



Date: 9 March 2017 9.30 – 12.30

Location: Ethiopia Room, FAO

Welcome and Introductory Remarks by the CFS Chair

The CFS Chair, Amb. Amira Gornass (Sudan), thanked the attendees for participating in this important informal discussion, noting that members and participants should all be proud of CFS, its work and components that make it unique within the UN system. They prove that CFS can be inclusive while respecting the decision-making role of Members and achieving concrete results.

She also noted that CFS is increasingly referenced as a model within the UN and that there is a clear trend, well beyond the UN system, that shows how complex issues are better addressed when they are jointly tackled through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Governments alone cannot provide all solutions to ever changing and increasingly complex issues; instead solutions must be developed together with other stakeholders, each having their respective roles and responsibilities. The CFS Chair said CFS is a living example of this model.

The CFS Chair recalled the objective of the meeting: to agree on how to ensure long-term sustainable and adequate funding to CFS so that the Committee can continue to play its important role, achieve its vision, contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda and build on the important work that has already been done. She underlined the fact that CFS needs to be both effective and relevant. Therefore CFS needs to be inclusive, comprising the PSM and CSM, and evidence based, supported by the HLPE's work.

The CFS Chair underscored that the decision on how CFS should be sustainably funded is ultimately in the hands of its Members.

The CFS Chair explained that the background document focused on ensuring sustainable funding for the Plenary and work streams although all three components and their funding (Plenary and workstreams, HLPE and CSM) are fundamentally important for the effectiveness of the Committee. She recalled that only a handful of members have historically contributed to CFS – about 15 - while membership today includes about 135 countries and many more participants. She noted that Sudan, this year, has been the first developing country to contribute to CFS plenary and workstreams. The CFS Chair mentioned that the meeting's discussion is inherently linked with the independent evaluation of CFS.

Presentation of the Background Document by the Secretariat

The Secretariat presented in detail the background document, which proposed a definition of sustainable funding as meaning resources were committed at the time of approval of the Multi-Year Program of Work (MYPoW), and illustrated a 'core' budget to enable the functioning of plenary and workstreams of CFS. The needs of the HLPE and CSM were reiterated. The Secretariat's paper identified the main options suggested to date by Bureau and Advisory Group members on addressing CFS funding, covering the core budget. These were:

- Trimming the core budget to live within the present RBA contribution (\$4.05 million per biennium);
- Increasing secured resources from RBAs to cover the core budget of plenary and workstreams;

- Seeking for un-earmarked contributions from all members via a voluntary scale of contribution;
- Continuing with Business as usual (earmarked resources from some donors to bridge the gap between RBA contributions and the MYPoW);
- Requesting for increasing the contributions from RBAs plus contributions from other UN institutions that have to do with food security and nutrition.

Discussion with CFS Stakeholders

The CFS Chair opened the floor for discussion, asking participants to give clear indications on what approach/es to sustainable funding could feasibly be implemented.

During the discussion, areas of general agreement were identified:

- There needs to be a renewed commitment to CFS;
- All components of CFS are important and need to be considered in an integrated way - CFS workstreams and plenary, HLPE and the mechanisms (CSM, PSM);
- Inadequate funding jeopardises the whole CFS model;
- Sustainable funding for CFS is important;
- The discussion on CFS funding cannot be separated from the one on MYPoW, and the MYPoW needs to be realistic, based on secured resources, and offering real value-added outcomes;
- The Rome-based Agencies are essential to CFS and the links between their work and CFS should be strengthened; particularly with FAO as the mandated organisation on normative work;
- A combination of approaches is likely to be necessary to ensure sustainable funding and all options should be explored;
- Outreach and CFS visibility beyond Rome needs further efforts by all stakeholders;
- The results of the CFS Evaluation and the subsequent plan of action will help the Committee determine its long term future approach;
- A business as usual approach to the future of CFS resourcing was not deemed appropriate.

In relation to the different options put forward, the strongest support expressed was for requesting increased contributions from the RBAs. However this would only be part of the solution, as it was recognised that funding would still be insufficient to cover an integrated budget that includes HLPE and CSM. The CFS Chair and several participants noted this was in the hands of Members to pursue in the appropriate venues. Some Members expressed interest in a voluntary scale of contribution, while others questioned the feasibility of this approach. Several Members suggested approaching more philanthropic foundations and private sector organisations for funding, provided suitable safeguards against conflict of interests could be in place. There were mixed views on presenting a tight core budget with limited flexibility versus a more ambitious core budget. Some stressed the importance of resources for translation and interpretation. While un-earmarked resources were preferred, it was recognized that this was an unfeasible option for some donors. It was also recognized that increased and more tailored fund-raising activities would come at a cost. Pursuing contributions from other UN institutions involved in CFS work was suggested as a possibility, though it was noted clear signals from Members on this in the relevant governing bodies would be needed.

On suggestions for trimming costs, most did not support only holding plenary every two years, though there were some suggestions for a shorter plenary week. Further information on the

budget, including fixed costs, how priorities are determined, and information on earmarked funding, was requested for the May Bureau and Advisory Group meeting.

Next Steps

In the immediate term, the CFS Chair stressed the urgency of receiving contributions as CFS still faces funding gap in 2017. Today's gap -she reminded participants in the meeting- is US\$ 1.1 million and cutting costs risks compromising ongoing processes and their outcomes. Without additional contributions the 2017 HLPE reports would not be translated. She thus encouraged members to contribute to ensure a successful 2017 for CFS as well as an effective long term future, noting that small contributions from all members would solve the problem.

The CFS Chair received support for holding a second informal meeting, after the May Bureau meetings and once the final report of the Evaluation were available.