

**CSM comments for the CSF Advisory Group and Bureau meeting  
3 May 2018**

**Agenda Item 1 – CFS 45 (Draft provisional agenda and Draft timetable)**

Thanks for the draft agenda and timetable for CFS 45. We would like to make some remarks and suggestions on the current drafts, as a contribution towards a vibrant and substantial plenary that we are all looking forward to, even if this will be the first Plenary since the CFS reform without the conclusion of a significant policy convergence process.

Our remarks, questions and suggestions are:

- Regarding the Opening of the CFS Plenary, we would like to be updated regarding the question if the UN Secretary General has been invited, or if he already confirmed his participation to CFS 45.
- We welcome that the CFS Plenary can be opened now on 15 October, and that the World Food Day (WFD) will be celebrated only on Tuesday 16 October and no other session days will be taken away from the Plenary week. As the WFD is now fully embedded into the CFS week, it is also well positioned to create synergies with the CFS Plenary agenda. We would like to know if there are already initial ideas for the agenda of the WFD celebration, and would suggest to connect the main topics of the WFD with main themes of the CFS Plenary. In our opinion, it would be good to have a shared preparation process of CFS and FAO to ensure this connection and synergy among agendas.
- We would like to recall that the Opening Day of the CFS Plenary will coincide with the celebrations of the International Day of Rural Women. CFS should dedicate special attention to this occasion by inviting a rural women keynote speaker for the opening of the plenary week.
- Concerning the first day we would suggest that all discussion and statements related to SOFI take place and conclude on that Monday. We would hope that the RBAs decide this year to launch the SOFI during the CFS Plenary in order to not lose again this important media relevance for the CFS as it happened last year.
- In the context of the SOFI discussions, a special slot should be provided for the annual thematic report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food who usually delivers this report to the UN General Assembly.
- The SOFA report, however, is connected rather to COAG than to the CFS. It could be presented in the context of a major side event to the CFS, as it was done last year, but should not be seen as an official part of the CFS Plenary.
- The CFS evaluation should maybe be discussed already on Wednesday, as we do not know at this stage if full consensus can be reached on the whole document and annex before the Plenary. In any case, the Plenary has the last discussion and decision on the implementation of the response to the CFS Plenary, and it should not come under time pressure.
- We would like to know what is the status of the urbanisation and rural transformation workstream and what is the process from here to October. This workstream is of high importance for many organizations within the CSM, and they continue to expect a policy relevant outcome of it. Is it confirmed that no intersessional event will be held on this topic before the summer break? Will one or both of the two cancelled events be held in

September? If a discussion is foreseen in plenary as scheduled in the current draft agenda, what will be the preparation process for it? What is the role of the Technical Task Team for this workstream in the coming months?

- We understand that space in the Plenary agenda needs to be provided for the outcome of the OEWG on monitoring meeting in June, in particular for a possible discussion and decision on next steps regarding the stocktaking events on specific CFS policy recommendations.
- It is important to dedicate one session to critical, emerging and urgent issues that can inform the upcoming HLPE in 2020. A proposal could be possibly prepared in the coming weeks by the CFS and HLPE secretariats and discussed at the next AG/Bureau meeting in July.
- We would also like to have a clarification regarding the upcoming HLPE report on Multistakeholder Platforms for financing FSN in the context of the SDG: Until when will funds be available for the translation of the report? Until when will the translation be available? We believe it is not sufficient to dedicate only one hour of the plenary discussion on this report and the follow-up to it.
- It is also not appropriate to dedicate only one hour to the discussion on the upcoming major policy process towards guidelines on food systems and nutrition, and this is also true for the workstream on urbanization and rural transformation.
- The general exchange events so far proposed for Friday morning are not priority in our view and could be replaced by other topics that do have priority.
- We would like to remind everybody that CSM is responsible, being the self-organized civil society space to the CFS, to facilitate the appointment of civil society speakers to discussions during the CFS Plenary.

## Agenda Item 2 – CFS Evaluation

- a) Plan of Action: in the understanding that the presented text has not been changed since the January discussions, we do not have further remarks on it.
- b) Implementation Report: After the open meeting that took place yesterday there is a need to have a clear guidance on the further process. We would like to make some remarks and suggestions in this sense, for consideration of the co-facilitators and the Bureau:
  - Informal meetings, if necessary, should be open to all interested members and participants.
  - Would be good to know as soon as possible if the announced meeting on 14 June afternoon is confirmed, and which are the topics on the agenda.
  - We understand from yesterday's evaluation meeting, that the following issues seem to be the ones that require more discussion: a) strategic objectives, b) roles, c) monitoring, and d) prioritization and funding.
  - If confirmed, the informal meeting on 14 May should address the pending questions on Strategic Objectives and Roles. The other questions can be solved when finalizing the annex on 14 June.
  - Due to our current financial constraints, the CSM is not in a position to confirm its participation to any informal meeting in late May or beginning of June. If the situation does not change within the next few weeks, the CSM will also have difficulties to ensure meaningful civil society participation to the CFS evaluation meeting in June.

- c) Clarification on additional info needed on expenditures and budget allocations, and regarding transparency of the related decisions:
- More detailed information should be provided on budget allocations with regards to CFS secretariat staff. Would be good to know how many people work in the CFS Secretariat staff, and who of them works under which kind of assignment.
  - More detailed and disaggregated information on budget allocation is needed with regards to "Workstream budget allocation". We suggest introducing sub-budget-lines for each type of activity that specifies how much expenditure goes into additional staff time, interpretation, translation of documents, and e-consultation.
  - Would be important to actually receive not only the planned budget, but also the actual expenditures in a disaggregated way, so that it becomes transparent if there are any unspent resources or savings and if they be used or reallocated to other activities that face a funding gap.
  - Would also be good to know, how decisions are taken within the Secretariat regarding budget allocation and expenditures: how does the Secretariat deal with needed changes when one workstream is underfunded, while others count with proper funding? To whom is the CFS Secretariat accountable with regards to budget allocation, expenditures and changes in these items?

### **Agenda Item 3 – Workstreams and budget updates**

#### *Workstream update*

- Question on the Urbanization and Rural Transformation Workstream, if not answered before (see above);
- We would like to follow-up on the Forestry decision taken by the Bureau in January. We would suggest that the AG/Bureau meeting in September discusses the issue of this one-off event that has now been postponed to 2019.

#### *Budget*

- Question on HLPE report on Multistakeholder Partnerships, if not answered before (see above)
- Information on our own CSM Budget situation: due to unexpected additional delays in the approval process of two main contributors to the CSM budget, the financial situation of the mechanism is currently very tight. We informed the AG/Bureau meeting in January already about this possible risk. In spite of quick support provided by participating NGOs and a contingency plan that was applied by the CSM for January to April 2018, the CSM faces now the situation that it possibly will not be able to function properly from late May to the month of June. We have done everything to accelerate the processes of approval but the funding procedures work in a slower rhythm than expected and are not in our hands. It is a transitory problem, but it might affect civil society participation to the CFS activities in June in a significant way.

