

**Draft CSM Contributions to the Advisory Group and Bureau Meeting
31 January 2018**

Comment on the draft agenda:

We would like to request a short slot under agenda item “Any other business”, to briefly present our new CSM Annual Report 2016/17.

Agenda Item 1: CFS 45 Provisional agenda and timetable

The discussion on recommendation 5 of the CFS evaluation report concluded with a strong consensus within the CFS to increase the visibility and political resonance of a more vibrant CFS Plenary, including through a stronger participation of ministers and other high-ranking representatives from capitals.

We must admit that the current proposal of a CFS timetable that would reserve the most visible and high-level segment of the week to a FAO event, generates our deep concern. However, we believe that the FAO Council’s decision of last December can be easily reconciled with the CFS 45 which should be kept as scheduled. If there is the needed comprehension and political will of member states and RBAs to implement what we all agreed in the CFS, a good solution is possible. The key guidance here is seeking the best synergy and collaboration possible on the common cause.

In that sense, we strongly believe that the CFS should start on Monday 15 October with the Joint Opening and the Public Launch of the SOFI 2018, assessing the profoundly worrying situation of food insecurity and malnutrition in the world.

The subsequent discussion could start with a high-level segment of ministerial presence as discussed in the recent past, and generate synergies by using the unique added value of the multi-actor nature of the CFS. Ministers would be joined by other CFS members and participants for an in-depth debate on the causes and effective policy responses to today’s severe food crises.

The FAO high-level event could take place on Tuesday 16 October (World Food Day) and could then be organized in a similar format as in WFD commemorations in previous years, led by FAO with high-level speakers, but still embedded in the CFS Plenary week.

Considering that the 15 October is the International Day of Rural Women, we would suggest to particularly emphasize this topic on the first day of CFS 45. This would allow CFS to also follow-up on the plenary decision adopted at CFS 44 to mainstreaming women’s rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment in all its work, including the Plenary.

We reiterate our proposal made last year, which was then endorsed by the CFS Bureau, to invite the UN Secretary General to the Opening of the CFS and the FAO high-level event on WFD commemorations. This would be an important step to also strengthen the CFS and increase its visibility.

Concerning the draft agenda and timetable proposed, we would also like to make three additional suggestions:

- The different discussions on Nutrition and SDGs could be merged instead of having them in separate moments;

- A specific session on critical, emerging and urgent issues could be included, so that this plenary can provide guidance to the discussion on the future MYPOW 2020/2021;
- We would also propose that the Plenary should foresee a discussion and decision about what kind of policy convergence process should follow the HLPE Report on Multi-stakeholder partnerships on financing Food Security and Nutrition, as we continue to believe that each HLPE report needs to be used as an input for specific CFS policy convergence processes.

Agenda Item 2: CFS 45 Side Events Criteria and Guidance

We welcome the proposal and we would only propose to add among the suggestions that all organisers of CFS side events are encouraged to ensure gender-balance in the panels of their events.

Agenda Item 3: CFS Evaluation – Response to the remaining recommendations

We understand that the consultation on the responses to the CFS evaluation processes is now concluded and congratulate the two Co-Facilitators for their moderation of discussions in November and January.

Now, on the way forward in the implementation of the responses to the evaluation report, we see several challenges: how can a transparent, effective and consultative process be ensured without a further proliferation of meetings and without extensive paper piles which make true participation very difficult?

The general feeling after the first meetings this week is that the discussions need their time, and that possibly more than the scheduled meetings might be needed. However, we believe that the number of meetings in the current large format should not be increased. Holding a series of bilateral meetings does not seem to be enough or appropriate to ensure transparency, effectiveness and the broad participation that is required.

Therefore, we would suggest the facilitators to convene, in addition to the already scheduled evaluation meetings in the larger format, a “*group of friends of the facilitators*” that would be open to all CFS participants and members and would have function to support the facilitators’ work in preparing the larger meetings. They would also have the task to facilitate inputs and communication between their constituencies and the process. We believe that this could be a feasible mechanism that could ensure inclusiveness, transparency and efficiency at the same time.

Agenda Item 4: Concept note/Draft Agenda 1st event on Urbanisation and Rural Transformation

The CSM Working Group on Urbanization and Rural Transformation is focusing these comments on the process presented in the draft concept note since we expect that we will have the opportunity to express our substantive views later on, during the finalization of the concept notes and in the intersessional events themselves.

We underline once again that this CFS process should conclude with a policy-relevant outcome, given the time already spent on this work stream and the political will that most of the speakers expressed during the last CFS plenary.

For CFS45 to be able to take a decision of any kind, the Chair's Summary needs to be complemented by a Decision box which should be prepared by the TTT, discussed in the AG/Bureau meeting on 23 July and approved by the Bureau.

The TTT was appointed to support the development of the inter-sessional events. However, the TTT was not adequately involved in the preparation of this concept note. Its members were not given the opportunity to meet and were only asked to comment on a secretariat draft by e-mail with a very tight deadline. The process should be respected and the TTT should be fully involved in future steps as foreseen in the MYPoW adopted by CFS44 (CFS 2017/44/8/Rev 1, para. 25)

A Concept note for each of the two inter-sessional events should be drafted by the TTT and shared with members of the AG and Bureau for their comments. To ensure policy coherence and consistency with other CFS policy outcomes, the inter-sessional events should build on the policy recommendations on Connecting Smallholders to Markets, the Women's Empowerment Forum's Chair Summary, as well as on other CFS outcomes (VGGTs, FFA, RfF Guidelines, GSF, etc.)

The CSM and PSM should have the possibility to select speakers for the inter-sessional events. Since the events seek to build a better understanding of the challenges faced by marginalized groups, the voice of the people and communities most affected by hunger and malnutrition should be prioritized and represented in the deliberations of the two inter-sessional events. This should also be reflected in the format of the event. The day's debate should be organized in panels focusing on key aspects of the topic. Each panel should include two speakers suggested by the CSM - reflecting balanced rural and urban experiences - one suggested by the PSM and two to be proposed by the Technical Task Team (TTT). Each panel should be followed by interactive discussion. In the final session of each event the Chair should share his understanding of the key emerging points and these should be commented on by participants.

Agenda Item 5: Meeting on issues not addressed during the policy discussions on sustainable forestry

The CSM would like to reiterate the importance of a proper discussion event on the relation between commercial plantations and food security and nutrition, as agreed by the CFS 44 plenary (see CFS 44 final report paragraph 21d). The discussions started at CFS 44 on this issue should continue in 2018 and include all CFS actors, including the relevant Rome based agencies. With a view towards this, the CSM has the following proposals:

Process: A TTT, open to all Advisory Group members, should be mandated to take forward the planning for this event including timeline, scope, content and budget. Taking into account the need for good preparation, and the current workload and budgetary constraints, we could foresee the event to take place in spring 2019, not in 2018.

Scope and content: Following on from the policy recommendations, the CFS should focus on its added value to host such an event on plantations and FSN. The event should generate genuine debate while focusing on the roles of small-scale food producers. As such it is imperative that we are able to bring grassroots experience and analysis from our constituencies around the world. The CFS event has a unique opportunity to add significantly to the global debate around plantations by creating an inclusive debate that brings out agreements and contradictions between all the different actors. Therefore, we need to jointly aim for an event that has adequate time, budget and participation to make it meaningful.

Regarding content, it would be important to bring in all the views relevant to the topic that are actively engaged in the CFS, including the RBAs. The HLPE report is already a good starting point and indicates some areas of consideration such as genetic diversity, biodiversity (including pollination), food safety nets, nutritional value, income and employment. The policy recommendations themselves included important additions such as small-scale food producers' spiritual, cultural, social, political and economic relationship with forests. Moreover, the outcomes of such an event could feed into the CFS Contributions to the HLPF processes in 2019, as Forestry is particularly relevant to SDGs 8 and 13.

Agenda Item 6a: CFS Advisory Group reporting exercise – January –December 2017
Agenda Item 6b: Discussion on implementing response to CFS evaluation recommendation 4

On agenda item 6a:

With regards to our own activities as CSM, the constituencies and participating organizations, we would like to underline that the new CSM Annual Report for 2016/17 provides a more comprehensive overview about our activities in the reporting period.

With relation to the linkages to be strengthened, we suggest to add the proposals to strengthen the relations between the CFS and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, CEDAW and UN Women, but also to regional platforms, organizations and conferences.

With regards to the report of WFO, we would like to make a factual correction: the Pan-African Farmers Organization (PAFO) is not a member of WFO. This is not a minor mistake, as PAFO is a very broad continental platform. Two of the regional member networks of PAFO, the Network of peasant's and farmers' organizations in Western Africa (ROPPA) and Central Africa (PROPAC) continue to be very active in the CFS through the CSM smallholder farmers constituency.

From the reports of most AG members, it becomes quite clear how much is already being done to participate in the CFS, and how much is done to foster the use and application of CFS policy outcomes. However, this is not enough, as others point out, how little knowledge exist about the CFS and its policy outcomes on the country but also the UN level.

Once again, we would like to stress the pivotal role of RBAs in supporting the CFS constituencies in disseminating, using and applying CFS outcomes through their work and country programs.

More in general, we strongly believe that all members and participants of the CFS should be invited to present a concrete plan on how they will foster dissemination, use and application of CFS policy outcomes within their areas of work.

On agenda item 6b:

Our understanding of the agreed CFS evaluation process is that the upcoming meeting on the CFS evaluation on 5 February will discuss Recommendation 4 (role and composition of the CFS Advisory Group).

A second and concluding moment of this discussion will be during the CFS evaluation meetings on 19/20 March. After these deliberations, the CFS Bureau can take an informed decision on the matter.

We therefore do not see the need to discuss this topic today further, it would unnecessarily duplicate the discussions scheduled for next Monday.

We appreciate all efforts to ensure a good process on this matter. We anticipate that a Bureau meeting will be scheduled for the end of March to take the decision on the composition of the CFS Advisory Group until October 2019. We are looking forward to learning about the date of that meeting.

Agenda Item 7: Workstreams update and Budget update

Regarding Nutrition: we would have liked the regional symposia on nutrition and food systems, conducted by FAO and WHO, to be organized with an appropriate participation from civil society. However, this was not the case. We reiterate that these symposia were not held as part of the CFS consultation process and did not meet the standards of participation and inclusiveness that are essential to the CFS. The upcoming discussion on the Terms of Reference for the CFS process on food systems and nutrition should carefully take these important parameters of participation and inclusiveness into account.

On the CFS Budget: as expressed in previous occasions, we fear that the gaps in the CFS budget are not only a financial issue, but indicative for a lack of collective political commitment to the CFS. The ways towards a sustainable funding structure are far from being developed.

We are convinced that all those of us who want the CFS to be strong, cannot support a donor driven agenda or a donor driven implementation of the CFS activities. If this would happen, it would be a clear indicator of a weakened CFS.

We are particularly worried about the budget situation of the HLPE. Will the HLPE be able to implement what the CFS requested to do? We would like to know that.

On the CSM situation, you can see our financial report and budget situation in more detail in the Annual Report that is in front of you.

We also need to make you aware that the currently approved funding of the CSM can ensure the functioning of the CSM only until end of April this year. We are confident that further funding is approved by then. We are however deeply concerned about the remaining gap and huge financial uncertainty the CSM continues to face for 2018 and 2019.

Any government that is willing to support civil society participation to the CFS, is warmly invited to consider supporting the CSM in the near future. Undoubtedly, it is the collective responsibility of the reformed CFS, its members, participants and secretariat, to support and ensure the participation of civil society to its deliberations.

Agenda Item 8: Any other business

We would like to take this opportunity to distribute to you the CSM Annual Report 2016/17 that has just being published. We kindly invite you all to read it! Please do not hesitate to contact the CSM Secretariat if you seek further clarification or information.