

**CSM Comments on the Inception Report for the CFS Evaluation**  
**29 July 2016**

The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for relations with the CFS would like to express its appreciation for the inception report elaborated by the Evaluation team, and also to thank the Team Leader Angela Bester and the Evaluation Team Leader Patricia Biermayr-Jenzano for their explanations during the presentation session last 22 July over skype.

After consultation of the Coordination Committee, the CSM would like to share with you the following remarks. Most of these observations, suggestions and questions were already brought to your attention orally during the 22 July conversation.

**1) On purpose, scope and methodology:**

The approved Concept Note for the Evaluation defines for the purpose and scope of the evaluation two important aspects that in our view should be strengthened in the Inception Report and play an important role during the evaluation process:

Under "Purpose", the Concept Note requests the evaluation to *"produce evidence whether the CFS is achieving its vision as outlined in the CFS Reform Document"*. Here, the essential aspect of the CFS vision to contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food is central. The inception report should include this fundamental dimension into the conceptual framework and methodology of the evaluation.

Under "Scope", the Concept Note defines that evaluation should pay particular attention to the: *"Objectives and mandate: to assess the extent to which CFS is fulfilling its mandate, how efficient it is at doing so, and how the roles outlined in the 2009 Reform Document have been implemented;"*

The performance of the CFS regarding its six roles is essential for its evaluation. In our view, it is not sufficient to mention the six roles and then to take the three outcomes, identified for the MYPOW 2014-2015, as the basis for the evaluation. The three outcomes do not replace the agreed language of the six functions of the CFS, as paragraph 11 of the approved MYPOW 2016-2017 clarified.

This is important, because the concept of the three outcomes falls short in fully capturing the six CFS roles on three key aspects:

- They do not make any reference to the contribution of the CFS to the progressive realization of the right to food, which is central in the CFS vision statement and explicitly included into the description of two roles of the CFS;
- They omit the reference to the monitoring role of the CFS, which is "to promote accountability and share best practices". It is worth noting that the monitoring function of the CFS is part of its mandate since 1974.
- They also do not mention role 6, which is the reference to the GSF and underlines its important role for the CFS.

**In summary:** the evaluation of the CFS should be based on the vision statement and the roles of the CFS as defined in the CFS reform document. This was defined in the approved concept note and needs to be properly included into the scope and methodology of the evaluation. It is not sufficient to take the three outcomes as the basis for scope and methodology. The evaluation questions would need to be revised in this sense. We can offer a specific language suggestion, if this is requested by the evaluation team.

## 2) Questions on the process

- a. Timeline: the evaluation was foreseen to be conducted in 12 months, now it is reduced to 7 months. The inception report was originally planned for February this year, now presented five months later, due to the existing budget constraints of the CFS. In our view, it seems very difficult to complete everything, including 7-10 country visits, from now to the end of the year. We feel that the evaluation team, as also stated by the Team Leader during the 22 July meeting, might need more time to ensure the best quality of the report and should be encouraged to request the proper time needed for this important endeavor.
- b. Participation and Focus group discussions: it is very important to have a broad participation and to capture the variety of views. The CSM would like to suggest and agree with the evaluation team on a methodology which would allow for a participation of all 11 global constituencies and all 17 sub-regions of the CSM to this exercise. We can discuss with the evaluation team the ways and methods to ensure to make this happen. One possibility could be to take advantage of the CSM meetings in the week before the CFS Plenary.
- c. Potential interviewees on the country level (table 2): We urge the evaluation team to seek also on the country level the dialogue with all the eleven constituencies of the CSM (smallholder and family farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, indigenous peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure and NGOs). As requested by the Team leader, the CSM is willing to facilitate the organization of these meetings on the country level.
- d. List of interviewees (table 5): it is not clear how this list is actually structured and gathered. The different nature of listed actors is not clarified. Some of the members of the CFS Advisory Group are listed, others are not. No distinction is made between the actual members of the Advisory Group, and others like ad-hoc participants. This should be corrected.
- e. Country visits: the main criterion for visiting a country is, in our view, the explicit interest of the country to receive the evaluation team. We would like to ask the following questions to the Evaluation team in this regard:
  - Which are the countries that have expressed interest for an evaluation visit so far?
  - Is there already a tentative list of countries to be visited?
  - Until when, suggestions can be made for country visits?
  - For when are the country visits scheduled?
- f. It is not clear from the inception report, how the evaluation team will assess the structures of the CFS. Our questions here are: How will the CFS and its main bodies actually be evaluated, especially the roles of the CFS Secretariat, the Bureau and the Advisory Group and its members? What is the methodology to be applied, and how will the Evaluation team ensure its independence from the CFS Secretariat?
- g. Languages: how will the consultation process of the evaluation report be conducted? In English only, or as well in other languages? We urge the team to consider producing the documents for consultation in several languages, and if this is not possible, to give due time for translation of those drafts and documents that need to be translated, in order to ensure an inclusive evaluation process.
- h. Finally, a correction should be made in the first paragraph of the Inception Report which is about the CFS and its nature. The description here is not the correct one, CFS is not a FAO Committee any more. The sentence from the CFS Reform document should be used here instead.