



# **Evaluation of the Committee on World Food Security**

**Final Report  
14 April 2017**

## Acknowledgements

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## Acronyms and Abbreviation

CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CSM	International Food Security and Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Framework for Action
FSN	Food Security and Nutrition
GSF	Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition
ICN2	Second International Conference on Nutrition
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MYPoW	Multi-Year Programme of Work
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC)
OWEG	Open-Ended Working Group
PSM	Private Sector Mechanism of the Committee on World Food Security
RAI	Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems
RBAs	Rome-Based Agencies (i.e. FAO, IFAD and WFP)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition Movement
UNSCN	United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition
VGGT	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
WFP	World Food Programme of the United Nations
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization

## **Executive Summary**

### **Background and purpose**

ES1. The Committee on World Food Security commissioned an independent evaluation to determine the progress the Committee was making towards its Overall Objective and main Outcomes since the 2009 reform. The evaluation covered the period October 2009 to October 2016.

ES2. The purpose of the evaluation as set out in the Concept Note in Annex A, endorsed by the Bureau is to:

- a) Produce evidence regarding whether CFS, as a multi-stakeholder forum, is achieving the vision outlined in the reform documents and its expected outcomes;
- b) Assess the extent to which CFS is performing its roles outlined in the Reform Document, efficiently and effectively, and if so, with what impact;
- c) Review the working arrangements, including the multi-year programme of work of CFS, in order to assess how the decision-making processes and planning may be impacting effectiveness;
- d) Propose forward-looking recommendations to enable CFS to respond effectively to the emerging food security and nutrition challenges, to further strengthen its comparative advantages, and to enhance its leadership role in improving global food security and nutrition; and
- e) Generate learning regarding multi-stakeholder collaboration, to which the CFS represents a possible model to be replicated.

### **Methodology**

ES3. The evaluation mainly used qualitative data collection, namely, semi-structured interviews with key informants and focus group discussions, and observation at the CFS 43<sup>rd</sup> Plenary. The data was complemented by documentary evidence, primarily from the Committee's documents and those of the Rome-Based Agencies, the Civil Society Mechanism, the Private Sector Mechanism, and other stakeholders. The evaluation team consulted 361 persons in the course of this evaluation, 156 of which were consulted in the country missions conducted in France, Jordan, Panama, the Philippines, Senegal, Uganda, and the United States. The evaluation covered all the main structures of the Committee. Time and budgetary constraints limited, among other things, the range of stakeholders that could be interviewed, for example, stakeholders at United Nations headquarters in New York and Geneva.

### **Summary of main findings**

#### **Enhanced coordination**

ES4. The CFS was seen at the global level as a relevant body for addressing global FSN (Food Security and Nutrition) issues, and as addressing important priorities in FSN. It has mainstreamed nutrition, and has taken steps to strengthen its work therein, a challenging task in view of the crowded and fragmented space. The annual Plenary Sessions, the main platform for global coordination, showed a steady increase in the number of delegates, reflecting a growing interest in the work of CFS, although there were concerns about the large number of side events overshadowing the main plenary, and the relatively low number of ministerial level delegates registered. The CFS has taken steps to strengthen its linkages with regional level initiatives, but has not advanced its role in promoting greater coordination at the regional level. There are many national coordination platforms for FSN at country level, and CFS's linkages with these are tenuous at this stage. The GSF is expected to contribute to

enhanced coordination on FSN issues, but its current format and low levels of awareness amongst potential users limit its effectiveness.

### **Enhanced policy convergence**

ES5. The CFS produced three main policy products, and 13 sets of policy recommendations informed by the HLPE reports and policy work streams. These products were the outcome of negotiation processes. There were different levels of understanding among stakeholders of what policy convergence means, and different perspectives on how CFS should approach policy convergence. There was a desire on the part of some stakeholders for CFS to be clear on what it wants to achieve from a policy product or set of policy recommendations, and how they will be used, before it embarks on the resource-intensive process of developing these products.

### **Strengthened national and regional food security actions**

ES6. The role of the CFS in facilitating support and advice to countries and regions was unclear, and no requests were received from these levels. The CFS endorsed the mapping of national FSN actions that could assist countries in designing policies, strategies and programmes but the work was not brought back onto the CFS agenda or MYPoW.

ES7. The CFS provided a platform for sharing experiences good practices on the VGGT, complemented by a stock-taking exercise on the VGGT and the monitoring report prepared by the CSM, and endorsed recommendations for similar events at national and regional levels.

ES8. The CFS 40<sup>th</sup> Plenary endorsed a comprehensive set of recommendations on the Committee’s monitoring role. It has conducted a periodic assessment of the effectiveness of the CFS with the baseline Effectiveness Survey. It has not monitored CFS main products and outcomes of major workstreams. Progress in implementing its role in monitoring have been hampered by differing views on monitoring that stem from confusion in the use of the term itself.

ES9. SOFI (State of Food Insecurity) is an important component of the CFS monitoring architecture because it monitors progress in reducing food insecurity and malnutrition globally. The newly conceptualized SOFI will focus on monitoring the indicators of two targets of SDG2 (2.1 and 2.2).

ES10. The VGGT has been used and applied at national, regional and global levels; initiatives reported in the stock-taking exercise reflect a variety of approaches, including awareness-raising, setting up multi-stakeholder platforms, and practical application through conflict mapping, land mapping and new land registration systems.

### **Functioning of the reformed Committee**

ES11. The table below summarizes how the CFS has performed its six main roles:

Role 1: Coordination at global level	CFS convened annual plenaries, serving as a forum for coordination on FSN issues. The increase in the number of delegates and other attendees suggests that there is value in attending.
Role 2: Policy convergence	CFS performed its policy convergence role through development and endorsement of policy convergence products and policy recommendations. There is an uptake of main policy convergence products (VGGT), but it is too early as yet to assess the impact.
Role 3: Support and advice to countries	CFS did not facilitate support and advice to countries and regions, as none requested such advice. There is a lack of clarity about this

	role and the details of how CFS should facilitate support and advice were not worked out.
Role 4: Coordination at national and regional levels (Phase II role)	CFS has tried to build some linkages with these levels at the plenary, but outreach to these levels were limited to the Chairperson's engagements at FAO Regional Conferences and other regional events. The details of this role have not been elaborated by CFS.
Role 5: Promote accountability and share best practices at all levels (Phase II role)	CFS provided platforms for sharing best practices at the global level through special events at the CFS Plenary. It has not developed frameworks that can assist countries and regions in monitoring progress towards achieving their FSN objectives.
Role 6: Develop a Global Strategic Framework for food security and nutrition(Phase II role)	The GSF was developed and endorsed by the CFS Plenary (2012). The level of awareness about the GSF is low, and the extent of usage is unknown. CSF is reviewing the GSF to improve it.

### Bureau and Advisory Group

ES12. The Bureau's role seemed to be mostly limited to strictly endorsing what has been developed and agreed by the Open-Ended Working Groups. This may be due to the resistance by fellow Bureau Members (who may also be Chairs of the OEWDGs) to reopen agreements that have undergone a long process towards consensus, as well as the short timeframe available for change. There was a difference in opinion within the Committee about the desirable composition of the Advisory Group and the distribution of seats, and several proposals, often conflicting, were put forward to the evaluation team.

### Rome-Based Agencies

ES13. The RBAs play a key role in CFS serving as Members of the CFS Advisory Group and Plenary, providing technical/policy expertise to the Committee, funding and staffing the CFS Secretariat, opportunities for the Committee to disseminate CFS conclusions and recommendations, supporting the use of CFS products at country level and providing facilities and support to the CFS Chair's travels in countries and regions. Thirty-eight percent of the contribution from the RBAs is in the form of senior-level seconded staff, and at times there have been lengthy delays in filling these posts, impacting on the stability of the Secretariat.

### Secretariat

ES14. The Secretariat was generally perceived to by CFS Members to be effective in supporting the substantive work of the Committee. The evaluation found, however, that the current structure and allocation of work in the Secretariat were not optimal, and there was a lack of clarity regarding the role of the Chairperson in relation to the Secretariat. The unpredictability of resources from the Rome-Based Agencies posed a risk to the effectiveness of the CFS Secretariat. The process-related decisions of the Committee are monitored by the CFS Secretariat in the form of a CFS Annual Progress Report that serves as a background document for the discussion on MYPoW during the CFS plenary. However, it was noted that tracking is only undergone for decisions arising from the most recent plenary.

### HLPE

ES15. The High Level Panel of Experts published 10 reports between 2011 and 2016, and these informed the policy recommendations of CFS. The HLPE reports are used beyond the Committee, at the global level, and were referenced in resolutions of the UN General Assembly. The promotion of HLPE reports is left largely to the Steering Committee, with the support of the HLPE Secretariat, and members of the Steering Committee have expressed concern about the limited resources to promote HLPE reports widely, especially at country level.

### Civil Society Mechanism

ES16. The CSM is the largest organized space for civil society actors related to food security and nutrition to meet, dialogue and coordinate their voices on FSN issues. The CSM has participated in all the main processes of the Committee. The mechanism also contributed to the monitoring function of the Committee through its synthesis report on civil society experiences with the use and implementation of the VGGT. There is an appreciation on the part of CFS Members for the contribution that the CSM makes to the effective functioning of the Committee. But there are also CFS Members and stakeholders who were critical of the manner in which the CSM functions. The concern raised was that social movements dominated the CSM, and that the voices of other constituencies/organizations, namely, international non-governmental organizations, are not being heard sufficiently. There were groups that felt that their voices were not being heard in CFS as they were not given the space in the CSM. Although these organizations were critical of the CSM, they believed that it remains a very valuable mechanism for achieving the outcomes of CFS, and wanted to help improve it.

### Private Sector Mechanism

ES17. The attendance of the private sector at the CFS Plenary Sessions has increased since 2010. The sector participated in CFS intersessional work and convened partnership forums. There were two related themes that emerged from the interviews of the private sector members of the PSM. The first theme related to the feeling that members of the PSM have that their issues were not given the same level of attention as issues raised by the CSM. The second theme was that, the PSM is seeking parity with the CSM with respect to the number of seats on the CFS Advisory Group, given the increasing number and diversity of organizations that are members of the PSM.

### MYPOW

ES18. A theme that emerged strongly from the interviews was that the Committee has an overloaded agenda and this was impacting negatively on its performance. There was a strong call for more effective prioritization of activities of the Committee. In particular, the need to reduce the number of workstreams was raised. The current two-year MYPoW has too short a time horizon to serve as a strategic plan or framework for the Committee.

### Budget

ES19. The evaluation found that the budgeting process was disconnected from the planning process of the MYPoW, and that the latter was chronically underfunded. The Committee did not have a resource mobilization strategy, and resource mobilization was ad hoc. The resources required for the operations of the Committee, including the workstreams, as well as the resources for the HLPE and the CSM were not predictable, posing a risk to the effectiveness and sustainability of the CFS.

### Communication and Outreach

ES20. The communication and outreach efforts yielded mixed results. There was awareness of the Committee at the global level, but low levels of awareness at the country level. Communication between Rome and other capitals was found to be problematic, and not all activities in the communication strategy could be implemented due to a lack of funding.

### **Multi-stakeholder model**

ES21. The CFS is unique multi-stakeholder platform in the United Nations system. CFS strives for inclusiveness, though important limiting factors remain, such as the language or the lack of translation and interpreter services which inadvertently excludes people from

policy discussions and negotiation processes. The evaluation identified critical success factors for CFS to function as an effective, inclusive multi-stakeholder platform. When assessed against these criteria, there are several areas where CFS can improve. (Table 30)

Table 30: Assessment of current state of CFS against critical success factors

<b>Vision and strategy</b>	
<b>Critical success factors</b>	<b>How CFS measures up</b>
Vision must be unambiguous	The vision of the CFS contains several elements and takes several readings to understand the vision.
It must be clear to those inside and outside the platform what it seeks to achieve	CFS has clarity on what it wants to achieve, though there are differences in opinion on how best to do this. It is not clear to outsiders what CFS seeks to achieve as it is not well-known to those not closely involved in the Committee, nor is it fully understood how their efforts complement and/or leverage the efforts of other actors in the food and nutrition arena.
Objectives should be specific, not vague	CFS' overarching objective is sufficiently specific. However, its three Outcomes are very broad and high level, and not easily amenable to measurement. These could be improved by including immediate and intermediate outcomes.
Select issues of high interest that will get people around table	CFS selects issues that have attracted attendance at Plenaries as they are relevant food security and nutrition issues. The side events attract many people.
Choose, rather, one topic that will have impact, than many topics that have little impact	CFS tries to focus on one or two topics, but there is always pressure to cover more topics or issues.
Be flexible to respond to changing conditions	CFS is not a very flexible platform and is slow to respond to changing conditions. This limited flexibility is inherent to intergovernmental bodies.
<b>Values</b>	
<b>Critical success factors</b>	<b>How CFS measures up</b>
Mutual respect and trust among all who are part of the platform	There is mutual respect amongst the parties in CFS and rules of debate and negotiation are observed. The levels of trust are low within some structures and between some of the structures in CFS.
Spirit of collaboration and consensus	CFS strives for consensus in its decision-making. This consensus approach is accepted as the way in which CFS 'does things'. Some are critical of the consensus approach and see it as driving CFS to appeal to the lowest common denominator and therefore not selecting topics that might be controversial.
Everyone should work in the same direction even if they have different interests and perspectives	Most members of the CFS platform want to see CFS work effectively and achieve its objectives. There are many different interests and perspectives on how this should be done.
Be inclusive of the different structures that exist within the platform	CFS strives for inclusiveness, but there are challenges. The unavailability of translation and interpreter services for all documents and meetings and the unpredictability of funds undermine inclusiveness.
Equal voice for all at the table	CFS allocation of Advisory Group seats is a source of tension within the Committee, as there are participants who feel that they do not have an equal voice at the table. There are different interpretations of equal voice – for some it means parity in the number of seats, for others it means that the allocation of seats should favour those most affected by food insecurity.
Freedom to voice views without fear or hindrance	CFS Members and Participants are free to express their views in meetings of the platform. There may, however, be practices within the different groupings that inhibit freedom to voice views. The evaluation team is not privy to what happens in the internal meetings of Members and Participants.

<b>Capacity</b>	
<b>Critical success factors</b>	<b>How CFS measures up</b>
Leadership capacity to influence the UN agenda	Responsibility for influencing the UN agenda seems to be left to the CFS Chairperson. There appears not to be a sense of collective responsibility to influence the UN agenda.
People at all levels who can champion the platform	CFS is championed to varying degrees by different structures and mechanisms at different levels. Currently, the CSM is active at championing the CFS at the country level. At the global level, more advocacy can be done by member countries especially in the governing bodies of the RBAs and at UN platforms. RBAs are in the best position to champion CFS at regional level while collectively, more can be done at the country level, to support countries in adapting CFS products to the country's realities to make them meaningful, and support countries to use these products.
A capable secretariat to support the platform	There are shortcomings in the structure of the CFS Secretariat resulting in under-utilized capacity at the senior level. Delays in secondments from RBAs and unpredictability of funding impact on the effectiveness of the Secretariat.
Members must have the capacity to do their work in the platform and to participate in various structures of the platform	Capacity is uneven across the different CFS Members, so those with less capacity and fewer resources limit their participation in the platform.
<b>Systems and procedures</b>	
<b>Critical success factors</b>	<b>How CFS measures up</b>
Procedures are necessary and must be clear	CFS is subject to General Rules of the organization, which includes its own Rules of Procedure. The Rules of Procedure are broad and do not cover fine details, and so there is room for interpretation of the rules to each individual's purpose. The procedural guidelines, which subsidiary and ad hoc bodies OEWGs and TTTs are currently working under, are not documented and thus can differ across different workstreams.
Flexibility in procedures	As a UN intergovernmental body, CFS has limited flexibility in procedures.
<b>Funding</b>	
<b>Critical success factors</b>	<b>How CFS measures up</b>
Funding must be sufficient to achieve objectives	CFS funding is insufficient to cover all its activities noted in the MYPoW fully for the biennium and lacks a model for sustainable financing. Transparency could help donors to understand the potential impact of their contributions.
Funding must be predictable	CFS funding is not predictable. It relies on donor funding for its workstream activities, and for the CSM and HLPE. Delays in secondment of RBA staff impact on its ability to deliver.
<b>Communication</b>	
<b>Critical success factors</b>	<b>How CFS measures up</b>
Communicate messages to generate meaningful dialogue especially when there is a lot of technical information	CFS needs to look beyond plenary and strategize an implementable outreach strategy that includes the transmission of easy-to-understand information for its messages to be well-received by those who need them the most (i.e. at country level).

## Conclusions

ES22. This presents the main conclusions of the evaluation, and for clarity, these conclusions are organized around the key evaluation questions.

**Key Evaluation Question 1.1** To what extent has the reformed CFS enhanced global coordination of food security and nutrition issues?

ES23. **Conclusion 1:** The Committee has made some contribution towards enhancing global coordination on food security and nutrition issues. It has put mechanisms and processes in place to carry out its global coordination role. While the Committee has addressed relevant issues that fall within its mandate, it has not sufficiently articulated and exploited its comparative advantage in food security and nutrition as it lacks an overarching strategy. The Reform Document is the founding document of the reformed CFS, but cannot serve as a strategy for action.

ES24. The Committee is the only platform within the United Nations system that brings together a broad range of diverse stakeholders at the global level to develop guidelines and make policy recommendations, in the manner that it does, with non-state actors as equal partners, except for the final decision. It has the participation of civil society and the private sector in all its major processes, and is able to draw on the evidence base provided by the reports of the High Level Panel of Experts. This makes the Committee unique within the United Nations system, yet it is largely unknown outside of headquarters in Rome. The Committee is seen by those closely associated with it, to be addressing relevant food security and nutrition issues, but with the Committee largely unknown at the national level, it may not be relevant to the ‘ultimate beneficiaries’ of its work.

ES25. The Committee’s work to date has covered a wide range of food security and nutrition issues, many of which are covered elsewhere. While the topics are relevant and important, the Committee is not always clear about what its added value is in pursuing certain issues. For example, it has not sufficiently articulated its vision and strategy to contribute to global nutrition efforts. The Committee’s contribution to coordination at regional and national levels has been minimal as it has not elaborated for itself what such coordination would entail.

**Key Evaluation Question 1.2** To what extent has the reformed CFS improved policy convergence on food security and nutrition issues?

ES26. **Conclusion 2:** The Committee has contributed to improved policy convergence on food security and nutrition issues to the extent that it has developed policy products that have potential application across many countries and regions. As noted in the findings on policy convergence, it is also necessary to assess policy convergence as an outcome reflected in the use and application of policy convergence products. The Committee has achieved convergence on certain policy issues at the global level, but this has not yet translated into widespread use and application of its policy convergence products.

**Key Evaluation Question 1.3:** To what extent has the reformed CFS strengthened national and regional food security actions?

ES27. **Conclusion 3:** The Committee contributed to national actions on food security and nutrition actions through the technical support and advice given by FAO, other development partners, and civil society, to countries in using and applying the VGGT. The role of the CFS in facilitating support and/or advice to countries and regions remains unclear, and the support that countries have received from FAO and others was not facilitated through the Committee. CFS has limited information on what countries require, nor does it have information on the

many FSN platforms that exist at national and regional levels. This information is necessary for CFS to facilitate advice and support at national and regional levels. The Committee made a modest contribution to promoting accountability through its ‘monitoring’ thematic event on VGGT. There is a lack of clarity in CFS about its ‘monitoring’ role, and little progress has been made in monitoring the main products and policy recommendations of the Committee.

**Key Evaluation Question 2.1** To what extent do the six roles, working arrangements, management systems and structures contribute to the Outcomes?

ES28. **Conclusion 4:** The Committee is functioning and has managed to generate a high level of outputs since the 2009 reform. It could be more effective and efficient; its performance of its six roles is uneven, and there are gaps and issues that it needs to address to be fully effective and efficient.

ES29. As a platform for coordination at the global level, the Committee has managed to bring a wide range of stakeholders around the table to dialogue on food security and nutrition issues. However, it is too early to conclude whether this has translated into strengthening collaborative action among stakeholders at the country level. The Committee has been able to produce policy convergence products, and there is evidence of use of one of its major products. The roles that the Committee has not been effective in executing are:

- Support and advice to countries and regions
- Coordination at national and regional levels
- Promoting accountability and sharing best practices.

ES30. There is a lack of clarity and agreement about how the Committee should proceed with these roles. In the case of support and advice to countries and regions, the Committee at best can only facilitate support and advice to countries and regions. The Committee is an intergovernmental policy body, and not an implementing body. The Rome-Based Agencies and others in the United Nations system are better placed to provide support and advice to countries and regions.

ES31. With regard to the Committee’s role in promoting accountability and sharing experiences and good practices, it has made a good start with convening global events for sharing experiences and good practices. There are, however, differing views in the Committee about its role in monitoring and what, exactly, it should be monitoring. It is not feasible, nor is it desirable for the Committee to attempt in-depth monitoring of the implementation of the numerous policy recommendations, and policy products at the country level. Periodic stocktakes and evaluation may be more appropriate.

ES32. **Conclusion 5:** The Bureau, the Advisory Group, and the Open Ended Working Groups played a pivotal role in shaping the agenda of Committee and content of its work. The contestation over the membership of the Advisory Group to ensure adequate representation of all stakeholders threatens to reduce the effectiveness of the Advisory Group. The Civil Society Mechanisms and the Private Sector Mechanisms play an important role in facilitating the contributions of non-state actors in the work of the Committee. Both mechanisms are seeking to have the requisite ‘space’ to ably facilitate the views of their participating organizations. The Joint Bureau-Advisory Group meetings are a platform for influencing the decisions of the Bureau and ultimately, the Plenary. It is therefore not surprising that there is contestation over the representation and the distribution of seats in the Advisory Group.

ES33. **Conclusion 6:** The role of the Chairperson went beyond chairing the Plenary and Bureau meetings, to an active role in outreach and interaction with the United Nations headquarters in New York, the regional conferences, as well as addressing meetings outside CFS in Rome, and other countries, on request. While the Rules of Procedure made provision for the Chairperson to do more than chair meetings, these other functions were not made

explicit in the rules. There was also a lack of clarity about the role of the Chairperson in relation to the work of the CFS Secretariat.

ES34. **Conclusion 7:** The CFS Secretariat was generally perceived by CFS Members and stakeholders to perform its functions effectively, in particular, organizing a large scale event such as the annual CFS Plenary. However, the unpredictability of the contributions from the RBAs, which are largely in-kind and without compensation for delays, pose a serious risk to the stability and effectiveness of the Secretariat. The structure of the CFS Secretariat was not planned in any detail from the outset, and there are issues pertaining to work allocation and to the efficient and effective utilization of staff.

ES35. **Conclusion 8:** The High Level Panel of Experts produced reports that covered a range of food security and nutrition issues. There was broad agreement among CFS Members and stakeholders on the importance of the Panel in bringing scientific evidence to inform the decisions of the Committee, but the potential of the Panel was not fully exploited. The Panel has a number of challenges including the lack of adequate resources to promote its work.

ES36. **Conclusion 9:** The Multi-Year Programme of Work followed a rigorous process of identifying the priorities for the Committee over the biennium but has not been successful in limiting the number of priorities that are finally approved. The Committee's effectiveness and efficiency are impacted negatively by the unpredictability of its funding and the resources for the Joint CFS Secretariat, the HLPE and the CSM.

ES37. **Conclusion 10:** The Committee has not been effective in its communication and outreach, as it is largely unknown at the country level. The Civil Society Mechanism and the Private Sector Mechanism promote the Committee and raise awareness of products and decisions, among their constituencies. The gap lies in the communication between delegations in Rome and ministries at the country level, and the extent to which the RBAs have included (or not) the CFS policy outcomes into their programmes and work at the country level.

**Key Evaluation Question 2.2** To what extent do the strategies, tools, products and recommendations contribute to the Outcomes?

ES38. **Conclusion 11:** The Committee ultimately has little control over the extent to which its policy products and recommendations are used and applied, although it can proactively seek to influence the use and application of these. The effective use and application of CFS policy products and recommendations require that countries be supported with strategies and tools, as well as practical guidance to adapt CFS products to the country context. The development and deployment of these, however, fall outside the mandate of the Committee, and it is up to the Rome-Based Agencies, and other development partners, as well the CSM and PSM to develop strategies and tools for the use and application of CFS policy products and recommendations. The VGGT was a good example of strategies and tools developed to aid the use and application of a policy product. However, this was not the case with other products and recommendations.

**Key evaluation question 2.3:** To what extent do the stakeholder platforms, interactions and structures contribute to the Outcomes?

ES39. **Conclusion 12:** While the Committee has linkages with platforms at the global level, this was not the case with regional and national platforms. Even at the global level, the evidence suggests that the Committee is 'Rome-centric' and not sufficiently engaged with other global structures. This could change with the interest shown by the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Committee has not developed strong linkages or leveraged stakeholder platforms at the regional level. The evaluation found several platforms

across different regions, and within the countries visited, with no discernible interaction with CFS.

**Key evaluation question 3.1:** To what extent has the multi-stakeholder platform engaged a diversity of voices in policy decision-making?

ES40. **Conclusion 13:** The reformed Committee engaged a greater diversity of actors than was the case prior to the reform, especially through its two mechanisms from civil society and the private sector. There are challenges in ensuring that the Committee is truly inclusive. Insufficient translation and interpreter services, especially for important negotiation processes and documents, and the uneven capacities of CFS Members and Participants impact negatively on their participation in CFS processes. The CSM and PSM are still evolving as inclusive mechanisms, as the full diversity of voices within these mechanisms were not always evident in Advisory Group discussions. Strong sentiments were expressed by the World Farmers' Organization that their member organizations did not feel represented by neither the CSM nor the PSM, and advocated for "...an autonomous space where their voices can be listened to..."<sup>1</sup>

**Key evaluation question 3.2:** To what extent are gender, and youth, as well as the interests of indigenous people and marginalized populations integrated?<sup>2</sup>

ES41. **Conclusion 14:** The Committee has integrated gender equality and the empowerment of women in its agenda, and the participation of youth is receiving more attention than has been the case in the past. The Committee has integrated the interests of indigenous peoples into its work, but issues of indigenous peoples are championed primarily by the Civil Society Mechanism and not by the Committee as a whole.

**Key evaluation question 3.3:** What are the assumptions, factors and conditions necessary for the platform to function?

ES42. **Conclusion 15:** The Committee is potentially a good model for the collaboration and partnership required to achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, it still lacks some of the factors or conditions required to function effectively as a multi-stakeholder platform.

ES43. Successful multi-stakeholder initiatives have clear objectives and a single issue that brings stakeholders to the table to try to resolve. The Committee covers a broad spectrum of food and security issues, and does not have a single focus that stakeholders can rally around. The Right to Adequate Food, which was one of the drivers for the reform, has seldom been a direct focus of CFS activities, except for the ten-year retrospective event held in 2014, and the CSM-Norway event held in 2016.

ES44. Multi-stakeholder platforms require predictable resources and a stable core staff to support it. These two conditions are not in place in the Committee and so the sustainability of the Committee is at risk. Effective multi-stakeholder platforms are good at communicating their vision, and demystifying the technical aspects of their work. This condition is not present in the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication from WFO to the evaluation team, April 2017

<sup>2</sup> These groups were prioritized for the evaluation on the basis of the issues raised during the inception phase

ES45. There must be mutual respect and trust among stakeholders. This is something that is still evolving in the Committee. People do not work together because they trust one another – they develop trust through working together. Stakeholders must feel that they have an equal voice and that their different contributions have equal value in the Committee. This is an area where the Committee and its mechanisms have challenges. There are groups that feel excluded or that their contributions are not valued equally.

## **Recommendations**

ES46. The evaluation makes a number of recommendations, and notes that the Committee is already addressing some of issues raised in this evaluation. The evaluation has prioritized the recommendations, but advises the Committee that all the recommendations are necessary to improve the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Committee.

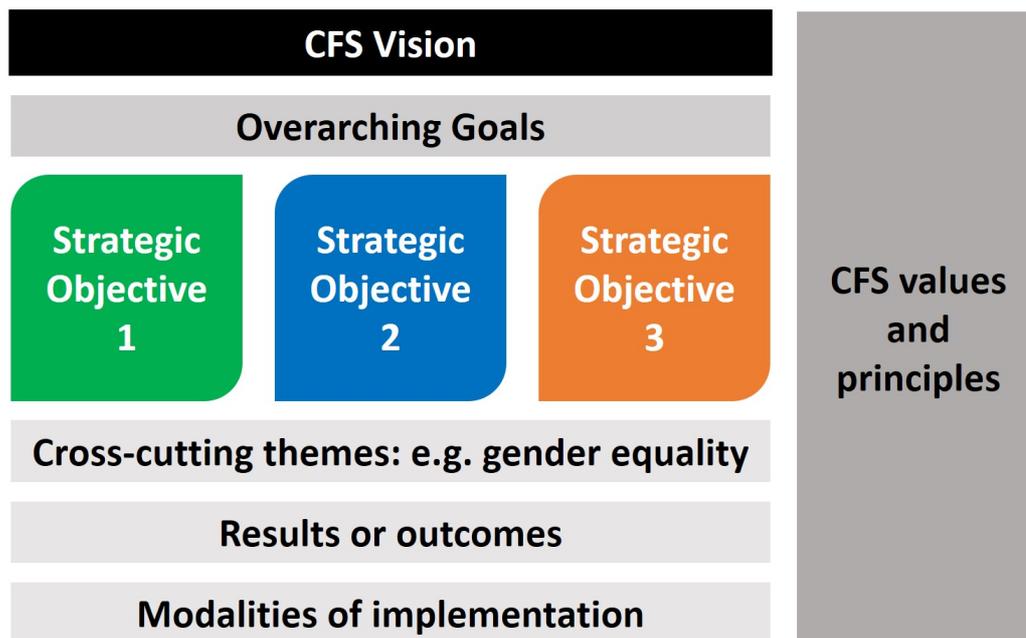
ES47. **Recommendation 1** [ref: Conclusions 1 & 2]: The Committee should direct the Bureau to lead the development of a strategic plan/framework to guide CFS’s work over the medium-to-long term, using the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as its frame of reference, and informed by amongst other things, the Critical and Emerging Issues paper of the HLPE. While the Bureau leads the process, it should be an inclusive process that draws on the insights of all CFS Members and Participants, and other relevant stakeholders. An OEWG structure supported by a Technical Task Team should be tasked to develop the plan/framework.

ES48. The evaluation team does not wish to prescribe the particular planning regime that the Committee should adopt, as each organization needs to find what approach is best suited for its mandate. The United Nations system has adopted a results-based approach to planning, and the Committee is advised to incorporate the principles of a results-based approach into its framework. It would be useful to consider the approaches adopted by the Rome-Based Agencies. FAO has a 10-year strategic framework, and within this, a four-year medium-term plan and a two-year programme of work and budget. IFAD has a 10-year strategic framework, with three-year medium-term plans, while WFP has five-year strategic plan.

ES49. The planning horizon for CFS should be at least six years, covering three biennia, and should be reviewed and updated as necessary. The strategic plan/framework does not replace the MYPoW – it sets the direction within which the MYPoW should be formulated. The MYPoW represents the programme of activities that CFS intends to implement for the duration of the MYPoW.

ES50. The strategic plan or framework should set out the vision of CFS and its overarching goal(s), as well as a small number of strategic objectives to direct it towards achieving or contributing to the goal(s). While there is no prescription on the number of strategic objectives, it is advisable to have no more than five, clearly articulated objectives, and the results or outcomes to be achieved. It is important that the Committee consider the pathways for achieving the intended outcomes or results, and here the indicative programme logic developed in the course of the evaluation, can be used as a guide. The development of the strategic plan/framework also provides an opportunity for the Committee to clarify the six roles set out in the Reform Document, and the modalities for carrying out these roles. Figure 1 shows schematically the indicative elements of a strategic plan/framework.

Figure 1: Indicative elements of a strategic plan/framework



ES51. As part of the process of developing the strategic plan/framework, CFS should draw on the forthcoming Critical and Emerging Issues Paper of the HLPE, and information on what other global actors are doing in FSN, to enable CFS to clarify its niche and where it can add value. The strategic plan/framework should be informed by the realities ‘on the ground’: the CFS should obtain information on the national FSN priorities, as well as information on existing and planned national platforms. The Advisory Group, the Rome-Based Agencies and WHO are well-placed to provide information on national priorities and national platforms.

ES52. **Recommendation 2** [ref: [Conclusion 9](#)]: The MYPoW structure and process should be revised. The MYPoW should be informed by, and aligned to the strategic framework, and there should be a clear link between the activities in the MYPoW and the results or outcomes in the strategic framework. CFS is investigating the option of a four-year MYPoW. Given the difficulty that CFS has in securing a firm budget for a two-year period, extending the MYPoW to four years will simply mean having a plan with many unfunded activities. The need for a medium-term perspective is catered for by the introduction of a strategic plan/framework that covers three biennia.

ES53. The MYPoW should be linked to the budgeting process to reduce the chronic funding deficits faced by the MYPoW. While CFS seeks to ensure sustainable funding, it should also prioritize its work, streamlining workstreams and potentially de-emphasizing other work streams where appropriate. CFS needs to determine the delicate balance between quality and quantity of workstreams and avoid spreading itself too thinly. Any MYPoW presented at the CFS Plenary should include a committed budget with specific allocation to prioritized workstreams. There should be an understanding that other workstreams should not start until extrabudgetary funding is available.

ES54. **Recommendation 3** [ref: [Conclusion 9](#)]: The ability to carry out activities in the MYPoW is dependent on a sustainable CFS budget. The Bureau should take the following actions to secure sustainable funding for CFS:

- (i) It should develop a resource mobilization strategy as a matter of urgency. The resource mobilization strategy should underpinned by a clear, simple message about

CFS that will appeal to potential funding partners. The resource mobilisation strategy should be for CFS Plenary and work streams, the HLPE and the CSM.

- (ii) The sources of funding should be diversified. Private foundations and the private sector should be considered, provided there are no conflicts of interest. The donor base from public sources should be expanded, with an appeal to those CFS Member States that have not funded CFS since the reform.
- (iii) The RBAs should formalize their contribution through a Memorandum of Understanding and could be approached for an increase in their annual contribution. It is not possible to predict the size of the increase as this would depend on the number of workstreams in a given MYPoW.
- (iv) There should be greater transparency in the budgeting process, showing how budget allocation decisions have been arrived at. Equally important is transparency in the expenditure. There should be accounting of actual expenditure where this is currently not the case, except for the HLPE and CSM.
- (v) Consideration should be given to having a position in the Secretariat that dedicated to resource mobilization, budget analysis and expenditure reporting.

ES55. **Recommendation 4** [ref: Conclusion 5]: The Bureau should review the composition and processes of the Advisory Group to ensure that it is able to perform its functions effectively. Members of the Advisory Group who have not attended three consecutive meetings in the current biennium should be requested to provide reasons for their non-attendance, and an indication of their interest going forward. These members can be given the option of an ad hoc seat and attend only when there are specific items that are relevant or are of interest to them. Another option would be to make phone-in facilities available for those members not stationed in Rome.

ES56. The Bureau should assess requests for seats on the Advisory Group, using a due diligence approach. Requests should only be considered if accompanied by a detailed proposal setting out, but not limited to the following:

- Demonstrate how the participant will contribute to CFS objectives, and the value-added by the participant
- Demonstrate contribution made to date in CFS processes and other structures
- Resolution from the member organizations to be represented, and audited or reliable figures on the membership
- Governance arrangements – composition of decision-making or steering structures;
- How participation in the Advisory Group will be funded
- Declaration of conflict of interest
- Participation in other intergovernmental bodies.

ES57. With regard to current requests for new mechanisms or additional seats, the decision rests with the Bureau. The evaluation team has been requested to provide a view on these requests and on the current allocation of seats. The views of the team are as follows:

- (i) The PSM has requested parity in seats with the CSM, that is, whatever the number of seats that the CSM has, PSM should have the same number. In the opinion of the evaluation team, an equal voice does not mean that there must be parity in the number of seats. The CSM was allocated four seats to give priority to those voices that historically have been marginalized. To give parity in the allocation of seats will only serve to reinforce the asymmetry of power between civil society and the private sector within the context of a multi-stakeholder platform, and so undermine the principles of the reform. However, there are small businesses involved in food

production and they be brought on board, and accordingly, consideration should be given to an additional seat for the PSM.

- (ii) The World Farmers Organization has requested the creation of a farmers' mechanism, on the basis that farmers are not adequately represented by the CSM, asserting that they represent social movements and not farmers, and the PSM, as they represent agri-business and not farmers. The evaluation is not persuaded by the argument, as there are farmers in both mechanisms. The evaluation team noted that the WFO and its member organizations feel strongly about the issue, and they should be invited to submit a detailed proposal to the Bureau addressing the items set out in para 11.
- (iii) Consideration should be given to allocating an Advisory Group seat to WHO, as they have demonstrated their commitment and contribution to CFS.
- (iv) The CSM should be requested to provide a comprehensive proposal to motivate the need for additional space. The allocation of an additional seat should be contingent on demonstrating that the CSM has addressed its internal organization, in particular, how the communication to, and the involvement of sub-regions can be improved.

ES58. **Recommendation 5** [ref: Conclusion 1]: The CFS Plenary Session is the high point and culmination of the work done during the year, and the Bureau should ensure that the Plenary is a vibrant platform where there is dialogue on the key FSN issues of the day. The many side events should not be seen as threat to the main plenary, but as an opportunity to raise the profile of CFS to an audience wider than the audience in the main plenary. The side events should also be used to have a dialogue on difficult or contentious issues that have not found their way onto the main agenda of the CFS Plenary.

ES59. The Bureau should revisit the recent practice of having negotiations well in advance of the plenary week. The negotiation process is as important as the policy recommendations that are finally endorsed, and it is essential that the process be as inclusive as possible. While these processes do take time, being inclusive is likely to be more efficient in the long-run, than short-term efficiency approaches that inadvertently exclude those who cannot travel to Rome several times a year. The Committee could consider a different approach, taking reference from other intergovernmental meetings, where, for example, side events and negotiations at the level of officials precede the plenary attendance and discussions that involve ministerial level delegates.

ES60. **Recommendation 6** [ref: Conclusion 5]: The Bureau should streamline the number of OEWGs by consolidating OEWGs with related functions, as well as take stock of OEWGs which have completed their tasks given by the Plenary and need not continue. It should consider creating an OEWG for MYPoW and budgeting. The status of the GSF OEWG should be revisited once it has completed its review of the GSF, as updating the GSF following each Plenary does not require a fully-fledged OEWG. All OEWGs should develop terms of reference to govern their functioning. The terms of reference should outline the objectives of the OEWG, the results the OEWG must achieve over the biennium, and if the OEWG is a policy-related OEWG, there should be a date for the expiry of the term of the OEWG. Terms of reference should include roles and responsibilities of the Chair, participants and the technical task teams that support the OEWG. Where the work of two or more OEWGs or other policy workstreams are interrelated, provision should be made for joint meetings of OEWG chairs.

ES61. **Recommendation 7** [ref: Conclusions 10 & 11]: The Committee on World Food Security is an intergovernmental committee within the United Nations system, and it is the CFS Members who ultimately bear the duty of ensuring that the Committee delivers on its mandate. In this regard, there are a number of actions that CFS Members can take to improve the functioning of the CFS:

- (i) CFS Members should review the flow of information to and from their capitals and address gaps to ensure that, among other things, CFS products and recommendations reach the relevant ministries.
- (ii) CFS Members should advocate for the use and application of CFS products and recommendations in their respective countries, according to their needs and priorities.
- (iii) CFS Members should, where feasible, contribute in cash or in kind to the resources of the Committee.

ES62. **Recommendation 8** [ref: [Conclusion 6](#)]: The Committee and the Bureau should clarify the expectations that they have of the position of Chairperson beyond the chairing of the Plenary and the Bureau/Advisory Group meetings. This clarification should include what the expected outcomes of the outreach activities of the position, and these should be taken into account in the planning and budgeting of the Committee's activities. The role of the position of Chairperson with regard to the CFS Secretariat should also be clarified so that 'grey' areas are addressed. This may necessitate a review and revision of the terms of reference of the Secretary. The Chairperson, the Director of the ESA and the Secretary should agree on a protocol for reporting from the CFS Secretariat.

ES63. **Recommendation 9** [ref: [Conclusion 7](#)]: The structure of the CFS Secretariat should be revised to ensure that the Secretariat can effectively support the work of the Committee, and to ensure efficient utilization of staff. The levels and terms of reference of all positions should be reviewed and revised as necessary. It is essential that the RBAs fill vacant secondments within a reasonable timeframe to ensure continuity in the operations of the CFS Secretariat. It is recommended that there be a formal agreement between the Committee and the Rome-Based Agencies on the secondment of staff, including an agreement to fill secondments within the timeframes they use to fill vacancies in their respective agencies.

ES64. **Recommendation 10** [ref: [Conclusion 4](#)]: CFS should develop an overarching framework that spells out its role in various activities that it has grouped together as monitoring. A great deal of confusion has been created by the generic use of the term to cover different but interrelated functions. CFS should align its terminology and approach with that of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The following approach is recommended for CFS role in promoting accountability and sharing good practices at all levels:

- (i) The function of the CFS is to follow up and review progress made with the implementation of the main CFS policy convergence products and policy recommendations from the policy workstreams. These are periodic reviews and there should be a schedule for the reviews taking place during the biennium.
- (ii) The function of the CFS is to convene special events to share experiences and good practices. These events can be informed by intelligence gathered through the periodic reviews.
- (iii) Detailed monitoring of policies, programmes and plans are the responsibility of national governments. CFS should consider conducting a voluntary survey every two years to obtain information on use and application of CFS products and policy recommendations.
- (iv) CFS should commission independent evaluations when required, on major aspects of its work.
- (v) It is essential that the **process** decisions and recommendations of CFS are monitored and reported on. The CFS Secretariat should improve the current system of tracking the process decisions and recommendations. The system should at a minimum

identify the decision, the action taken, and the reasons for deviation or non-completion of the action.

ES65. **Recommendation 11** [ref: [Conclusion 10](#)]: CFS should adopt the principle that communication about CFS is the responsibility of all CFS Members and Participants, supported by the communication function in the CFS Secretariat. Consideration should be given to having Bureau Members facilitate an outreach activity in the respective regions. This will spread the responsibility of communicating and profiling CFS at regional levels. Non-Bureau members should be requested to facilitate an outreach activity in their respective countries. The CFS Secretariat can assist by developing short information briefs, including a standardized presentation on CFS. These information briefs can be used by members of the Advisory Group in their outreach activities, should they need the assistance. The Rome-Based Agencies have a critical role to play in the dissemination and application of CFS policy products and recommendations at country level, and the Committee through the Bureau should request them to intensify their communication efforts.

ES66. **Recommendation 12** [ref: [Conclusion 8](#)]: Member countries are encouraged to disseminate the HLPE reports to the relevant ministries at country level. RBAs should consider the HLPE reports in their programme of work.

ES67. **Recommendation 13** [ref: [Conclusion 8](#)]: The Chairperson of the HLPE Steering Committee should interact with the Bureau and Advisory Group to keep the latter abreast of developments with the work of the HLPE. This informational briefing does not pose a threat to the independence of the HLPE, and can serve to encourage Bureau and Advisory Group members to promote the work of the HLPE. Similar discussions should take place between the two secretariats, so that there is a mutual appreciation of the work of the secretariats.

ES68. **Recommendation 14** [ref: [Conclusion 8](#)]: The HLPE Steering Committee should address the concerns raised by interviewees, and misunderstandings regarding the processes for calling for project experts. This entails reviewing the existing communication processes for calling for experts to identify improvements. The Committee should also take steps to improve the accessibility of HLPE reports to non-technical readers.