

Draft Preliminary CSM Contributions on the 1st Draft of the CFS Evaluation Report

1) Introductory remarks

- The CSM has gathered preliminary comments on the first draft of the Evaluation report. Some of these preliminary comments are being presented today. A more detailed and complete written version will be submitted within the given timeline on 2 March.
- We would like to thank the Evaluation team for the efforts made for a comprehensive evaluation of the CFS, which for sure is not an easy task. We express our general appreciation of the first draft which already provides a lot of food for thought to the CFS members and participants.
- As compared to the previous paper on the preliminary findings, we see the reflective approach of the document has improved substantially. However, we believe that in many parts, a deeper analysis of the causes and the context is needed. Several paragraphs would greatly benefit, if the question “why is this so?” would be more thoroughly addressed. To give an example: if the GSF is perceived as less known than the VGGT, it would be good to identify the reasons more precisely, and to evaluate how much efforts and resources have been dedicated to the dissemination, use and applications of each of these two policy outcomes. If there is a huge difference between the two, it would be again the question, why this? We recommend to deepen the analytical part of the evaluation in this sense, which also would help to make the recommendations more substantial and specific.

2) How to effectively implement the principles of the CFS reform?

- The CSM strongly supports the approach to strengthen and defend the CFS in the spirit of its reform. The Evaluation offers a number of important suggestions in this direction.
- In this sense, it is important that the Evaluation recalls the importance of the right to food as a main driver of the reform, as an essential part of the CFS vision statement and the inclusion of the Right to Food Guidelines in roles of the CFS. We strongly suggest that this part should also be reflected in the recommendations of the report. Monitoring the RtF Guidelines, as suggested by paragraph 94 of the evaluation, could be a concrete example.
- The fundamental decision of the CFS reform by including the voices of the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition into the CFS deliberation process is also stressed as an important achievement. But how can a greater participation of the constituencies of the smallholder family farmers, the indigenous peoples, the agricultural and food workers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure be achieved?

- The evaluation rightly mentions that the issues of indigenous peoples have been present in the CFS, because the CSM championed their participation. But giving particular attention and space to indigenous peoples and their rights is a responsibility of the whole CFS, not only the CSM.
- The role of women and gender equality has been tackled quite often in the CFS, as the evaluation rightly points out. But why has it been so difficult to get an explicit recognition of the respect, protection and fulfillment of women's rights working in agriculture in the CFS?
- We often miss a deeper understanding and higher attention of the CFS to the realities and struggles of our constituencies who are so often at risk, often oppressed, and are at the same the most important contributors to food security and nutrition worldwide.
- In that context, the discussion on inclusiveness and equality of voices needs particular consideration. The demand of having all voices equally heard, cannot be dissociated from the asymmetries of power that also reign the politics on food security and nutrition. These asymmetric power relations are among the most important causes of hunger. They usually leave many of our people behind. Inclusive governance is an important response to this failure of food systems, and it means mainly the inclusion of the excluded to the relevant policy making processes.
- The assumption that all stakeholders are equal is blind to the real asymmetries of power. It also misunderstands deeply the spirit of the CFS reform which established that all relevant actors should be on the table, but a special space and weight must be given to the organizations of the most affected by food insecurity, to the rights-holders whose right to food is most violated. The claim for a parity of seats between the private sector and civil society is obviously absurd in such a context.
- The proposal for an increased civil society participation, however, as successfully practiced in numerous national food security and nutrition councils, might be helpful in guiding the discussions on this topic. The important distinction between stakeholders and rights-holders should not be confused, considering the very important role of the rights to adequate food in the vision and roles of the CFS.

3) On the use, application and monitoring of CFS policy outcomes

- The concern on the better use and application of CFS policy outcomes is well reflected in the draft evaluation report, and it is one of our main concerns too. We share the view that much more needs to be done to make the outcomes of the CFS effective on the ground.
- We suggest to further develop this part of the evaluation by analyzing more precisely the role of all involved actors in this context. It is clear that the CFS is not an implementing body, so it relies on its members and participants for the use, application and monitoring of its policy outcomes.
- The evaluation underlines the importance of the first comprehensive monitoring exercise, as undertaken during CFS 43 with the Global Thematic Event on the use and application of the VGGT. The CFS can learn from this

exercise for the use and application of all its policy outcomes, including regarding the success stories and the obstacles and shortcomings.

- The questions then are: What is the role of governments, and what should it be? What is the role of the Rome based agencies, and what should it be? What is the role of civil society and other actors, and what should be improved by them?
- On the monitoring function of the CFS, the evaluation recognizes the important progress of the last few years. This includes that today, after the approval of the terms of reference for monitoring events on the use and application of CFS policy outcomes, there is a much better common understanding on what should be monitored, who should be involved and how the process should be organized.
- It is contradictory, that the evaluation on one hand praises the monitoring exercise of the VGGT and then recommends that the CFS should not monitor the use and application of its policy outcomes. We do not support this recommendation to reduce the CFS monitoring exercise to an information gathering exercise of the Rome Base Agencies. We suggest to rather continue the path and strengthen the efforts on monitoring in the future, as on the progress made in the recent past.
- We welcome and support the suggestion of the evaluation report to strengthen the CFS capacity to address global emerging or urgent issues as part of the strategy to become more visible and relevant.

4) On the Functioning of the CFS:

- While we appreciate the attempt of the evaluation to assess the different bodies of the CFS, there is apparently no common methodological approach to assess the contributions and functioning of the bodies which also generates some uneven results. This should be improved in the final evaluation report.
- The part on the functioning of the OEWGs of the CFS need to be improved as well. It is a pity that the evaluation team could not participate to OEWG meetings and witness the deliberation process. Particularly the negotiations of the OEWG on sustainable agricultural development and the role of livestock would have given important insights on internal dynamics which are now missing in the draft report.
- An in-depth assessment of the role of the CFS Secretariat is missing. It is difficult to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the CFS without a proper evaluation of the Secretariat. The assessment of the CFS Secretariat cannot be limited to the analysis of its staff and financial situation. Its role for the whole CFS is essential. We suggest that such evaluation should still be included.
- The fundamental role of the HLPE has not been properly assessed. The draft evaluation does not capture the innovative character and methodologies, as well as the extraordinary contributions of the HLPE to the reformed CFS.
- The composition of the CFS Advisory Group: the composition should reflect the priorities and principles of the CFS reform, as already expressed before.

Currently the category of the private sector and private philanthropic foundations has two seats, while the category of the civil society in all its dimension has four seats. If a change is to be considered here, it should result in a greater participation of civil society.

- The evaluation underlines that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations has failed to outreach to other private philanthropic foundations. This shortcoming needs to be taken into account when considering the future composition of the Advisory Group.
- Any organization that wishes to participate in the CFS should first chose the category it belongs to, and then coordinate its participation with the respective mechanism. This is true for all organizations, and as well for the WFO. The WFO is a relatively small organization, as compared with several farmer and food producer organizations in the CSM, and cannot claim special privileges. Everybody has to respect the rules that are in place.
- The role of the Rome Based Agencies in the CFS should be assessed on the different levels of their involvement: a) they are part of the Joint Secretariat; b) they are part of the funding structure; c) they are part of the policy process, through the OEWG and the Advisory Group; d) their role in linking their own policies and programs and CFS processes (for example VGGT and Small Scale Fisheries Guidelines); e) their role in the use and application of CFS policy outcomes; and f) their role in contributing to the CFS monitoring.
- The funding of the CFS should come from public sources only. A sustainable funding mechanism needs to be put in place as soon as possible. The Meeting on 9 March will show if there are the appropriate proposals, and the needed political will to overcome this problem. The financial problem of the CFS is, as we've said before, not a lack of funding only, but an expression of lack of political support to the CFS.
- The suggestion for a "strategic framework" for the CFS does not seem a real need to us. The CFS has already a Global Strategic Framework which is not sufficiently used. It would only generate another burden of work for internal purposes. The discussions on the MYPOW already show how difficult it is to agree on the future priorities of the CFS agenda. The CFS should not increase, rather decrease the energy dedicated to internal bureaucratic procedures
- The role of the MYPOW process however does need further analysis, also in the light of current debates. The risk, that the CFS shies away from highly relevant, but conflictive issues, needs to be addressed. It is not in the spirit of the CFS when the consensus model is used by a few to just block the debate on a highly relevant topic. It would be good if the evaluation could address this problem and recommend a way out of this dilemma.
- A topic of high importance which has not been reflected in the draft evaluation report is the need of the CFS to develop robust safeguards to protect the CFS against conflict of interest. The need for this has been recognized in the CFS document on its role in nutrition, approved by the Plenary of CFS 43. The evaluation could have a look into different options on how to tackle this sensitive, but important issue for the future of the CFS.