

CFS47 CONTINGENCY PLANNING

OPTIONS PAPER

Introduction:

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in compliance with the decrees issued by the Government of Italy and relevant guidelines of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has reduced, postponed or reinvented virtually all of its meetings and events scheduled for the past three months since the outbreak of the disease.

On 19 March 2020, the Committee on World Food Security held the first virtual meeting of the CFS Bureau and ad hoc Advisory Group and has since convened several other virtual meetings in April, May, and June with a high degree of stakeholder participation. At its meeting of 17 April, the Bureau opted to forego (proposed fully virtual) negotiations scheduled for mid- and late-May, respectively, on its two ongoing policy convergence processes, and to revisit the issue at a later date.

Building on this experience, the CFS Secretariat has been exploring contingency plans for the weeks and months ahead, including the organization of CFS 47, presently scheduled for 12-16 October 2020. Since the Bureau's last meeting, FAO circulated a paper for its early July Council meeting in which it proposes that CFS 47 be held from 8 to 12 February, with space on the calendar maintained for virtual CFS meetings during World Food Week. Attached to this document is a notional Timetable for such virtual meetings to be organized from 13 to 15 October, including virtual side events, should the Bureau so decide on this approach. It is important to note that the RBA calendar is already extremely full, due to postponement of numerous meetings and events anticipated to have taken place earlier in 2020. Likewise, due to delays in finalizing the two ongoing CFS policy convergence processes, it will be nearly impossible to complete negotiations on both products in time for mid-October CFS events, and challenging to finalize before an early-February extraordinary plenary.

Three scenarios are hereby presented to consider regarding timing and content of CFS 47, for discussion and decision at the Bureau meeting of 5 June.

Any discussion on these scenarios should take into consideration the evolution of the pandemic, the two ongoing policy convergence processes and their negotiation (modalities and timing), as well as the fact that FAO will determine the use of its facilities for such events as CFS plenary session.

Scenario 1

CFS 47 Plenary session is held **in-person**, from 12 to 16 October 2020, as originally planned, possibly with limited in-person participation, pending FAO decisions on use of its facilities and public health and safety conditions. Specific decisions by FAO on this option will be communicated to CFS Bureau Members and ad hoc Advisory Group members by the CFS Secretariat, after consultations with the

Office of the Director-General of FAO. The approved Agenda and Timetable will guide planning for this option, although additional modifications may be made to accommodate more discussion around the implications to global food security of the COVID-19 pandemic. Side events would be organized, though likely fewer, ideally with webcasting available for all plenary sessions and side events, to accommodate “virtual” participants.

Scenario 2

CFS 47 Plenary session is held **virtually** from 12 to 16 October 2020, pending approval of the Office of the Director-General of FAO. The Agenda and Timetable approved by the CFS Bureau will remain in place with possible small adjustments, as in Scenario One. Pending decisions by FAO on use of its meeting rooms and facilities, it may be possible for the CFS Chair, limited Secretariat staffing, and a small number of members/guests to be present in the FAO plenary hall, with the majority of participants linked in using virtual webcasting technologies. This scenario is conceivable if the two policy convergence workstreams are not yet ready for adoption by Plenary.

Scenario 3

CFS 47 is postponed to the first quarter of 2021, to be agreed by CFS Bureau and the FAO DG’s office. Rather than lose the chance to highlight CFS’s work on food systems and innovations, among other topics, CFS can organize public virtual meetings during World Food Week, 12 to 16 October 2020, with one 3-hour plenary session per day (Tuesday to Thursday), and a limited number of side events held immediately before or after the main sessions. Topics for these main sessions could be selected by the CFS Bureau from a list to include: the 2020 SOFI report, the HLPE’s 2030 Synthesis report, COVID-19’s impacts on SDG-2, the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises, food system transformation, and/or agroecological and other innovative approaches for food security and nutrition. The timetable and agenda of such virtual meetings would be organized to complement and not conflict with FAO’s planning for World Food Day on 16 October, and would be timed to avoid or minimize overlap with the virtual meetings being planned by the organizers of the World Food Prize that same week in Des Moines, Iowa. A draft timetable is attached to this document, for the Bureau’s consideration and decision making.

ANNEX 1

CFS Events during “World Food Week” October 2020

(DRAFT) Timetable *

	Tuesday 13 October	Wednesday 14 October	Thursday 15 October
10.00 – 11.30**	(2) Side Events ***	(2) Side Events	(2) Side Events
12.00 – 15.00	CFS main plenary session ****: Exploring implications and recommendations of the SOFI 2020 Report and the CFS HLPE Report on Building a Global Narrative towards 2030	CFS main plenary session: COVID-19 and its impacts on global food security and nutrition – what can stakeholders do to respond, rebuild, and strengthen resilience ahead of future zoonotic crises.	CFS main plenary session: The CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition, the CFS Policy Recommendations on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches, and their relevance to the objectives of the UN Food Systems Summit
13.30 – 17.00	(2) Side Events	(2) Side Events	(2) Side Events

* This proposal has been coordinated with FAO’s Office of Corporate Communications. FAO will organize WFD virtual events 16 October.

** The schedule above was coordinated with the Executive Director of the World Food Prize, and timed to avoid overlap with their events.

*** To be determined through an open selection process, managed by the CFS Secretariat with 12 proposals selected by the CFS Chair.

**** CFS Bureau Members and Advisory Group members will be invited to propose dynamic speakers for the three main plenary sessions above, while the Secretariat will seek to ensure appropriate gender and geographic balance among all three sessions and side events.