



Date: 5 February 2018
Time: 09:30-12:30
Location: Red Room, FAO HQ (Building A, 1st Floor)

Implementation of the CFS Evaluation: Recommendation 4

Background information

(i) Decisions endorsed by CFS at CFS 44¹

The Committee:

[...]

e) Decided exceptionally, without setting a precedent, that the Bureau may appoint its Advisory Group until March 2018 and thereafter consider if changes are needed in the composition of the Advisory Group for the remainder of the Bureau's term, taking into account the implementation of the response to Recommendation 4 and the need for any plenary decisions;

f) Provided the following guidance for the Bureau's consideration in its work in the 2018 intersessional period, in line with the discussions during Plenary:

[...]

- It is important to revisit the composition of the Advisory Group to fulfil its substantive role, remaining open to all relevant actors within existing parameters in the CFS reform document (CFS 2009/2 Rev.2).

(ii) Response to Recommendation 4 endorsed at CFS 44²

Recommendation is partially accepted

¹ [Final Report of the 44th Session of CFS](#), CFS 2017/44/Report

² [Consultation Report for the Preparation of the Response of the CFS Evaluation with draft decision](#), CFS 2017/44/12 Rev.1

22. The importance of the Advisory Group in providing substantive input to the Bureau on food security and nutrition for the range of tasks which the CFS Plenary has instructed the Bureau to perform and in outreach to constituencies was reiterated.

23. The Bureau does not currently take full advantage of the Advisory Group and the expertise and knowledge of the broad spectrum of voices of the constituencies it represents. CFS will review the composition and processes of the Advisory Group to ensure that it is able to perform its functions effectively.

24. The meetings in September 2017 highlighted the following elements for the Bureau’s consideration in its review:

Process related:

- The Advisory Group should primarily contribute substantive work and provide advice to the Bureau on food security and nutrition, in line with the Reform Document and the Rules of Procedures.
- The Bureau should clarify the support required from the Advisory Group before appointing it and, during its two-year term, requesting specific advice on substantial issues and agenda items.
- Active engagement and participation in CFS work, either through physical attendance or other means, and yearly periodic reports of Advisory Group members on their contributions towards CFS are important.

Composition related:

- The quality and relevance of advice provided is an important factor to consider, which is reflected in the criteria listed in the recommendation for assessing the requests for seats on the Advisory Group.
- The five categories of constituencies remain relevant and the principle of inclusiveness should drive composition.
- The Advisory group should reflect the broad spectrum of voices of its constituencies and the Bureau should remain open to receiving advice from more stakeholders, considering the need for reviewing the number of categories and seats.
- The appointment of ad hoc participants with a mandate limited to a particular topic, a specific activity and a limited period of time, as per the Rules of Procedure, allows flexibility and inclusiveness to better respond to CFS priorities in agreed MYPoW.

Action to be taken	Implementing body	Timeframe	Further funding required (Y or N)
A4.1. Review the composition and processes of the Advisory Group, so that it can perform its functions effectively.	CFS Bureau, seeking additional inputs as needed	By March 2018	N

(iii) Background shared at CFS evaluation meetings on 26 and 27 September to develop response to Recommendation 4

The Evaluation recommended the Bureau review the composition and processes of the Advisory Group³.

“The Bureau should review the composition and processes of the Advisory Group to ensure that it is able to perform its functions effectively. Members of the Advisory Group who have not attended three consecutive meetings in the current biennium should be requested to provide reasons for their non-attendance, and an indication of their interest in going forward. These members can be given the option of an ad hoc seat and attend only when there are specific items that are relevant or are of interest to them. Another option would be to make phone-in facilities available for those members not stationed in Rome.

The Bureau should assess requests for seats on the Advisory Group, using a due diligence approach. Requests should only be considered if accompanied by a detailed proposal setting out, but not limited to the following:

- Demonstrate how the participant will contribute to CFS objectives, and the value added by the participant.*
- Demonstrate contribution made to date in CFS processes and other structures.*
- Resolution from the member organizations to be represented, and audited or reliable figures on the membership.*
- Governance arrangements – composition of decision-making or steering structures.*
- How participation in the Advisory Group will be funded.*
- Declaration of conflict of interest.*
- Participation in other intergovernmental bodies.*

With regard to current requests for new mechanisms or additional seats, the decision rests with the Bureau. The evaluation team has been requested to provide a view on these requests and on the current allocation of seats. The views of the team are as follows:

(i) The PSM has requested parity in seats with the CSM, that is, whatever the number of seats that the CSM has, PSM should have the same number. In the opinion of the evaluation team, an equal voice does not mean that there must be parity in the number of seats. The CSM was allocated four seats to give priority to those voices that historically have been marginalized. To give parity in the allocation of seats will only serve to reinforce the asymmetry of power between civil society and the private sector within the context of a multi-stakeholder platform, and so undermine the principles of the reform. However, there are small businesses involved in food production and they should be brought on board, and accordingly, consideration should be given to an additional seat for the PSM.

(ii) The World Farmers Organization has requested the creation of a farmers’ mechanism, on the basis that farmers are not adequately represented by the CSM, asserting that they represent social movements and not farmers, and the PSM, as they represent agri-business and not farmers. The evaluation is not persuaded by the argument, as there are farmers in both mechanisms. The team noted that the WFO and its member organizations feel strongly about the issue, and they should be invited to submit a detailed proposal to the Bureau addressing the items set out in Para 11.

(iii) Consideration should be given to allocating an Advisory Group seat to WHO, as they have demonstrated their commitment and contribution to CFS.

(iv) The CSM should be requested to provide a comprehensive proposal to motivate the need for additional space. The allocation of an additional seat should be contingent on demonstrating that the

³ A new Bureau will be elected at CFS 44 and will have to appoint its Advisory Group (AG). In order to give sufficient time to allow the review of the AG composition and processes, Plenary has been asked on an exceptional basis to let the Bureau appoint its AG until March 2018.

CSM has addressed its internal organization, in particular, how the communication to, and the involvement of sub-regions can be improved.

[\[Extract: Final Report of the CFS Evaluation, Recommendation 4, paragraphs 284-286\]](#)

1. Background

Mandate

The members of the Advisory Group shall be appointed for a term of two years⁴.

Roles and Functions

The function of the CFS Advisory Group is to provide inputs to the Bureau regarding the range of tasks which the CFS Plenary has instructed it to perform. Decision making will be in the hands of the member States. It is expected that members of the Advisory Group should be able to contribute substantive work and provide advice to the CFS Bureau⁵.

At its 41st session, the Committee endorsed the proposed amendments to paragraphs 3 and 4, Rule IV, of the CFS Rules of Procedure, concerning the roles to be performed by the CFS Advisory Group.

[CFS Rules of Procedure, Rule IV; para 3]

Each member of the Advisory Group should be responsible for the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of regular linkages with organizations and entities within the category it represents with a view to:

- a) Promote the engagement of interested organizations and entities that are represented in each of the five categories of the Advisory Group in order to ensure a two way exchange of information during CFS inter-sessional periods;
- b) Facilitate the participation and provision of inputs, comments and proposals regarding ongoing CFS activities from those entities represented in each category that could provide relevant contributions to CFS discussions;
- c) Assist the Bureau in the identification of important developments in the area of food security and nutrition at global, regional and national levels and raise awareness towards the ongoing activities carried out by the different entities represented in each category;
- d) Contribute to the dissemination of CFS outcomes and deliberations.

[CFS Rules of Procedure, Rule IV, para 4]

At the end of each inter-sessional period, each member of the Advisory Group should prepare a report to inform the Bureau about the work carried out during the year to fulfil their roles. Particular attention should be devoted to the achievements obtained in involving their constituencies and facilitating a two way exchange of information and inputs among their stakeholders and the Committee.

Categories, number of seats, present and past composition

⁴ CFS Rules of Procedure, Rule IV (Advisory Group), paragraph 1

⁵ CFS Reform Document, paragraph 32. CFS 2009/rev.2

In accordance with paragraph 32 of the CFS Reform Document and Rule IV, paragraph 1, of the CFS Rules of Procedure, the composition of the Advisory Group reflects the following five constituencies of CFS Participants as listed in paragraph 11 of the Reform Document:

- a) UN agencies and bodies with a specific mandate in the field of food security and nutrition such as FAO, IFAD, WFP;
- b) Civil society and non-governmental organizations particularly organizations representing smallholder family farmers, fisherfolks, herders, landless, urban poor, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, consumers and indigenous people;
- c) International agricultural research institutions;
- d) International and regional financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, regional development banks and the World Trade Organization;
- e) Private sector associations and philanthropic foundations.

The number of members of the Advisory Group shall not exceed that of the members of the Bureau including the Chairperson, unless otherwise decided by the Committee⁶. Currently, 6 seats are assigned to UN agencies and bodies, 4 to CSOs/NGOs, 1 to International Agricultural Research Institutions, 1 to International and Regional Financial Institutions and 1 each to Private Sector Associations and Philanthropic Foundations. The number of Advisory Group members is currently 14 which exceeds the number of Bureau members including the Chair as a result of the decision taken at CFS 36 in 2010 to include the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN) in the Advisory Group⁷. Two additional ad hoc seats were assigned to the World Health Organization and the World Farmers Organization for the 2016-17 biennium.

The distribution of seats among each category of the Advisory Group, and the size of the Advisory Group subject to the limits above is a prerogative of the Bureau. In 2015, the current Bureau decided not to change the distribution of the existing 14 seats among the five categories. Furthermore, at its meeting on 29 October 2015, the Bureau recommended the Chair make use of her authority to invite, after consulting with the Bureau, other important bodies to participate in Advisory Group meetings on an ad hoc basis on particular agenda items.

Composition of CFS Advisory Group 2016-2017	
Advisory Group Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN agencies and bodies – FAO (1 seat), WFP (1 seat), IFAD (1 seat), Special Rapporteur on the right to food (1 seat), UN High-Level Task Force on the Global Food and Nutrition Security (1 seat), UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (1 seat) • International Agricultural Research Institutions – CGIAR (1 seat) • International and Regional Financial Institutions – World Bank (1 seat) • CSO/NGOs - Civil Society Mechanism (4 seats) • Private sector associations – Private Sector Mechanism (1 seat)

⁶ CFS Rules of Procedure, Rule IV (Advisory Group), paragraph 1

⁷ CFS 2010/Final Report, paragraph 12.

Composition of CFS Advisory Group 2016-2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philanthropic Foundations – Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (1 seat)
Ad hoc Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Health Organization (1 seat) • World Farmers Organization (1 seat)

At its meeting on 10 February 2017, the Bureau underlined the need to keep ensuring the inclusion of a plurality of views in the Advisory Group, with particular attention to the most vulnerable and those most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition. The Bureau also noted that the selection of engaged participants is key for the Advisory Group to be effective. The Bureau noted that when Advisory Group members cannot physically attend CFS meetings, they should be encouraged to provide written inputs concerning the different agenda items. The Bureau suggested to assess the level of participation and the contribution of current Advisory Group members as a starting point. It was suggested that in the future regional financial institutions such as Multilateral Development Banks could be appointed as members of the Advisory Group as foreseen in paragraph 11.iv) of the CFS Reform Document. The Bureau noted that the mandate of ad-hoc Participants should be time-bound. [CFS Bur/2017/02/10/Outcomes]

Selection Procedures

Under the current legal framework and practice⁸, the selection procedure of the members of the Advisory Group depends on the nature of the constituency.

Category of Advisory Group	Selection Procedure
1: UN Agencies and Bodies	The Bureau invites FAO, IFAD and WFP to appoint their representatives. All other UN agencies and bodies are selected by the Bureau and are invited to designate their respective representatives.
3: International Agricultural Research Institutions 4: International Financial and Trade Institutions	The Bureau selects the institutions.
2: CSOs / NGOs	Designates its own representatives through the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) in accordance with paragraphs 16, 17 and 32 of the CFS Reform Document who are then communicated to the CFS Bureau.
5: Private sector associations and philanthropic foundations	The Private Sector designates its representative through the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) who is then communicated to the CFS Bureau. The Bureau selects the representative of Philanthropic Foundations.

2. Other relevant paragraphs from the CFS Evaluation Report

“The CFS Evaluation found that there is a difference in opinion within the Committee about the desirable composition of the Advisory Group and the distribution of seats, and several proposals, often conflicting, were put forward to the evaluation team. These included a call for parity of seats

⁸ CFS Rules of Procedure, Rule IV.

between PSM and CSM; more seats for the CSM, establishing a farmers' mechanism distinct from CSM and PSM and giving a seat to this mechanism; a seat for the World Health Organization (WHO); and maintaining the status quo. There were also suggestions to reallocate seats from members who were frequently absent from Bureau-Advisory Group meetings. The issue of Advisory Group seats should be resolved and should not be about having more or an equal number of seats. The Advisory Group should have enough seats to effectively represent and convey the diversity of views of the constituencies they represent.” [Extract: Final Report of the CFS Evaluation⁹, paragraph 144]

“The contestation over the membership of the Advisory Group to ensure adequate representation of all stakeholders threatens to reduce the effectiveness of the Advisory Group. The Civil Society Mechanisms and the Private Sector Mechanisms play an important role in facilitating the contributions of non-state actors in the work of the Committee. Both mechanisms are seeking to have the requisite ‘space’ to ably facilitate the views of their participating organizations. The Joint Bureau-Advisory Group meetings are a platform for influencing the decisions of the Bureau and ultimately, the Plenary. It is therefore not surprising that there is contestation over the representation and the distribution of seats in the Advisory Group.” [Extract: Final Report of the CFS Evaluation, Conclusion 5, paragraph 261]

⁹ 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