

## Comments on Negotiations' Modalities, Format and Working Procedures

On the **overall process**, it seems that the document acknowledges as if the so called "phased approach" that starts with virtual negotiations, was already agreed. However, in the minutes of the last Bureau meeting on 24/06/20 it is only acknowledged that "a number of advisory group members" supported the idea of a "phased approach". Indeed, in the Bureau Decision from the same meeting it clearly states "the CFS Bureau decided that formal negotiations could only commence during the week of 20-24 July if an agreed hybrid option was available". Therefore, we wonder why fully virtual negotiations are proposed for September without a Bureau decision on this regard.

We would like to point out that replacing CFS official meetings in person to prepare for negotiations - or to hold them - with online meetings carries a great risk of exclusion per se for a large part of our constituencies. While in theory virtual meetings open up a much wider possibility of participation, in reality, in many communities and regions of the world people do not have reliable access or even access itself to the internet forcing them to travel outside their homes for access, something not possible in the current situation of confinement. Also, in many places the internet connection is not stable so it may allow for sending or receiving emails but not for following up on a meeting for a long time. This not only limits participation in the meeting itself, but also limits prior preparation as usually done in the CSM. We believe that if connection problems will exclude the participation of some CFS participants, including the CSM but not only, the virtual format is not a viable option. Furthermore, we would like to stress that these exceptional modalities, given the circumstances, should not replace in-person meetings/negotiations when FAO/IFAD/WFP headquarters will be able to host them.

However, we understand the limitations due to the current pandemic and although we still call for the need of having physical negotiations, we will engage in the first round of virtual negotiations for the CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition on the premises that virtual modalities should contemplate all the complexities and elements of physical meetings. **The high CFS Standards of transparency, inclusiveness and space of dialogue and debate which have been practiced in previous negotiations should be fully translated and applied also in this virtual period.** To ensure that, we present a number of specific comments on the proposed modalities:

### **Specific comments:**

- Paragraph a) under the section on modalities for negotiations: We believe it is important, within these rules, to guarantee a minimum number of interventions for the different mechanisms (CSM and PSM) depending on the time available, thus ensuring the inclusion of their voices and messages in the meeting. **The number of interventions from the CSM should be the same as in previous CFS in-person negotiations.**
- Under section of registration procedures: clarity must be given on how many representatives from each constituency will be granted participation and observation for the virtual format. This should take into account the participatory and inclusive modality of the CFS. **The number of CSM participants and interventions for virtual negotiations should be the same as in physical negotiations.**
- Paragraph g) under the section on modalities for negotiations: modalities on the composition of the Friends of the Chair group should be shared and these should reflect the need that **Friends of the Chair are open to all members and participants of the CFS**, as it was the case in all previous CFS in-person negotiations, and take into consideration the language diversity that this might involve
- Paragraph h) under the section on modalities for negotiations: as stated by the paper negotiations will take place either virtually or in a hybrid way, both allowing the **connection and active participation of colleagues from different regions of the world.** The time in Rome needs to be adjusted to these needs. It cannot be expected that the world adjusts to the time

in Rome, rather the timing in Rome needs to adjust to the world. In this sense, a **good compromise, feasible for several time zones is three hours in the Roman afternoon (from 1-4pm, or 2-5pm CET)**, to make them better accessible to the Americas and Asia. This would also allow to have additional time for internal consultations within Regional Groups, Constituencies and/or Friends of the Chair group, making the format more inclusive and efficient at the same time. Furthermore, **and in addition to interpretation into the 6 UN languages, all documents for the negotiation should be shared in all 6 UN languages at least 1 month in advance.**

- Under the section of Virtual negotiations, paragraph f: text should always be displayed with the continuous inclusion of the changes proposed by participants.
- The current **section on hybrid modalities** has resulted in an even less inclusive format than the virtual one. In this sense:
  - o paragraph d): **1 CSM delegate is not acceptable, we request a minimum of 4-6 CSM participants in the room** to ensure that the inclusivity from previous experiences (with up to 30 CSM delegates in the room) is adequately translated under the current circumstances.
  - o paragraph e): **webcast does not contemplate the hybrid modality initially suggested. We call for participants to be able to actively take part in the negotiations through the virtual modality.** Again, we need to ensure the best conditions for participants and one single delegate as the only participant for the negotiations will not permit this.

For the **CFS Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition**:

It should be clear that the **basis for negotiations will be the Draft for Negotiations** and not the latest Matrix shared by the Chair.

Regarding the Matrix, we appreciate the clarification on which participant proposed each of the suggestions included to have a sense of which will be the landscape of negotiations. However, we request the translation of the matrix into all 6 UN languages prior to the negotiations phase.