

## CSM Plenary Statements on CFS Evaluation, 12 October, 2017

### (1<sup>st</sup> intervention)

#### General overview:

CSM has contributed intensively to the CFS evaluation elaboration and the discussion on how to best respond to it. We congratulate Ms. Angela Bester and her team for the report, and Egypt and Iceland for their co-facilitation work for the CFS response to it during the past months.

The CFS continues to be in a critical situation. We have seen during the past years and also during this session, that there are two possible pathways for the CFS: either it goes in the direction of erosion of the CFS Reform, or in the direction of strengthening the CFS in the spirit of its Reform.

The CSM clearly stated its expectation that the evaluation and the discussion on the response to it should be guided by the spirit of the reform and make the CFS much stronger in line with its mandate and its roles.

We welcome that the Co-Facilitators concluded the first Meeting on the Response in June this year with the explicit statement that there will be no reform of the reform. The Consultation report clearly points in this direction: it aims to further strengthen the roles and functioning of the CFS in line with its mandate and vision.

We believe that this is the only right direction, but we see as well that not all members and participants really want to go into this direction. Very often, there is a tendency to convert the CFS again into the talk shop it was before the reform. This becomes clear when there is:

- no willingness to enter serious policy negotiations, or to provide the needed time and resources for that;
- positions that openly challenge the human rights basis of the CFS, or that want to prevent the CFS to take up urgent, critical and contentious issues;
- lack of commitment of members and Rome based agencies to properly fund the CFS and its activities;
- too many efforts and meetings of an increasingly inward-looking CFS.

Let's not forget that the CFS was created in 1975 as a response to the Food crises in 1974, and it was reformed in 2009 due to the food crises in 2007/8. Against this background, it is clear that the CFS must respond to the food crises and the structural causes of food insecurity and malnutrition today in an effective way. The CFS has to be able to effectively assess and address the crises that originated its constitution and reform and to pursue its vision to the progressive realization of the right to food.

We need a CFS that responds to the urgent demands of today's realities, and this means particularly and primarily, to the demands of the people most affected by today's food crises, who are at the same time the most important contributors to food security and nutrition worldwide. We, the small-scale farmers, fisherfolks, pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples, agricultural and food workers, women, men and youth, we feed most of the world with our daily efforts. We need public policies to support us, as opposed to the current neoliberal paradigm that continues to destroy our livelihoods, farms, production systems and communities.

With the reformed CFS, a global place was established to hear our voices, because the global governance architecture on food security and nutrition policies can only be effective if it is able to listen to us. "Nothing about us without us" - this was the promise of the reform.

Today, we have a permanent struggle to just remind governments, participants and the CFS Secretariat, that the CFS Reform gave special voice and space to the constituencies of the CSM. We are tired to repeat this again and again. Sometimes we feel that not all of you listen and understand how important it is to have us here, who we are and what we bring to the table of hundreds of millions of households and to the CFS.

We are the world's largest mechanism of civil society organizations working on food security and nutrition. The participating organizations in our eleven constituencies have far more than 380 million organized members. Among them, there are far more than 330 million food producers are part of the CSM, being small-scale and family farmers, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, fisherfolks, agricultural and food workers.

During the past eight years, we have shown a huge commitment and have been among the most important contributors to the CFS, in terms of substance, quality and quantity of proposals, social energy, and people's participation. We have taken care of the whole CFS as a highly valuable policy space. We have not just pushed for our own interests, as some continue to do. Over the past 8 years, we have given a new dimension of legitimacy to the CFS.

The CFS has many weaknesses and limitations, but it still is a proposal for the whole United Nations' system: we believe that opening the UN to the people means opening the future to the UN.

## **(2<sup>nd</sup> Intervention)**

### **Positions on specific topics of the Evaluation and the Consultation report:**

- We can agree with the Consultation report as presented, although we see many weaknesses in it.
  - The proposal of having a **strategic MYPOW** is a good compromise which takes into account the fact that the CFS is not an organization, but a platform.
  - The **budget issue** is not solved in our view, this remains as an urgent challenge to solve next year. We would like to reaffirm that the budget is not a financial but a political issue.
  - On other issues like **Plenary, OEOWGs, Chair and Secretariat**, specific follow-up steps are agreed for next year.
  - The **composition of the Advisory Group** should reflect the **principle on participation** established in the CFS Reform Document, paragraph 7: "the composition will ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders - **particularly the most affected by food insecurity** – are heard". These most affected by food insecurity are the constituencies of the CSM, according to the CFS Reform Document.
  - Regarding the specific consideration of the evaluation on the **PSM: we agree with the CFS evaluation report that the parity of seats demand is not justified**. The legitimacy of the CSM, representing more than 380 million organized people from all civil society sectors, including farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, consumers, landless, women, youth, urban food insecure and public-interest NGOs, is not comparable with the PSM, representing primarily the private and profit-oriented interests of the corporate sector, transnational companies and international business organizations.
- a) **Regarding WFO: we agree with the evaluation report that their argument is not valid.** Farmers have been already participating in the CFS, and the WFO has usually participated through the PSM. CSM facilitates the participation of more than 330 million family farmers and food producers to the CFS through the CSM.

Any organization that wants to join the CFS as participant needs to first define to which category it belongs, and then define through which mechanism they can collaborate. WFO needs to take a decision to either participate through the CSM or the PSM to the CFS.

No special treatment is possible. If a special treatment is allowed for the WFO, each of the CSM constituencies will claim the same right: one special seat for Indigenous Peoples, one for Smallholder and Family farmers, one for pastoralists, one for agricultural and food workers, one for fisherfolks, one for consumers, one for the landless, one for women, one for youth, one for urban food insecure, one for NGOs.

### **(3<sup>rd</sup> Intervention)**

#### **Other issues of importance that should be tackled in the Follow-up to the CFS evaluation report:**

- As agreed yesterday, Gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment should be mainstreamed throughout the CFS. The discussion on the evaluation provide an appropriate space for this.
- One topic that should be particularly discussed is the challenge for a better use, application and monitoring of CFS Policy Outcomes: How can we better use at home what was agreed in Rome? This discussion has been significantly pushed by the CSM in 2017, together with some governments.
- How to make the CFS a truly responsive place to the global challenges of today and tomorrow? This question refers to global urgencies such as the famines and severe food crises as well as to global challenges with huge implications, such as the debate on megamergers in the agribusiness sector.
- Last but not least: the role of the Rome-based Agencies in strengthening the CFS:

The engagement of RBAs with the CFS should be assessed on the different levels of their involvement:

- they are part of the Joint Secretariat;
- they are part of the funding structure; they are part of the policy process, through the OEWG and the Advisory Group;
- they can link their own priorities, policies and programs with CFS processes;
- their role in the dissemination, use and application of CFS policy outcomes is absolutely key; and
- their role in contributing to the CFS monitoring exercise is essential.

On all these levels, the involvement of RBAs needs to be revisited and strengthened. The case of the roles of RBAs regarding the VGGT can show the achievements and shortcomings in this respect, and also the potentials and needs for change in the future.

