

Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM)
Plenary Statement @CFS47 | 9 February 2021
MYPoW (2020 – 2023) Rolling Section
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My name is Jessie MacInnis. I am a small-scale agroecological farmer, youth vice president of the National Farmers' Union Canada, a founding member of LVC, and a member of the Youth Working Group for the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism.

Today I am speaking to you on behalf of young women, men, and non-binary youths, peasants and smallholders, urban food insecure youth, farmworkers, and all our CSM sisters and brothers - to express our frustration, disappointment and anger.

Yesterday, country after country took the floor to express how pressing the acute crisis of Covid-19 is. You claimed to speak for those around the world who have been devastated by this health crisis - this food crisis - these multiple crises of our fragile neoliberal economic, governance and development models. You came to the CFS plenary this week - a body established and then reformed for the precise purpose of addressing food crises - and you told the international community that this was the most important issue facing us today - that we needed to address the devastation.

And yet there has been no policy response. In the midst of a crisis in which the planet is speaking to us more and more clearly, a large number of negotiating governments have chosen to ignore this urgent call. The CSM and HLPE have been raising the alarm since March - demanding that the CFS take action - asking the international community to address this food crisis together. And nothing has happened as of yet.

You continually ask youth to step up - to participate - and we are told we will be listened to - that you want to work with us, that our insights are of critical importance. And yet we presented to you our concerns in October. We presented our Declaration for a Radical Transformation of Food Systems. We shared how we and our communities have been responding to the COVID crisis despite inadequate government responses. We put in the work for our future and for the future generations. And still there has been no coordinated policy response. Nothing from this body tasked with responding to global hunger and malnutrition.

This is unacceptable.

This is shameful.

The youth are watching and we will not stand for this.

There is no excuse for inaction. The CFS has the mandate, the responsibility, and the ability to work towards a coordinated, multilateral response to the food systems crisis laid bare by COVID-19. It seems only political will is lacking. Every month that we delay means lost opportunities.

Idleness is complicity in the face of the destruction of this ongoing crisis.

We support the call from the Africa Group today for changing the rolling section of the MYPoW.

It is time for the CFS to fulfil its duty and this is an important step. It will place COVID-19 on the agenda of the CFS - and provide vital space for discussing policy response. We support this approach.

We also welcome the EU, statement underlining the need for the CFS to be able to react to the COVID crisis and call on them now to back up their statements with action.

We propose an addition to the Decision Box for today's session - reassert our commitment to a global policy response to COVID- 19 - and request that countries support. Specifically, we propose the following language which we will also post in the chat:

- *the CFS agrees to further deliberate on the impact of Covid-19 on food security and nutrition and the need for effective policy responses by CFS*

We now ask you all to respond to the recommendation of the Africa Group regarding the Rolling Section and our recommendation regarding the Decision box. We would like to emphasize that Africa's proposal simply fills a 'hole' in the rolling section of the MYPOW since the activity 'CFS engagement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' will not be carried out as foreseen in the MYPOW due to the fact that the deadline for submitting the CFS's contribution to the High-Level Political Forum has been anticipated this year to 15 March. The proposal is also zero budget.

We do not want to hear platitudes, vague statements or the usual excuses. We want ACTION!

- Perhaps you will say that we can't reopen the MYPOW. But the purpose of the MYPOW rolling section should be to respond to crises like this. When the CFS adopted the MYPOW process in 2018 it insisted that CFS work should be 'guided by the needs of the people most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition and anchored to realities on the ground' and identified the Plenary as the prime place to define demands and priorities. (CFS 2018/45/3).
- Perhaps you'll worry about the workload of CFS representatives. But what about the crushing workload that COVID is placing on the shoulders of our constituencies, women particularly, and of government people on the ground especially in the global south, which CFS policy guidance could lighten?
- Perhaps you will say we can't address items not in the MYPOW. But in the last few days, we have heard you speaking over and over about the FSS and preparing the CFS response to that. And yet the FSS appears nowhere in the MYPOW. We CAN and MUST address the COVID- 19 crisis in the context of the MYPoW - all it takes is your initiative.
- There are no excuses - we must act.

We have put our proposal in the chat. We now ask for your response.

- Will you commit to working with us towards a global policy response to COVID-19?
- Will you support an amendment to the rolling section of the MYPOW to convene a meeting to respond to COVID?
- Will you support our addition to the Decision Box and put COVID- 19 on the CFS agenda?

We are listening. We are taking notes. We are reporting back to our communities on the ground.