

Monitoring the Right to Food Guidelines and the CFS Innovative Monitoring Mechanism

Holding governments accountable to their legal human rights obligations, as well as ensuring that the commitments made and negotiated in international policy fora are implemented, has been a consistent challenge at all levels of government, and is one of the fundamental challenges in governance in many sectors, in particular with regards to the Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition.

The Committee on World Food Security will undergo a process of monitoring the Voluntary Guidelines for the Right to Adequate Food, to be presented during the 45th session in October 2018. This will be done utilizing the process recently adopted by the CFS.

The adoption of the [“Terms of Reference to share experiences and good practices in applying CFS decision and recommendations through organizing events at national, regional and global levels”](#)¹ (ToR for monitoring events) during CFS 43 in October 2016, was a crucial first step to start building the CFS innovative monitoring mechanism. This mechanism should not just be an additional workload to state authorities and civil society. Rather it should be beneficial in supporting the identification of good practices as well as of challenges and gaps in policymaking and implementation, which could guide the adoption of needed corrective measures at national, regional and international level.

With the unique role of the CFS as “the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform, for a broad range of committed actors to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and the realization of the right to adequate food”² the CFS-related monitoring events at national and regional levels are a unique opportunity. **They create a national or regional space where various existing actors involved in monitoring related to food security and nutrition converge and dialogue, creating synergies for more accountability and better implementation.** Actors involved would include, for instance, relevant government ministries, persons and communities most affected by hunger and malnutrition, national entities and platforms monitoring food security and nutrition, national human rights institutions, academia, CSO platforms, etc.

Organizing this type of monitoring events is an opportunity to:

- (a) Create a forum for CSOs to share feedback on current processes towards the implementation of the Right to Food;
- (b) Introduce problems, lessons learned, and recommendations, faced when implementing the Right to Food guidelines, shaping and informing the regional and international debates;
- (c) Make an important contribution to the gradual development of the monitoring mechanism, and its synergies with other process such as the Human Rights Treaty bodies and the SDGs;
- (d) Actively support the learning process for the implementation of the Right to Food Guidelines at a global level.

¹CFS, *Terms of Reference to share experiences and good practices in applying CFS decision and recommendations through organizing events at national, regional and global*, CFS 43, 2016, at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr182e.pdf>

² CFS Reform Document, paragraph 4, 2009, available at: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs0910/ReformDoc/CFS_2009_2_Rev_2_E_K7197.pdf

Guiding principles

Emerging from the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF), the CFS has agreed to follow its monitoring principles in the monitoring events at national, regional and global levels:³

- Be **human-rights based**, with particular reference to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food;
- Make it possible for decision-makers to be **accountable**;
- Be **participatory** and include assessments that involve all stakeholders and beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable;
- Be simple, yet comprehensive, accurate, timely and understandable to all, with indicators disaggregated by sex, age, region, etc., that **capture impact, process and expected outcomes**;
- Not duplicate existing systems, but rather **build upon and strengthen** national statistical and analytical capacities.

Additionally, the monitoring events should be:

- **Country led**, and focus on evaluating **national policy coherence**
- **Inclusive**
- **Ensure active participation**
- **Capturing both qualitative and quantitative aspects of progress**

Organizing events:

While we have created and maintained a participatory space for food and nutrition policymaking at the international level, these spaces, or their existence at all, vary in each national context, where policymaking has a more direct impact on communities. Bearing this in mind, each process to organize monitoring events will be different, however the key steps include:

1. Set up a **facilitation group**, either within an existing platform or calling for organizations to join. It is important to ensure that the most relevant actors who can support the content preparation are involved. In this case for the Right to Food Guidelines it should cover both the national and international dimensions, and include the relevant Government representatives, CSOs, and academia.
2. Set up a **CSO facilitation group** that ensures the active participation of the rights holders and affected communities, representing the most relevant constituencies (eg. small scale food producers, urban food insecure, women, youth, consumers, workers, indigenous peoples, landless, NGOs, communities in protracted crises).
3. Organize a preparation **meeting with the relevant government ministries** or bodies to discuss the preparation of the event utilizing the monitoring ToR. For more information on what to take into account when promoting the organization of CFS monitoring and interpreting the monitoring ToR, see XXXX
4. Propose a list of **key questions to frame the event**. Questions should be developed based on the national context, programs, etc., and in conjunction with the facilitation group.

³ CFS Terms of Reference," Section IV. Recommended approach for holding events at national, regional and global levels"

Framing the discussion:

Each country will have its own context, priority issues, and realities to tackle within the monitoring process. However, there are resources that can be used to support and guide the exercise. The [Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition](#)⁴ identifies *Seven Steps for States to implement the Right to Adequate Food*. These points can support the development of key questions and issues to address within the monitoring exercise with governments, which includes:

1. Have the food insecure populations been identified and is disaggregated data available? And has there been an analysis of the underlying causes of their food insecurity?
2. Has there been any assessment, in consultation with key stakeholders, of existing policies, institutions, legislation, programs and budget allocations to better identify both constraints and opportunities to meet the needs and rights of the food insecure?
3. Has the government adopted a national human-rights-based strategy for food security and nutrition as a roadmap for coordinated government action to progressively realize the right to adequate food? Does this strategy should include targets, timeframes, responsibilities and evaluation indicators that are known to all, and is a basis for the allocation of budgetary resources?
4. Have the roles and responsibilities of the relevant public institutions at all levels been established in order to ensure transparency, accountability and effective coordination and, if necessary, establish, reform or improve the organization and structure of these public institutions?
5. Has there been any integration of the right to food into national legislation, such as the constitution, a framework law, or a sectoral law, thus setting a long-term binding standard for government and stakeholders?
6. Have there been efforts to monitor the impact and outcomes of policies, legislation, programs and projects, with a view to measuring the achievement of stated objectives, filling possible gaps and constantly improving government action? This could include right to food impact assessments of policies and programs. Particular attention needs to be given to monitoring the food security situation of vulnerable groups, especially women, children and the elderly, and their nutritional status, including the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies.
7. Has there been the establishment of accountability and claims mechanisms, which may be judicial, extrajudicial or administrative, to enable rights-holders to hold governments accountable and to ensure that corrective action can be taken without delay when policies or programs are not implemented or delivering the expected services?

Additionally, the following resources could also be consulted:

- CFS Call for Experiences in the Use and Application of the Right to Food Guidelines
- CSM Guiding Questions for CSO synthesis report on the Use and Application of the Right to Food Guidelines
- [Screen State Action Against Hunger: How to use the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food to monitor public policies?](#)

⁴ CFS, *Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition*, "A.1 Implementation of the Right to Food", Fifth Version – 2016, at <http://www.fao.org/3/a-mr173e.pdf>

Please **share key outcomes and communications** for the monitoring events with the CFS! The CSM Monitoring Working Group members are able to support with technical guidance and support. Please feel free to contact mattheisen@fian.org for any questions!