

Biofuels and food security at the next session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), October 2013

Your participation matters!

Biofuels production – and the policies, subsidies and mandates behind much of the supply and demand in the biofuels market – has been directly linked to higher food prices and increased food price volatility in recent years. Demand for biofuels and high prices for food crops are also directly linked to land- and water-grabbing. Coordinated policy action at the global level is necessary to eliminate mandates and subsidies; protect the rights to food, land, and water; and ensure that biofuel production does not threaten food security.

What is happening?

In October 2011, the CFS recommended a review of biofuels policies, and requested the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) to produce a report on the positive and negative effects of biofuels on food security. The HLPE report was released at the end of June. The full report, its executive summary, and recommendations can be found [here](#).

At the CFS meeting in October, governments will consider the report and will make recommendations for action by international organizations, governments, and other stakeholders.

In between now and October, civil society can make clear to governments what recommendations are necessary to ensure that production of biofuels does not threaten food security or the right to food.

Why is it important to participate?

Strong engagement by organizations of smallholders and supportive organizations and academics is important to deliver several key messages to governments and other stakeholders in the CFS:

1. There is need for global action to ensure that biofuels do not compromise food security and are managed so that food access or resources necessary for the production of food – principally land, biodiversity, water, and labor – are not put at risk. Comprehensive food and bioenergy policies must be rooted first in local and national food systems, based on small-scale food producers, reinforcing agroecological approaches, gender equity, increasing their resilience and adhering to human rights obligations. Specific attention should be given to respecting and promoting “The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests.”
2. Mandatory targets, subsidies and other policies that artificially drive strong additional demand, leading to food price rises and food price volatility, must be eliminated.
3. The CFS should play a prominent role in directing biofuel development to serve the needs of smallholders. Research and development in biofuels should focus on developing those biofuels that do not have land use or food security impacts. Emphasis should be given to

improving access to renewable energy for smallholders in the world's poorest and most energy-insecure countries and regions.

One final reason to participate is to continue to strengthen the CFS. As civil society and social movements, we have pushed for the CFS to be reformed. Now the reformed CFS is the central space in the United Nations system for decisions on food and agriculture. Through the Civil Society Mechanism, we have the right to fully participate in the CFS, although the decisions taken remain the responsibility of governments. To use and strengthen this space is more important than ever.

How can we participate?

All actors involved can give their inputs and fully participate in the negotiations that will take place in the CFS. Civil society is organized through the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for the Committee on World Food Security. A CSM Working Group on biofuels, led by Sarojeni Rengam, will coordinate our inputs.

Concrete actions you can take:

1. Join the Biofuels working group of the Civil Society Mechanism. More information about the working group, including how to join, can be found [here](#). You may also communicate your ideas to the working group through the constituencies and the sub-regional groups of the CSM.
2. Communicate your ideas to the civil society representatives attending upcoming regional CSM consultations:
 - Latin America and Caribbean, 5-9 August in Colombia
 - South Asia, 24-26 August in Sri Lanka
 - West Asia and North Africa, 11-12 September
 - Europe and Central Asia, 12-13 September
 - Africa, 15-17 September in Liberia
3. Lobby your government to incorporate the key messages above in the positions they will take on biofuels at the CFS.

For further information, visit the [website](#) of the Civil Society Mechanism.