika clearly practiced in the spirit of the CSM: highly dedicated and engaged in the articulation of civil society efforts at the local, national and global level, particularly within the space of the CFS. Wherever she is - she is at work, organizing small scale fishing communities, for their right to a better life,” said Naseegh, while Zola read out the poem “Keeping quiet” from Pablo Neruda, which poem Chandrika was known to like very much.

Those who prepare green wars, wars with gas, wars with fire, victories with no survivors, would put on clean clothes and walk about with their brothers in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused with total inactivity. Life is what it is about; I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded about keeping our lives moving, and for once could do nothing, perhaps a huge silence might interrupt this sadness of never understanding ourselves and of threatening ourselves with death.

Perhaps the earth can teach us as when everything seems dead and later proves to be alive.

Now I’ll count up to twelve and you keep quiet and I will go.

from Extravagaria (translated by Alastair Reid, pp. 27-29, 1974)

The CFS Chair Gerda Verburg and the Director General of FAO José Graziano da Silva welcomed the participants in the Forum. Both extended their congratulations on the work of the CSM during the last four years.

Gerda Verburg stated that “CSM has been an incredible success in creating a space for diverse range of social movements and CSOs to discuss and influence decisions of the CFS.” José Graziano da Silva stated: “CSM is part of the international decision making process at the international level, CFS is the only mechanism on governance of food security globally that we have at this moment. You must be aware of this.”

Civil Society views on the CFS reform, 5 years later

The Forum started off by assessing the achievements and shortcomings of the CFS, 5 years after its reform. Different perspectives and opinions were expressed on these issues during a panel discussion. One main point was that after many years of struggles by social movements and civil society at different levels, the reform of the CFS in 2009 created a lot of expectations on the part of civil society.

Today, the CFS is the most important and inclusive platform where to discuss and address food security and nutrition issues at the global level. It represents a unique space with unique rules, an unprecedented experience within the UN system. The principle “nothing about us without us”, and its application in a global governance body is a positive step forward for the constituencies of the most affected by hunger and malnutrition who have been traditionally excluded from political decision making at all levels. It is a substantial achievement in itself that global, regional and national organizations of farmers, smallholders, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure and NGOs are now truly engaged with the CFS through the CSM. As a result most of these constituencies perceive that their strong participation has led to valuable outcomes.

On balance the assessment of the 5 years is positive when considering most of the CFS processes and decisions. Particular examples are the Tenure Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests, and the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition, both of which have become references for government decisions when framing food security and nutrition policies.

When it comes to the initiative on rai (responsible agricultural investment), the CSO assessment is less positive when analyzing the final outcome and what was on balance gained and lost. It should be recalled...
that the process started with a decision to not simply legitimize the principles that had been drafted by some international institutions without civil society participation. The fact that the CFS took up the responsibility for a new and participatory process on rai was an important achievement in itself.

Key challenges for the future of the CFS that were identified by the panel:

1. The need to implement and monitor CFS decisions: taking into account the struggle of power in the international context, there is a risk for the CFS to be marginalized from policy making processes on the national, regional and global level. The challenge for the CFS is to ensure that the implementation of its decisions is monitored and that those responsible for their implementation are held accountable. An innovative monitoring system is required to ensure that CFS decisions are relevant for policy decisions at all levels and that they make a real difference for people affected by hunger and malnutrition. This will also lead to CFS authority being globally recognized and strengthened.

2. The CFS, as the most important and most inclusive international forum to promote convergence, coherence and coordination on food security and nutrition issues, is continuously challenged by other global processes that follow different dynamics. A concrete example of side-lining the CFS was the process towards ICN2. Why was the CFS not involved in its preparation? The same can be said on the post 2015 agenda, with respect to food and nutrition. What is, or should have been, the specific role of the CFS in this context? The CFS did not play a relevant role in the formulation of the objectives on food security and nutrition, nor was the Global Strategic Framework used as a key reference in that process. Consequently, the CFS future role is still not defined.

3. The policy coherence imperative is certainly among the most challenging for the CFS. Yet, there has been strong reluctance by some governments to tackle within the CFS one of the key topics for food security policy coherence: the impact of trade policies on food security and nutrition. Not only do trade policies and WTO agreements challenge significantly this coherence, they also increasingly influence CFS processes, as in the case of rai. So, why should the CFS not discuss the coherence between trade policies and the right to adequate food when the latter is at the heart of the CFS’ mandate?

4. Civil society organizations also perceive a persistent resistance of some governments to entertain debates in the CFS on a number of themes. Social movements and civil society organizations around the globe are working on the promotion of an alternative model of food production and consumption, based on peasant agriculture and local food systems. CSO have identified, through a comprehensive consultation process within the CSM, as priority issues to be discussed by the CFS: food sovereignty, agro-ecology and genetic resources. However, none of these themes have been taken up by the CFS or in HLPE reports.

5. Potentials and limitations of the multi-stakeholder approach are becoming another challenging topic for the CFS. Although it is considered important to have all relevant actors at the same table, there is an increasing concern about the role of the private and corporate sectors when shaping public policies and their participation in processes that set UN standards. Some of the key issues are: (a) the urgent need for regulatory frameworks to make international corporations accountable for negative impacts on the right to adequate food, human rights and the environment; (b) the imperative to clearly distinguish between public interest and private interest, and (c) the related conflicts of interest when private sector companies and foundations get involved in Public-Private Partnerships and UN-sponsored programmes, driven by profit motives and self interests.

6. Finally, an increasing concern by civil society involves the way how the consensus building process is sometimes being conducted in the CFS. The impression is that some CFS members use the consensus concept to actually oblige others to accept a common but low level denominator in taking decisions, or to prevent a debate on a sensitive issue. Such attitudes present a real risk to the potential of the CFS as the space where innovative and substantial decisions need to be taken for policy transformations towards the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.
Following the World Food Summit in 1996 and its Plan of Action, substantial progress in understanding and implementing the Right to Adequate Food has been achieved through two major instruments: the General Comment 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted in May 1999, and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (in short: RtAF Guidelines), adopted after two years of negotiation in November 2004 by the FAO Council. Since then, the right to adequate food has made enormous progress, in some aspects, and is, at the same time, still probably the most violated human right on the planet.

The CFS Reform of 2009 put the Right to Adequate Food at the center: it is the vision of the CFS “strive for a world free from hunger where countries implement the voluntary guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security”. The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate food proposed to the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 2012, to hold a special session on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the RtAF Guidelines. The plenary of the CFS welcomed the proposal and decided to include it in the CFS 41 Session Agenda.

A comprehensive assessment was conducted by civil society organizations that participate in the CSM, most of them being members of the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition as well. The aim was to generate a renewed commitment of governments, UN and civil society to advance the implementation of the Right to Adequate Food, particularly by strengthening human rights accountability and coherence on all policy levels that affect food security and nutrition.

For the CFS 41 Session on the Right to Adequate Food, a CSO Synthesis Paper was drafted based on the results of a broad discussion and consultation process conducted by civil society. Please find the Synthesis paper and the executive summary at http://www.csm4cfs.org/cfs_41-14/right_to_food-53/.

Key CSO messages to the CFS Session on 10 Years Right to Food Guidelines:

✓ The defense and the struggle for the realization of the Right to Adequate Food are the core activities of the CSM. For social movements and civil society organizations, the Right to Adequate Food is one of the major reasons that accounts for the presence of civil society at the CFS. To promote policies that are coherent with human rights principles, with government being held accountable for human rights violations, and policies are developed for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food, CSOs are working and fighting for the right to adequate food and for all human rights in communities and at country level, and have fought for these rights as well in the CFS.
✓ To promote the progressive realization of the Right to Adequate Food is central to the mandate of the CFS itself. It is an essential part of the CFS Reform Document, of the CFS Vision Statement and of many of its decisions since then, including the Global Strategic Framework and the Tenure Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests. Consequently, any attempt to weaken the Right to Adequate Food is an attempt to weaken the CFS.
✓ The statements in the decision box cannot lower the standards set by the Right to Food Guidelines themselves and as expressed in the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition. A human rights approach to food security and nutrition was key for framing the Right to Food Guidelines, the CFS reform and the GSF.
✓ The fundamental role of rights holders must be underlined, especially of those most affected by violations of the right to adequate food, particularly small scale food producers, pastoralists, fisher-folks, peasants, landless, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers, urban food insecure, women, youth. These actors cannot be equated with actors in the corporate sector by calling them “non-governmental actors”.
✓ Social movements and civil society organizations undertook a major
effort to analyze and widely consult on the progress, shortcomings and challenges ahead, after 10 years of the Right to Food Guidelines. As the result, the CSO Synthesis paper was prepared for the purpose of being presented at the CFS 41, as a general assessment of the Right to Food was foreseen in the Annotated Agenda. Nevertheless, CSO were blocked in presenting this paper to the plenary, as some governments did not want to have a comprehensive assessment of the Right to Food Guidelines in this particular session.

The Process towards formulating the decision box was problematic. Already in July, the decision box was presented only to the Bureau, not to the Advisory Group (AG). Only upon protest, a process for comments was opened. The process in September was equally problematic: after a discussion in the Joint Meeting of the Bureau and the AG, no consensus was reached. A Friends of the Chair Group was created by the Bureau, without AG participation and hence no participation by civil society. Such a proceeding is essentially exclusive and not in line with the established practice in the reformed CFS.

Assessing the CFS 41 outcome on the RIAF

In spite of a complicated process of formulating the decision box and after an intense Friends-of-the-Chair meeting during the CFS 41, a positive decision box was approved by the CFS 41. From a civil society perspective, the following substantial commitments should be highlighted:

CSO expressed their appreciation of the renewed commitment approved as a global consensus. This is particularly noteworthy as some member countries of the CFS had openly questioned the agreement to have a decision box on the Right to Adequate Food at all, and also attempted to weaken its content with regard to the recognition of human rights approaches.

CSO demanded stronger wording or more specific commitments on several points, particularly on the recognition of women’s rights, the role of rights holders, human rights coherence and follow-up. However, these proposals were not accepted due to the opposition of few influential governments.

The CFS 41:

✓ reaffirmed governments’ commitment for implementation of the right to adequate food.

✓ encouraged all CFS stakeholders to ensure policy coherence in line with the Voluntary Guidelines for the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food.

✓ reaffirmed the importance of respecting, protecting, promoting and facilitating human rights when developing and implementing policies and programmes related to food security and nutrition.

✓ committed to strengthen mechanisms that facilitate informed, participatory, and transparent decision-making in food security and nutrition policy processes including effective monitoring and accountability.

✓ urged all stakeholders to afford the highest priority to the most vulnerable, food insecure and malnourished people and groups when designing and implementing food security and nutrition policies and programmes.

✓ urged all stakeholders to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment in the design and implementation of food security and nutrition policies and programmes.
Participants at the CFS 41 were asked to engage in an “open and substantive debate to contribute to concrete policy recommendations for consideration by the CFS” on the role of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to food security and nutrition. This was the first time in its 40-year history that the CFS had given importance to the contribution of fisheries to food security.

The main CSO messages

Securing adequate food and nutrition for all is not just about producing enough food. Rather, it is about the way food is produced, where it is produced, and who produces it. People do not go hungry because there is a lack of food in the world; they go hungry because nutritious food is not accessible to them. The problem is a lack of access to land and water to produce food, or a lack of means to purchase food. In the case of fisheries, this is in part due to the privatization of coastal areas and water bodies and to the degradation of the aquatic environment by both fishery and non-fishery activity. Ensuring food security and adequate nutrition for all requires that the brute force of industrial fisheries and aquaculture are reigned in, and that activities that privatize and degrade the aquatic environment are halted. It also requires giving small-scale fisheries and small-scale aquaculture producers the priority, means and recognition they deserve.

 Fisheries and aquaculture have a central role to play in providing solutions to meeting food and nutrition needs today and in the future, but only if developed in a regulated and sensitive manner that is both environmentally and socially responsible. The CSO participating in the CFS 41 advocated that this must involve addressing the imbalances in power in the food system and throughout the fishery value chain. They called for effective support to be provided to the struggles of small-scale fishworkers to sustain their livelihoods and to feed their families and their communities. The Voluntary Guidelines on Securing Sustainable Small-scale Fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication (SSF Guidelines), if implemented in an appropriate manner, are a vital tool in this regard. Women play a particularly important though largely unrecognized and poorly rewarded role in the fisheries sector. They comprise at least 50% of the workforce, are engaged in productive activities throughout the value chain, and are largely responsible for putting food on the table. This is why the CSO called on the CFS to give high priority to supporting women in fisheries and aquaculture through affirmative action, adequate planning, legislation, recognition of rights, allocation of resources, and the promotion of their contribution to food security and nutrition.

Much of the fish on our plates comes at a high social cost. Small scale fisheries and aquaculture produce most of the fish we eat, as much as 60%, and employ at least 90% of the workforce engaged in fisheries and aquaculture activities. Yet poverty and underdevelopment plague small-scale fishing communities, rendering them vulnerable to natural and manmade disasters, to the predatory activities of industrial interests, and isolating them socially and economically from the mainstream. The achievement of food security and nutritional wellbeing should not be at the cost of the human rights of the world’s fishery and aquaculture workers and the fishing communities whose livelihoods, incomes, wellbeing and future prospects depend on living aquatic resources. Meeting nutritional goals must go hand in hand with a human rights-based approach to food production. This includes meeting the development goals set out in the outcome document of the Rio + 20 Conference - “The Future We Want”, and in establishing the conditions for decent work as laid out in ILO conventions, including the Work in Fishing Convention (C.188), in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The CFS 41 therefore provided a historic opportunity to address these issues, and for the CSO to put forth their views and recommendations.

What is in the decision box? Achievements and weaknesses

In preparation for the CFS 41 a Task Team was set up to draft recommendations for discussion to complement the recommendations from the High Level Panel of Experts’ Report on “Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE Report). The Task Team included inputs from World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fishworkers (WFF), the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) and the International Planning Committee on Food Sovereignty (IPC). The approved Decision Box recommendations are grouped under eight headings:

- Give fish the position it deserves in food security and nutrition strategies, policies and programmes.
- Promote sustainable fisheries and aquaculture policies and management, and design climate-change adaptive strategies in fisheries for food security and nutrition.
✓ Seize the opportunities and address the challenges of aquaculture development;
✓ Recognize the contribution of small-scale fisheries;
✓ Enhance fish markets’ and trade’s contribution to food security and nutrition;
✓ Improve social protection and labour rights;
✓ Fully address the gender dimension of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors; and
✓ Integrate food security and nutrition concerns into fishery and aquaculture policies and programmes.

These headings covered the issues of concern quite adequately. From a civil society perspective, the following specific commitments can be appreciated:

The CFS 41 agreed to:
✓ Recognize the contribution of small-scale fisheries
✓ Recognize the specific contribution of small-scale fisheries to food security and nutrition
✓ Promote and support the implementation of the ‘Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication’ (SSF Guidelines), with respect to food security and nutrition
✓ Take into account the requirements of small-scale fisheries in the design and implementation of national and international policies and programmes related to fisheries, including investment plans, as appropriate
✓ Support local organizations to foster the integration of small-scale fisheries into the decision-making processes
✓ Enhance fish market’s and trade’s contribution to food security and nutrition. Promote the inclusion of food security and nutrition in the objectives of policies and mechanisms related to fish trade
✓ Seek to avoid trade measures that may disadvantage small-scale fisheries and small-scale aquaculture
✓ Promote a fair return along the fish value chain and encourage direct trade linkages between fish producers and consumers with due consideration to food safety
✓ Improve social protection and labour rights
✓ Strive to improve the working conditions of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, including safety at sea, promoting decent work, eliminating forced and child labour and developing social protection systems
✓ Fully address the gender dimension of the fisheries and aquaculture sector
✓ Give high priority to the support of women in fisheries and aquaculture through adequate planning, legislation, recognition or allocation of rights and resources, and the promotion of their contribution to food security and nutrition
✓ Promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in fisheries and aquaculture, promoting their engagement and access to policies, investments, projects, and fishing and access rights systems
✓ Recognize the work and contribution of fisher women involved in inshore and inland harvesting, and secure the protection of their rights in this context
✓ Integrate food security and nutrition concerns into fisheries and aquaculture-related policies and programmes
✓ Promote the implementation of the ‘Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security’ (VGGT), recognizing the particular relevance of article 8.3 on collectively used and managed land, fisheries and forests
✓ Promote the participation of fishing communities and fish workers in all decisions that impact their livelihoods and enjoyment of the right to adequate food as defined by national laws
✓ Promote the protection of existing rights and ongoing tenure over sites for food-insecure people, fishing communities and indigenous and tribal peoples, taking into account the VGGT.

However, from a CSO perspective the Decision Box falls short in the following areas:
✓ Stronger wording on women’s rights, human rights and monitoring was suggested by civil society during the negotiations, but rejected due to the opposition of a few influential governments.
✓ Aquaculture has received much attention as a food production system capable of filling the gap in fish supplies to meet the needs of a growing world population, projected to reach 9 billion by 2050. However, the production model receiving most attention is industrial, and based on high, intensive and unsustainable levels of feed inputs, pharmaceuticals and other chemicals, using a limited range of species, often carnivorous and exotic, and providing products to consumers through large scale agro-industrial systems.
✓ Alternative production models need to be developed, based on species low in the food chain, using non-intensive systems that can be integrated into other food production activities owned and controlled by small scale producers, and which deliver nutritious fish products to local markets.
✓ The rapid and unregulated spread of aquaculture is a contributing cause of land and ocean grabbing. These phenomena transfer resources, wealth and publicly owned lands and waters into private hands. Fisherfolk face increasing competition for aquatic and land spaces from other interests as well, including energy production, oil and gas exploration and extraction, mass tourism, and real estate speculation. Such land and ocean grabbing by powerful interests is increasingly supported by banks and global capital funds, often under the guise of conservation.
FOOD WASTE

Food Losses and Waste

As in the case of Fisheries, the discussion during the CFS 41 was preceded by an HLPE report on the issue of food losses and waste (FLW). The discussion was conducted in a format of a Policy Round Table. The objective of the Policy Round Tables is to arrive at concrete recommendations for consideration by the Committee. A rapporteur is appointed for this purpose, and meetings then take place in an open Friends’ of the Chair group to reach consensus on the content of the CFS decision box.

The main CSO messages

Civil society’s initial approach was to come up with a list of “asks” not necessarily linked to the HLPE report. It was felt that the report was only based on the industrial food system and had failed to take alternative food distribution systems or a solidarity economy approach into account.

Civil society brought a rich analysis, questions and recommendations to the table. This included a broad and incredibly diverse range of voices of millions of people, both producers and consumers, who are most affected by, and most engaged in direct struggles to change the food system. They are at the center of building sustainable food systems - in agriculture, fisheries, pastoralism, food gathering and based on indigenous knowledge - that offer the kind of diversity, innovation and resilience to combating and reducing food losses and waste (FLW).

Civil society underlined the need to promote public, farmer-led responsible research, data collection, formulation of common protocols, implementation of good practices and generation of FLW information by governments in partnership with regional governments, local authorities, other actors and relevant bodies.

Civil Society also pointed out the multitude of sustainable agricultural practice of those that work with the land, with ecosystems, and with biodiversity - in other words agroecology, and also those of traditional modes of consumption that are not wasteful.

The whole process was long, painstaking and complex, with several late-night sessions, but CSO did succeed in getting almost all of their key “asks” incorporated in the text of the Decision Box that was then unanimously approved by CFS 41 on the final day.

Assessing the CFS 41 outcome on Food Waste and Losses

Voted unanimously in the plenary, the final text of the Decision Box contains several wins and actionable items that are relevant to both food sovereignty and solidarity economy movements, and can be used in the daily and political practice of social movements and civil society organizations:

- Recognition of the fundamental role and decision making at the local authority level. This emphasis allows social movements and networks to use this document in their work at local and community level;
- The continued use of the comprehensive food systems concept in relation to food loss and waste is important in terms of the interconnectedness of all its aspects at local level and a food sovereignty-based approach;
- Emphasis on the need for small-scale producer-led participatory research for producers and small-scale processing units is also very important in fighting industrial agriculture’s stranglehold on local sustainable food systems;
- The recognition of the importance of multi-stakeholder governance bodies is a useful reference for the promotion and the strengthening of Food Policy Council on the local, district or national levels;
- The reference to opening public tenders for school meals to groups of small-scale producers that can also be used at local level;
- Agreement to examine how short food chains and Community Supported Agriculture can contribute to reducing food waste and loss.
On the other hand, the following shortcomings of the decision box were identified:

- An overspill of the policy document on responsible agricultural investment;
- All mention of agroecology was blocked, unless associated with elements considered unacceptable to civil society, such as ‘climate-smart agriculture’ or ‘sustainable intensification’;
- Civil Society tried to include the alternative dynamics practiced by citizens, food producers, small-scale businesses, students, in terms of changing the system in the way in which they grow their food by keeping it local, by reaching out to other sectors, and by changing consumption practices in the discussions. But only a few of these aspects were actually included in the final text;
- There was a notable absence of governments from the South during the negotiations, as many delegates were engaged in parallel discussions. Ideas and voices of some important actors were not carried forward. It was therefore left to civil society to carry forward some issues that have widespread support, but that do not always translate into a powerful presence in late night meeting sessions.

One major challenge for the future are the important questions linked to how to integrate the food losses/waste agenda into the work of the CFS, and to find adequate funding across the broader UN system to move this work forward. In this sense, civil society organizations urged the CFS to prioritize working with the Rome-based UN agencies and Member States to plan an agenda for action on food losses and waste in CFS42.
The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) is fully committed to the CFS, seeking to strengthen its work and outcomes and it is in this spirit that we engaged in the negotiations on the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (Principles). We are pleased that the Principles take into account some important conditions for making investments sustainable. We regret however, that the Principles fall short of the clear commitments and consistent recommendations needed to stop land and water grabbing.

CSM engagement in agricultural investment from 2011-2014

The rai principles are one of the important outcomes of the CFS’s concern for investment in agriculture. At its first session following its reform, in October 2010, the CFS refused to endorse the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI) that had been developed by the World Bank/IFAD/FAO/UNCTAD, which many actors considered to be a cover-up for land grabbing. Instead it was agreed that agricultural investment should be addressed within the inclusive space of the CFS and from a viewpoint of contributing to food security and the right to food.

The CSM agricultural investment-working group, established at the coordination committee meeting in Cordova in May 2011, defined two overarching objectives in the context of the CFS for civil society’s work on agricultural investment:

- Achieve more support and opportunities for small-scale food producers and their models of production through enabling public policies, support programmes and research, remunerative prices, access to domestic markets through appropriate infrastructure and credit; value addition through small-scale processing, cooperative enterprises etc.
- Protect small-scale food producers from corporate take-over by resisting land grabbing and value chain/contract farming approaches, opposing initiatives to stimulate adoption of GMOs and public-private partnerships promoting these corporate strategies.

During the policy discussions on “How to Increase Food Security and Smallholder Investment in Agriculture” at the CFS 37 in October 2011, civil society sought to redirect attention away from ensuring an environment for profitable external investments and towards responding to small-scale producers’ stated needs and proposals, by addressing the questions:

- Food production by whom?
- Adopting what model of agricultural production?
- Whose investments to promote?
- Connecting smallholders to markets-under whose control? Which markets?
- What role for the State?

This objective was attained to a large degree. The decisions approved by the CFS 37 recognize the primacy of small-scale sustainable food production and the fact that small-scale producers are the major investors in agriculture. They recommend that member governments and other CFS stakeholders “ensure that agricultural policies and public investment give priority to food production and nutrition and increase the resilience of local and traditional food systems and biodiversity”.

A further step was taken in 2013 on the basis of an HLPE Report on “Investing in Smallholder Agriculture”. The policy decisions adopted by CFS40 invite governments, with small-scale producers’ and other national stakeholders, to develop a country-owned vision for smallholder agriculture and bring it to bear on the range of relevant policies and budgets. They advocate promoting smallholders’ ability to use, breed, exchange and sell the seeds they need. They call for strengthening participatory research combining traditional knowledge with the findings of scientific research. They support the development of markets that are remunerative for smallholders and rural communities and recognize the importance of local food systems.
However, the domination of international trade regulations over food security concerns continued to hold sway, although it was recognized that the constraints faced by smallholders in relation to sanitary and phyto-sanitary regulations need to be taken into account.

The rai principles

It is against this background, that civil society decided to engage intensively and constructively in the negotiations on the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (Principles). Civil society developed its positions on responsible agricultural investment through extensive consultations in the CSM constituencies and regions during 2013 and 2014, as well as through participation in the formal CFS consultations.

Before the start of the actual negotiations, civil society outlined its position in the following six points, which were shared with the Open Ended Working Group in April 2014. CSO stressed that responsible investment in agriculture must:

- Be anchored in a rights-based framework.
- Clearly recognise small-scale producers and workers as the main investors in agriculture.
- Include a commitment to create decent work and respect workers’ rights, and to overcome discrimination against women.
- Support peasant-based agro-ecological production systems, and local food systems and markets as well as the defence of peoples’ access to and control over land, forest, water, seeds and fisheries.
- Prioritise effective public policies and investment that support and defend small-scale producers, workers and local food systems.
- Include a strong role for States to monitor the Principles in an inclusive way.

Assessing the negotiated principles on rai

At the annual CSM Forum ahead of CFS41, civil society reviewed the final negotiated document in terms of how far it meets the six key points listed above.

CSO welcomed that the Principles include the following positive provisions:

- Respect for decent work and worker’s rights.
- Elimination of discrimination against women.
- Governance and accountability.
- The important roles of small scale producers and workers in agricultural investment.
- The recognition of the importance of progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

Sadly, the Principles fall short of clear commitments and consistent recommendations in the following ways:

- References to human rights are undermined by repeated references that seek to subordinate human rights to trade agreements and rules.
- The qualifier related to Free Prior and Informed Consent lowers the universally recognized standard on the rights of indigenous peoples.
- Recognition of the vital role of small scale producers in investment and food security is nominal and the rest of the document emphasises facilitating large-scale investment.
- The Principles do not acknowledge that different production systems have different environmental impacts, a silence that will allow damaging farming practices to continue under the banner of responsible investment.
- The issues of land, water and resource grabbing were a driving impetus behind the Principles, but the document refuses to name these, and offers no protection for struggles against grabbing on the ground.
- The Principles do not prioritise public policy at all and consistently downplay States’ responsibilities.
- The Principles reduce national level monitoring to measuring without actually doing anything about the problems.
Furthermore, unlike the Tenure Guidelines, which set out principles of implementation that have to be respected by all stakeholders, the Principles allow stakeholders to pick and choose what suits them. Civil Society critique is available on the csm website at www.csm4cfs.org/cfs_41-14/rai_principles-51/.

The main problem, however, is that the document places the interests of big business over those of small-scale producers, agricultural workers and those most vulnerable to hunger. It will thus be ineffective in stopping land and water grabbing. At the core of civil society concerns is the repeated subordination of human rights to trade interests throughout the document.

Challenges for the future:
Civil society is concerned that the weakness and incoherence in the Principles will be used to legitimise irresponsible investments. Civil society calls upon the CFS to accept responsibility for monitoring what is done in the name of the Principles in order to avoid misuse.

Civil society organizations will continue their engagement in the use of the Principles by monitoring how they are applied and by documenting both successes and challenges to bring these to the attention of CFS actors. CSO also are planning to conduct a thorough human rights assessment of the document. The completion of negotiations and adoption by the CFS of the document are important stages in the struggle and commitment to establish appropriate public policies and regulations that enable the sustainable investments of small scale producers and workers, and discipline abuses by mid to large investors.
Food Security in Protracted Crises at the CFS

The Agenda for Action addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises (A4A) within the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) was set to enter the final negotiation stage in July 2014, on track to be endorsed during CFS 41. However, as the negotiations began, it was clear that the process would be longer than planned and the document would not be ready for endorsement by the proposed deadline.

During the negotiation session, the CSM working group was well prepared to defend and develop key elements within the A4A, especially the human rights-based framework and corresponding State obligations, “occupation” as an underlying cause of protracted crises, a reference to the extraterritorial nature of human rights obligations and food security issues related to displaced persons in situations of protracted crises. These issues remained unclear, misunderstood or contentious, despite two years of Rome-based deliberations and expert meetings. As in many international processes, these operational terms and concepts proved to be sticking points within other policy negotiations in the CFS, and need to be resolved for the document to be negotiated by States.

Despite three days of intense negotiations, including night sessions, the Committee was unable to finalize the process. The negotiations ended with many core provisions “in brackets” (still to be negotiated), and a “plan of action” was developed in a parallel session without agreeing on the specific actions that are to be taken.

It is unfortunate that this document was not finalized in a more efficient way, however, with the CFS agenda overloaded with many topics, including the final negotiations on rai, and although full support and commitments were given by the CFS Secretariat, the A4A did not receive the appropriate attention by States within the CFS until now. While these specialized topics required specialized information on the part of State delegations, the State delegations without the necessary background, as well as those States with an obstructive agenda, slowed the process, which finally led to the postponement of the process to 2015. Despite this chronological setback, the CFS now faces an opportunity to push for an improved A4A, as the CFS Secretariat, many States, UN agencies and other stakeholders have prioritized this issue for the coming year. The 2014 CSM Forum set the A4A as a top priority for 2015, and the CSM is committed to moving forward in the negotiation process toward an outcome that pursues real change for the most vulnerable, food- and nutrition-insecure communities.

In order to achieve this goal, the CSM working group encourages placing communities in protracted crises at the center of the discussion and negotiation process, as well as the efforts toward resolving protracted crises with the right kind of international cooperation. CSM has long advocated that this paradigm shift adopts a human rights approach, particularly putting the human right to adequate food at the core of the document and in prescribing actions, to be consistent with the CFS Global Strategic Framework.

Human Rights Instruments, including the Right to Adequate Food Guidelines, reiterate guaranteed rights and protections, and guide community and global responses to restore rights and livelihoods affected by conflict and disaster. The CSM has made it clear that it will not accept a document that does not recognize these guidelines.

It is equally imperative that the A4A has clear, concise and accountable actions, with roles for all relevant stakeholders. This includes UN bodies such as the UN Secretary General (SG), the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, the SG’s Special Representative for Food Security and Nutrition, and the special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council. Such coordination is consistent with the decision of the CFS 39th session (2012) to initiate the A4A process. CFS then called for the A4A to contain “immediate, purposeful and coherent action by all stakeholders to promote food security and nutrition in the context of protracted crises.”

It is crucial that civil society demand an actionable and accountable document, in order to meet the goal of ending hunger and food insecurity, and to support policy that works toward the realization and operationalization of the right to adequate food.

The revised timeline for the A4A in 2015 is as follows:

- 31 March 2015: Circulation of third draft
- 7-8 May 2015: OEWG Negotiations
- 18-22 May 2015: Final Negotiations
- 12-17 October 2015: CFS 42, Final Endorsement
Monitoring CFS Decisions

The issue of monitoring got substantial attention during the CSM Forum and support by all CSM constituencies. Now that the CFS has made several important decisions such as Tenure Guidelines, GSF, rai and the upcoming Plan of Action on Protracted Crisis, CSO realized the importance of properly monitoring what governments, UN agencies and the private sector will be doing with respect to these CFS decisions.

CSO representatives stressed at CFS41 the promotion of accountability within the CFS as the fundamental role of the Open Ended Working Group on Monitoring (OEWG). CSO recalled the fact that promotion of accountability, particularly through an innovative monitoring mechanism, is one of the six key functions of the CFS. Yet the establishment of such a monitoring mechanism is still pending almost 5 years after the CFS reform. Therefore, CSO urged governments to take steps towards implementing the accountability agenda of the CFS.

CSO welcomed the outcome of CFS deliberation: Towards a Framework for Monitoring CFS Decisions and Recommendations, particularly the mandate of the CFS to the OEWG to develop a proposal for an innovative monitoring mechanism to promote accountability as established in the 2009 CFS Reform Document. Unfortunately no clear timeline was agreed upon for the development of such a proposal.

The CFS 41 further requested that the CFS Secretariat, in collaboration with the OEWG on Monitoring:

- conduct a baseline assessment of CFS effectiveness beginning with the implementation of an opinion survey of CFS stakeholders; and provide an update including a report of the baseline survey results to CFS 42;
- complement the opinion survey of CFS stakeholders with the implementation of in-depth but voluntary country level assessments.

The CSM Working Group on Monitoring is committed to support the opinion survey and to develop its own concrete proposal on key elements of the innovative mechanism and invites governments and all CFS actors to discuss this proposal further in 2015. To kick-start this process, a CSM workshop was organized on November 24-25, 2014 in Rome, and its result will be reported back to the OEWG on Monitoring in 2015.
A progress report on the Multi-Year Programme of Work and Priorities (MYPOW) was presented during CFS41 as well as the “High-Level Panel of Experts Note on Critical and Emerging Issues for Food Security and Nutrition.” Both documents serve as an input for the further discussion in 2015 on the CFS Agenda in the biennium 2016-2017, to be adopted by CFS42.

However, the CFS41 already decided on the topics of two reports to be prepared by the High Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE):

- Sustainable Agricultural Development for Food Security and Nutrition, including the Role of Livestock, to be presented to the 43rd Plenary Session in 2016.
- Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition, to be presented to the CFS Plenary in 2017.

CSOs Positions: Reiterating the centrality of agroecology and genetic resources.
Civil Society reminded the Plenary that agro-ecology and seeds have been priority themes brought to the attention of the CFS by the CSM during the past years. Agro-ecology and genetic resources are fundamental for food security and nutrition around the planet. Therefore, CSO had suggested an HLPE Report fully dedicated to Agroecology. This suggestion was unfortunately not accepted. However, as a general agreement of the CSM Forum in 2013 was reached after a long process of internal consultation, the CSM will continue to demand that Agro-ecology and Seeds should become priority issues for the CFS in the future.

Reiterating the proposal to have 2 HLPE reports annually
As the HLPE goal is to ensure the regular inclusion of advice based on scientific evidence and knowledge, CSO stressed that addressing only one topic per year is not sufficient considering the existing capacities as expressed by the HLPE itself. Given the installed capacities, it is also clearly more cost-efficient to produce two reports as compared to only one annually. CSO will continue to bring forward this suggestion in the future.
The CSM conducted in 2014 a very interesting evaluation and started, based on the results of this investigation, a process of strategic thinking and planning on the future engagement with the CFS, and the internal development of the CSM through strengthened interactions between the global and national level, improved communication, internal learning approaches, capacity building measures.

Within this context, the 2015 CSM work plan foresees to closely accompany the themes that are already defined for the agenda of CFS 42 in 2015, by creating specific working groups for each theme. Some of these themes are already presented above, particularly Food Security and Protracted Crisis, Monitoring and MYPoW and thus do not require further discussion here.

The other issues that will be addressed by the CSM in 2015, based on discussions already started in 2014, are:

**“High-Level Forum on Connecting Smallholders to Markets”**

This theme was spurred by the HLPE report and discussions on smallholders investment in agriculture in 2011, and is also referred to above in the chapter on rai. The CFS decided in 2013 to hold a High-Level Forum (HLF) on connecting smallholders to markets in 2015.

When preparations started in 2014, civil society and smallholder farmer organizations were unfortunately excluded from the Task Team in charge of preparing the event. It was only after several oral interventions and written protests from CSM that the CFS Advisory and the CFS Bureau revised an earlier decision, recognizing the need to open the Task Team up to CSO participation. The political body to supervise the process will be the CFS Advisory Group and the Bureau. The date of the HLF is set for the 25th of June 2015, and the concerned smallholder and civil society organizations very much hope that the event will become part of a sustained process in the CFS to address the complex challenges of such an essential topic.

**Forthcoming HLPE report on Water and Food Security**

The CFS requested in its 40th Session (October 2013) the High Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE), to prepare for its 42nd Session in 2015 a report on Water and Food Security. This report, made available as a zero draft in October 2014 was commented on by civil society organizations. Some aspects of the draft were particularly appreciated:

- The importance of a human rights framework, particularly the right to water;
- The positive support that the HLPE team has given to agro-ecology;
- The strong emphasis on improved governance of water.

The HLPE report is scheduled to be publicly presented by May 15, 2015.

**What is the Role of the CFS in the Post 2015 Development Agenda?**

The CSM has repeatedly voiced in the past its serious concerns on the lack of a human rights-based approach in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and did so again during the CFS 41 plenary debate. The CFS should have been the space where the discussions on food security and nutrition were to be conducted in the process of the SDG. The fact that the CFS played a marginal role in this respect represents a missed opportunity to empowering CFS.

The CFS has now to decide in 2015 what its role is to be in the implementation of the SDG. In this respect the CSO pointed out that:

- CFS should play a monitoring role on the process that follows the SDG adoption. A future innovative monitoring system implemented by the CFS could contribute to meeting this challenge.
- The development of a post-2015 framework for food security and nutrition should not be something new, it should be built on what the CFS has already decided, including the GSF, the VGGT, all other decisions taken so far, as well as recommendations already received.
- CFS should reflect and discuss in-depth its role in the SDG process. Different constituencies of the most affected by hunger and malnutrition as well as other involved actors should fully participate in this process.
The Follow-Up to ICN2 – What Role for the CFS?

The Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), organized by FAO and WHO in November 2014 at FAO headquarters, provided an unique opportunity to discuss the links between agriculture, health and food, from a food system perspective. For governments it was the occasion to develop an agreed policy proposal, combined with an agenda for action for the coming decade. This is important considering the growing worldwide attention on nutrition and the related nutrition initiatives that have “popped up” without proper political framing and guidance.

Civil society has tried to be involved in the preparations of ICN2 since the CFS meeting in 2013. At a very early stage CSO started writing formal letters to the UN organizing agencies to urge them to open up the preparatory process to CSO participation. It took a long time before FAO and WHO decided to open the door. By that time the number of CSOs that were interested in participating had grown considerably. CSO including social movements had already prepared joint statements calling for:

- inclusion of a strong and comprehensive human rights approach to nutrition;
- in-depth analysis of the reasons and underlying factors leading to malnutrition, including socio-economic and political determinants;
- inclusion of all forms of malnutrition, and not just problems related to undernutrition.

The four principles that framed the CSO vision statement along these lines are:

- Human Rights and rights-based approach to food and nutrition security.
- Coherent and coordinated management of nutrition throughout the lifecycle and at all levels.
- Sovereign local food and agricultural systems based on agro-biodiversity.
- Democratic governance of food and nutrition based on a global regulatory framework.

The outcomes of the ICN2 are reflected in the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and in the Framework for Action (FFA). During CFS 41 there was a strong call from the CSM nutrition working group and the broad-er CSM Forum, for the CFS to take up its mandate on nutrition and include nutrition in its next work plan. The CFS, as the most inclusive and participatory forum to discuss food security and nutrition, could and should provide the normative guidance and coherence for its food security and nutrition agenda. In order to strengthen CFS in the area of nutrition, CSO suggested that WHO should participate in the CFS Advisory Group and possibly be represented in the CFS Secretariat. Space should be created in 2015 to further think about how CFS can take nutrition on board, and what role it will play in monitoring the follow-up of ICN2.

Final Remarks

2015 will be another challenging year for the CFS, and for the CSM as well. Many contentious issues need to be addressed.

Will the CFS be capable of meeting the high expectations that have been generated as the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform to advance convergence, coordination and coherence of policies on food security and nutrition? What measures will be taken to ensure the implementation and monitoring of CFS decisions? How will the CFS respond to proposals to discuss themes that are controversial and complex?

Can the CFS create added value through its deliberations and outcomes while avoiding conflictive issues and by only seeking consensus based on the lowest denominator of agreement? Will the CFS be able to take substantial decisions on such important topics as protracted crisis, connecting smallholders to markets, water and food security or monitoring and accountability?

Success will depend on the actors involved. The CSM, being an essential and autonomous part of the CFS, will remain committed to facilitate and articulate civil society contributions to the important global topics that, as stated at the outset, are highly relevant and directly linked to the daily struggles of social movements and civil society organizations involved in changing realities and improve food security and nutrition at the national and local level.
# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A4A</td>
<td>Agenda for Action for addressing food insecurity in protracted crises</td>
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<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Advisory Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC-CSM</td>
<td>Coordination Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>Committee on World Food Security</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Civil Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSM</td>
<td>Civil Society Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLW</td>
<td>Food Losses and Waste</td>
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<td>GMOS</td>
<td>Genetic Modified Organism</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSF</td>
<td>Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLF</td>
<td>High Level Forum on Connecting Smallholder to Markets</td>
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<td>HLPE</td>
<td>High Level Panel of Experts</td>
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<td>ICN2</td>
<td>Second International Conference on Nutrition</td>
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<td>ICSF</td>
<td>International Collective in Support of Fisheries</td>
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<td>IPC</td>
<td>International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty</td>
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<td>MYPOW</td>
<td>Multi Year Program of Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>OEWG</td>
<td>Open Ended Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>rai</td>
<td>Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investment</td>
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<td>RTAF</td>
<td>Right to Adequate Food</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SG</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
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<td>SSF</td>
<td>Small Scale Fisheries</td>
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<td>TGs</td>
<td>Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (also called VGGT)</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFF</td>
<td>World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers</td>
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<td>WFFP</td>
<td>World Forum of Fisher Peoples</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Program</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for relations with the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the largest international space of civil society organizations (CSOs) working to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition by promoting effective agriculture, food security and nutrition policies, at the national, regional and global levels.

The CSM is formed by 11 constituencies and 17 sub-regions which elect their members to the CSM Coordination Committee. Several hundred organizations participate in the CSM, particularly from the constituencies of farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure and NGOs.

With this publication, the CSM presents some of its contributions to, and assessments of the 41st Session of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS), held from 13-17 October 2014 in Rome, and offers an outlook for 2015.