

**CSM Preliminary Positions on the CFS evaluation
and the discussion on Recommendations 1,2,3, 5,6
7 June 2017 – CFS Advisory Group and Bureau Meeting**

General remarks

- CSM welcomes the evaluation report and **appreciates the efforts of the evaluation team** to understand and assess the CFS after its reform.
- The **Evaluation report can contribute to a better understanding** of main achievements and limitations, and the identification of key action that can improve the CFS in achieving its vision and complying with its roles.
- The **CFS continues to be at the crossroads**. The discussion about the plan of action on the CFS Evaluation will show, if the CFS will be strengthened in the spirit of the Reform, or if it will be weakened in its relevance and its commitment to achieve its vision.
- We strongly believe that all our **discussions on the evaluation of the CFS should be guided by a collective will and effort to strengthen the CFS in the spirit of its reform**
- In this context, the evaluation report highlights the **special role of the Right to Food** for the vision and the roles of the CFS, as well the **special attention to smallholder food producers, indigenous peoples, particularly women, and people living in rural areas**, when building the CFS as we have it today (para 23-24).
- The evaluation confirms the **high relevance of the CFS** and the issues it has addressed. But it also highlights **the need to effectively respond to urgent issues** of high relevance for food security and nutrition, such as the severe food crises and famines in these days, or the mega-mergers debate at CFS 43 (para 51-52).
- We appreciate particularly the emphasis of the CFS evaluation report on **the need to strengthen the dissemination, use and application of CFS policy outcomes** (para 106-113). In our view, this topic should be seen among the priority areas of the CFS plan of action in response to the CFS evaluation.
- Open-Ended Working Groups play a major role in the CFS, particularly for the policy convergence and the consensus building process. Unfortunately, **the evaluation team did not participate in any of the OEWG sessions**. Mainly due to this gap, the **evaluation report does not identify the specific difficulties of the policy convergence and consensus building process in the CFS**. The evaluation misses to identify the main cleavages and obstacles for the policy convergence process, and how the different members and participants actually act in these discussions, from their particular perspective, and with what kind of contributions and intentions. The discussion on the follow-up to the evaluation should take this gap into account, and eventually address it. This includes the discussion on the question about how and when the concept of “*red lines*” can be legitimately used in the CFS without undermining the consensus-building model of the CFS as a whole.

Comments on the Recommendations 1,2,3,5, and 6:

On Recommendation 1: Strategic Framework for the CFS?

We affirm our full commitment to the process of discussion and follow-up of the evaluation in the spirit of strengthening the CFS and making the CFS more effective in compliance with the CFS reform.

In this spirit, we strongly recommend that **all key decisions are made in the plenary.**

We agree with the importance of having a clear strategy to strengthen the normative aspects of the CFS and translate these norms to effective action. However, the development of **a separate strategic framework might not be the most appropriate measure.** It is important to remember that the CFS is not an organization, but a broad and inclusive intergovernmental and international platform on food security and nutrition. The CFS is essentially a space for policy dialogue, and to advance convergence, coordination and coherence for food security and nutrition. In addition, one of the concerns is also that the CFS is getting too much preoccupied and involved on its own processes.

A strategic approach of the CFS should provide an instrument for planning, but also offer the flexibility for the CFS to respond to emerging and urgent priorities.

We support the proposal made by the delegate from Brazil that the **MYPOW be expanded to include such a strategic component.** The MYPOW could be expanded, for example, to a four-year period, with the strategic component ensuring that actions and processes strengthen the six roles of the CFS in the CFS Reform document (Coordination at global level; Policy convergence; Support and advice to countries; Coordination with the national and regional levels; promote accountability and share best practices at all levels; promoting the Global Strategic Framework for food security and nutrition.)

The follow-up to the evaluation will require a lot of efforts in the coming 16 months and we believe that these efforts should be directed towards the following priorities:

- Strengthening the effectiveness of the CFS in each of its 6 roles;
- Strengthening the role of the CFS to contribute to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food;
- Strengthening the dissemination, use and application and monitoring of CFS policy outcomes;
- Addressing the challenges of policy convergence and consensus building process in the CFS on a rights-based approach to food security and nutrition;

On Recommendation 2 + 3: MYPOW and Budget

- As we've said in other occasions: The MYPOW process needs to be linked to a realistic budget planning, yes, but **a donor-driven CFS MYPOW**, or a donor-dependent selective implementation of the MYPOW, as we have it **now is not acceptable.**
- In that sense, clear decisions need to be made urgently to **ensure that the CFS Budget is covered by non-earmarked and predictable funds.** We have made proposals, but we do not see any change in the contributions of the RBAs or the CFS members. The set-up of a sustainable funding mechanism for the CFS must be seen as a priority.
- The CSM submitted to the attention of CFS members and participants during the last months, several possible solutions to ensure a sustainable funding to the CFS. **Increasing significantly**

the RBAs contribution to the CFS would be instrumental to secure the MYPoW. In addition, other ways to **encourage the CFS membership to voluntarily contribute with predictable and regionally balanced funding** to the CFS should be further explored.

- The CFS **should include into the Plan of Action on the Evaluation a document which provides “robust safeguards against abuse and conflict of interests”, as recognized at CFS 43** (Document CFS 2016/43/9, para 17). The drafting and adoption of these safeguards should be finalized before the CFS accepts any further funding from the private sector or private philanthropic foundations. (see Recommendation 3, (ii)).

On Recommendation 5: Plenary

- According with the proposals of the CFS evaluation, the CFS should **redesign the Plenary in a way that it becomes again a vibrant platform that raises attention beyond the plenary.** The Plenary represents the sovereign and decision-making body of the CFS, it should be the place for the final negotiations and decisions as in many UN and other multilateral platforms. A rubber-stamping CFS is not an attractive option.
- Such approach has certainly more potential to attract the presence of high-level representatives of governments, the media and all actors, and would also take into account that the **Plenary is the most inclusive moment of the year**, attended by delegates from all constituencies, especially smallholder and family farmers, fisherfolks, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, landless, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, consumers and urban food insecure.
- The **negotiation methodologies for decision-making would have to be re-designed** in a way that the Plenary can effectively take the decisions, based on a sound preparation of the different options. Such an approach would also reduce the workload of the intersessional period, and would give more resonance to the final CFS deliberations, as the history shows.
- The Plenary should have the **capacity to include in a more flexible way emerging and urgent issues** in the agenda or side events. The capacity of the Plenary to host critical discussions on urgent matters that affect food security and nutrition, with the participation of those directly affected, is an important asset for the CFS and contributes to its mandate of promoting coordination and policy convergence.

On Recommendation 6: OEWG

- The **recommendations of the CFS evaluation on OEWG need to be discussed**, most of them are useful and can help to develop a better functioning of these bodies. However, as the evaluation team did not have first-hand impressions of the reality in these important policy convergence processes, they fall **short in identifying the actual problems of the OEWG.**
- The CFS should first identify **the specific difficulties and obstacles affecting OEWG processes and their efficiency.** This would be a first step to address the main problems, and allow to jointly **develop a methodology to improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of the OEWG.**
- One important precondition is that all the actors should demonstrate their **attitude towards a constructive way of negotiating**, otherwise every attempt for a solution will be jeopardized from the outset.
- With regard to specific obstacles, the CFS should **discuss the legitimate use of the so-called “red lines”.** We all come from different positions, we all have not-negotiable values. However, an indiscriminate use of red lines, for instance against the normative basis of the

space, or to block a highly relevant theme, or to explicitly condition the discussion of one theme to another one, brings the whole room into severe difficulties.

- We all need to take care of, and further **strengthen the consensus building process within the CFS**, in order to effectively comply with its policy convergence function on policies for food security and nutrition.
- An **increased support to translation and interpretation** services is important for the whole CFS, but particularly to ensure participation and inclusiveness in the OEWG.