



Plan of Action of the CFS Evaluation

Background document for the meeting of 23 November 2017

Objective of the meeting: Prepare the response to Evaluation Recommendations 7, 11 and 12. The Recommendations will be discussed on 23 November (AM). The responses will then be drafted based on the discussions on 23 November, and presented in a successive meeting for discussion.

Recommendation 7: Actions by CFS members to improve CFS

Recommendation 7

“The Committee on World Food Security is an intergovernmental committee within the United Nations system, and it is the CFS Members who ultimately bear the duty of ensuring that the Committee delivers on its mandate. In this regard, there are a number of actions that CFS Members can take to improve the functioning of the CFS:

- (i) CFS Members should review the flow of information to and from their capitals and address gaps to ensure that, among other things, CFS products and recommendations reach the relevant ministries.*
- (ii) CFS Members should advocate for the use and application of CFS products and recommendations in their respective countries, according to their needs and priorities.*
- (iii) CFS Members should, where feasible, contribute in cash or in kind to the resources of the Committee.”*

[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, Recommendation 7, paragraph 290]

Point (iii) of this recommendation is linked to response A3.1 and A3.2 of the Consultation Report for the preparation of the response to the CFS Evaluation with draft decision¹.

Background

1. Extracts from the CFS Reform Document

- (i) “It is crucial that the work of the CFS is based on the reality on the ground. It will be fundamental for the CFS, through its Bureau and Advisory Group, to nurture and maintain linkages with different actors at regional, sub regional and local levels to ensure on going, two way exchange of information among these stakeholders during intersessional periods. This will ensure that at its annual sessions the Plenary is made aware of latest developments on the ground, and that, conversely, results of the deliberations of the Plenary are widely disseminated at regional, sub-regional and country as well as global levels. Existing linkages should be strengthened, such as*

¹ CFS 2017/44/12 Rev.1 Consultation Report for the Preparation of the Response to the CFS Evaluation with Draft Decision

through the FAO Regional Conferences, and other regional and subregional bodies dealing with food security and nutrition related issues.”²

- (ii) *“CFS Members States are encouraged, at their discretion, to constitute or strengthen multidisciplinary national mechanisms (e.g. food security networks, national alliances, national CFS) including all key stakeholders dedicated to advance food security at national and local levels. Through renewed mobilization and coordination of key stakeholders, such mechanisms will enable more effective identification and implementation of food security and nutrition policies and programmes.” “Existing structures should be used to ensure programmes are better integrated with each other and aligned with on-going national and local food security and nutrition priorities. This would take advantage of the field presence of stakeholders involved in the CFS.”³*

2. Relevant paragraphs in the CFS Evaluation Report

“The Committee has not been effective in its communication and outreach, as it is largely unknown at the country level. The Civil Society Mechanism and the Private Sector Mechanism promote the Committee and raise awareness of products and decisions, among their constituencies. The gap lies in the communication between delegations in Rome and ministries at the country level, and the extent to which the RBAs have (or have not) included the CFS policy outcomes into their programmes and work at the country level.” [Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS⁴, conclusion 10, paragraph ES37]

“The primary responsibility for raising awareness of the Committee and its products at the level of the national government lies with the CFS Members. The route followed by each CFS Member in communicating from Rome will vary from country to country. What emerged from the interviews at country level were perceptions that the processes were not always clear or efficient. The evaluation team’s understanding is that all communication to countries regarding matters of the Committee must be routed via the Bureau to the regional groups and then to the country level. There are no CFS focal points at the country level and the CFS Secretariat does not have a mandate to have direct access to ministries at country level. This could in part account for the low level of awareness of the Committee among government officials at country level. The tools envisaged in the communication strategy to support CFS Members to promote awareness of the Committee and its products were not developed, as no funding was available to do so. The PSM and the CSM have developed their own advocacy and awareness materials, and other members of the Advisory Group have requested short briefs to assist them in promoting the Committee and keeping their networks informed of its latest decisions.” [Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 219]

“The Rome-Based Agencies, as members of the CFS Advisory Group, are expected to promote the Committee and its products. While the heads of the Rome-Based Agencies have issued instructions to that effect, the evaluation observed that United Nations officials at the country level were not familiar with the Committee and its products, except for those officials who were involved in projects related to the VGGT” [Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 220]

² CFS Reform Document, Linkages between CFS and the regional and country levels, Para. 23.

³ CFS Reform Document, Linkages between CFS and the regional and country levels, Paras. 24-26.

⁴ Final report of the Evaluation of the Committee on World Food Security:

http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1617/Evaluation/CFS_Evaluation_Final_Report_14_April_2017.pdf

Recommendation 11: Responsibilities for communication & activities

Recommendation 11

“CFS should adopt the principle that communication about CFS is the responsibility of all CFS Members and Participants, supported by the communication function in the CFS Secretariat. Consideration should be given to having Bureau Members facilitate an outreach activity in the respective regions. This will spread the responsibility of communicating and profiling CFS at regional levels. Non-Bureau members should be requested to facilitate an outreach activity in their respective countries. The CFS Secretariat can assist by developing short information briefs, including a standardized presentation on CFS. These information briefs can be used by members of the Advisory Group in their outreach activities, should they need the assistance. The Rome-Based Agencies have a critical role to play in the dissemination and application of CFS policy products and recommendations at country level, and the Committee through the Bureau should request them to intensify their communication efforts.”

[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, Recommendation 11, paragraph 294]

Background

1. Plenary decisions

CFS endorsed a communication strategy⁵ at its 43rd Session in 2013. It identified, amongst others, what stakeholders can undertake for communications and outreach. The decisions adopted by the Committee at its 43rd Session were:

The Committee:

- a) Acknowledges that awareness raising and outreach should be an integral part of the development and roll out of all the Committee’s work;
- b) Notes that effective communication is an important component for achieving CFS objectives as awareness regarding CFS and its outputs is a precondition for their voluntary adoption and application taking into account context specificities;
- c) Endorses the elements of the strategy as presented and recommends and urges that an implementation plan including the budget be worked out by the Secretariat in close collaboration with the Bureau and the Advisory Group;
- d) Communication should be an intrinsic part of all CFS workstreams

2. Relevant paragraphs in the CFS Evaluation Report

“The Committee has not been effective in its communication and outreach, as it is largely unknown at the country level. The Civil Society Mechanism and the Private Sector Mechanism promote the Committee and raise awareness of products and decisions, among their constituencies. The gap lies in the communication between delegations in Rome and ministries at the country level, and the extent to

⁵ Communication strategy for the Committee on World Food Security, CFS 43, 2013, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/029/MI007e.pdf>

which the RBAs have (or have not) included the CFS policy outcomes into their programmes and work at the country level.” [\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 266\]](#)

“The Committee has a communication and outreach strategy adopted by the CFS 40th Plenary Session in 2013. The strategy proposes the use of the networks in the Committee to raise awareness of CFS products, promote their use and obtain feedback. CFS Members are the primary network for communication about the Committee, its products and how they can be used. The strategy also identifies the Rome-Based Agencies as a network for raising awareness of CFS products, both at global and national level, and other members of the Advisory Group. The responsibility of Advisory Group participants for communication and outreach on behalf of the Committee is set out in the Terms of Reference for the Group and mandated in the Rules of Procedure of the Committee. The HLPE Steering Committee is responsible for communication and outreach of its work, with the support of CFS Members and Participants. The HLPE has elaborated a four-page flyer to explain its roles and methods of work, and contribute to raising awareness of the HLPE and CFS outside of Rome. The promotion of HLPE and its reports is left largely to the Steering Committee, with the support of the HLPE Secretariat, and members of the Steering Committee have expressed concern about the limited resources to promote HLPE reports widely, especially at country level.” [\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 215\]](#)

“CFS Members, according to the strategy endorsed by the Plenary, are the primary network for communication about the work of the Committee. In this regard, the Chairperson of the Committee has undertaken outreach missions to the UN Headquarters in New York, to meetings of regional organizations, for example, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development and the European Economic and Social Committee, and FAO Regional Conferences. The annual reports to the Bureau from the Rome-Based Agencies, the CSM and the PSM contain several examples of their communication and outreach activities. Other members, namely, the High Level Task Force of Food and Nutrition Security, the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food also reported examples of communicating CFS decisions. The HLPE, in addition to launching and distributing its reports, responds to requests for presentations on HLPE reports and encourages the Steering Committee and project team members to promote the HLPE reports. The HLPE also convenes a special information and exchange seminar on the back of its HLPE Steering Committee meetings as a means to increase awareness of its work.” [\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 216\]](#)

“The communication and outreach efforts have yielded mixed results. There is awareness of the Committee at the global level as evidenced by the interest of the High Level Political Forum in the potential role the Committee can play in the follow-up and review of the SDGs. The referencing of the Committee and the HLPE reports in the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly indicate awareness of the Committee and the value it can add in the UN system. Awareness of the Committee can be inferred at the regional level as the current and previous Chairpersons have presented reports on the CFS Plenary Session outcomes to all FAO Regional Conferences. A theme that emerged strongly from the interviews was that while there is some level of awareness of the Committee at the global level, it could do more to raise the profile of the Committee among the UN entities in New York and Geneva.” [\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 217\]](#)

“Awareness of the Committee and its work is weak at the country level. Out of the 156 persons consulted during the country missions, only 30 (19 percent) could identify at least one major CFS product. There is a low level of awareness of CFS products among government officials. Those officials who are aware of the Committee and its products are those who have attended CFS Plenaries, and/or are involved in the implementation of projects using the VGGT. These officials were usually employed in the ministries of

agriculture. Officials in the health ministries who are working on nutrition were not aware of the Committee's role in nutrition. The situation is better in civil society where the CSM participant organizations are active in promoting and advocating for the use and application of CFS products. In the case of the PSM, its members at country level are aware of the Committee and its products."

[\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 218\]](#)

"The primary responsibility for raising awareness of the Committee and its products at the level of the national government lies with the CFS Members. The route followed by each CFS Member in communicating from Rome will vary from country to country. What emerged from the interviews at country level were perceptions that the processes were not always clear or efficient. The evaluation team's understanding is that all communication to countries regarding matters of the Committee must be routed via the Bureau to the regional groups and then to the country level. There are no CFS focal points at the country level and the CFS Secretariat does not have a mandate to have direct access to ministries at country level. This could in part account for the low level of awareness of the Committee among government officials at country level. The tools envisaged in the communication strategy to support CFS Members to promote awareness of the Committee and its products were not developed, as no funding was available to do so. The PSM and the CSM have developed their own advocacy and awareness materials, and other members of the Advisory Group have requested short briefs to assist them in promoting the Committee and keeping their networks informed of its latest decisions."

[\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 219\]](#)

"The Rome-Based Agencies, as members of the CFS Advisory Group, are expected to promote the Committee and its products. While the heads of the Rome-Based Agencies have issued instructions to that effect, the evaluation observed that United Nations officials at the country level were not familiar with the Committee and its products, except for those officials who were involved in projects related to the VGGT." [\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 220\]](#)

"Having effective communication between the Committee and the country level is important, not only for raising awareness of CFS products but also so that they can be used and applied in national policy frameworks and programmes. The communication is essential for the Committee's own awareness of what is happening at field level so that its policy products and recommendations are informed by the practical experiences of communities (rights holders), government officials, and the range of non-state actors involved in food security and nutrition. These lessons from the field are as important as the scientific evidence contained in the HLPE reports."

[\[Extract: Final report of the evaluation of the CFS, paragraph 221\]](#)

Recommendation 12: Dissemination and use of HLPE reports

Recommendation 12:

“Member countries are encouraged to disseminate the HLPE reports to the relevant ministries at country level. The RBAs should consider the HLPE reports in their programme of work.”

[Extract: Final Report of the CFS Evaluation, Recommendation 4, paragraph 295]

Background

1. Extracts from CFS Reform Document

36. *“In line with efforts to revitalize the Committee on World Food Security, members called for regular inclusion of structured food security and nutrition-related expertise to better inform its sessions. This effort should help create synergies between world class academic/scientific knowledge, field experience, knowledge from social actors and practical application in various settings. Given the multidisciplinary complexity of food security, the effort is aimed at improving communication and information-sharing among the different stakeholders in food security and nutrition. Its products will focus on better understanding current food insecurity situations and will also look forward toward emerging issues. The expert process will, through Plenary and the Bureau, aim to support CFS members and other stakeholders in designing strategies and programs for addressing food insecurity. Participants in this expert process will utilize and synthesize available research/analyses and add value to the work performed already by numerous agencies, organizations, and academic institutions, among others.”*

[Extract: CFS Reform Document, paragraphs 36]

“D. OUTPUT OF HLPE.

41. *By request of the CFS Plenary or Bureau, the Steering Committee will provide scientifically sound, clear and concise written reports/analyses for Plenary or inter-sessional purposes.*

42. *Following its introduction as an item on the agenda by the Bureau and according to the nature and purpose of a project, a report, its conclusions and recommendations could be introduced in CFS Plenary by the Chair of the HLPE Steering Committee in possible conjunction with the head of a specific project team.”* [Extract: CFS Reform Document, paragraphs 41-42]

2. Relevant paragraphs from the CFS Evaluation Report

“The High Level Panel of Experts produced reports that covered a range of food security and nutrition issues. There was broad agreement among CFS Members and stakeholders on the importance of the Panel in bringing scientific evidence to inform the decisions of the Committee, but the potential of the Panel was not fully exploited. The Panel has a number of challenges including the lack of adequate resources to promote its work.” [Extract: Final Report of the CFS Evaluation, paragraph 264]

“The HLPE Steering Committee is responsible for communication and outreach of its work, with the support of CFS Members and Participants. The HLPE has elaborated a four-page flyer to explain its roles and methods of work, and contribute to raising awareness of the HLPE and CFS outside of Rome. The promotion of HLPE and its reports is left largely to the Steering Committee, with the support of the HLPE Secretariat, and members of the Steering Committee have expressed concern about the limited resources to promote HLPE reports widely, especially at country level.”

[Extract: Final Report of the CFS Evaluation, paragraph 215]

“The HLPE, in addition to launching and distributing its reports, responds to requests for presentations on HLPE reports and encourages the Steering Committee and project team members to promote the HLPE reports. The HLPE also convenes a special information and exchange seminar on the back of its HLPE Steering Committee meetings as a means to increase awareness of its work.”

[Extract: Final report of the CFS Evaluation, paragraph 216]

“There is evidence of the influence of HLPE reports beyond the Committee, at the global level. Three HLPE reports were referenced in the Report of the Secretary-General: Agriculture Development, Food Security and Nutrition (2014). The Secretary-General’s report recommended the reports of the HLPE as useful guidance: “Sustainable development goals and targets relating to agriculture and food security could prioritize ending hunger and malnutrition, address medium term requirements for ensuring sustainability of food systems, and take into account the importance of maintaining the Earth’s natural resources. In this regard, the latest findings of reports produced by the High-level Panel of Experts on food security and nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security can provide useful guidance.” In the United Nations resolution adopting the Report of the Secretary-General, the reports of the HLPE were noted. The HLPE was also referenced in the Secretary General’s Report on Agricultural Technology for Development.

Other institutions have used the HLPE reports. For example, the Global Water Partnership organized an outreach and capacity building event in 2015 with nine African countries, following the release of the HLPE report on Water and Food Security. The HLPE’s definition of sustainable food systems was used officially by the Sustainable Food Systems Program of the UN 10-Year Framework for Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production that now forms part of SDG 12. The High Level Task Force on Food and Nutrition Security and the European Economic and Social Committee also use the HLPE definition of sustainable food systems.

The HLPE’s self-assessment indicates increasing usage of HLPE reports by the academic community, with a growing awareness of the HLPE and its reports. The HLPE has not conducted studies tracing references in academic literature, due to resource constraints. It infers increased awareness among the academic community from the added number of responses to calls for project experts. The average number of responses received for the first five reports was 49 responses per report, compared to the average 111 responses per report for the five most recent reports. The highest number of responses was 186 for the report on Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition. What role for livestock?, followed by 139 responses for the report on Food systems and Nutrition.”

[Extract: Final report of the CFS Evaluation, paragraph 171-173]

“The promotion of HLPE reports is left largely to the Steering Committee, with the support of the HLPE Secretariat, and members of the Steering Committee have expressed concern about the limited resources to promote HLPE reports widely, especially at country level. Members of the Advisory Group are required to promote all CFS products, including those of the HLPE. A scan of the annual feedback reports of Advisory Group members shows that there was little or no reference to promoting HLPE reports. The exception was the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food who made reference to the use of HLPE reports in her report to the General Assembly. Although the HLPE is an important structure of the reformed Committee, it does not participate in the Bureau-Advisory Group meetings, presumably because it wishes to protect its independence. This, however, puts the HLPE ‘out of mind’ until it is time to discuss the HLPE report. There is a need for closer engagement between the HLPE Steering Committee

and the Bureau-Advisory Group, and this can be done without compromising the independence of the HLPE.” [\[Extract: Final report of the CFS Evaluation, paragraph 175\]](#)