

**“Connecting Smallholders to Markets”**

**1. Background**

The 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) decided to hold a High-Level Forum (HLF) on *Connecting Smallholders to Markets* in 2015, intended to formulate recommendations to be submitted to CFS42. The HLF would build on previous CFS work including the 2013 High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) report on *Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security* and related CFS decisions.

The CSM supported this proposal since it had identified markets as an important issue which merited further work in the CFS. At the same time, a CSM meeting held during CFS41 in October 2014 recognized that civil society/social movements are not well-prepared on this topic. Small-scale producers and communities around the world have a very rich experience of local, people-oriented markets, but this experience has not yet been systematized and made visible.

According to the Terms of Reference prepared by the CFS secretariat, a “technical task team” (TT) composed of staff from FAO, IFAD and WFP would be responsible for preparing the HLF. The CSM questioned the failure to provide for effective involvement of smallholder organizations. In December 2014 it was finally agreed to include a CSM and a PSM representative. At this point work in the TT was already far advanced and the date of 25 June had been set for the HLF. Under these circumstances it was very difficult to consult adequately with different constituencies and sub regions. Nonetheless, “emergency” teamwork was established whereby a number of CSM members contributed ideas and case studies and proposed panelists. Thanks to these efforts it was possible to include several CSM panelists in the HLF programme and to positively influence the background discussion paper. This document states clearly that not all markets are beneficial to smallholders and that there is a lack of data on local peoples’ markets. It accepts that there would be no possibility of reaching a consensus on 25 June and that further work on this topic will be needed. The HLF programme and discussion paper are available at <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/cfsevents/hlfsmall/en/>.

The High Level Forum was preceded by a preparatory CSM workshop on 24 June which allowed participants from the different constituencies and regions to share their experiences and points of view, to agree on the main messages to bring to the HLF, and to start strategizing for the future. The main CSM messages and our reports of the CSM workshop and of the HLF are attached in annex to this note. The Chair’s Summary of the HLF is available at <http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/cfsevents/hlfsmall/en/>.

Thanks to repeated, strong CSM interventions, backed up by some supportive governments, it has been agreed that work on “Connecting Smallholders to Markets” will continue up to CFS43 in October 2016 following a process that is described in the following terms in the draft MYPoW that will be adopted at CFS42:

“The **Task Team** that was appointed to prepare the High-Level Forum will analyse the outcomes of the High-Level Forum with a view to extrapolating lessons from good practices arising from the background document and during discussions at the High Level Forum itself as well as identifying options for overcoming barriers and maximising opportunities, drawing on additional evidence and research as needed. The results of the work of the Task Team will inform the **discussions of one-off Open-Ended Working Group** that will take place before July 2016 and last up to two days according to the needs. The objective of the one-off Open-

Ended Working Group would be to agree upon a set of policy recommendations and practices that evidence suggests can strengthen smallholders access to markets.

**This agreed set of policy recommendations and practices will be presented for endorsement at CFS 43.** These can be broadly disseminated with a view to informing future policy and be the basis for future stocktaking and sharing of lessons.” (paras. 28-29)

## **2. CSM Objective: Change the dominant vision on markets and trade**

- *Make visible our “invisible” markets.*  
Document our existing markets throughout the world. Systematize our ongoing experience and demonstrate how these markets work for us and for food security/right to food and how they differ from “the formal market”.
- *Clarify key concepts and question dominant paradigms*  
...such as “the market”, value and value chains, PPPs, contract farming, cooperatives, urban/rural relations, local food markets/international trade. Highlight lack of data on changes underway in the local food market, where the big stakes are located since the share of the international food market is not increasing.
- *Indicate what kind of public policies, legal frameworks, infrastructure and investments* are required at all levels to support markets that work for peoples’ right to food.
- *Open the door to discussing trade in the CFS.*  
Which rights regime should rule the market? What are the implications for food security/right to food of different trade regimes?

## **3. Operational strategy**

- In CFS42, present our own views regarding the outcomes of the High Level Forum and our proposals regarding the process to CFS43 (including a 2 day OEWG).
- In the Task Team, insist on ensuring an open process for preparing the discussion paper for the OEWG and a timeline that permits civil society input.
- Collect case studies from all regions and constituencies, strategically selected to illustrate key points we wish to make (guidelines for case studies to be developed). Where possible, hold discussions at regional and constituency level, including by taking advantage scheduled meetings. Otherwise, organize regional teleconference calls.
- Develop a draft position paper that systematizes our experience, clarifies key concepts/paradigms, considers how CFS discussions link up with those in other forums like the WTO. Seek broad reactions to draft, if possible including in a dedicated meeting held a couple of months before the OEWG. Finalize the draft position paper for discussion at a CSM workshop prior to OEWG (see below).
- Build political support with governments and other CFS participants, including at country level in key countries. To support this, develop a brief that summarizes our positions. Take advantage of IFAD Governing Council and Farmers’ Forum (February 2016) and of FAO Regional Conferences in 2016.
- Hold a 2 day workshop prior to the OEWG to exchange/sensitize civil society/social movement participants and prepare positions for OEWG. Plan a half- day follow-up meeting after OEWG to develop our strategy leading to CFS43.

- Experiment with “nonconventional” communication of evidence, e.g. prepare a video report on invisible markets to bring real life experience into the CFS, organize a market during the OEWG.....

#### **4. Organization**

- The agricultural investment working group and mailing list will be the CSM “universe” for carrying forward this work. Regular reports to group and requests for input and reactions will be sent.
- A voluntary task group of people who commit to work actively on this activity will be established. This group could include some engaged academics/researchers who are willing to provide support. We need to verify realistically if it is feasible for focal points in all regions to collect case studies on a voluntary basis and if someone can volunteer to prepare the draft position paper within the short time framework, or if it would be desirable or necessary to envisage some form of a recompense for these tasks.
- The existing agricultural investment facilitation team (Shalmali, Nico, Nora) will backstop the work. Logistic support for communication and coordination will be required particularly given the short time period.
- Political oversight will be provided by the CC member coordinators of the agricultural investment working group, who come from small-scale producers’ organizations. Consideration could be given to setting up a “contact group” of people named by different social movement constituencies to reinforce the political oversight.

#### **5. Budget**

Support would be required for:

##### *Indispensable:*

- Travel, per diem, interpretation for the two-day CSM meeting just prior to the OEWG.
- Logistic support for communication and coordination.
- Costs of regional teleconference calls including interpretation where needed.
- If deemed necessary, recompense for the drafter of position paper and/or for regional collection of case studies.

##### *Desirable*

- Travel, per diem, interpretation for a meeting to discuss the draft CSM position paper before finalization.
- Per diem, interpretation (where needed) for add-on discussions on markets at already scheduled regional meetings.
- Funds for preparation of a video and/or other non-conventional communication of evidence.

## ANNEX

### EXCERPT FROM MYPOW

28. The **Task Team** that was appointed to prepare the High-Level Forum will analyse the outcomes of the High-Level Forum with a view to extrapolating lessons from good practices arising from the background document and during discussions at the High Level Forum itself as well as identifying options for overcoming barriers and maximising opportunities, drawing on additional evidence and research as needed. The results of the work of the Task Team will inform the **discussions of one-off Open-Ended Working Group** that will take place before July 2016 and last up to two days according to the needs. The objective of the one-off Open-Ended Working Group would be to agree upon a set of policy recommendations and practices that evidence suggests can strengthen smallholders access to markets.

29. **This agreed set of policy recommendations and practices will be presented for endorsement at CFS 43.** These can be broadly disseminated with a view to informing future policy and be the basis for future stocktaking and sharing of lessons.