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Date: 12 July 2017

Time: 14.00 – 15.30

Location: German Room, FAO

Outcomes

Preparatory meeting for the CFS Policy Convergence Process on Sustainable Forestry for Food Security and Nutrition

Agenda

1. Preparation process – timeframes and expected outcomes
2. Results – Expectations on the nature of the outcomes for CFS 44
3. Any other business

Outcomes

The meeting was opened by the CFS Rapporteur on Sustainable Forestry, Ambassador François Pythoud (Switzerland), who outlined the agenda and asked for its adoption. The Rapporteur urged CFS stakeholders to be on time at the next meetings of this process.

1. Preparation process – timeframes and expected outcomes

The CFS Secretary presented an overview of the different steps and related deadlines of the policy convergence process. CFS stakeholders were informed of minor amendments to the document after its circulation. The document now indicates that the Rapporteur's proposal, after its circulation in English on 25 September, will be made available in all languages on 29 September. This would allow CFS stakeholders to have almost two weeks with the English version and almost one week with the language versions, before the interpreted sessions to reach consensus is held on 5 and 6 October.

There was some discussion that the process defaulted to past CFS practice, inhibiting a reflection on a new or different outcome, but no objections to the process overall. The revised version of the document outlining the process and timeframes is circulated together with the outcomes of the preparatory meeting.

2. Results – Expectations on the nature of the outcomes for CFS 44

CFS stakeholders were requested to provide their inputs not only on the content of the HLPE recommendations but to give indications concerning the nature of the final outcome. During the meeting, it was asked if there is value in continuing producing the same type of recommendations out of the follow-up to the HLPE reports or if it might be worth considering a different type of policy outcome.

The Rapporteur encouraged participants to have a clear idea of the outcome sought, which should be useful for CFS and for food security and nutrition, and able to be used beyond the Rome community. He noted there needn't be a repeat of the HLPE report and its recommendations, which were already available for public use and reference. CFS should avoid very general recommendations and focus on a minimum set of recommendations, maximum two pages, that could generate impact and make a difference.

CFS stakeholders were reminded of a note discussed at Bureau and Advisory Group level in March 2014, suggesting that the document to be presented for endorsement by the CFS plenary should be no longer than two pages, approximately 1000 words. In view of the length of the recommendations produced by the HLPE (1500 words), the Rapporteur invited CFS stakeholders to focus also on what could be deleted and not only on what is missing.

The first step of the process will be to devote attention to the seven clusters suggested by the HLPE in its recommendations and see whether they are in line with the expectations of CFS stakeholders or if and how they need to be amended.

The discussion identified that actionable points directed to specific stakeholders, where particularly relevant, could be useful. Focusing on the CFS mandate and an outcome useful to those who make decisions should be a priority. Recommendations directed to the forestry sector may be a lower priority as they could be addressed by COFI, but those that go beyond forestry, needing input and collaboration with other sectors and specific to FSN could focus the work. Past CFS and other related recommendations, such as the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, should not be replicated but could be referred to.

Several participants sought information on the process of reaching consensus. The Rapporteur noted that it would depend on the results of the consultation concerning the nature of the outcome, should allow for flexibility and he would use different methods depending on what would facilitate the achievement of effective results, rather than the acceptance of the lowest common denominator. He reiterated the need to ensure inclusiveness and ownership by including all the views on the table and reminded the audience that the process is not an end itself but a means to produce an effective outcome.

Participants noted there needed to be clear rules of engagement and discipline in the process and there was a great deal of scope to improve working methods.

The deadline to provide inputs, suggestions and comments is 15 September and the Rapporteur highlighted that there will not be any extension, given the tight schedule.

The Rapporteur will circulate a note, before the meeting scheduled on 19 September, presenting his guiding rules of engagement for the consensus-building process.

3. Any other business

No other business was discussed.