



## Background information:

As mandated by the CFS Plenary, the Bureau has previously deliberated over the role, composition, categories, and size of the Advisory Group (AG) over the past years with a view to enhancing its overall effectiveness and inclusiveness.

For example, at its 41st session, the Committee endorsed proposed amendments to paragraphs 3 and 4, Rule IV, of the CFS Rules of Procedure (RoP) concerning 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.*

With respect to the number of participants in the Advisory Group, the Reform Document states that the “[number of] AG [members] normally will not exceed that of the CFS Bureau”. However, 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 (UNSCN) in the Advisory Group.

At its 44<sup>th</sup> session, in the context of the response to the independent evaluation of the CFS, the Committee provided the following guidance for the Bureau: ***“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).”***

The current composition of the AG is:

- The RBAs each has one seat;
- The Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) has four seats;
- The Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) has one seat;
- The CGIAR has one seat in representation of the International Agricultural Research system;
- The World Bank Group has one seat in representation of International and regional Financial Institutions (IFIs);
- The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food has one seat;
- The UN system Standing Committee on Nutrition has one seat;
- The World Health Organization has one seat; and,
- The Philanthropic Foundations have one seat, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Eleanor Crook Foundation.

The following proposals, discussed at length by the Bureau in its meetings of 8 November 2018 and 6 March 2019, were made by the CFS Chair on 29 May 2018<sup>1</sup>:

- That FAO, IFAD, and WFP become **ex-officio** and **extra-quota** members of the AG, thus freeing up 3 additional seats. The other three UN entities that have occupied Advisory Group seats (Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, and World Health Organization) will each retain their respective seat;
- That new “clusters” be created under existing categories, in line with the Evaluation Implementation Report recommendation to AG members to strengthen the respective coordination roles (Annex H, Point 3a) of these group-based seat holders (i.e., CSM, PSM, Foundations);
- That *ad hoc members* of the Advisory Group would continue to be appointed under the Chair’s authority, as appropriate, per para. 5, Rule IV of the CFS Rules of Procedure.
- That an informal “Friends of the Chair” group would be created, allowing stakeholders that are not within existing AG categories (e.g. scientific communities, action-oriented and faith-based organizations, universities and other academic entities, connectors and influencers, innovators, think tanks, press agencies and media outlets, international legal organizations, parliamentarians, social protection mechanisms, among others) to advise the Bureau through the Chair on a wide range of subjects, including for mobilizing human and financial resources, delivering political capital, advocacy, visibility, etc. in a transparent way (e.g. by posting exchanges on the CFS website) at no cost to CFS.

As requested by the Bureau, the CFS Chair consulted with the FAO Legal Office which wrote that the proposal (i.e., *elevating the status of the RBAs to ‘ex-officio’ and ‘extra-quota’ members of the Advisory Group thus freeing three seats for new AG members*) could be implemented on a provisional basis, subject to agreement by the RBAs and absence of objection by Bureau members. Requisite amendments to the Rules of Procedure (RoP) could be prepared for adoption at the next CFS plenary session in October 2019. CFS may, in the absence of consensus and by a two-thirds majority of votes

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<sup>1</sup> The CFS Chair’s proposals of 29 May 2018 intended: (i) to strengthen inclusiveness as “the first guiding principle of the reform” per para. 3 of the 2009 CFS Reform Document, and (ii) to respond to the evolving needs of CFS in the decade since the reform, especially in light of the reversing trends in hunger and malnutrition re SDG2.

cast, amend its RoP provided such amendments are consistent with the FAO Constitution and the CFS Reform Document (Rule XIII).

In April 2019, the RBAs each wrote to the CFS Chair expressing their willingness to support the proposal for the RBAs to become 'ex-officio' and 'extra-quota' members of the CFS Advisory Group.

Consultations following the Chair's 29 May 2018 proposals, Bureau debates, and responses of the RBAs show that a number of stakeholders, responding to the apparent willingness of CFS to consider expanding its inclusiveness, have expressed interest to enter the AG. Those participants include:

- A cluster of intergovernmental social protection secretariats promoting concerted actions on SDG2 at national, regional and global levels;
- A cluster of Parliamentary fronts against hunger;
- A cluster of farmers organizations whose interests do not align with the existing structures of either CSM or PSM;
- The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII); and
- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Guiding question for Bureau decision:

Do we agree with implementing - on a provisional basis - changes in the structure and membership of the CFS Advisory Group by elevating the status of the RBAs to 'ex-officio' and 'extra-quota' members, thereby freeing three seats to allow for additional AG members?

If the answer to the above question is positive, a draft decision should be submitted to CFS 46, that would amend paragraphs 1, Rule IV, of the CFS Rules of Procedure (RoP), concerning the composition of the CFS Advisory Group.

#### Draft decision

*The Committee decides to amend paragraphs 1, Rule IV, of the CFS Rules of Procedure (RoP), as follows:*

*The Bureau shall establish an Advisory Group from among representatives of ~~the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other organizations allowed to participate in the proceedings of the Committee under paragraph 11 of the CFS Reform Document and paragraph 3 of Rule XXXIII of the General Rules of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.~~ **Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development take part in the Advisory Group in an ex-officio and extra-quota capacity.** The members of the Advisory group shall be appointed for a term of two years. 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 Committee.*