Introduction:

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a health and human crisis threatening the food security and nutrition of millions of people around the world. Hundreds of millions of people were already suffering from hunger and malnutrition before the virus hit and, unless immediate action is taken, we could see a global food emergency. In the longer term, the combined effects of COVID-19 itself, as well as corresponding mitigation measures and the emerging global recession could, without large-scale coordinated action, disrupt the functioning of food systems. Such disruption can result in consequences for health and nutrition of a severity and scale unseen for more than half a century.”

UN SG’s policy brief the impact of COVID-19 on FSN (June 2020)

Le Comité de la sécurité alimentaire mondiale (CSA), en sa qualité de principale plate-forme intergouvernementale et internationale ouverte traitant des questions de sécurité alimentaire et de nutrition, est bien placé pour aborder cette crise sans précédent et promouvoir le droit à une alimentation adéquate. Le CSA a le mandat d’entamer des dialogues inclusifs et de faciliter un apprentissage mutuel et une analyse collective, dans le but de susciter chez les différentes parties prenantes les actions nécessaires pour répondre à la pandémie, éradiquer la faim et améliorer la nutrition et le bien-être des parties prenantes. This mandate includes promoting policy coherence and convergence with input and inclusion of all CFS stakeholders.


Continuing a discussion from its 2 and 5 June meetings, the CFS Bureau along with its (ad hoc) Advisory Group agreed to set up an Informal Working Group to develop an Options Paper on the roles that CFS could play with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with its vision and mandate. The present Options Paper reflects discussions at the meeting of the Informal Working Group held on 15 June, as well as previous discussions with CFS stakeholders on this topic. Several roles are identified below, based on the three strategic objectives agreed in the CFS 2020-23 Multi-Year Program of Work (MYPoW), for further discussion and deliberation at the 23 and 24 June meetings of the CFS Bureau.
(i) Roles in line with the first strategic objective (Platform) – Leverage the convening power of CFS as the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform to discuss the global FSN situation and seek to coordinate collective action at all levels.

1. Use the convening power of CFS to organize one/two open meetings during the remainder of 2020 to discuss situations of food insecurity and malnutrition caused by COVID-19, the impacts of policy measures on food security and nutrition, in particular on poor and vulnerable groups, and the responses implemented by various actors to ensure the right to adequate food. From these experiences, identify good practices and lessons, findings and recommendations, of global, regional and national policy responses to the pandemic to be summarized in documents for public consumption.

These inclusive open meetings will give an opportunity to hear from Members, CFS Advisory Group members, and other stakeholders - such as OIE, ILO, UN Women, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, or the relevant UN Special Rapporteurs. These could seek to involve speakers from various constituencies, including the most affected such as workers, women, indigenous peoples, youth, urban food insecure, small-scale food producers and family farmers, from all regions. They may also benefit from input by, and participation from, the CFS High Level Panel of Experts on this topic.

For example, an open meeting could be co-organized with the support of CSM and PSM specifically to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and food producers, and seek to identify local/regional/global measures/interventions taken by communities, civil society and private sector organizations to respond to the crisis, start the recovery process, and enhance the resilience and sustainability of food systems against future pandemics. Such a meeting could include for instance focus on specific sectors, such as the meat processing industry, whose workers around the world have been among the hardest hit by COVID-19.

Another example could be organizing an open meeting to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for the thematic workstreams included in the CFS MYPoW 2020-2023, namely Gender, Youth, Data and Inequalities. Such an event could draw from the knowledge/experience of CFS Advisory Group members (e.g.; CGIAR COVID-19 Hub; RBAs; etc.) and other stakeholders, and it could represent a first effort to mainstream the issue of addressing pandemic preparation throughout the CFS MYPoW 2020-2023.

2. En plus de ces réunions ouvertes, organiser une session spéciale de haut niveau consacrée à la COVID-19 en octobre 2020 (lors de la 47e session du CSA si elle est organisée à ce moment-là ou à l’occasion d’une autre manifestation spéciale organisée lors de la semaine de l’alimentation), visant une participation ministérielle et la pleine inclusion de l’ensemble des groupes/parties prenantes du CSA. Cette session de haut niveau pourrait être liée à la discussion sur l’édition 2020 du SOFI et à la Manifestation thématique mondiale sur le CSA-CDA, si elle est organisée lors de la même semaine, et apporter l’engagement politique de haut niveau nécessaire pour aborder la crise de la sécurité alimentaire.

(ii) Roles in line with the second strategic objective (Policy) – Develop voluntary policy guidance for policy convergence and coherence to achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.
3. Include in the **two on-going policy convergence processes** (Food Systems and Nutrition; Agroecological and other innovative approaches) text to support the implementation of food security and nutrition policies that integrate important lessons learned from the pandemic.

4. Between July and October, the HLPE will **update its Interim Issue Paper on COVID-19** to reflect the latest information on the impacts of the pandemic on food security and nutrition.

5. The HLPE will include analysis, experience, and conclusions about the impacts of the pandemic on food security and nutrition into its **2030 Synthesis Report** scheduled for public release on 25 June.


7. **Sur la base des éléments factuels fournis par le HLPE, des événements de mise en commun de l’expérience et de la session spéciale de haut niveau consacrée à la COVID-19 mentionnée au paragraphe (i)2., le CSA pourra décider des futures mesures éventuelles pouvant être prises.** These might include setting up a **policy convergence process** to develop policy guidance to support Members and other stakeholders in responding to the food security and nutrition crisis, guide the recovery process, and enhance the resilience and sustainability of food systems against future crises and pandemics.

8. **Identifier les produits et recommandations du CSA présentant un intérêt immédiat pour la réponse à la COVID-19 (ex. : protection sociale, mise en relation des petits exploitants avec les marchés, eau, foncier, crises prolongées, investissement dans la petite agriculture, volatilité des prix des denrées alimentaires, foresterie, et élevage et agriculture durable), et les mettre en évidence, s’il y a lieu.** Le CSA pourrait également envisager de tenir un événement de bilan lors de la 48e session du CSA, alimenté par les contributions des parties prenantes du CSA, afin de documenter les expériences et les bonnes pratiques dans le domaine de la mise en œuvre de ces résultats politiques du CSA dans le contexte de la réponse à la crise de la sécurité alimentaire induite par la COVID-19. Such an event could be organized similar to a CFS monitoring exercises (e.g.; call for inputs; preparation of a report with consolidated results; presentation of results by selected panelists; Chair’s Summary).