Evaluation of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

Full Report

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Priscilla Claeys and Jessica Duncan
Independent Evaluation Team

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Acronyms

To increase the accessibility of this report, we have limited the use of acronyms. However, we recognize that many people engaged in the CSM and CFS are sometimes more familiar with acronyms. We are thus presenting a list of the main acronyms used in the CSM and CFS.

AG Advisory Group of the CFS Bureau

CC Coordination Committee (CSM)

CFS United Nations Committee on World Food Security

CSM International Food Security and Nutrition Civil Society Mechanism for Relations with the CFS

CSO Civil Society Organization

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FFA Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises

GSF Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (CFS)

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

HLPE High Level Panel of Experts (CFS)

LGBTQI+ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex, and others

MYPOW Multi-Year Program of Work (CFS)

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

OEWG Open Ended Working Group (CFS)

PSM Private Sector Mechanism

RBAs Rome-based Agencies (IFAD, FAO, WFP)

ToRs Terms of Reference

TTT Technical Task Teams (CFS)

VGGT Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of national food security (also known as TGs)

WFO World Farmers' Organization

WFP World Food Program of the United Nations

WG Policy Working Group (CSM)

WHO World Health Organization

UN United Nations

Executive Summary

Evaluation of CSM's internal dynamics

1) Meeting its mandate (see pp. 13-16 of report)

The CSM fully fulfills its roles and mandate. It is recognized as a key actor in the CFS by a broad range of CFS members and participants.

CSM processes allow participants to actively engage in CSM and CFS activities. The strong commitment of participating organizations has ensured that the CSM consistently produces well-prepared contributions and constructive policy proposals. Civil society actors are very positive about their participation in the CSM, and about their political victories at the CFS. Participating organizations see the CSM as a diverse, inclusive and strategic space that was secured by social movements, and as a good place for affirming a collective alternative vision for food security, grounded in the right to food and nutrition and food sovereignty.

The top three contributions of CSM participants to the work of the CSM are: providing knowledge and information, solidarity, and outreach. In turn, CSM participants gain new information, build alliances, and can place relevant issues on the CFS agenda. CSM participants also see the CSM as an important space for learning, training, and exchange, allowing some of them to advocate more effectively in other settings. Key barriers to participation are: finding financial resources, time, and understanding CFS processes. Additional barriers include difficulty in understanding the methodology of working and a lack of inclusiveness, especially for new CSM participants.

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a 'buddy system' that links new CSM actors to more experienced CSM actors to ensure smoother integration, including for Coordination Committee members.

2) The CSM Governance structures of the CSM: towards inclusiveness and diversity (see pp. 17-24 of report)

CSM governance mechanisms operate well and most of the inner tensions diagnosed in the 2014 CSM evaluation have been successfully addressed.

CSM participants generally evaluate gender, constituency and sub-regional balance within the CSM as good but imbalances in power, influence, capacity and resources remain between various participating organizations. The CSM must continue efforts to uproot and deconstruct patriarchal power relations within the CSM, beyond advocating for women's rights in CFS processes. Efforts must also be made towards strengthening youth engagement beyond the youth constituency itself. Finally, CSM should reinforce the participation of more actors from (central) Asia, the Middle East, Portuguese speaking countries, and the African Continent.

Recommendation 2: Continue reflecting on how to deconstruct patriarchal power relations within the CSM and consider developing gender equality guidelines and related training for application across the work of the CSM.

Recommendation 3: Develop quotas to enhance youth involvement in the Coordination Committee and Working Groups.

Recommendation 4: Develop a strategy to invite more people to participate in the CSM, selectively targeting organizations, sub-regions or constituencies that are under-represented in the CSM.

The CSM has demonstrated an ability to be self-reflexive as an inclusive facilitating space. To address under-representation issues within the CSM, it has explored the possibility of setting up a new constituency for communities under protracted crises, refugees and displaced people. The CSM has also taken steps to reinforce weaker or less active constituencies with an emphasis on the Women, Youth and Landless constituencies.

The CSM Fora are a key space for interaction and mobilization. Yet, participating in CSM/CFS activities is costly, and the CSM budget is only able to cover the participation of members of the Coordination Committee. Beyond the Coordination Committee, participation is thus constrained by/dependent on the ability of organizations to self-fund their attendance. This is an important obstacle to enforcing the balance requirements (i.e., constituencies, regions, gender) that are at the heart of the CSM.

Recommendation 5: Identify strategies to more strictly enforce balance requirements (youth, gender, constituency, sub-regional) in all CSM processes, notably by better collecting data about civil society participation in the CSM forum.

Recommendation 6: Consider asking for a financial contribution from self-funded participants to support the attendance of under-represented participants and enhance the inclusiveness of the CSM space.

3) The CSM Secretariat (see pp. 25-33 of report)

The CSM Secretariat is very skilled and competent in facilitating civil society participation to the CFS. It is actively reinforcing and protecting the guiding principles of the CSM.

The CSM Secretariat is widely appreciated and perceived to be professional, competent and supportive by both CSM participating organizations and other CFS members and participants. To address challenges identified in the 2014 CSM Evaluation, the CSM Secretariat has placed strong emphasis on developing and enforcing good processes. The focus on process has produced good results, notably improving trust, transparency and accountability in CSM activities and reducing conflict. The CSM Secretariat has also managed to actively assert its role as a facilitator and not as the coordinator of the CSM, repeatedly emphasizing that the CSM is a space and not an organization.

Recommendation 7: Continue to develop and implement guidelines and strategies to streamline and clarify CSM processes

4) CSM Working Groups (see pp. 34-38 of report)

The CSM Policy Working Groups are highly evaluated both internally and externally. Working Groups are widely effective in advancing the positions of civil society actors.

CSM Working Groups have developed as the heart of the CSM. Through Working Groups, CSM participants have shown high levels of commitment to, and engagement with, the CFS work streams, demonstrating a willingness to learn and work as a collective. There is strong awareness of the importance of ensuring diverse participation in Working Groups. To this end, constituencies and sub-regions operate as a 'check-list' of who needs to be engaged. Social movement's views are adequately prioritized within Working Groups, although some attention needs to be paid to ensuring that social movements further increase their engagement.

Coordinators and facilitators have found creative ways to consistently and effectively react to the demands of the CFS. As coordinators of the Working Groups, social movements give political orientation which is fundamental. The role of facilitator is also of paramount importance. Facilitation work tends to be concentrated in the hands of a few dedicated individuals, often involved in several Working Groups. A more diversified distribution of coordinators and facilitators would be a useful strategy for ensuring diversity of representation, capacity building, and prevent overloading particular CSM participants.

The follow-up mechanisms for thematic Working Groups once CFS negotiations are completed remain unclear, and there is currently a lack of consolidation of expertise and experiences at the end of the policy cycle. Interactions and communications between Working Groups and between Working Groups and the Coordination Committee are sub-optimal, and too dependent on the CSM Secretariat.

Recommendation 8: Address over reliance on a small number of individuals by developing a strategy towards a more diversified distribution of Working Group coordinators and facilitators to address over-reliance on a small number of individuals. Streamline communication across Working Groups. Explore ways to address imbalances in social movement involvement in different CFS work streams and intersessional activities.

Recommendation 9: Develop a strategy to increase the institutional memory of the CSM Working Groups, assigning

clear responsibilities for this task and laying the ground for efforts towards the use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes. Develop protocols, including leadership strategies, to support the transition from policy to implementation.

Recommendation 10: Develop communication pathways, or feedback mechanisms, between the Working Groups and the Coordination Committee to ensure political coherence and focus.

5) The CSM Coordination Committee and Advisory Group (see pp. 35-47 of report)

The Coordination Committee has developed as a space of co-responsibility and mutual accountability. The trust and working environment of the Coordination Committee has greatly improved since 2014.

The Coordination Committee is perceived positively in terms of legitimacy, although a bit less in terms of functionality and transparency. There are concerns about the workload and responsibilities that come with being an effective Coordination Committee member. In addition, some members think that the Coordination Committee spends too much time on internal issues at the expense of content. Some also call for more strategizing by the Coordination Committee to identify which CFS issues are priorities for CSM.

Recommendation 11: Consider devoting more time in Coordination Committee meetings to developing a political strategy outlining clear priorities and areas of focus.

The issue of regional balance on the Advisory Group remains sensitive, but past tensions were adequately dealt with by the Coordination Committee and seem to have been overcome.

Sub-regional Coordinators do not appear to have full clarity about their roles, the tools they can use, how they could better support certain actors or constituencies within their sub-region, and how they can facilitate the process of coordinating a sub-regional agenda. The role of sub-regional Coordinators is potentially more complex than that of constituency Coordinators for the diversity of views that they need to integrate.

Recommendation 12: Further clarify the roles and identify the skills needed for sub-regional Coordinators to be effective, and consider providing more targeted training or support to strengthen them. Develop Terms of Reference for the sub-regional Coordinators outlining expectations for communication, as well as use, application and monitoring of CFS outputs.

Evaluation of the CSM's external dynamics with a view to the future

1) Future, relevance and visibility of the CFS (see pp. 46-49 of report)

The CFS is under threat and urgently needs to address a number of key challenges.

CSM participants have ranked the top five challenges to the future of the CFS as: a lack of financial support for the CFS, a lack of political commitment by states, no support for dissemination of CFS outputs, CFS actors blocking progress towards monitoring, and the lack of financial support for the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE). Despite these challenges, and the frustration generated by the lack of uptake of CFS outputs by governments and Rome-based agencies (RBAs), CSM participants remain very committed to the CFS.

2) Future challenges for the CSM (see pp. 50-54 of report)

The CSM is facing a number of challenges in the short to medium term, and will need to continue to fight to maintain its status in the CFS.

CSM participants identify the following as the biggest challenges to their future work within the CFS: a lack of financial support, the ongoing challenge to a human-rights approach at the CFS, the failure to prioritize the voices of those most affected in the CFS, and the increasing presence of the Private Sector Mechanism. In light of these challenges, we see both the need for the CSM to reflect on how to protect and reinforce the reform principle of prioritizing the voices of those most affected. This principle should be further anchored in the governance structure of the CFS, and more explicitly and firmly translated into specific CFS processes. We note with satisfaction that the terms of reference of the

recently established CSM Working Group on Global Food Governance cover this issue, as well as many of the inter-related governance challenges identified above.

The external communication strategy of the CSM puts a heavy focus on reinforcing the normative and human-rights based focus of the CFS. This is a key point of agreement and convergence within the CSM but, as was noted in the CFS evaluation, the right to food does not have a high profile on the agenda of the CFS.

Recommendation 13: Develop a strong statement on how the CFS should, in line with a human rights-based approach, better prioritize the voices of the organizations representing the most affected within the context of a 'multi-stakeholder' platform. Clarify the use of the term 'multi-actor' platform by CSM actors.

Recommendation 14: Continue active engagement with the Friends of the Right to Food group to create stronger relations with states to put the right to food and nutrition more strongly on the CFS agenda.

3) CSM-CFS Relations (see pp. 55-56 of the report)

The CSM is widely appreciated by CFS members and other participants for its consistent and professional engagement.

To preserve the quality and impact of CSM engagement with the CFS in the future, the CSM should address the following issues: intersessional engagement of CSM actors remains quite weak overall, with a key group of actors playing a dominant role in multiple intersessional work streams; CSM actors are perceived by many member states as too present or influential within CFS processes; the CSM has achieved so much convergence in its policy positions that there is a small risk it becomes a bit monolithic, possibly weakening its commitment to diversity ; and, the insistence of CSM actors on the normative role of the CFS, particularly the demand for having policy recommendations as outcomes of every process, is not well understood by diplomats.

In addition, other CFS participants, and member states in particular, express frustration and irritation with the tone and attitude the CSM actors take during negotiations. They perceive CSM actors as too ideological, dogmatic, pushy, and insistent. A number of states representatives expressed that often the CSM does not fully participate in wider efforts to negotiate and find compromise, and positions themselves as the only "good guys" in the debate.

Recommendation 15: Develop a more concrete strategic vision for the CSM to selectively engage with targeted priority policy processes.

Recommendation 16: Reflect collectively on the negative perceptions of the CSM by other CFS participants and develop strategies to address these without compromising the important political role and function of the CSM.

4) Use and application of CFS outputs (see pp. 57-64 of the report)

CSM actors have demonstrated their ability to turn CFS outputs into popular tools to be used in grassroots struggles, with concrete impacts on the ground.

CSM participants rank the top five contributions of CFS policy outcomes to peoples' struggles as: providing information, policy or advocacy work, awareness raising, alliance building, and dialogue spaces with policy-makers. To date there has been a heavy focus on getting good policy outcomes, at the expense of considering what happens next. The top five obstacles to the use and application of CFS outputs are: financial support, the political situation, the lack of training, the lack of appropriate materials (e.g. in the local language) and the lack of knowledge (how to apply them to the local context). We note three additional obstacles: the lack of spaces similar to the CFS at the national level (where dialogue can take place and where civil society organizations are granted a seat at the table); the lack of support by FAO for the CFS agenda, and lack of uptake of CFS outputs by FAO and other Rome-based Agencies; and, the fact that CSM participating organizations identify such a diversity of priority areas for their work that it may be difficult to assemble a critical mass of organizations to join forces around the use and application of a priority number of outputs. There is a need to identify and balance a clear and inclusive political agenda for the CSM with the diversity of interests of participating organizations.

Overall, the collective ability of the CSM participating organizations to "bring Rome home" is still very weak. There is a lot of eagerness for the CSM to do more at the national level, notably in terms of training, awareness or advocacy or as watchdogs of state implementation. At the same time, there is currently a lack of clarity on how the CSM as a space could facilitate efforts by participating organizations to 'domesticate' CFS outputs.

Recommendation 17: Identify and implement strategies for Working Groups to play a stronger role in the dissemination, use, and application of CFS outcomes in the future, building on the knowledge and expertise acquired by CSM participants in the negotiation process.

Recommendation 18: Identify a small selection of priority CFS outputs to translate into peoples' manuals and disseminate through CSM participating organizations.

Recommendation 19: Create more synergies at national and sub-regional level, and better engage with FAO and other Rome-based Agencies where appropriate, to enhance dissemination activities.

Recommendation 20: Develop and implement strategies for capacity-building for participating organizations to effectively lobby national governments to take steps towards the implementation of CFS outputs.

Future outlook: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats

CSM STRENGTHS	CSM WEAKNESSES
• Perceived as very professional, recognized as key actor in CFS • Articulates clear positions, speaks as one • Positive perceptions of participation • Very skilled Secretariat, good processes • CSM governance structures operate well • Increased inclusivity • Efforts to reinforce weaker constituencies (women, youth, landless) brought good results • Reflexivity and openness to new constituencies e.g. communities under protracted crises, refugees and displaced people • Diversity of expertise and interests • Social movements and NGOs are mutually accountable • Coordination Committee operates as space of trust, transparency and co-responsibility • CSM participating organizations have demonstrated their ability to turn CFS outcomes into popular tools to be used in grassroots struggles • CSM is an effective space for training and exchange • Working Groups work well, high level of engagement in CFS workstreams • Good working relationships between Working Group coordinators and facilitators • New Working Group on Governance responds to key threats on CSM work (e.g., rights-based approach, conflicts of interest with private sector, how to reinforce CFS in relation to other fora, follow up on CFS evaluation, HLPE report on multi-stakeholder partnerships)	• CSM perceived as not welcoming/cliquey by newcomers • Over-reliance on a key number of individuals (e.g. in Working Group) • CSM governance structures difficult to grasp • External communication • Sub-regional balance remains sensitive issue • CSM participants struggle to keep up with information flows • Data collection around who attends the CSM Forum is insufficient to fully assess inclusivity • Self-funded participants in CSM forum threaten the balance requirements that are at heart of CSM (constituencies, sub-regions, gender) • Under-representation of some sub-regions and of youth in CSM activities • Sub-regions do not function optimally and sub-regional Coordination Committee members have no clarity about their roles • Consultation and reporting (two-way communication) by Coordination Committee members remains inconsistent • Differences in levels of engagement and imbalances in power, influence, capacity and resources between various organizations, constituencies and sub-regions; risk that some organizations dominate discussions • Ability of the CSM participating organizations to bring Rome home is still very weak

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CSM	THREATS FACING CSM
• Develop a political vision to guide CSM engagement in CFS • Prioritize policy processes • Develop clear statement and vision on how to prioritize the affected in multi-stakeholder governance in line with human rights approach • Develop strategy for disseminating and monitoring application of selected CFS outcomes, support with training and materials/tools • Develop processes for capturing knowledge accumulated in policy processes • Continue to develop full gender equality within CSM processes • Build better communication between Working Groups (WGs), between WGs and Coordination Committee and between WGs and sub-regions/constituencies • Strengthen internal and external communication • Build stronger relations/strategies with states • Develop sub-regional synergies • Opportunity to work more with Rome-based Agencies • Friends of the Right to Food • Agroecology process • Build on the Women's Empowerment Forum • CSM is institutional memory of CFS	• Top challenges facing CFS (ranked by CSM): lack of financial support, lack of political commitment by states, no support for dissemination of CFS outcomes, and CFS actors blocking progress towards monitoring • Top challenges facing CSM (ranked by CSM): lack of financial support, challenge to a human-rights approach at the CFS, failure to prioritize the voices of those most affected in the CFS, and increasing presence of Private Sector Mechanism • Reluctance of Rome-Based Agencies to play leading role in the use, application and implementation of CFS outcomes • Negative perceptions of the CSM as pushy, righteous, too influential and not invested in consensus • CSM insistence on normative role of the CFS is not understood by diplomats • Bureau reassessing relations to Advisory Group • Trend towards completing negotiations intersessionally and not in plenary

Introduction

Background and purpose

The 2018 independent evaluation of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) has been conducted with the aim of assessing how the CSM is functioning in line with its founding document, guiding principles and mandate. As the Evaluation Team, we were tasked with evaluating key aspects of the CSM functioning in the context of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) as it is today, 8 years after the Reform, and 3 years after the last evaluation. As per the terms of reference (ToRs), the evaluation addresses the following key dimensions:

• **The CSM internal dynamics**: the internal ways of working of the CSM, the successes achieved and the challenges faced by its participating organizations across the different levels of articulation of their struggles.

• The **CSM external dynamics**: the effectiveness and usefulness of the CFS global governance space for civil society organizations and social movements engaged in the CSM; this external dimension is analyzed in conjunction with a **forward-looking vision for the CFS**, enabling us to assess the role of the CSM in relation to a changing CFS .

Methodology

The evaluation mainly used qualitative data collection, namely, semi-structured interviews and an online survey. In order to triangulate the data collected through the survey and interviews, and inform the research design, we undertook a strategic review of CSM and CFS documents. We started by reviewing previous evaluations and Annual Reports and used this review to identify key issues to be included in the research design. We considered the documents

produced by the Working Groups (WGs), as well as a number of key CSM documents shared by the Secretariat and/or found on the CSM website (see annex 1).[1]

In consultation with the CSM Secretariat, we identified over 50 possible people to interview. We set out to prioritize interviews based on knowledge, needs and representation (i.e., gender, constituency, region, language and age), as well as taking into account different roles within the CSM (e.g. Coordination Committee, Advisory Group, Working Groups, Facilitators of Working Groups, and forum participants). We also identified non-CSM actors (i.e., governments and relevant agencies) to interview to better assess outside perceptions of the CSM. In total, 46 interviews were conducted between March and June 2017: 35 representatives of a variety of actors participating directly in the CSM;[2] 7 government representatives, and 4 representatives from other participant categories to the CFS. Interviews were conducted in English, French and Spanish predominantly over the phone or via Skype. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes to 2 hours. All participants gave verbal consent to participate in the evaluation. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and anonymized. 7 people preferred to submit their answers in writing.

The online survey was launched on 13 March 2017 and was open for a total of 8 weeks. The Secretariat sent out a special update to CSM mailing list. There were also a series of follow up and reminder emails sent out. The survey was open for a total of eight weeks. The survey was translated in the three working languages of the CSM (English, Spanish and French) and took about 20-30 minutes to complete. This survey was designed with input and support from Josh Brem-Wilson and Nora McKeon and thus includes a few additional questions to support their research agenda. We received a total of 82 responses.

The majority of responses (63%) were in English (see Figure 1) but we note that not everyone who responded to the survey in English had English as a first language. We note that the survey is not representative of the CSM but is fairly representative of a diversity of views within the CSM as it was completed by all constituencies and all but two-regions. However, some biases need to be accounted for. We had no respondents from Central Europe or West Asia and Western Europe was over-represented. Further, constituencies were not evenly covered with NGOs, Indigenous Peoples and small-holders over-represented, along with observers (including academics) (see Figure 2). Some people selected more than one constituency, highlighting possible tensions around the clarity and application of constituencies (see section below on Constituencies). There was acceptable gender balance with 44% of respondents identifying as female, 51% as male and 4% preferring not to respond (see Figure 3). The breakdown of ages was biased towards slightly older participants with 38% between 30 and 44 years old and 62% of respondents over 45 years old (see Figure 4). No one under 30 completed the survey.

[1] We strongly recommend the inclusion of dates to all CSM documents, which is important not only for archiving and for the institutional memory of the CSM, but also to provide added clarity as to which document is most recent and relevant.

[2] Out of a total of 46 interviews, 21 interviewees served on the Coordination Committee and 7 of these served on the Advisory Group at some point since 2014.

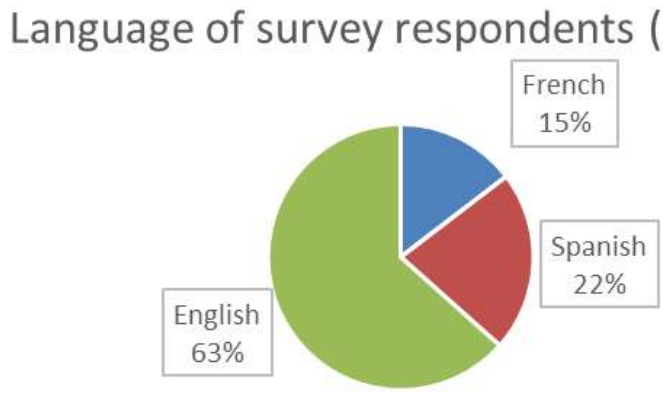

Figure 1 Language used by survey respondents

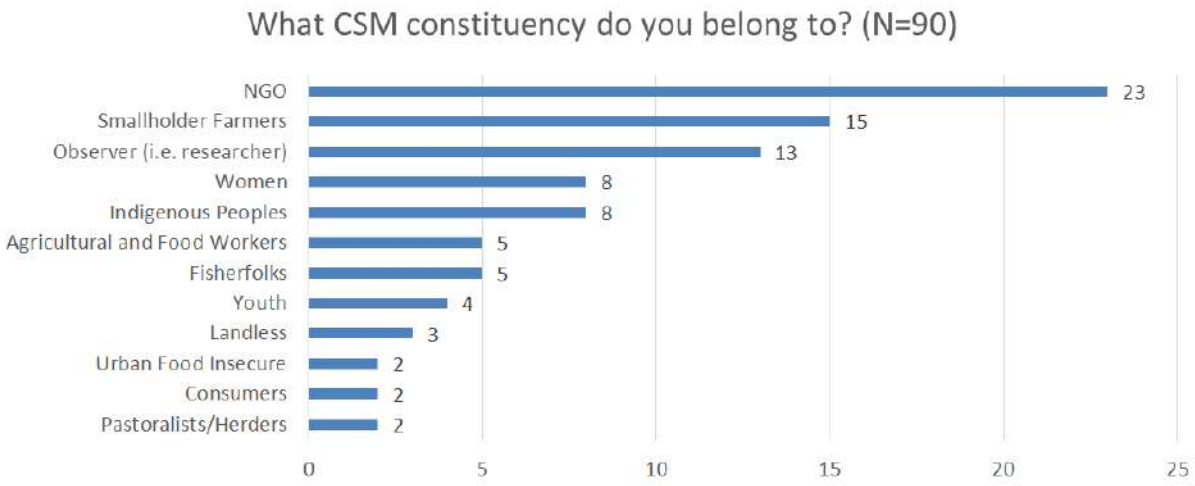

Figure 2 Constituency identity of survey respondents (online survey Q 2)

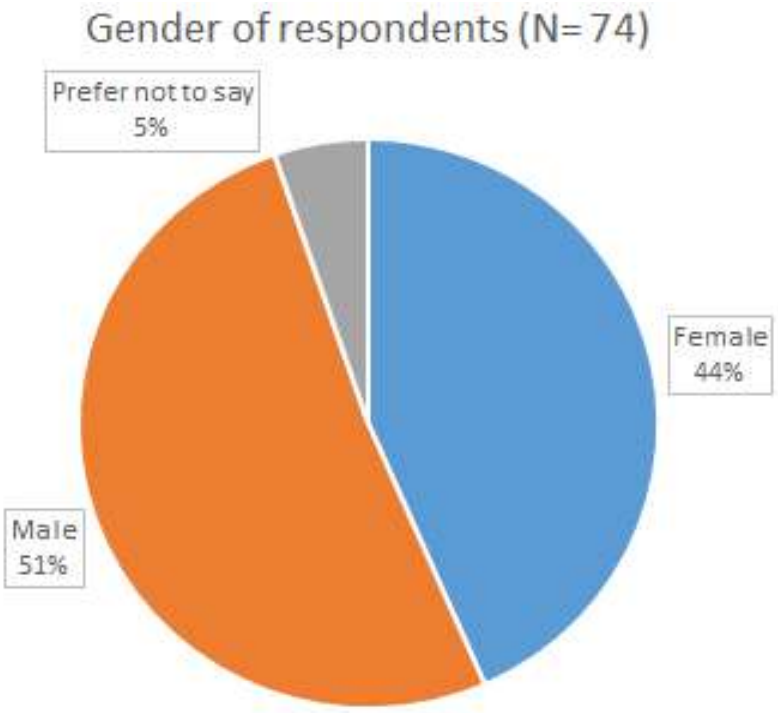

Figure 3 Gender of survey respondents (online survey Q 56)

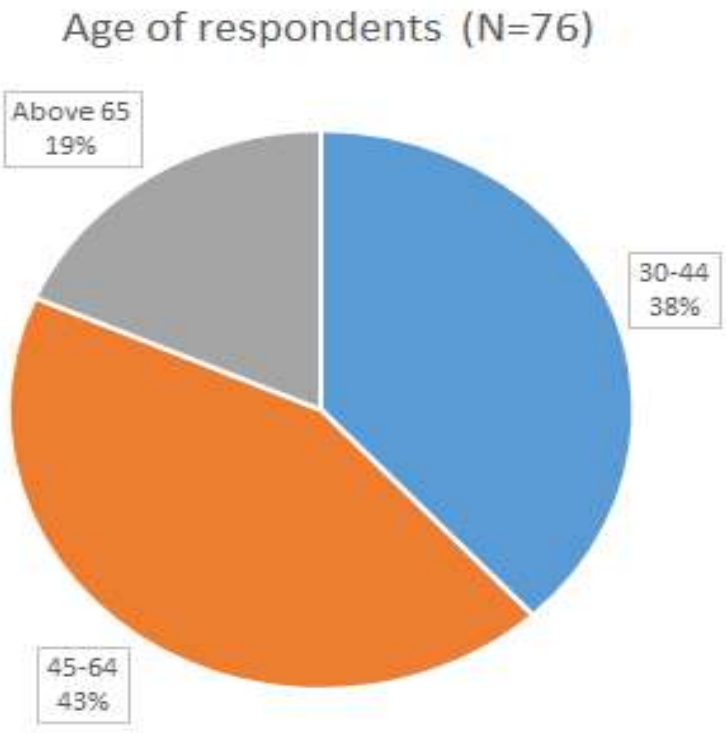

Figure 4 Age of survey respondents (online survey Q 54)

Evaluation of the CSM's internal dynamics

In this section we present the results of the evaluation of the internal dynamics of the CSM. More specifically we consider:

1. The mandate of the CSM
2. The governance structures of the CSM
3. The CSM Secretariat
4. The CSM Working Groups
5. The CSM Coordination Committee and Advisory Group

1) Meeting its mandate

The CSM fully fulfills its roles and mandate. It is recognized as a key actor in the CFS by a broad range of CFS members and participants.

According to the CSM Founding Document, the essential role of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) is to facilitate the participation of CSOs in the work of the CFS, including input to negotiation and decision-making. The CSM will also provide a space for dialogue between a wide range of civil society actors where different positions can be expressed and debated. The CSM will present common positions to the CFS where they emerge and the range of different positions where there is no consensus.

To fulfil its facilitation role, the CSM can perform a series of functions including:

i) broad and regular exchange of information, analysis and experience;

ii) developing common positions as appropriate;

iii) communicating to the CFS and, as appropriate, its Bureau through representatives designated by an internal self-selection process within each civil society category; and,

iv) convening a civil society forum as a preparatory event before CFS sessions if so decided by the civil society mechanism.

The CSM fulfills its mandate and meets the expectations of the 2009 reform in terms of facilitating civil society participation in the work of the CFS. Overall, the functioning of the CSM is effective and is perceived by other CFS member and participants as professional. CSM processes and procedures allow civil society participants to actively engage in CSM and CFS activities. We note consistent participation of Civil Society Organizations facilitated through the CSM at the CFS Annual Sessions (see Figure 5). The active and effective CSM Secretariat and the strong commitment of participating organizations have ensured that the CSM consistently produces well-prepared contributions as well as clear and constructive policy proposals. The CSM is recognized as a key actor in the CFS by a broad range of members and participants.

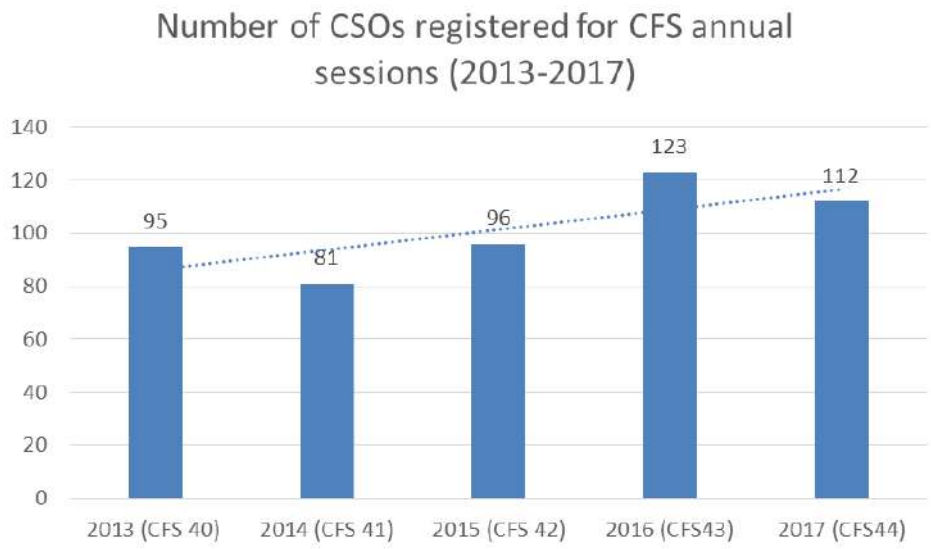

Figure 5 Civil society organization registered for CFS Annual Sessions (2013-2017)
Source: CFS Annual Reports (2013-2017)

Civil society actors are very positive about their participation in the CSM, and about the political victories they have collectively won through the CSM, signaled by the uptake and adoption of several CSM proposals during policy negotiations. Examples of some of these achievements that were mentioned to us include successfully negotiating the inclusion of agroecology to the Multi-Year Program of Work (MYPOW) 2018-2019, water recommendations (2015), positive outcomes of the CFS Forum on Women's empowerment[3] in the context of food security and nutrition (2017), the process of monitoring the Voluntary Guidelines for the Right to Adequate Food (2018), successfully negotiating strong and progressive language in outcomes such as Connecting small-holders to markets (2016), and working towards the use, application and monitoring of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGTs) (from 2012 onwards).

From the perspective of the organizations sending people to participate in the CSM, the top reasons for participating include: the ability to get and share new information, the possibility to influence policy and bring the voice of small-scale food producers, and the opportunity to build networks and international coordination across scales. Participating organizations see the CSM as a diverse, inclusive and strategic space that was gained by social movements, and as a good place for affirming a collective alternative vision, grounded in the right to food and food sovereignty.

When asked what they have contributed to the CSM, participants who responded to the online survey highlighted: providing knowledge and information, solidarity, and outreach (see Box 1).

[3] The CFS Outcomes of the Forum explicitly ask CFS to mainstream in its work women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality and to allow CEDAW and G34 to guide its work.

Box 1 What actors have contributed to the CSM (online survey Q 10)

Here is how the CSM participants have ranked their contributions to the CSM.

1. Knowledge/information
2. Solidarity
3. Outreach
4. Applying CFS outcomes in grassroots struggles
5. Specific expertise
6. Political understanding
7. Strategic framing/contextualisation
8. Testimonies
9. Coordination/facilitation
10. Time of salaried staff

In turn, respondents of the survey noted that through participation in the CSM they gained: new information, alliance building, and getting relevant issues on the CFS agenda (see Box 2).

Box 2 What organizations receive from participating in the CSM (online survey Q 11)

Here is how CSM participants have ranked what their organizations get from participating in the CSM.

1. New information
2. Alliance building
3. Put relevant issues on the agenda
4. Political analysis and strategizing
5. Solidarity
6. Ability to change policy
7. Experience
8. Ensure voices of most affected are heard
9. New methods for collective working
10. Recognition of struggles
11. Shift dominant thinking
12. Important policy outcomes

The survey results were reinforced by interviews where CSM participants described the CSM as a great space for learning, training and exchange. Some explained that the skills they learned through the CSM helped them advocate more effectively in other settings.

The survey found that English speakers perceive their participation in the CSM as quite easy, whereas Spanish and French speakers as well as those not comfortable in any of these three languages, have a bit more difficulty participating. Across all three language groups, key barriers to participation are: finding financial resources, finding time, and understanding the CFS and its process (see Box 3). In addition, some respondents highlighted the difficulty in understanding the methodology of work and, especially for new CSM participants, the perception of CSM 'cliques', disregarding attitudes, and lack of inclusiveness. Some also noted that a small number of people appeared to have the lion's share of responsibility and influence. This was confirmed through interviews.

Box 3 Barriers to working on CSM activities (online survey Q 13)

Here is how the CSM participants have ranked barriers to participating in CSM-related work.

1. Financial constraints
2. Finding time
3. A lack of responsiveness by institutional actors (member states, UN officials, etc.) to civil society's agenda
4. Understanding the CFS and its processes
5. A lack of connection between CFS work and your organization's concerns
6. Not being able to speak your language
7. Complexity of the issues
8. Being confident about your participation
9. Finding capacity

Finally, the survey indicated that a majority of participants started to be involved in the CSM as a result of being invited. To ensure ongoing and increased participation in the CSM and improve inclusiveness, CSM actors could deliberately extend more invitations to attend, selectively targeting organizations that are under-represented in the CSM (see below). This would also address the issue of attracting more and new people to the CSM, which a number of respondents identified as important.

2) The Governance structures of the CSM: towards inclusiveness and diversity

CSM governance mechanisms operate well and most of the inner tensions that were diagnosed during the 2014 CSM evaluation have been successfully addressed. Perceptions of participation are overall positive but there is work to do on creating a more inclusive environment, particularly for new actors, youth and non-English speakers, and to address gender dynamics. Targeted efforts are also needed towards specific sub-regions.

The governance structure of the CSM is grounded around the CSM Coordination Committee and CSM Advisory Group. CSM Coordination Committee members are elected through autonomous processes taking place independently in the 11 CSM constituencies and 17 sub-regions. In addition, CSM Policy Working Groups are established to address key work streams of the CSM and CFS. Coordination Committee members are expected to serve as coordinators for the Working Groups and are supported by technical facilitators. Actors of the CSM can come together annually in Rome at the CSM forum which takes place in advance of the CFS annual sessions.

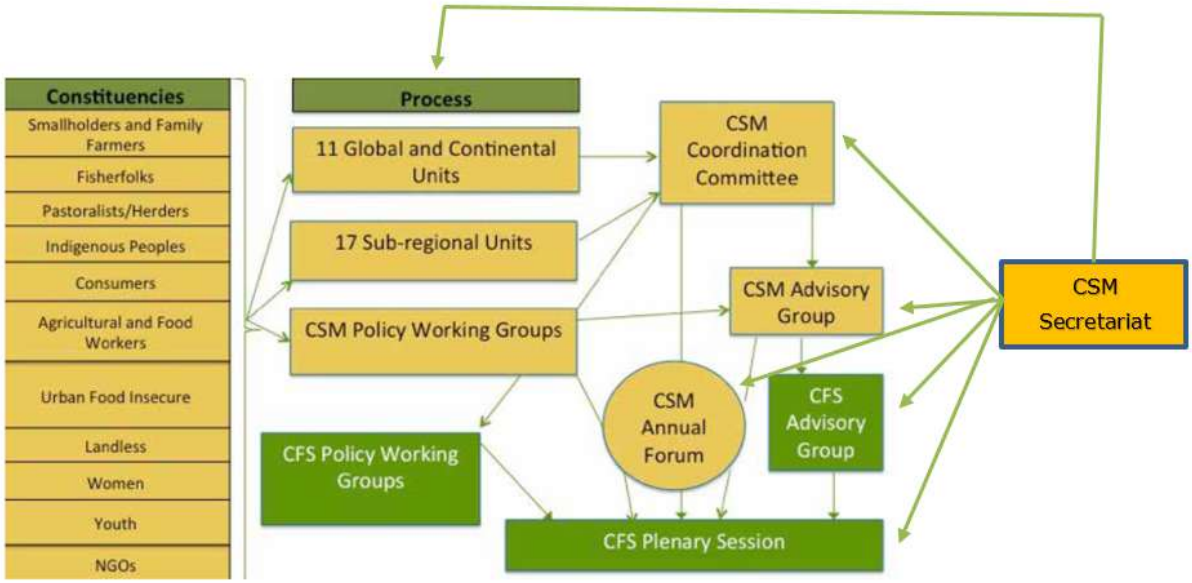

Figure 6 CSM Working Structure
Source: Adapted from CSM Annual Report 2016-2017

Overall governance of the CSM

The sophisticated mechanisms of the CSM serve to enable the engagement of a diversity of constituencies and sub-regions, with attention to sectoral, regional and gender balance. Currently, balance requirements or quotas exist for sub-regions and constituencies, as well as for women who are meant to make up 50% of participants. These requirements are formally enforced in the composition of the Coordination Committee and Advisory Groups but they also operate as checklists for other CSM activities, such as Working Groups (see below), and to a limited extent, the

CSM Forum. These have proven effective to guarantee the inclusion of a diversity of actors, and this diversity has enabled the CSM to develop policy positions on a wide range of issues and actively engage in all CFS work streams. At the same time, the complexity of the CSM's governance structure remains difficult to explain. While the CSM Welcome Kit[4] has been well received, it is important for the CSM Secretariat to continue to put emphasis on explaining CSM governance processes to newcomers, in particularly new Coordination Committee members[5] (see section below on the CSM Coordination Committee for more detail).

CSM participants overall evaluate gender, constituency and sub-regional balance within the CSM as good, although more work needs to be done to support full gender equality as well as youth engagement. Moreover, within the CSM there remain imbalances in power, influence, capacity and resources between various participating organizations. Imbalances exist between and amongst constituencies and sub-regions of the Coordination Committee as well as across Working Groups (see below). In the context of these disparities, we encourage CSM actors to systematically enforce the balance requirements that are at the heart of the CSM governance structures.

Youth

There is currently no quota (or formal balance requirement) for youth, but considerable efforts have been made in recent years to engage more youth, notably through the consolidation of the youth constituency (see below). In the future, it may be advisable for the CSM to develop specific quotas to enhance youth involvement in the Coordination Committee and Working Groups (i.e. across constituencies and sub-regions and beyond the youth constituency strictly speaking), considering the importance of enabling the participation of young leaders, and increasing challenges relating to farm renewal and succession, rural employment and barriers to entering farming for the younger generations.

Gender

Based on survey results and interviews, we conclude that CSM participants positively assess gender balance across CSM activities. That said, some CSM participants expressed concerns about men dominating certain discussions, speaking roles, or working groups. An instance of sexual harassment was also reported to, and adequately dealt with, by the Coordination Committee. Further efforts should be made to address gender dynamics within the CSM, and in that regard we welcome recent developments such as the elaboration of a shared vision of the women's constituency, the outcomes of the Women's Empowerment Forum, attention to inclusive language in CSM documents, and the development of shared CSM values around gender. We encourage the Coordination Committee to open a space for regular dialogue on gender issues and dynamics within the CSM.

[4] The Welcome Kit is an accessible tool to start navigating the complex spaces of the CSM and CFS. It is available here http://www.csm4cfs.org/csm-welcome-kit/

[5] Coordination Committee members are responsible for coordinating specific constituencies or sub-regions. When referring to the activities they undertake to inform and consult their constituencies or sub-regions, we call them constituency Coordinators or sub-regional Coordinators in this report. Recognizing that they are often called facilitators, we have opted for Coordinators to avoid confusion with Working Group facilitators and emphasize that these are members of the Coordination Committee.

Constituencies

With regard to constituencies, there appears to be a good balance of sectors within the CSM, although many survey participants found this difficult to assess. In terms of under-representation, those surveyed felt that there is insufficient participation of organizations representing the landless, youth, and refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs). These gaps have been recognized by the Coordination Committee, and efforts have been made in recent years to ensure that the CSM operates as an inclusive space.

The CSM has demonstrated an ability to be self-reflexive as a facilitating space, and to act upon the challenges it faces in terms of improving representation. Three developments are worth highlighting. First, the CSM has looked into the possibility of setting up a new constituency of organizations of communities living in protracted crises, of refugees and internally displaced people (see Box 4). While it is premature to draw any conclusions from this process, we welcome the quality of the discussions that have taken place, and the attention paid to the importance of opening the CSM to a broader diversity of relevant actors, while preserving its quality as a space that gives priority to social movements.[6]

Second, specific attention has been paid to reinforcing weaker or less active constituencies and addressing imbalances in the representation of different constituencies (i.e., missing constituency Coordinators) with an emphasis on the Women, Youth and Landless constituencies. This has benefited from specific budget allocation and appears to have brought substantive results, particularly with regards to the Women, Landless and Youth constituencies which have been invigorated.

We welcome the use of visioning exercises that have been undertaken in this context to help develop a shared agenda and understanding, identify objectives and entry points in relation to various CSM and CFS activities, and reflect on ways to spread the views of the constituency in the work of all CSM Working Groups. While this good practice could be an effective way to ensure that the priorities of the respective constituencies are adequately taken into account in policy processes, some constituencies are more mature or consolidated than others (e.g. small-holders) and already have clear political strategies and objectives.

Third, the Indigenous Peoples constituency recently requested a name change for the CSM to the "Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples Mechanism". The International Indian Treaty Council has urged the CSM to consider this name change so as to ensure the full participation of Indigenous Peoples and the consistent application of the dispositions in UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in CFS policy processes. From our interviews with Indigenous Peoples' representatives, we understand that it is important for Indigenous Peoples to have their own identity when navigating the UN system and that some fear that the civil society terminology, which does not fit well with Indigenous Peoples' own institutions, could passively marginalize Indigenous Peoples. The request was discussed at the the CC

[6] It is worth highlighting that the CSM is a 'political' space in the sense that it does not facilitate the participation of grassroots communities but rather of organized movements representing the affected. Many people who attend CFS meetings through the CSM are political leaders who are involved in international struggles to defend the right to food and food sovereignty.

meeting in July 2018 and the CC found consensus on this. The CSM is now checking the legal and procedural implications in order to prepare the formal decision enabling the name change.

We would like to further highlight four issues that may require more attention in the future. First, some actors or organizations appear over-represented within the CSM. While the process for electing constituency Coordinators has improved since the 2014 evaluation (see below), important disparities remain. Some constituencies are diverse, with different organizational representatives taking on the role of Coordinator, but other constituencies were described as being under the "guardianship of particular organizations", with the associated risk that some "heavy weight" actors may dominate certain processes/discussions. Some questions were also raised as to whether leading organizations within the constituencies were doing their best to reach out and include new organizations. We also heard specific concerns about the important presence of La Via Campesina within the CSM. La Via Campesina encompasses many constituencies and is present in most Working Groups, and its involvement in CFS related work is facilitated by a dedicated La Via Campesina support staff based in Rome. At the same time, others noted that this presence is consistent with the fact that La Via Campesina is the largest and most organized social movement of food producers, and that many La Via Campesina representatives have accepted to take on leading roles and responsibilities within the CSM. In addition, many view La Via Campesina's active participation as key to the functioning of a strong CSM, since La Via Campesina has a clear political stance and leadership on many issues discussed at CFS.

Second, although NGOs are recognized as one of the 11 constituencies and sit on the Coordination Committee, in practice many NGOs in the CSM function more as a support constituency[7] to the other constituencies than as a distinct constituency in and of themselves. As one interviewee explained, this support role is the outcome of a mutual or self-selection process and of the explicit alignment of some NGOs with the objectives of food sovereignty. The NGO constituency is very heterogeneous, and it contains large and small, Northern and Southern NGOs, which do not all necessarily see their roles as one of support. At the same time, however, this support role is clearly embedded in the ways in which the Working Groups function, since Working Groups are led by a social movement coordinator supported by a technical facilitator from an NGO (see section on Working Groups). This support function, combined with the fact that the CSM often speaks as one, may explain the perception of some CFS members and participants that the big development NGOs are not active in the CSM. We welcome the support granted by NGOs and the emphasis put by all CSM participants on prioritizing the voices of social movements, but also note that some of the participating organizations think that NGO support is too focused on La Via Campesina, while other less established movements are perhaps more in need of such support.

Third, a growing number of researchers have attended the CFS, some of whom are supportive of the work of the CSM. There have been instances where 'allied' researchers were brought in by the CSM to provide evidence that could back some CSM claims in policy negotiations, such as in the Connecting small-holders to markets workstream. While CSM

[7] For more on this issue, see Claeys, P. and Duncan, J. Forthcoming. "Do we need to categorize it? Reflections on constituencies and quotas as tools for negotiating difference in the global food sovereignty convergence space." *Journal of Peasant Studies*.

actors appear aware of the potential of developing strategic collaborations with academia, this has not received much attention and could deserve more discussion in the future.[8]

Finally, one limitation of the constituency approach is the issue of (multiple) identities. Many actors who enter the CSM space do not know which constituency to join, or to which they 'belong'. The CSM Secretariat has addressed this by encouraging actors to identify their primary political identity, while recognizing that these identities are often fluid and overlapping (e.g. Indigenous women pastoralist). While we recognize that CSM processes are, in practice, fluid enough to accommodate a diversity of identities, notably through the Working Groups, we feel it is important for the CSM to continue to reflect on the tension between constituencies, identities and inclusion. In that regard, we invite the Coordination Committee to explore the possibility of facilitating the deliberate inclusion of other identities or people/groups enduring other forms of discrimination (e.g. (dis)abilities, caste, class, LGBTQI+, race, and religion) in the future. While there may be concerns that this could lead to fragmentation, research shows that, to the contrary, the absence of specific constituencies based on particular (especially marginalized) identities can make people feel alienated.[9]

[8] Academic observers need to register as academics through the CFS registration process. The CFS reform identified a participant category for researchers that is reserved for CGIAR. In the context of the CFS evaluation, Italy proposed the development of an academic mechanism under article 4 about the composition of the Advisory Group. If this proposal moves forward, it may be important to more strategically engage with researchers.

[9] For an academic discussion on this see Gutmann, A. 2003. Identity in Democracy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Box 4 New constituency for communities living in protracted crises, refugees and internally displaced people

A Coordination Committee Working Group was established to assess whether the existing constituencies cover the issues of protracted crises. It was noted that communities living in protracted crises are a special category that suffers from distinct social, economic and political phenomena, including:

- Destruction/break down of livelihoods
- Internal and external displacement (i.e. refugees)
- Very high dependence on humanitarian assistance
- Collapsed or dual governments - weak institutional capacity at best
- Increased rate of morbidity and mortality
- Decreased longevity due to food crises

The Working Group determined that the existing constituencies do no cover the issues of protracted crises for the following reasons:

1. Protracted crises situations have distinct challenges that do not exist in other situations. These distinct challenges include the:
    a) Physical destruction of infrastructure and livelihoods
    b) Unstable and unsafe environments characterized by conflict, war and occupation
    c) Lack of or dual governments which are unable or unwilling to provide basic services
    d) Displacement and the pressure on resources
    e) High morbidity and mortality
    f) High dependence on food aid, which has high implications on nutrition, and food safety
    g) Mobility difficulties and the common violation of the right to movement
    h) The possibility of unilateral measures against countries including the use of sanctions
    i) The use of food as a weapon of coercion by parties of a conflict
    j) Illegal colonization and foreign settlements

2. Protracted Crises situations have distinct underlying causes that need to be addressed.

3. Protracted crises fall outside of the typical categories for intervention including non-crises development situations and short term crises.

The Working Group suggested two possible names for a new constituency: “Communities in Protracted Crises” or “Communities living under Conflict”. The final name has not yet been defined but there is agreement , and the call has been made to invite organizations of communities living in protracted crises, refugees and internally displaced people. In terms of who would be recognised as part of such a constituency, the following criteria were identified:

a) Civil Society Organizations /social movements/peoples’ organizations from within the community that are active under recurrent conflicts and wars or occupation and have a focus on agriculture, food security, or food sovereignty.

b) Civil Society Organizations/social movements/peoples’ organizations from within the community that represents displaced peoples (refugees or internally displaced communities) and have a focus on food security.

The Working Group submitted its conclusions and proposals and the Coordination Committee must now decide on next steps.

Sub-regions

The regional balance is positively assessed across the CSM although there is room for improvement, particularly in terms of engaging more actors from (central) Asia, the Middle East, Portuguese speaking countries as well as from across the African Continent. Concerns were raised that NGOs and actors from wealthy countries (particularly Western Europe) and Spanish-speaking countries remain over-represented in the CSM, along with an over-emphasis on the agriculture sector. It is acknowledged by the Coordination Committee that some sub-regions are weak, with two regions particularly under-represented: Southern Africa and Central Asia.[10] The Coordination Committee is well aware of these shortcomings and specific efforts have been made to reach out to organizations in these regions. Certain sub-regions also face internal challenges. For example, Southern Asia has not fully followed the process of electing their Coordinator leading to questions about process and transparency. We note that there are perceptions that some countries dominate within particular sub-regions (e.g. Argentina and Brazil). Finally, the issue of regional balance in the governing bodies of the CSM remains sensitive and we welcome the sustained attention of the Coordination Committee in that regard (see section on the Advisory Group below).

Drawing from interviews, it emerged that the sub-regional Coordinators do not appear to have full clarity about their roles, the tools they can use, how they could better support certain actors or constituencies within their sub-region, and how they can facilitate the process of coordinating a sub-regional agenda. The role of sub-regional Coordinators is potentially more complex than that of constituency Coordinators for the diversity of views that they need to integrate (e.g. the need to include representatives from all constituencies, the fact that lines are often blurred between NGOs and movements). It could even be argued that sub-regions function more like Working Groups in terms of having to interact with a wide variety of actors (arguably more diverse than constituencies). It may be important for the CSM to map the specific skills and processes that sub-regional Coordinators may need to deploy to fully meet their roles, and to support the development of such skills through targeted training. We see two reasons why reinforcing sub-regional articulation (and sub-regional Coordinators) is important for the future of the CSM. First, sub-regions are the main entry point to the CSM for local and national level organizations that cannot engage through global constituencies (see section on the Coordination Committee below). Second, sub-regions could potentially play a key role in advancing the use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes (see specific section on use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes, under external dynamics below).

[10] We note a lack of survey respondents from these regions as well as from Eastern Europe.

CSM Forum

When it comes to the CSM Forum, we were not able to systematically assess the balance of constituencies, sub-regions, gender and youth, nor the evolution of participation over time, due to the absence of reliable data.[11] The CSM Secretariat is well aware of this gap and wishes to improve data collection in the future, which will need to be done in respect of data protection requirements as per the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In our view, improved data collection is key to enabling the CSM Secretariat to adequately monitor participation in the CSM, and suggest measures to enhance the diversity, inclusiveness and legitimacy of the CSM.

One important element needs to be highlighted here in relation to the proportion of funded vs. self-funded participants. Participating in CSM/CFS activities is costly, and the CSM budget is only able to cover the participation of members of the Coordination Committee, in line with the quota system in place for the Coordination Committee. Beyond the Coordination Committee, participation is thus constrained by/dependent on the ability of organizations to self-fund their attendance. According to our interviews, the proportion of funded vs. self-funded participants was about 50/50 at the last CSM Forum, which indicates that diversity can only be ensured for about half of the total number of participants. For the other half, the over-representation of participants from the Global North, NGOs, research institutions or more resourced organizations is difficult to avoid.

One way of addressing this imbalance could be through financial contributions from self-funded participants (notably international NGOs and academics) to support the participation of under-represented participants. This approach has been implemented in the past, notably in the 2006 Parallel Forum to the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), in Porto Alegre, Brazil. In addition to regional and constituency quotas, the proportion of self-financed participants was limited to 10 per cent of the total number of participants financed by the Forum. Self-financed participants were asked to finance on a one-to-one basis persons from the rural social movements.[12]

In addition to the above, we encourage the CSM Secretariat to look into ways of more strictly enforcing balance requirements in at least some selected sessions of the CSM Forum (while continuing to put an emphasis on specific methodologies that prioritize the voices of social movements' representatives). At the same time, quotas should not be enforced in a rigid way, and should allow for the engagement of specific actors in relation to specific CFS workstreams. In that regard, we welcome efforts that have been made in the past to reach out to specific constituencies in relation to certain policy processes (e.g. protracted crises).

[11] While personal data is collected by the CSM Secretariat for registration purposes since most CSM meetings take place within FAO premises, such data is structured in a way that primarily responds to FAO accreditation requirements, not CSM internal needs. Data collection is further impeded by last minute changes in representatives sent by CSM participating organizations, cancellations associated with declined visas, illnesses and other events, and the lack of capacity of the Secretariat around the time of the CFS plenary.

[12] IPC. 2006. "Call to Participate in the 'Land, Territory and Dignity' Forum." *Friends of the MST*. http://www.mstbrazil.org/news/call-participate-land-territory-dignity-forum.

3) The CSM Secretariat

The CSM Secretariat is very skilled and competent in facilitating civil society participation to the CFS. It is actively reinforcing and protecting the guiding principles of the CSM. The CSM Secretariat could undertake further efforts towards improving external communication.

According to the CSM Founding Document, the CSM Secretariat will provide support to members of the CSM, the Coordination Committee, civil society members of the Advisory Group and to help organize the annual Civil Society Forum.

The Secretariat will report to the Coordination Committee. Its role will be administrative, facilitating the functioning of the CSM by performing financial, logistical and communication tasks. It will be politically neutral and will not perform advocacy and lobbying roles.

Members of the Secretariat will require experience facilitating the participation of a wide range of civil society actors, particularly social movements from the South, in policy dialogue and governance mechanisms. Language skills, particularly English, Spanish and French, will also be another important criterion taken into consideration.

The CSM Secretariat is widely appreciated and perceived to be professional, competent and supportive by both CSM participating organizations and other CFS members and participants. The respondents to the survey and people we interviewed expressed gratitude, praise, affection and satisfaction with the Secretariat, and a very limited number expressed frustrations associated with logistical challenges.

The 2014 CSM evaluation identified a number of challenges facing the CSM, in relation to: the CSM not having official legal status; securing funding; needing to address different and potentially conflicting requests from Coordination Committee members; and, the need to increase social movement inclusion and ensure greater involvement from the respective constituencies. To address these, the CSM Secretariat has placed strong emphasis on developing and enforcing good processes.[13]

The focus on process has produced good results, notably improving trust, transparency and accountability in CSM activities and reducing conflict. As highlighted above, the CSM Secretariat has succeeded in maintaining, explaining and

[13] Key examples of such processes are detailed in the following documents:

- Terms of Reference for the Coordination Committee
- Technical Instructions for CSM CC members for the Reporting and Renewal Process 2017
- CSM Reporting and Renewal Process 2017
- CSM Guidelines on Internal Functioning on transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, selection and decision-making processes in the CSM Terms of Reference for CSM Food Governance Working Group for discussion at CSM Forum
- Guidelines for facilitating common policy positions and messages through the Civil Society Mechanism

enforcing the complex governance arrangements of the CSM that serve to guarantee inclusiveness and diversity. [14] It has done so with the flexibility required to accommodate tensions. The CSM Secretariat has also managed to actively assert its role as a facilitator and not as the coordinator of the CSM, repeatedly emphasizing that the CSM is a space and not an organization. This has proven key to protecting the ability of the CSM to fulfil its mandate, also in response to expectations from some CSM participants that the Secretariat would step in and play more of a coordination, representation and/or political role. Considering the diverse nature of the CSM and the various levels of capacity and engagement of actors within the CSM, the emphasis on good processes will remain important in the future. Good processes are also key to preventing one group or organization from dominating or consolidating power within the CSM space.[15]

To facilitate the participation of civil society organizations to the CFS, the CSM Secretariat[16] has developed strong capacity and contribution around the following roles:

- **Enabling participation:** This extends beyond organizing visas, flights, hotels, and logistics. It also includes helping people feel confident about their participation, responding to their questions and doubts, and working with the Coordination Committee to ensure adequate representation.
- **Informing and Communicating**: This includes the coordination of internal and external communication, as well as translation and interpretation (see below). Key examples include the website, the Welcome Kit, videos and CSM updates.
- **Contextualizing**: This entails introducing CSM participating organizations to the CSM and the CFS as well as explaining latest developments. In practice, this includes sharing relevant PowerPoint Presentations, clarifying workstreams and explaining what has been achieved in the past, and what is at stake in specific policy processes. Coordination Committee and Advisory Group members have specific contextualization needs (e.g. process issues) that the Secretariat addresses.
- **Translating**: This does not refer to languages. Rather it refers to a two-way process of facilitating the expression of grassroots claims in ways that are understood and acceptable by organizational actors (e.g. member states, international organizations, the private sector and researchers), and translating back the outcomes of global policy processes into formats that are relevant to CSM organizations, notably local-level actors.

[14] For a more detailed analysis see Claeys, P. and Duncan, J. Forthcoming. "Do we need to categorize it? Reflections on constituencies and quotas as tools for negotiating difference in the global food sovereignty convergence space." Journal of Peasant Studies.

[15] At the same time, these processes can be difficult to grasp at first, and their formal nature contrasts with more grassroots forms of organizing. The CSM Secretariat is well aware of this need and devotes considerable time and efforts to support newcomers to the CSM and CFS, with careful training and explanation enabling participants to understand, accept and appropriate the CSM ways of working. Towards this end, the development of the Welcome Kit has been important and well appreciated.

[16] It should be noted here that the CSM Secretariat does direct facilitation of the Coordination Committee, Advisory Group and the CFS Evaluation workstream (in liaison with the recently created Global Food Governance Working Group), while the members of the Coordination Committee act as both coordinators and facilitators for their constituencies and sub-regions, and the CSM thematic Working Groups have their own dedicated coordinators and facilitators.

- **Coordinating and providing strategic advice**: This includes ensuring coordination, communication and coherence between the Working Groups and between the Coordination Committee, Advisory Group and the Working Groups as well as maintaining overview of all CFS workstreams. This implies reaching out to and being aware of what is happening in and across the CSM Working Groups.
- **Assessing**: The CSM Secretariat assesses who needs to be involved in specific processes and decisions. They do this in consultation with the Coordination Committee and in line with the CSM Founding Document.

Below we review in a bit more detail the following roles of the CSM Secretariat: managing internal communication including translation and interpretation, supporting CSM external communication needs, and managing the CSM budget.

Internal communication

With respect to communication, the 2014 evaluation warned about the need for creating processes for information exchanges in multiple languages and taking into account the lack of good internet connection for many CSM participating organizations. It also concluded that there was a need for: increased support for constituency and sub-regional consultations; improved communications and capacities; greater collaboration and communication between sub-region and constituency representatives; and strengthened awareness raising and communication mechanisms, using both electronic and other methods, to inform a wider range of people. In the last years, the CSM Secretariat has actively addressed these concerns and improved internal communication.

In October 2017, the Coordination Committee approved a *Guidance Note on CSM Communication Work* outlining the basis for an internal and external communication strategy for the CSM. The *Guidance Note on CSM Communication Work* highlights communication tools developed by the CSM including: a comprehensive website; improved format of the Monthly CSM Updates; use of WhatsApp and Skype to complement emails; and ongoing publication of Annual Reports. We consider some of these developments below. The *Guidance Note* also identifies existing communication challenges and outlines strategies[17] for addressing them.

The *Guidance Note* is well developed and highlights relevant challenges. Good progress has been made on addressing these challenges, and we encourage the CSM Secretariat to continue to implement the strategies outlined in the Guidance Note. More clarity in terms of responsibility would be useful. We also note that a great deal of attention is paid to informing Coordination Committee members about how the CSM operates and this is fundamental but it is also key that actors who are in Working Groups be targeted as well.

[17] More specifically, the following strategies were identified with regards to internal communication: improving understanding of the CSM; better translating work done at global level to local level and vice versa; better supporting participating organizations in reporting their work back from Rome; improving the virtual and online communication flows, updates, and feedback; improving sharing of background knowledge to allow more time for horizontal discussion among the civil society participants; and, making more accessible CFS background documents and processes to enhance participative discussion.

Many CSM participants struggle to keep up with the flow of emails and communications received. While the communication is clear and effective, the CSM Secretariat needs to continue to find innovative ways (i.e. social media (see below)) of finding the proper balance between knowledge sharing and knowledge overload. Given that we cannot evaluate what has yet to take place, in what follows we focus specifically on 5 areas of internal communication that have been operative: the CSM webpage, the CSM updates, interpretation and translation, social media and reporting.

Webpage

The CSM website was re-designed in March 2016 with a clear emphasis on satisfying internal communication needs in priority. The improved webpage is user-friendly, visually appealing and functional in the three working languages of the CSM. The CSM archive has been updated in a way that supports institutional memory. There is no search function on the website making it very difficult to find things quickly if you are not familiar with the CSM and the website more specifically. In addition, the Working Group pages of the CSM website are not user-friendly. The clear identification of coordinator, facilitator, members and chairs is useful, but the logic of the shared information is not clear, especially to those outside of the specific Working Groups.[18] We encourage Working Groups to develop clear summaries outlining where they are in the process; what was achieved (what the CSM supports in the policy, and why it is useful); what was not achieved (what the Working Group finds problematic with the policy recommendations, and what the limitations of this are); and what are the next steps. This would help to translate the policy relevance to those coming to the CSM website[19].

Finally, we also see an opportunity in the future to develop a more systematic use of inclusive language in all three CSM languages, recognizing that the struggle for food sovereignty is embedded in a broader struggle for equality and inclusiveness.

Updates

The CSM Updates, regularly sent out in all three languages, are an effective communication tool. They are both informative and well-formatted which makes them useful for sharing across networks. Having a "lighter" version of the CSM updates that can be read without opening an image-heavy PDF would be a way of ensuring greater readership, particularly for those who read the documents on smartphones and tablets.[20]

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[18] The time lines and video clips of interventions are useful for communication, accountability and transparency, but many of the Working Groups have listed the texts of the interventions on the webpages which are long to read through. This makes the Working Group sites text heavy. We would encourage that these interventions remain on the site but as downloadable files.

[19] At the same time, many CSM participants have highlighted the difficulty of sharing information about policy processes with people who were not able to attend the meetings in person. The information shared via the CSM website should therefore be seen as a way to complement and not replace in person communication.

[20] One option could be to send out the updates to language-specific email groups with the update in the text of the email as well as attached as a PDF. This would also reduce the size of the emails being sent out which include the updates in all three languages. We recognize that such lists are not currently available and that the database of emails is outdated and, in turn, that organizing such a process would be very time consuming. That said, we feel that it could have benefits in the long term.

In terms of improvements for the future, we note that some CSM actors requested more prompt sharing of information. Sharing of information in the three working languages of the CSM in a timely matter is certainly key to the functioning and mandate of the CSM but we also warn against sharing too much information which runs the risk of being overlooked, overloading CSM participants, and absorbing too much time and budget. In that regard, we note that not all CSM participants have clarity on the types of information they need to receive and share with others (constituencies, sub-regions, working groups), when and for what purposes, at times relying too much on the Secretariat for producing and sharing information. A user-friendly guidance note (or even infographic) on information sharing from global to local and local to global, including what to share, when, how and with whom, could usefully address this challenge.

Interpretation and translation

Translation and interpretation are fundamental to the functioning of the CSM and make up an important part of the CSM's annual budget. CSM participants are very satisfied with interpretation and translation services (see Figure 7) but some called for more translation, notably into Spanish, and wished that Arabic and Portuguese could be added as additional languages. Arabic interpretation was provided on an ad-hoc basis in the context of the negotiations on the Framework for Action in Protracted Crises and we commend the flexible use of the interpretation and translation budget in response to specific participation needs. In the future, we encourage the CSM to consider the possibility of including other languages as needed so as to enhance participation from under-represented regions and constituencies. One respondent to the survey raised concerns about instances of interpreters playing political roles in the CSM processes. We were unable to explore this further. The CSM is well aware that maintaining politically-neutral interpretation is fundamental to its functioning.

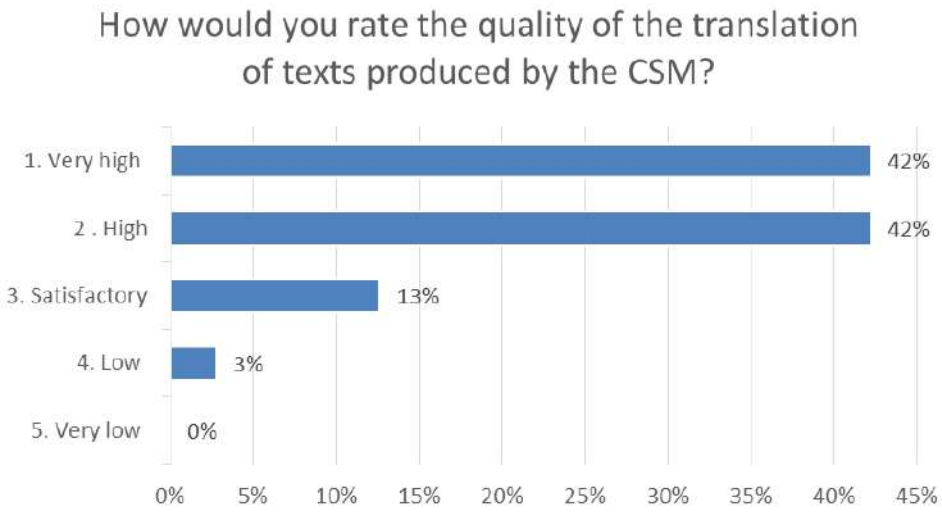


Figure 7 Perception of translation and interpretation (online survey Q 42)

Social media

In terms of optimizing the CSM's capacity to share information and engage with civil society actors, social media is currently under-utilized. This is acknowledged in the *Concept/Guidance note on CSM communication work,* which identifies social media as key. Recognizing that there are reasons to be extremely cautious about social media engagement, the use of popular platforms such as Twitter and Facebook which are actively and often easily used by grassroots actors, could be significantly improved. One challenge to advancing the CSM's social media profile is clarity around who should take the lead on this: Secretariat, Coordination Committee members or Working Group Coordinators and Facilitators.[21] Given that the role of the Secretariat is to facilitate communication, they would arguably be the logical CSM actor to lead this. Social media can be a double-edge sword and a social media protocol to address privacy and content should be developed and approved by the Coordination Committee if there is agreement on the need to enhance the CSM's social media presence.

Reporting

Interactions and reporting channels between CSM bodies appear to function in a loose and sub-optimal way. There are protocols in place for Working Groups and Coordination Committee members to feed into CSM Annual Reports, to which the CSM Secretariat and the Financial Working Group also contribute. However, the reporting guidelines are not applied in the strict sense and there is a need for improved communication between: the Coordination Committee members and the constituencies and sub-regions, the Working Groups and the Coordination Committee and Advisory Group, as well as across Working Groups. More clarity and structure in terms of reporting would be useful, both to contribute to the Annual Report and to enhance every day interactions across CSM bodies. Finally, many CSM participating organizations lack clarity on how constituencies and sub-regions interact with Working Groups. Clarifying the relations between the executive body of the CSM and the major work streams would be potentially useful.

External Communication

Given the broader challenges facing the CFS, the CSM has identified a need to elaborate a strong external communication strategy to significantly empower CSM possibilities to defend the CFS as a whole. Specific challenges that have been identified include: making the CSM and CFS understandable; ensuring outcomes can support local struggles; shaping a communication group; and, identifying new ways of denouncing the behavior and lack of commitment of some member governments and the perceived threats to the normative basis of the CFS.[22] Addressing these challenges through the production of videos and community radio programs with Friends of the Earth (as was done at the last CFS session) are promising. Further efforts to articulate concrete elements for an external

[21] We were informed that the Nutrition Working Group has effectively used a Facebook Group to communicate, however efforts to gain access to this group were not successful and therefore we are unable to provide a more in-depth reflection. We encourage the Nutrition Working Group to reflect on the usefulness of this approach and to share with other Working Groups.

[22] These challenges were identified in the CSM document *Outline and timeline for the CSM external communication strategy towards CFS45* (2018).

communication strategy for CFS 45 (2018) also move the CSM in a positive and pragmatic direction.[23] At the same time, such efforts are time consuming and there is a need to be careful that this line of work does not take away from other important tasks.

Towards this end, and in the spirit of improving and prioritizing, the development of a Communications Working Group that advances strategic collaborations with the communication officers of participant NGOs and movements is welcome. We encourage this group to also assess the value added of emerging communication strategies. For example, at CFS44 (2017) there was a focus on press releases and hashtags for CFS 44 (2017), but it is unclear how much this strategy advanced the wider aims of the external communication strategy. Hiring a professional communications and media officer to support the CSM with external communications during the CFS could very usefully help to limit the workload of the CSM Secretariat, if budget allows. Finally, the external communications strategy puts a heavy focus on reinforcing the normative and human-rights based focus of the CFS. This is a key point of agreement and convergence within the CSM but may not easily or effectively resonate with those outside the CFS, in part due to complexity of the right to food framing and in part due to the limited focus on human rights within the CFS.

CSM budget

The CSM has managed to secure a relatively stable and substantial budget (see *Figure 8*). The CSM has the goal of 100% public funding from member states. This is rationalized on the basis of the nature of the CFS, which is a public space. Between 2011 and 2016 84% of the total CSM budget came from Governments and International Organizations and 16% from NGOs and CSOs, with these figures reaching 91% and 9% respectively in 2017. This indicates that CSM has succeeded in increasing its share of public funding over the years. The EU remains the largest funder of CSM activities, followed by Switzerland. In the long term, the lack of financial contributions from a broader diversity of governments places the CSM in a vulnerable position, as Western governments may remove or limit their funding if others don't share the burden of ensuring the CFS operates as an inclusive and evidenced-based governance body. It may be advisable for the CSM to explicitly reach out to more governments and diversify its public funding base, although we note that the financial vulnerability of the CSM is intimately linked to that of the CFS as a whole.

[23] Planned activities include: engaging more actively with the press (i.e. press conference, interviews and press releases, as well as enhancing media contacts and having a CSM/CFS toolkit for journalists); hiring a professional communications and media officer for two months around the CFS Annual Sessions; continuing to improve the use of audio-visual and social media tools; asking Working Groups to draft communication priorities; establishing relations with IPS and other agencies able to follow-up on the CFS; and, preparing a daily paper for the CFS plenary session.

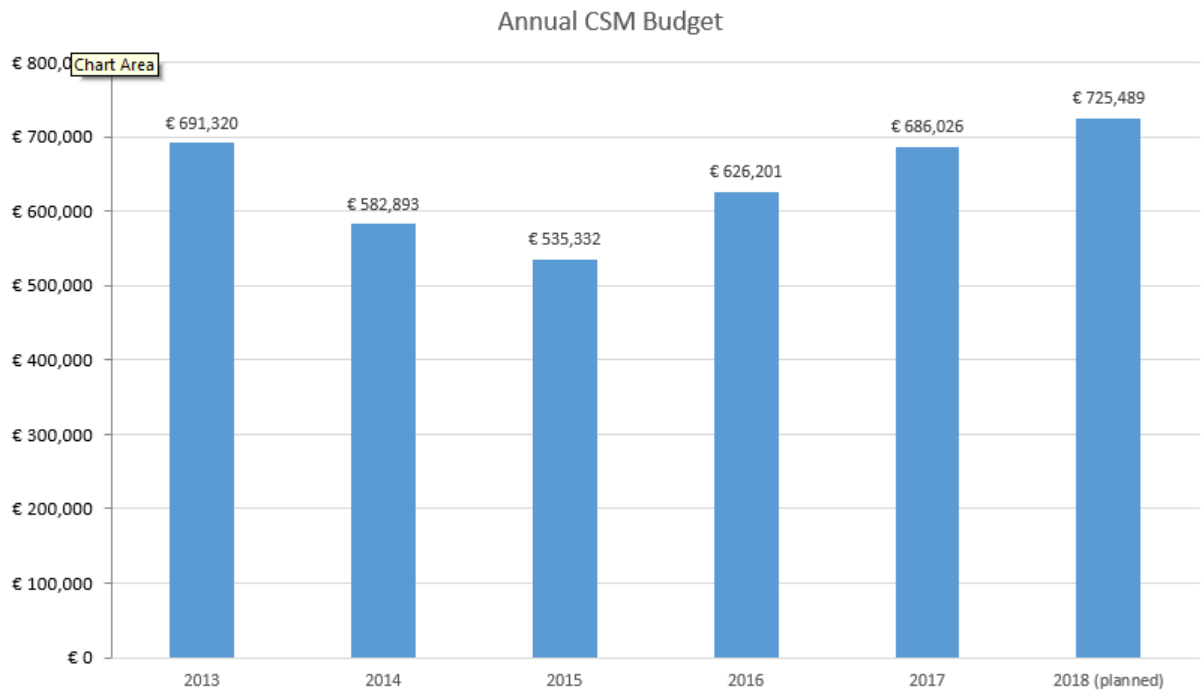


Figure 8 Annual CSM budget 2013-2018

In addition, we note that EU funding is currently channeled through FAO, which places a number of restrictions on how funds can be spent (i.e. these funds cannot be used to pay VAT) and forces the CSM to find options for co-financing. This could create challenges for the future, as an important proportion of the CSM budget is spent on interpretation and translation costs, on which VAT is attached. So far, however, we note that the CSM Secretariat has managed to address these challenges in creative and effective ways.

The Financial Working Group[24] appears to have effectively supported the Secretariat in preparing the CSM budget, dealing with recurrent delays in the release of funds, making strategic decisions about how to finance CSM in the future and responding to donors pulling back.

The 2018 budget was divided as follows:

Participation in Advisory Group meetings	11%
CSM Working Groups	17%
CSM consultations at sub-regional or constituency level	23%
Annual CSM forum	21%
Secretariat and monitoring	20%
Accountability, audit and administrative cost	8%

These figures indicate that CSM budget has been allocated in ways that enable the CSM to fulfill its mandate, facilitating the active and inclusive participation of civil society actors in CSM Working Groups, consultations at sub-

[24] Although this Working Group also has the mandate to make decisions for the Coordination Committee in case of emergency, this does not seem to have happened yet.

regional and constituency level, CSM Forum and CSM governance structures. CSM participants who completed the survey are satisfied with the distribution of the budget, but would eventually like to see more resources go to regional and constituency consultations if funding allows. This is echoed by interviews who point to the potential for the CSM to increase its inclusiveness and outreach if more funds were made available for activities at sub-regional level. At the same time, delays in the release of funds, changes or uncertainties in the CFS agenda, and persisting insecurity in relation to future funding have a negative impact on the ability of the CSM to plan its activities adequately. Lack of advance notification of CFS intersessional activities affects not only the CSM but also CFS other participants. It is hoped that, in the future, CFS meetings could be better clustered during specific times of the year so as to allow for adequate planning and participation of CSM participants.

Finally, the CSM Secretariat continues to face a number of administrative challenges linked to the fact that the CSM does not have a legal entity status. This lack of legal entity status is coherent with the CSM function as a space for all participating organizations that is not under the control of a board. However, this makes fund-raising and management complex and negatively affects CSM Secretariat employees in terms of employment security and benefits. While the staff of the Secretariat is technically hired by an NGO, it is accountable to the Coordination Committee of the CSM. In face of this administrative challenge, we welcome the decision by members of the CSM Secretariat to hold internal evaluations once a year. While the evaluation team was not privy to the resulting reports, we see this as a good practice that should continue. Further, standard annual evaluations of the Secretariat from the Coordination Committee could also be a way of communication and ensuring that the Secretariat remains high functioning.

4) CSM Working Groups

The CSM Policy Working Groups are highly evaluated both internally and externally. The Working Groups are effective in advancing the positions of civil society actors. Some attention needs to be paid to ensuring that social movements further increase their engagement in the Working Groups and that Facilitation and Coordination are shared across a wider range of actors to enhance capacity building and increase diversity.

The CSM established Working Groups (WGs) in order to promote dialogue and common positions amongst CSOs on issues being discussed in the CFS. Most CSM Working Groups mirror CFS Open-Ended Working Groups or Task Teams, although some are specifically geared towards CSM needs or internal purposes. Broadly speaking two kinds of Working Groups can be distinguished. Some Working Groups are tied to the specific policy processes of the CSM and their work ends at the end of a policy negotiation cycle (e.g., Water, SDGs, Connecting small-holders to markets). Some Working Groups are more transversal and enduring (e.g. Governance, Finance, and Monitoring). The analysis below covers both with specific attention to policy Working Groups.

According to the *Guidelines for facilitating common policy positions and messages through the Civil Society Mechanism*, the roles of the CSM policy Working Groups are:

- to enhance circulation of relevant documentation and information on the issue and on the related process in the CFS;
- to provide a space for dialogue and the exchange of views amongst CSOs on the issues under consideration by the CFS Open-Ended Working Groups/Task Teams;
- to provide a space for CSOs to develop strong and well-articulated civil society positions and provide inputs to the civil society members of the CFS OEWG and TTs; and
- to identify civil society participants in Open-Ended Working Groups and Task Teams and in Round Table panels.

CSM Working Groups have developed as the heart of the CSM.[25] Through Working Groups, CSM participants have shown high levels of commitment and engagement with the CFS work streams, demonstrating a willingness to learn and work as a collective. As a result, we note a strong sense of community in the CSM Working Groups, with a shared identity. Many interviewees spoke about the ability of WG participants to work as a group and speak as one voice rather than pursue the visibility of their own organization.[26] On the whole, Working Groups work well, with no conflicts reported. Respondents to the survey are generally satisfied with the Working Group's ability to promote dialogue and facilitation on issues discussed in the CFS (see *Figure 9*). CSM participants also recognize the importance of presenting a strong collective position. To this end, the Coordination Committee has developed a set of *Guidelines for facilitating common policy positions and messages through the Civil Society Mechanism.* This appears to have brought good results, as other CFS participants acknowledge and appreciate the preparedness of CSM Working Groups and the coherence of their proposals.

[25] For a list of current and past CSM Working Groups see http://www.csm4cfs.org/policy-working-groups/

[26] We note that this lack of visibility can be a challenge particularly for organizations such as NGOs that have visibility requirements (i.e., who need to have their name associated with particular processes). These organizations, primarily NGOs, have had to find ways to be part of a process that they cannot put their name on. In addition, many NGOs act as facilitators and this role requires a level of self-limitation, in contrast to taking a protagonist role.

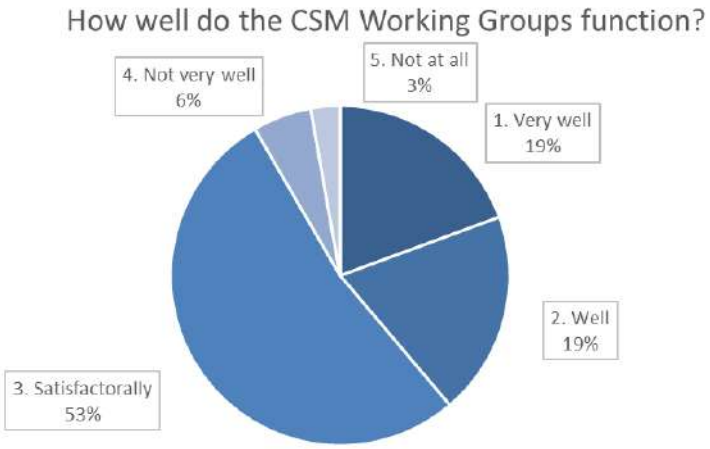


Figure 9 Perceived functioning of the CSM Working Groups (online survey Q 25)

CSM participants have a large diversity of expertise and do not necessarily identify the same priority issues (see Box 13). In addition, many of them are also engaged in other global governance spaces (see Figure 10).

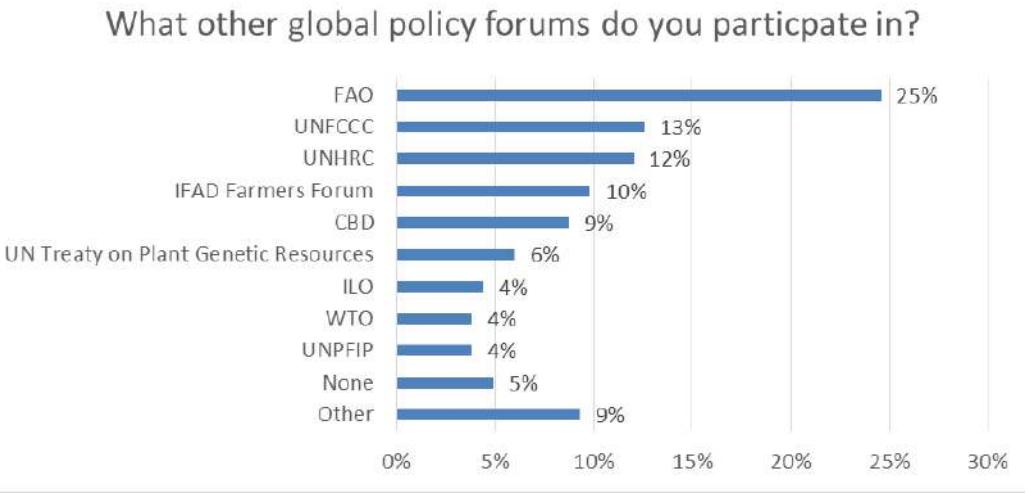


Figure 10 Global Policy Fora (online survey Q58)

Examples of additional governance spaces include the World Health Organization, the High Level Political Forum on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UN Habitat, Rotterdam Convention, Stockholm Convention, and UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). These two factors explain the strong ability of the CSM to contribute to different CFS workstreams, bringing in useful references from other relevant policy processes. At the same time, we note that the impact of the CSM on policy negotiations is tied to the political cohesion that unites CSM participating organizations. The CSM is perceived to have the greatest influence on CFS policy processes when everyone comes together with the same intensity. This was seen most clearly in the negotiations on the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests, and is anticipated to happen again around the negotiations on agroecology. However, not all processes manage to build this level of ownership.

One additional minor point deserves to be mentioned here. Some CFS participants outside of the CSM commented that the actions of CSM actors in some policy negotiations have generated confusion. For example, in negotiations CSM participants contradicted positions submitted by the CSM at earlier technical stages. Although the CSM should be able to shift its positions as negotiations proceed, CSM actors, particularly Working Group coordinators and facilitators should be aware of contradicting positions and recognize and explain them in their interventions. In that regard, we welcome the new good practice initiated by the CSM to organize briefing meetings in advance of negotiations to explain its positions to other CFS participants.

Working Group participants

> The CSM Working Groups are open to all CSOs working on food security and nutrition. Anyone interested in participating in a CSM Working Group can contact the relevant Working Group Coordinator and/or Facilitator whose names and contact details are listed on the CSM website.

The CSM Forum is a good entry point for attracting people to join Working Groups. It is less clear how many people engage with the CSM through Working Groups who have not taken part in the CSM Forum but the size of Working Groups has grown over the years, which is a good sign. Overall, there is strong awareness of the importance of ensuring diverse participation in Working Groups, and Working Groups facilitators see this as part of their task. To this end, constituencies and sub-regions operate as a 'check-list' of who needs to be engaged. This approach is important because Working Groups play a key role in linking people across constituencies and sub-regions.

Levels of engagement in the Working Groups naturally depend on the issues in question. Some themes appear to attract less interest from social movements (e.g. SDGs, monitoring, CFS evaluation) or attract certain constituencies more specifically (e.g. forestry, livestock), while some are perceived as too technical (e.g. nutrition). This being said, 70% of those surveyed feel that social movement's views are adequately portrayed and prioritized within Working Groups. According to the *Guidelines for facilitating common policy positions and messages through the Civil Society Mechanism,* a quota system could be enforced if social movement voices are not well represented. To our knowledge, no Working Group has implemented such actions. Without calling for a strict enforcement of quotas, we encourage CSM Working Groups to continue to pay attention to constituency and sub-regional balance in the future. How to balance CSM diversity criteria with the need to leave Working Groups open to those who have the ability and eagerness to participate is something the CSM Coordination Committee could consider in future discussions with the Working Group coordinators and facilitators. Strategies for maintaining the use of three languages within Working Groups will also need to be strengthened in order to enhance inclusiveness in the future. Often, email discussions start in three languages and continue only in English. We note that the Working Group on Nutrition is an exception to this as Spanish is dominant.

Working Group Coordination and Facilitation

The CSM Working Groups are led by one or two coordinators from the Coordination Committee and supported by one or more technical facilitators, usually from an NGO. Both coordinators and facilitators are meant to fulfill a facilitation rather than political role and they do so on a voluntary basis. Their selection should be proposed by the members of the Working Groups and agreed by the members of the CSM Coordination Committee.

Coordinators and facilitators have found very creative ways of working together to be able to consistently and effectively react to the demands of the CFS. Within the Working Groups, social movements and NGOs have found mutually accountable ways of working together that build on their respective strengths. As coordinators of the Working Groups, social movements give political orientation which is fundamental. Facilitators, who were described to us in one interview as midwives, are also of paramount importance. Without their time and commitment, Working Groups would not function and that the quality of outcomes would not be as high.

At the same time, active participation in Working Groups requires the investment of a lot of time and efforts, and this can result in the consolidation of expertise and power of certain people. We note a tendency towards specialization of the people actively involved in Working Groups. Facilitation work tends to be concentrated in the hands of a few dedicated individuals, often involved in several Working Groups. In turn, many of the social movement actors, including coordinators, are unable to adequately follow all processes or are engaged in too many. Through interviews we heard reference to a few so-called 'rock stars' who cover a range of international meetings or leadership responsibilities for their organizations. To ensure that social movements maintain an active role in the policy work of the CSM, this issue should be addressed. At present, there is a bit of a discrepancy between the policy work that takes place in the Working Groups where not all social movements are actively engaged and present, and the internal CSM issues that are discussed in the Coordination Committee, where social movements are more consistently present. In addition, while consultation with constituencies and sub-regions technically rests on Coordination Committee members, in practice most consultation actually takes place in the Working Groups. A more diversified distribution of coordinators would be a useful strategy for ensuring diversity of representation, capacity building, and prevent overloading particular Coordination Committee members.

We also see a clear opportunity to consolidate good practices and training around facilitation so as to expand number of people and organizations currently facilitating CSM processes. The expansion in the number of facilitators should indeed be pursued very cautiously, with a very clear understanding of the skills and dispositions that make for a good facilitator in the CSM. All Working Groups are different and make use of different styles of leadership and facilitation. This flexibility is important but should not prevent the CSM from better documenting the roles, tasks and internal processes of Working Groups. This would also support another challenge that we identified, i.e. the difficulty of joining a Working Group, particularly halfway through a process or if one is unable to frequently travel to Rome.

Many facilitators described their work as 'lonely at times, with a lot of 'chasing' to ensure that social movements views are represented. Some facilitators noted that they feel uncomfortable and guilty trying to push movement actors for

inputs. Facilitators have developed and implemented a range of creative strategies for ensuring social movements' inputs, including email, skype, phone calls, in-person meetings, Facebook, and WhatsApp, and writing draft contributions on the basis of conversations and not written inputs in response to emails. Some explained how they have a Plan A and a Plan B (formal and informal) for following up with social movement actors to get their views on political issues. Most Working Groups have developed the use of various layers or circles of articulation. Depending on the decisions that need to be made, certain issues are discussed bilaterally between coordinators and facilitators while some issues are discussed with a core group. The results of either or both processes are then shared with all Working Group members.

The Working Groups that seem to operate most effectively rely on a shared agenda and vision, which limits the need for endless consultations and enables the quick identification of red lines. For this to happen a clear vision has to be established and Working Group members must trust the facilitators and coordinators. Several Working Groups (i.e., Global Strategic Framework, VGGTs, Sustainable Development Goals, Water, Forestry, Urban-Rural) undertook such visioning exercises. This practice should be pursued in the future, and combined with visioning exercises at the levels of constituencies, and even sub-regions, in order to secure more diverse insights and streamlining inputs from the constituencies and sub-regions into CSM Working Groups.

In the future, visioning exercises could expand their horizon to include the development of shared strategies around awareness-raising, training, use, application and monitoring the implementation of CFS outcomes. At present, the follow-up mechanisms for thematic Working Groups once CFS negotiations have concluded are unclear. Should some Working Groups be maintained beyond specific policy process? And if so, how? How could CSM actors better capitalize on the experience that negotiating participants have acquired? How could the CSM more systematically learn, and transmit that learning, from the Working Groups? A clear strategy to increase the institutional memory of the CSM Working Groups and track successes and challenges would be useful. This is already taking place in some Working Groups, but only at the prerogative of the facilitators. In our view, it is important for the CSM to have protocols, including leadership strategies, to support the transition from policy to implementation. To this end, Working Group facilitators and coordinators should be encouraged to more systematically share information, ideas, strategies and outcomes, independently of the CSM Secretariat.

5) The CSM Coordination Committee and Advisory Group

The Civil Society Mechanism is governed by a Coordination Committee (CC) which is responsible for ensuring that the functions of the CSM are carried out as effectively as possible and according to its organizing principles. The Coordination Committee is evaluated positively, but we note concerns about workload and the functioning of sub-regional Coordinators.

The Coordination Committee is responsible for facilitating the participation of CSOs in the CFS. This includes overseeing the work of the civil society members of the CFS Advisory Group and the Secretariat of the Mechanism, ensuring access to adequate funding and ensuring accountability for the finances of the Mechanism. It is also responsible, to the best of its ability, for ensuring that there is effective two-way communication with CSM participants world-wide and for supporting efforts to participate effectively in policy dialogue at all levels.

The Coordination Committee takes decisions on the functioning of the CSM, such as: criteria for participation in the Mechanism, quotas for participation in/speaking during the CFS Plenary, selection of civil society members of the Advisory Group, providing support to the civil society Advisory Group members, and assisting in the organization of the civil society forums related to the CFS.

The Coordination Committee is composed of constituency and sub-regional Coordinators: 4 Coordinators from smallholder family farmer organizations and 2 from each of the other constituencies (see Figure 6), and 1 Coordinator from each of the 17 sub-regions. Priority is given to small-scale farmers because they represent 80% of the hungry people in the world and produce the largest proportion of the food in the world. Coordinators are selected through autonomous processes for a period of 2 years, with possible renewal for another 2 years. For the purposes of this evaluation we focus on the functioning of the Coordination Committee from 2015 onwards.

CSM participants have positive perceptions about the Coordination Committee in terms of its legitimacy, although a bit less in terms of functionality and transparency (online survey 45-47). The five top roles that Coordination Committee members[27] perform on a regular basis (at least once a month) include: Prioritizing activities for CSM engagement; coordinating Working Groups; informing their constituency about the CFS; facilitating the participation of their constituency or region; and consulting their constituency (see Figure 11). These roles reflect, to a high degree, the vision of the CSM Founding Document and the related expectations of Coordination Committee members.

[27] The online survey was completed by 27 Coordination Committee members who served from 2014 (since the last evaluation) to present.

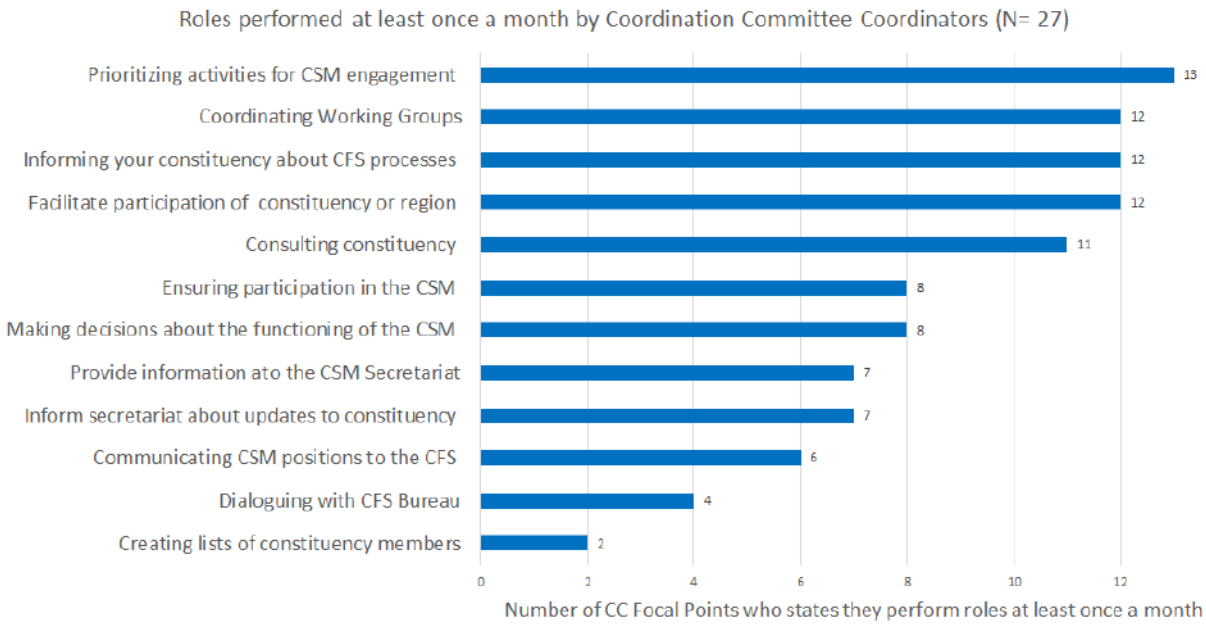


Figure 11 Roles performed at least once a month by Coordination Committee members (online survey Q 50)

Coordination Committee members identify all these roles as relevant, with information and consultation of constituencies and sub-regions seen as being of primary importance. Some respondents listed other important roles the Coordination Committee could perform, including liaison with International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), support with fundraising, more strategizing, providing political analysis of the situation in their constituencies/regions, and support with strengthening sub-regions/struggles. Several people we talked to noted that most strategic discussions (e.g. on the role of rights-based approaches, or communication issues) take place at the level of the Working Groups (and not enough at Coordination Committee level). They feel there is a need for more strategizing work, notably to decide which CFS issues are priorities for CSM. Coordination Committee actors should consider if they want to play these roles, and how, but we have concerns that there is limited time or capacity to take on additional responsibilities (see below).

The Coordination Committee has developed as a space of co-responsibility and mutual accountability. Its members have developed shared values and collective understanding that the CSM is a space for facilitation and not for individual representation and advancement of organizational interests. The trust and working environment of the Coordination Committee has greatly improved since the 2014 evaluation. This is particularly important in relation to sitting on the Advisory Group, which some Coordination Committee members are tempted to perceive as a position of power associated with facilitated access to governments, Rome-Based Agencies and potentially financial resources. The Coordination Committee is perceived by some Coordinators to spend too much time on internal issues at the expense of content. Lengthy discussions about structure, power, elections, conflicts of interest, regional balance and representation in the Coordination Committee, which are undoubtedly important, have generated frustrations. It may be important for the Coordination Committee to ensure its agenda integrates more balance across activities and topics.

At the same time, we note concerns about the workload and responsibilities that come with being an effective Coordination Committee Coordinator, especially considering that many are also tasked with coordinating or facilitating Working Groups. Coordination Committee members are not all active on a regular basis and are not very consistent in reporting their activities to the CSM Secretariat. The biggest constraints include time, language, being new to the Coordination Committee (and therefore not familiar with procedures), and a lack of resources. We also note very different levels of engagement within the Coordination Committee. This is not necessarily a problem as members of the Coordination Committee contribute what they can, but it does lead to a concentration of workload and a potential reduction of the diversity of perspectives. When surveyed about what they would do if they had more time, Coordination Committee members stated they would participate more in Working Groups, engage in more mentoring, and work towards broader diffusion of CFS outcomes and processes in regions and territories.

Finally, there is a perception that some Coordination Committee members have not been as proactive as they should have been as two-way channels of communication; that is processes for informing and, in particular consulting, constituencies and sub-regions appear weak. We also learned that Coordination Committee members could do more in terms of communication but too often rely on the CSM Secretariat. One reason for this is that many are unclear on what information they need to pass on and how. The Coordination Committee could consider more ways to facilitate this two-way communication and outreach (see for example Box 5) to enhance both awareness of CFS processes and accountability. Another potential way to reinforce interaction between the Coordination Committee and policy work would be for Coordinators to play a more active role in identifying who in their organizations could feed into Working Group processes.

Box 5 Making use of CFS outcomes: two-way communication

The CFS's Global Strategic Framework, the product which encompasses most of the outcomes of CFS, has been used as an entry point in discussions at the local level by member of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association (IUF). IUF is a global union federation of trade unions but at the local level, CSM affiliated actors have used the Global Strategic Framework as an entry point. The IUF and others produced a manual for the use and application of the GSF, which can be found at: http://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/GSF-Manual_en.pdf

As it was explained:

> *We are looking at issues of decent work. We are looking at issues of women participation in decision making, and how do we make sure that it is translated into our work at the grassroots level. It [the Global Strategic Framework] serves as a training material and we use it for mission to our training.*
>
> *We use tools like drama or role-play. People role-play a situation of a woman who does not have access to information and income. How would the state of the children that they are giving birth be to in terms of nutrition? Participants role-play then we start discussing. If this is the situation, what do you think that we can do? Then they themselves make a recommendation. This recommendation is used by our affiliates in CFS negotiation as an evidenced-base.*

Selection of Coordinators

The political process of appointing Coordination Committee members is heavy and time consuming. The development of *Technical Guidelines for appointing Coordination Committee members* has served to clarify the process, and there is now increased transparency and accountability. The election of Coordination Committee members takes places through autonomous and independent processes decided internally by each of the respective constituencies and sub-regions. In practice, the Coordination Committee supports the accountability of the wider CSM in so far as it has the role of ensuring that the lists of participating organizations provided by Coordination Committee members for their constituencies and sub-regions are inclusive and representative of organizations conducting relevant work on the ground. Overall, we note a good balance between internal autonomous processes and criteria and checks for accountability.

The appointment and transition of the 2017-2019 Coordination Committee appears to have been relatively smooth. There were new voices and perspectives brought in (e.g. World March of Women). We note a strong awareness of the

training needs of new Coordination Committee members, in light of the complexity of the CSM governance mechanism, often technical CFS agenda and the fact that transmission of information does not necessarily take place within organizations from one Coordination Committee member to the next. This has been addressed in part through clarity of process and through exchanges of knowledge between older and newer Coordination Committee members.

One important clarification that has been made in recent years is that, in terms of the Coordination Committee and who can be selected, constituency Coordinators must come from global/continental organizations while sub-regional Coordinators can be representatives from national/regional organizations. However, in practice this agreement does not appear to be fully understood by all, and some feel that it is unfair. For example, some regional Coordinator organizations feel that they do more work than the global constituency Coordinators, but enjoy less opportunity to be on the Coordination Committee, in part because national/regional organizations may need to rotate (after two terms on the CC) while the global constituencies do not (they will need to appoint a different representative but their organization will always be on the CC).

Survey respondents positively assess the current composition of the Coordination Committee while acknowledging that its structure may need to evolve to reflect new challenges and emergent constituencies (e.g. protracted crises) (see Figure 12). In the CSM Founding Document, 2 extra seats on the Coordination Committee are given to small-scale farmers because they represent 80% of the hungry people in the world and produce the largest proportion of the food in the world. Some people called for more space for Indigenous Peoples on the Coordination Committee though they are already integrated into other constituencies (e.g. pastoralists).

In terms of geographic representation of the constituency Coordinators, there has been improved distribution when comparing the 2015-2017 constituency Coordinators to the 2017-2019 ones (see Figure 13). While there is a perception the Global North in particular are over-represented in CSM activities (e.g. CSM Forum, Working Groups), participants from the Global North are not over-represented when it comes to the executive structure of the CSM, in line with the principles of the CSM Founding Document. When reviewing the primary constituency affiliation of sub-regional Coordinators, we see that farmers networks and NGOs are overwhelmingly represented (see Figure 14). Yet, the disproportionate number of sub-regional Coordinators coming from farmer organizations (and to a lesser extent NGOs) could lead to a consolidation of power and influence that threatens the balance of the CSM governance mechanisms. The Coordination Committee should consider how to address this (see recommendation 12) and identify ways to ensure that sub-regional Coordinators reach out to and interact with all the constituencies in their sub-regions, independently of their constituency affiliation.

CONSTITUENCY	ORGANISATION	SUB-REGION	ORGANISATION
Smallholders Farmers	LVC (La Via Campesina)	North America	National Farmers Union (Canada)
	LVC	Central America and Caribbean	MAELA (Movimiento Agroecológico Latinoamericano y del Caribe)
	COPROFAM (Coordinadora de Organizaciones de productores Familiares del MERCOSUR)	Andean Region	FENACOPEC (Federación Nacional de Cooperativas Pesqueras del Ecuador)
	FIMARC (International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements)	Southern Cone	CLOC Congress of the Latin American Coordination of Rural Organizations) (/LVC
Pastoralists	WAMIP (World Alliance for Mobile Indigenous Peoples)	West Europe	Oxfam Solidarite
	WAMIP	East Europe	Biological Farmer Association Elkana/LVC
Fisherfolks	WFFP (World Forum of Fisher Peoples)	North Africa	FNSA (Federacion National du Secteur Agricole)
	WFF (World Forum of Fish Harvesters and Fish Workers)	Central Africa	PROPAC (Plateforme Régionale de Organisations Paysannes d'Afrique Centrale)
Indigenous Peoples	IPACC (Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee)	East Africa	KESSFF (Kenya Small Scale Farmers Forum)
	IITC	**South Africa**	*To be appointed*
Consumers	Urgenci	West Africa	ROPPA (Réseau des organisations paysannes et de producteurs de l'Afrique de l'Ouest)
	Consumers International	**South Asia**	*To be appointed*
Agricultural and Food Workers	IUF (International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Association)	South East Asia	INDIES (Institute for National and Democracy Studies)
	IUF	**Central Asia**	*To be appointed*
Urban Food Insecure	HIC (Habitat International Coalition)	West Asia	Arab Network for Food Sovereignty
	HIC	Australasia	Poutini Waiora/IITC (International Indian Treaty Council)
Landless	APC (Asian Peasant Coalition)	Pacific	PoetCom
	LRC (Legal Resources Centre)		
Youth	LVC		
	WFF		
Women	LVC		
	International Women's Alliance		
NGO	REDSAN-CPLP (Rede da Sociedade Civil para a Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional)		
	Friends of the Earth		

Figure 12 Organizational representation of Coordination Committee members (2017 – 2019)

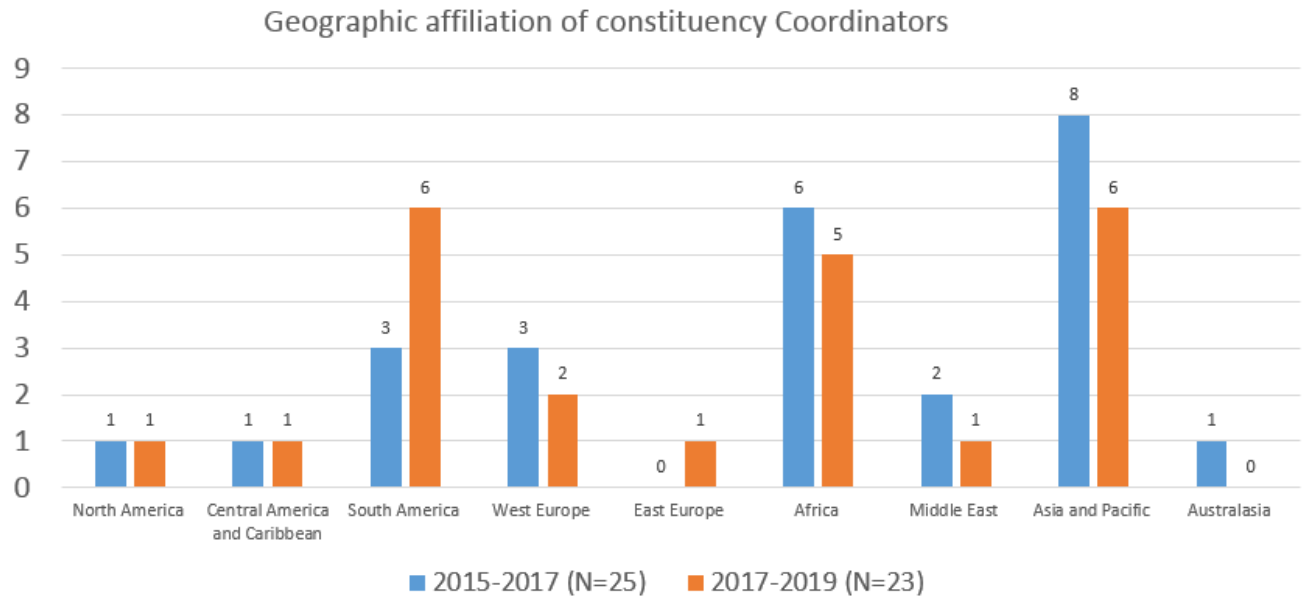


Figure 13 Geographic affiliation of constituency Coordinators (2015-2017, 2017-2019)

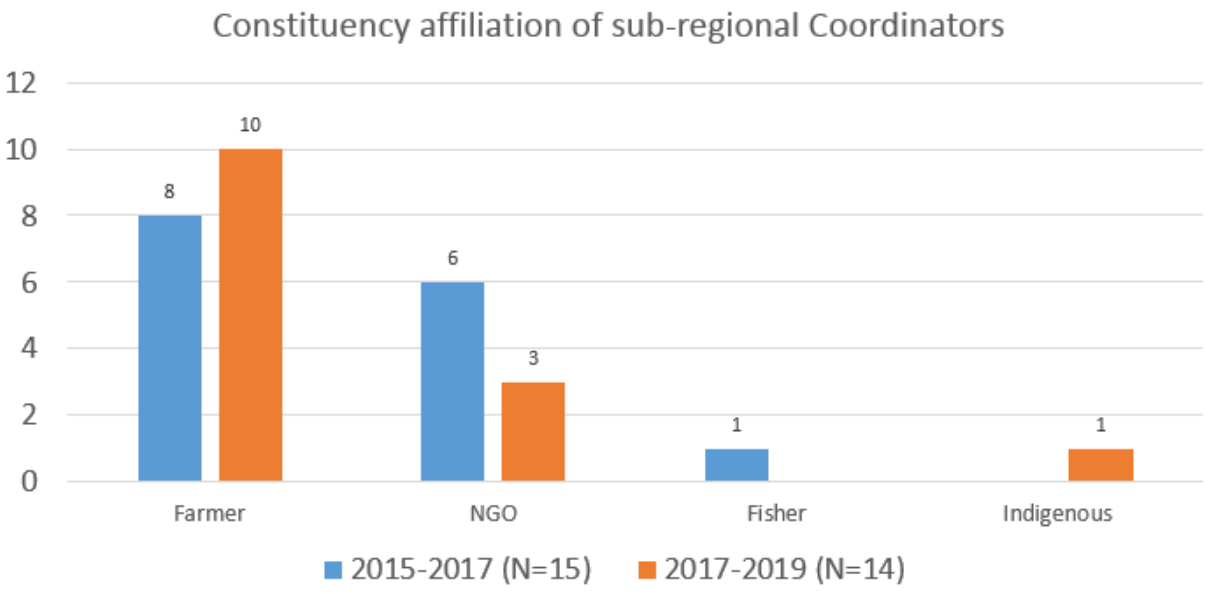


Figure 14 Constituency affiliation of sub-regional Coordinators (2015-2017, 2017-2019)

In the future, there is a need to consider how the selection of Coordination Committee members can be improved to ensure that they have adequate time available, expertise and interest. We note that in the Terms of Reference for the Coordination Committee there is a possibility for members to appoint substitutes if they cannot handle the

responsibilities of time commitments.[28] It is unclear how this plays out with respect to criteria for appointing Coordination Committee members. We encourage the CSM Secretariat to assess and clearly communicate about the number of hours that Coordination Committee members are expected to dedicate to the CSM. We further encourage members to make sure they can absorb that commitment before accepting a nomination, and to identify and share best practices for dealing with the workload, in particular with prospective and new coordinators. For example, some members share their tasks with other people in their organization or dedicate specific days or times to Coordination Committee related work. Others have secured adequate on-farm support, in particular during heavy CSM-related workload periods.

Advisory Group

According to the CFS Reform Document, the function of the Advisory Group is to provide input to the Bureau regarding the range of tasks which the CFS Plenary has instructed it to perform. It is expected that members of the Advisory Group should be able to contribute substantive work and provide advice to the CFS Bureau (executive body). The Advisory Group is composed of representatives of FAO, WFP and IFAD and other non-Member CFS Participants (i.e., CSM and Private Sector Mechanism).

The CSM has 4 seats on the Advisory Group. This is a point of contention for other participants who only have 1 seat but is often rationalized with the CFS reform focus on prioritizing the voices of those most affected, as well as by recognition for the diversity of global civil society.

Since 2017, the CSM Advisory Group members consist of 10 persons, rotating into the 4 seats. These people are identified by and from the Coordination Committee members. The Terms of Reference for CSM Advisory Group members outlines that at least 75% of the 'official 4' Advisory Group members need to be from Social Movements.

The issue of regional balance on the Advisory Group remains sensitive although tensions that were present at the time of the 2014 evaluation seem to have been overcome. In that regard, we welcome the recent decision to further extend the number of Coordination Committee members contributing to the CFS Advisory Group from 8 to 10, to allow for more regional diversity, as well as the emphasis that was placed on clarifying that the Advisory Group is not a place where organizations are to push for their own interests.

The Advisory Group deals with a lot of process and technicalities (especially in the context of CFS evaluation) but does not discuss content. However, representatives of CSM organizations who participate in Advisory Group meetings must have a good overview of what is happening within the CSM (notably the Working Groups) and CFS, and convey coherent messages on behalf of CSM to other CFS participants. The Advisory Group also has strategic dimensions, in terms of how to frame certain issues, or which countries to approach. One challenge identified by civil society members of Advisory Group is that they often feel ill prepared to deliver the positions coming from the CSM Working Groups. In

[28] In addition, the CSM Internal Guidelines establish that social movement leaders can have a technical support person to support them to serve on the CC. This possibility is widely used by CC members and seems to be working well.

practice, these positions are translated into speaking points by the CSM Secretariat, on the basis of the draft positions developed by the Working Groups and following collective discussions within the AG. The discomfort of civil society members of Advisory Group may increase if they have missed recent discussions or developments at the CFS. The CSM Secretariat is well aware of the need to adequately prepare Advisory Group members so that they can fully and actively play their role, the key here being to provide adequate contextualization of latest developments within both the CSM and CFS.

Two additional points are worth highlighting in regard to the appointment of Advisory Group members, that we feel should receive careful consideration in the future development of technical guidelines for appointing Advisory Group members. First, we note that a position on the Advisory Group is for two years, renewable for another two years. This is the same timeframe as being a coordination Committee Coordinator, which suggests that someone could spend their entire time on the Coordination Committee as a member of the Advisory Group. This is potentially problematic given that most Coordination Committee members noted a steep learning curve when they started, suggesting that perhaps Advisory Group members should be selected from more experienced Coordination Committee members or that the selection of Advisory Group members could be staggered so that they happen a year after Coordinator elections. Second, given the priority given to social movements, we are unclear why only 75% of Advisory Group members must be from social movements. This is not at all proportional to the ratio of social movements to NGOs in the Coordination Committee. At the same time, we recognize there may be pragmatic reasons for allowing a bigger proportion of Advisory Group members to come from NGOs as they are likely to have greater capacity and resources to fulfil the function.

Evaluation of the CSM's external dynamics

In this section we present the results of the evaluation of the external dynamics of the CSM. More specifically we consider:

1) The future, relevance and visibility of the CFS
2) The future challenges facing the CSM
3) CSM-CFS relations
4) The use, application, and monitoring of CFS outcomes.

1) Future, relevance and visibility of the CFS

The CFS is under threat and urgently needs to address a number of key challenges. Despite these challenges, and the frustration generated by the lack of uptake of CFS outcomes by governments and Rome-based agencies (RBAs), CSM participants remain very committed to the CFS.

In 2009, the CFS reformed to constitute the:

> foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for a broad range of committed stakeholders to work together in a coordinated manner and in support of country-led processes towards the elimination of hunger and ensuring food security and nutrition for all human beings. The CFS will strive for a world free from hunger where countries implement the voluntary guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security (CFS Reform Document, paragraph 4).

The roles of the CFS were identified as: coordination at global level; policy convergence; support and advice to countries and regions; coordination at national and regional levels; promoting accountability and sharing best practices; and developing a Global Strategic Framework.

It is clear from our interviews that the honeymoon phase of the reformed CFS is over. Many CFS participants perceive the CFS as seriously under threat, and there is a clear lack of shared views on the future of the CFS. Both the CSM and the HLPE, which are fundamental to the CFS being an inclusive and evidence-based body, lack financial security. CFS workstreams also have a significant financial deficit. Many CSM participants are concerned that limiting institutional funding to the CSM is a strategy to silence the CSM. The uncertain future of the CFS negatively impacts the CSM, which has invested a lot in the work of the Committee.

Survey results indicate that CSM participants identify a number challenges facing the CFS (see Box 6).

Box 6 Key challenges facing the CFS (online survey Q 53)

Here is how the CSM participants have ranked a list of challenges to the future of the CFS.

1. Lack of financial support for the CFS
2. Lack of political commitment by states
3. No support for dissemination of CFS outputs
4. CFS actors blocking progress towards monitoring
5. Lack of financial support for the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE)
6. CFS members blocking topics from being discussed at the CFS
7. Uneven regional participation from member states
8. Disagreement amongst actors on the roles of the CFS
9. Changes to CFS procedures
10. Shift in focus from policy to best practices
11. Focus on the Sustainable Development Goals taking focus away from the CFS core agenda

In addition to the challenges listed in Box 6, CSM participating organizations further identified: a lack of knowledge about CFS at national level and the Rome-centeredness of the discussions, an insufficient use of and presence of the CFS in the media, a polarization of the debates at CFS between the good guys versus the bad guys, the futility of CFS Open-Ended Working Group intersessional meetings, attempts by some CFS participants to shift the balance of power on the Advisory Group while simultaneously limiting its influence, and a lack of communication between CFS and different UN agencies. Some interviewees also expressed frustration regarding the inability of the CFS to demonstrate its relevance and added value in responding to emergencies (or identifying new developments) in the field of global food security governance. For example, the CFS missed a key opportunity to provide direction to the international community when the 2017 State of Food Insecurity in the World report showed that in 2016 the number of chronically undernourished people in the world was estimated to have increased to 815 million, up from 777 million in 2015.[29] Many CFS participants regret that the CFS has not yet found its place in the broader governance architecture, a place that is partly threatened by efforts undertaken by FAO to redefine and expand its role beyond agricultural development strictly speaking. A tension was also noted between the stated convergence function of the CFS and the 'niche approach' that the CFS has endorsed. The fact that many states object to the idea that the CFS should discuss issues that are already addressed in another body further impedes efforts by the CFS to work towards policy convergence.

Despite these challenges, and the frustration generated by the lack of uptake of CFS outcomes by governments and Rome-based agencies (RBAs), CSM participants remain very committed to the work of the CFS. At the same time, if the discussions become too distant from realities on the ground, for example too focused on the mechanics of the CFS (as many see happening with the CFS evaluation work stream), fail to address emerging issues or become geared towards sharing best practices (at the expense of normative recommendations), participants could start disengaging. In this uncertain context, several people we talked to highlighted the importance of being able to count, in the CSM, on the involvement of people who have engaged in the CFS since the 2009 reform. Their presence contributes to the institutional memory of the CFS (interview 1), and thereby to keeping the reform values alive.

[29] FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2017. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017. Building resilience for peace and food security*. Rome, FAO.

2) Future challenges for the CSM

The CSM is facing a number of threats and challenges to address in the short to medium term. Further, it appears the CSM will need to continue to fight to maintain its status in the CFS, and the reform principles more broadly.

The CFS reform document clarifies that the CFS is space of "convergence by all stakeholders at global level on issues pertaining to food security and nutrition and on the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security" (paragraph 20). Further, the CFS Reform Document outlines a composition that will ensure that "the voices of all relevant stakeholders – particularly those most affected by food insecurity – are heard" (paragraph 7). The CSM is the autonomous mechanism that ensures the facilitation of the voices of those most affected are heard in the CFS.

CSM participants identify the following as the biggest challenges to their future work within the CFS: a lack of financial support; the ongoing challenge to a human-rights approach at the CFS; the failure to prioritize the voice of those most affected in the CFS, and the increasing presence of the Private Sector Mechanism (see Box 7). Concerns have also been raised that the Private Sector Mechanism is seeking to reorder the balance of power away from the prioritization of civil society voices. For example, at CFS 43 (2016), the Private Sector Mechanism sought parity with the Civil Society Mechanism in terms of the number of seats on the Advisory Group. In addition, the World Farmers' Organization (WFO) called for a farmer's mechanism (like the existing CSM and Private Sector Mechanism) which would facilitate the explicit participation of farmers' organizations in CFS activities. As a result of their efforts, the World Farmers' Organization secured ad hoc status in the CFS Advisory Group, shifting the balance of power in the Advisory Group away from CSM participating organizations.[30] Thus, while the space for doing politics at the CFS remains, there are clear efforts underway to shift the balance of power towards "parity" between civil society and the private sector. The CSM should carefully reflect on how to address the growing participation of the private sector in CFS, as many member states see private sector and World Farmers' Organization involvement as key to the wider legitimacy of the CFS. In their view, the justification for having the CSM is intimately tied to the CFS being inclusive of a diversity of actors and perspectives.

[30] In the Evaluation of the CFS, evaluators noted that they were "not persuaded" by the arguments advanced by the World Farmers Organization and the Private Sector Mechanism on the need for a farmers' mechanism. More specifically, evaluators did not agree that farmers were not well represented in the CFS "as there are farmers in both [the civil society and private sector] mechanisms". See Bester et al. 2017. *Evaluation of the Committee on World Food Security.* CFS: Rome. xix. Available: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1617/Evaluation/CFS_Evaluation_Final_Report__14_April_2017.pdf)

Box 7 Key challenges facing the CSM (online survey Q 18)

Here is how the CSM participants have ranked a list of challenges to the future of the CSM.

1. Lack of financial support
2. The human rights mandate of the CFS is openly questioned
3. More seats being given to the Private Sector Mechanism on the Advisory Group
4. The voices of affected groups are not prioritized in the CFS
5. The increasing presence of the Private Sector Mechanism
6. Number of self-funded participants in CSM activities threatens balance of CSM
7. CSM actors disengage because of limited impact of participation and CFS
8. Sub-regions and constituencies are not adequately consulted and involved
9. The World Farmers' Organization (WFO) is recognized as a participant and member of the Advisory Group
10. The political process moves from plenary negotiations to intersessional sessions only

In light of these challenges, we see both the need for the CSM to elaborate a strong statement on how the CFS should, in line with a human rights-based approach, better prioritize the voices of the organizations representing the most affected within the context of a 'multi-stakeholder' platform. Indeed, the value of the reformed CFS lies to a great extent in its participatory structure that prioritized the voices of those most affected. In turn, the CSM plays a fundamental role in advancing the vision of the Committee and many CFS participants highlighted that the CFS would not exist if it was not for the commitment of the CSM. Yet, in our view, the reform principle of prioritizing the voices of those most affected should be further anchored in the governance structure of the CFS, and more explicitly and firmly translated into specific CFS processes. At present, this commitment can be expressed through the following practices: the number of seats on the Advisory Group, allocating speaking time in plenary, the choice of keynote speakers, the selection and training of technical task team coordinators as well as the allocation of institutional resources enabling representatives of civil society organizations of the affected to travel to Rome, and enjoy the translation and interpretation services they need to participate in the CSM and speak on their own behalf. However, all of these practices are questioned or targeted by some CFS participants, forcing the CSM to constantly fight to preserve its 'space' and the CFS as a whole.

We welcome that the terms of reference of the recently established CSM Working Group on Global Food Governance cover this issue, as well as many of the inter-related governance challenges identified above, including: the relations between CFS and other intergovernmental normative spaces, the relations between CFS and other levels of food and nutrition governance (notably regional and national), the human rights foundations of the CFS (with special emphasis on the right to food), the challenges of conflicts of interest within the CFS, tackling selected items of the CFS evaluation follow-up process, and facilitating the CSM contribution to the process emanating from the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) report on "Multi-stakeholder Partnerships to Finance and Improve Food Security and Nutrition in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda".

We also recognize that many participants in the CSM have been vocal in rejecting language around multi-stakeholder processes, calling instead for multi-actor approaches. In their view, multi-stakeholder governance wrongly suggests that all actors (e.g., states, civil society organizations and private sector) have the same rights to participation and the same stakes. They prefer the term multi-actor governance, which highlights that while all actors have the right to discuss and contribute, only states hold decision-making power. Civil society participants thus engage in the CFS as rights-holders, with a view to hold states accountable as duty bearers.

We acknowledge the tendency in global food governance towards so-called 'multistakeholderism'[31], at the expense of equitable and meaningful participation. However, we would encourage the CSM to come up with more clear and coherent positions on this issue, using the opportunity of the CFS follow-up process on the 2018 High Level Panel of Expert report *Multistakeholder partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda*).[32] With respect to the goals and priorities of the CSM, we are unclear on the usefulness of the multi-actor framing compared to a multi-stakeholder framing. In the CFS context, we see a possibility (see Box 8) for CSM actors to reclaim the multi-stakeholder language, by clarifying that CSM participants are primary stake-holders[33], and linking this to the CFS commitment to ensuring that the voices of those most affected are particularly heard.

[31] For more on this see:

Aubert, Pierre-Marie, Matthieu Brun, and Sebastien Treyer. 2016. "Recent Trends in the Global Governance of Food and Nutrition Security: Policy Implications for the EU (Policy Briefs, N. 07)." 7. IDDRI: Paris. https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/import/publications/pb0716_pma-et-al_global_governance_fns.doc.pdf

McKeon, Nora. 2017. "Are Equity and Sustainability a Likely Outcome When Foxes and Chickens Share the Same Coop? Critiquing the Concept of Multistakeholder Governance of Food Security." *Globalizations* 14 (3). Taylor & Francis: 379–98. doi:10.1080/14747731.2017.1286168.

[32] A summary and recommendations from the report are available here: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/hlpe/hlpe_documents/HLPE_S_and_R/HLPE_2018_Multistakeholder-Partnerships_S_R-EN.pdf

[33] Lelea, M.A., G.M. Roba, A. Christinck, B. Kaufmann. 2014. Methodologies for stakeholder analysis – for application in transdisciplinary research projects focusing on actors in food supply chains. German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL). Witzenhausen, Germany. Available: http://reload-globe.net/cms/attachments/article/56/Lelea_et_al_(2014)_StakeholderGuide_final_web.pdf

Box 8 Multistakeholder versus multi-actor spaces

Since the 2007/08 food price crisis, there has been a proliferation of multistakeholder platforms devoted to bringing diverse perspectives together to inform and improve food security policy. In addition, multistakeholder partnerships are becoming key instruments for implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Multistakeholder platforms like the CFS are welcomed by a variety of non-state actors (e.g., civil society, international organizations, private sector, philanthropic foundations, and research organizations) who enjoy the opportunity to actively participate in, and not just observe, state-led policy processes. Multistakeholder processes are also appreciated by state actors who find that the contributions and inputs of non-state actors with different types of knowledge and expertise make for better informed discussions and more relevant/concrete policy outcomes.

However, multistakeholder processes tend to assume, implicitly or explicitly, that all stakeholders hold equal stakes or will be equally impacted by the resulting policies, which is clearly not the case. They further risk diluting the responsibilities of states as duty-bearers of human rights obligations. Finally, such processes create tensions between profit motives and public goals, opening the door for undue influence and conflicts of interest. In order to highlight the differentiated impacts of the resulting policies on different groups and emphasize their position as right-holders, CSM participating organizations have been using the language of the CFS not as a multi-stakeholder space, but as a multi-actor space. The nuances and implications of this shift, however, need to be made clearer by the CSM. This is particularly important given that the CFS has added the theme of "Multi-stakeholder partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda" to the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW).

The term **'actor'** refers to a category of person who performs a certain *function* within a process. When we talk about actors, they should be connected to a particular activity or process.

The term **'stakeholder'** is used to identify actors who have a *stake or an interest* in an issue. We can define stakeholders as any group of people who share a common interest or stake in a particular issue. As such, stakeholders must be identified *in relation to such a specific issue or problem*.

When it comes to the CFS, stakeholders are then people who have a common interest or stake in global food security. This interest can also be described as those who are affected by or who can affect a particular decision or action.

In our view, the CFS commitment to prioritizing the voices of those most affected by food insecurity should be translated into a clear distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' stakeholders (or actors if that is the preferred term).

Primary stakeholders would designate those directly affected by the problem of food insecurity or involved in the issue.

Secondary stakeholders would designate all other stakeholders who are indirectly affecting or being affected by *food security and nutrition*.

States are more than stakeholders. Their voting rights distinguish them from other CFS participants and they have the duty to implement the right to food and nutrition notably through the negotiation and implementation of CFS outcomes.

To read the High Level Panel of Experts' report on Multi-stakeholder partnerships to finance and improve food security and nutrition in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, see: http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-hlpe/en/

In addition, we noted above that the external communication strategy of the CSM puts a heavy focus on reinforcing the normative and human-rights based focus of the CFS. This is a key point of agreement and convergence within the CSM. However, this strategy is difficult to implement in the context where, as was noted in the CFS evaluation and confirmed through interviews, the right to adequate food does not have a high profile on the agenda of the Committee. In the future, it is likely that continuing to push for right-based approaches and the strengthening of the right to food and nutrition within the CFS will be even more complicated. Towards this end, the CSM may consider developing training for CSM participants, as well as clear positions and strong language on the right to food and nutrition, women's rights and rights-based approaches that can be widely shared and (re)used by CSM participating organizations in negotiations.

The development of a 'Friends of the Right to Food in Rome'[34] is an important opportunity for the CSM and can serve to give visibility to the right to food, for example through relevant side events at the CFS Annual Sessions. Moving forward, it will be key for the CSM to build on the momentum created by the national, regional and global workshops and meetings organized in 2018 in the context of the Global Thematic Monitoring Event on the Right to Food Guidelines. The recommendations that emerged from the March 2018 workshop that was co-organized by the Friends of the Right to Food and the CSM to monitor the use and application of the Right to Food Guidelines are particularly relevant in that regard. Three of these recommendations are key for the CSM, which could play an advocacy and/or facilitation role: strengthening the use and application of the Global Strategic Framework of CFS, which contains all relevant guidelines and recommendation in order to realize the right to adequate food and for the monitoring processes in Geneva, as well as with the ongoing monitoring of the SDG2; increased cooperation on the Right to Food between the Rome based Agencies, in particular FAO, and the OHCHR in Geneva; and establishing open CFS like multi-stakeholder platforms at national level, including those people most affected by hunger and malnutrition.

[34] This informal group was established in 2018 by delegates accredited to the Rome-based UN agencies with the objective of advocating for positioning the right to adequate food in the decision-making processes in the Rome-based UN agencies and to help disseminate the Right to Food Guidelines. The founding members of the group include delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, South Africa and Switzerland.

3) CSM-CFS Relations

Overall, CSM-CFS relations are positively perceived and well evaluated. However, there remain some tensions, particularly in relation to perceptions of member states about the CSM. By acknowledging and addressing these perceptions the CSM could further strengthen relations with the CFS.

> The Reform Document states clearly that the "CFS is an intergovernmental Committee composed of members, participants and observers and will seek to achieve a balance between inclusiveness and effectiveness. Its composition will ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders – particularly those most affected by food insecurity - are heard" (paragraph 7). Participants include: representatives of UN agencies; civil society and non-governmental organizations and their networks; international agricultural research systems; international and regional financial institutions; and, representatives of the private sector and private philanthropic foundations.

In terms of effectively engaging with the CFS, as noted above, the CSM is appreciated for its consistent and professional engagement. It has been particularly successful in generating convergence within the CSM around the right to food and food sovereignty, and in articulating a shared position enabling the CSM to speak as one voice. To preserve the quality and impact of CSM engagement with the CFS in the future, we would like to raise a number of issues that emerged through the evaluation process.

First, we note a risk that the CSM may become a bit monolithic in its perspectives, possible weakening the commitment to diversity. While we recognize the importance of coherence in policy negotiations and the strength that comes from presenting civil society approved statements, this can also serve to alienate actors who should be present and active in the CSM but whose views do not align with the dominant perspectives. In the future, the Coordination Committee may want to consider strategies for ensuring that a wider diversity of perspectives and approaches are represented. That is, to create strategies to avoid homogeneous thinking.[35]

Second, the insistence of CSM actors on the normative role of the CFS, particularly the demand for having policy recommendations as outcomes of every process, is not understood by diplomats. Many state actors think that the CFS is generating too much work (very little of which is being used) and would welcome more sharing of inspirational experiences at CFS. It was also clear that some delegations (particularly from G77 countries) are unable to follow all work streams whereas the CSM is active in each one. Considering that states are ultimately accountable for implementing the right to food and addressing food insecurity, this raises concerns. The CSM could explore ways to reinforce/build shared strategies with selected states. But ultimately, it is the responsibility of all states to identify ways to reinforce their participation, at least through furthering regional collaboration. In addition, the CSM could also build on lessons learned from past successes and further consider how to reinforce its working relations with states to

[35] The importance of cultivating diversity is well acknowledged in the founding principles of the CSM. The CSM founding document, for example, states that "[p]articipation within the CSM should aim to preserve unity and solidarity amongst CSOs, but should not imply a flattening of the diversity that exists between civil society in terms of objectives, strategies, and content." Further, within the Terms of Reference for the Coordination Committee, it is noted that "[w]hen the CSM provides views to the CFS through its Coordination Committee (but CSOs also provide views directly through the annual meetings of the CFS) and the Advisory Group members, it will seek to communicate the range of divergent positions that are held by participants in the Mechanism."

enhance its influence in CFS processes. For example, the securing of agroecology in the CFS Multi-Year Program of Work was achieved through alliances with supportive states.

Third, intersessional engagement of CSM actors remains quite weak overall, with a key group of actors playing a dominant role in multiple intersessional work streams. In addition, the Open Ended Working Groups of the CFS have many different types of processes and methodologies, which makes it difficult for CSM actors to engage as they need to learn new procedures for each Group. From the perspective of the CSM, we question if it would not be preferable to push for more plenary negotiations in lieu of outcomes negotiated inter-sessionally. There are obviously trade-offs to this (e.g. cost, time, possibility of new actors joining negotiations at the end of a process), but it would allow for the development of more inclusive and comprehensive outcomes, and ensure that the CFS retains its political character. If everything is discussed in intersessional meetings, there is a risk that the annual sessions would become nothing more than annual networking gatherings where information is exchanged and policies are rubber stamped.

Along similar lines, we question whether the CSM should be more selective in which CSM workstreams it participates in. That is, should the CSM be present in every Open-Ended Working Group and Task Team of the CFS? Or should the CSM have a more strategic and proactive (rather than reactive) approach to its engagement? A more proactive strategy could not ensure more strategic use of CSM resources, and address concerns raised by some CSM participants about whether the CSM is investing too much energy on policy outcomes over application. Given this, CSM actors could consider calling for fewer policy processes that may have more relevance for civil society and larger impact. Along similar lines, and to address the sentiment that people in the CSM are pressed for time, the CSM could decide to only engage with policy processes that are of high priority. The CSM could also consider pushing the CFS to develop more standardized processes for how Working Groups operate, to avoid unnecessary discussions and delays associated with methodological confusion.

Finally, it emerged clearly through interviews with member states in particular that CSM actors are perceived to be too present or influential within CFS processes. In addition, there is a level of frustration and irritation with the tone and attitude the CSM actors take during negotiations. Interviewees spoke of CSM actors as too ideological, dogmatic, pushy, insistent, and repetitive. This was coupled by feelings that often the CSM did not participate in wider efforts to negotiate and find compromise. This perception was widely shared by member states and other CFS participants that we interviewed, generating negative perceptions of the CSM. Some interviewees said they had felt attacked by what they had perceived as a polarizing, antagonistic, righteous or in some instances the rude attitudes of some CSM actors. Member-states that are supportive of the CSM found this particularly frustrating and noted that they were often overlooked or even contradicted when they put forward proposals that were comparable with or aligned with CSM proposals.

Overall, we consider these comments as evidence of the CSM fulfilling its mandate and find that the CSM has managed to strike a nice balance between working with states and representing a strong civil society front to achieve its ambitions. However, there is a need for the CSM to collectively reflect on and pay attention to these negative

perceptions and to develop strategies to address them. This is particularly important in the context of the current assessment of relations between the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group. In our opinion, the CFS is a political space and the CSM has a mandate to advance the perspectives of those most affected by food insecurity. In this sense, CSM actors have the responsibility not to move towards consensus, but to defend positions. At the same time, CSM actors are not decision-makers and it would be in their interest to consider these critiques and try to maintain or develop strong alliances with selected member-states. This may imply further reflecting on how to address/overcome the clash of culture between the CSM and other CFS participants. One useful suggestion that was made by a CFS participant was to encourage CSM actors to try to 'speak more through states'.

4) Use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes

CSM participants have engaged with CFS outcomes, making use of them for diverse purposes, but more needs to be done by states, Rome-based agencies and CSM participating organizations to ensure adequate use, application and implementation of CFS outcomes.

The reformed CFS has produced four main policy convergence outcomes Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crisis; Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems; Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGT); and, the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition. The CFS has also developed policy recommendations building on 12 High Level Panel of Experts reports. The CFS 2017 Evaluation concluded that:

> 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. 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 (Conclusion 2).

In the end, the Evaluation found no evidence of widespread uptake of policy outcomes and recommendations beyond the VGGTs (ES6). That said, the Evaluation recognized that the best outreach in terms of CFS outcomesis being done by CSM actors.

According to the survey, 63% of the CSM participants have made use of some CFS outcomes. The most widely used outcomes are the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGTs), the Global Strategic Framework and the outcomes of the Connecting Smallholders to Markets process. Many respondents also mentioned the FAO's Governance of Tenure Technical Guide No. 3, *Respecting free, prior and informed consent: Practical guidance for governments, companies, NGOs, indigenous peoples and local communities in relation to land acquisition*[36]. Some interviewees self-critically reflected on the failure of their own organizations to integrate some CFS outcomes in their work and documents, despite identifying these outcomes as excellent and useful, such as the Water

[36] While not a direct CFS outcome, these guidelines build on the VGGT and were frequently cited as useful by survey respondents.

recommendations. It was also noted that CSM participating organizations have been too focused on getting good policy outcomes, not looking enough into what happens next.

According to the survey, CFS policy outcomes have contributed to peoples' struggles on the ground in several ways (see Box 9).

Box 9 How CFS outcomes contribute to peoples' struggles (online survey Q 36)

Here is how the CSM participants ranked the contribution of CFS policy outcomes to people's struggles:

1. Providing information
2. Policy or advocacy work
3. Awareness raising
4. Alliance building
5. Dialogue spaces with policy-makers
6. Creating useful processes
7. Accountability of states & international institutions
8. Fund raising

At the same time, a number of obstacles were also mentioned (see Box 10).

Box 10 Obstacles to using CFS policy outcomes (online survey Q 37)

Here is how the CSM participants ranked obstacles when it comes to using CFS policy outcomes to people's struggles:

1. Financial support
2. Political situation
3. A lack of training
4. Appropriate materials (e.g. in the local language)
5. Knowledge (how to apply them to the local context)
6. Time
7. Awareness of the different outcomes (what they are and what they refer to)
8. Limited dissemination by Coordination Committee member
9. Language
10. Outcomes are not useful
11. Their lack of relevance to your local work

Based on these outcomes, it appears that one of the key priorities would be for the CSM to work on supporting participating organizations with the development of adequate materials and tools as well as training to enhance the use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes. The good news is, CSM actors have already demonstrated their ability to turn CFS outcomes into popular tools to be used in grassroots struggles (see Box 11and Box 12), with concrete impacts on the ground. The involvement of CSM participating organizations in the process of negotiations on Connecting small-holders to markets, for example, supported the establishment of specific markets for the youth in West Africa and led to the development of a popular dissemination tool called Connecting small-holders to markets, *An analytic guide (see* Box 11*).*

Box 11 Applying CFS policy outcomes: An analytic guide

In June 2016 the CFS concluded policy negotiations on 'Connecting Smallholders to Markets'. The policies addressed important questions such as: 'What is a market?', 'In what kinds of markets are small-scale producers actually present?' 'Which markets now channel most of the food consumed in the world?' 'What would constitute a positive way forward for relations between small-scale producers, markets and food security, and what investment and public policies would be needed to promote this?'.

To support uptake and application of these guidelines, the CSM, in partnership with Hands on the Land and CSM participating organizations, developed an analytical guide to examine how small-scale food producers' organisations and allied civil society can work together with their governments to apply them in the context of national and regional policies and programmes.

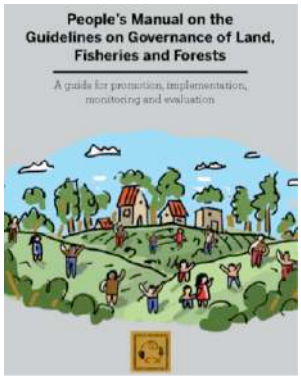
The Guide shows how the CFS policy recommendations on connecting smallholders to markets:

1) recognize that the bulk of food is channelled through markets linked to local, national and regional food systems ('territorial markets'), showing how these markets are at the forefront of market systems in the context of food security and nutrition;
2) urge governments to employ public policy to support these territorial markets, both by strengthening territorial markets where they already exist and by opening up new spaces for these markets to take root and flourish.

The Guide covered the topics of: Territorial markets; Distinctions between territorial markets and formal value chains and impacts of international trade; Public policies in support of territorial markets; and, Positioning territorial markets to respond to global challenges ahead. It also includes a number of practice examples to ground the analysis.

The Analytic Guide can be downloaded here: http://www.csm4cfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/English-CONNECTING-SMALLHOLDERS-TO-MARKETS.pdf

Box 12 Best practice in translating CFS outcomes to into local action



In May 2012, after participatory negotiations, the CFS officially endorsed the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT). They have been the most widely used and applied of the CFS outcomes.

The Guidelines provide a framework that can be used when developing strategies, policies, legislation, programmes and activities. They allow governments, civil society, the private sector and citizens to evaluate proposed actions.

In 2016, the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) published the *People's Manual on the Guidelines on Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests: A guide for promotion, implementation, monitoring and evaluation*. The manual was developed with a number of international organizations participating in the IPC, and with technical support from the FAO.

Clearly presented and written in a style and with language that appeals to grassroots approaches, the manual provides concrete and accessible information not only on the negotiation process, but also on how to incorporate the final policy outcomes into the work of peoples' movements. This includes how to address conflicts and how to use the Guidelines to empower food producers. It also contains concrete and practical examples to illustrate and inspire. Finally, it provides information about how social movements and organisations can contact national FAO offices to, among other things: request copies of the Guidelines to be distributed in their communities; propose joint activities; invite FAO or other organisations to civil society activities such as workshops etc.; insist that the principles of participation established in the Guidelines and the FAO strategy on partnerships with civil society organisations are applied when FAO organises activities at all levels; inquire about the possibilities for FAO or other organisations to help secure funding for activities related to the Guidelines and governance of natural resources; and, inquire about possibilities for technical assistance from FAO and other mechanisms, for example carrying out studies on the governance of land tenure.

Through interviews it became clear that this document has been used by organizations to support efforts on the ground. As such, the People's Manual is a key example of a best practice in translating CFS outcomes into accessible tools for peoples' movements.

The People's Manual can be downloaded here: http://www.foodsovereignty.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/peoplesmanual.pdf

Additional documents on the Voluntary Guidelines are available here: http://www.fao.org/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en/

At the same time, we note that CSM participating organizations identify such a diversity of priority areas for their work that it may be difficult for a critical mass of organizations to join forces around the use and application of a priority number of outcomes (see Box 13). One way around this would be for CSM participating organizations to make more links across policy outcomes. For example, links could be made between agroecology, nutrition, water, the Right to Food, Sustainable Development Goals and women's empowerment but these links have not been clarified or put into practice.

Box 13 Priority issues for CSM actors (online survey Q 34)

Here is how the CSM participants ranked top priorities for their organizations:

1. Agroecology
2. Climate Change
3. Land Tenure
4. Connecting Smallholders to Markets
5. Sustainable Agricultural Development, including Livestock
6. Women
7. Gender
8. Water
9. Sustainable Development Goals
10. Agricultural Investment
11. Nutrition
12. Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture
13. Monitoring
14. Social Protection
15. Sustainable Forestry
16. Biofuels and Food Security
17. Food Losses and Waste
18. Urbanisation and Rural Transformation
19. Global Strategic Framework
20. Protracted Crisis
21. Food Price Volatility
22. CFS Evaluation

Our interviews brought three additional challenges to the forefront. First, a great number of people we spoke to complained about what they perceived as the reluctance of FAO and other Rome-based Agencies to play a strong and leading role in the use, application and implementation of CFS outcomes (with the exception of the VGGTs and potentially *Connecting small-holders to markets: An analytic guide*). Across the CSM, there is a shared perception that the FAO is not sufficiently supportive of the CFS, or of its role as the foremost platform for food security governance. It was also noted that the agenda of FAO is not aligned and at times conflicts with that of the CFS (e.g. on nutrition or agroecology). This is of particular concern considering that lessons learned from the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests show that dedicated funding and commitment by FAO (and potentially other Rome-Based Agencies) is key to CFS outcome uptake.

A second challenge that was identified is the lack of spaces similar to the CFS at the national level, where dialogue can take place and where civil society organizations are granted a seat at the table. A third challenge that came up is the important disconnect between permanent missions representing governments in Rome who show some openness, and the 'capitals' which, according to the people we interviewed, show no interest in CFS outcomes and don't feel accountable or responsible for their implementation. The fact that CFS outcomes are voluntary and not compulsory is identified as a considerable limitation, and many worry that the low uptake of CFS outcomes by states will negatively impact the relevance and prominence of the CFS. In that regard, we note a division of opinions on the role of Sustainable Development Goals within the CSM. Some see the Sustainable Development Goals as illegitimate and problematic because they are not rights-based, and are concerned that the Sustainable Development Goals may take attention away from CFS; others see that Sustainable Development Goals are already reshaping development policies at national level, and think that the CSM should take stock of this, and use the opportunity that may arise from a better articulation of CFS outcomes to Sustainable Development Goals reporting (annual, via CFS). In their view, the Sustainable Development Goals could be used to put more weight onto CFS outcomes if the contribution of specific CFS outcomes to the realization of Sustainable Development Goals at country level was better highlighted.

Overall, the collective ability of the CSM participating organizations to "bring Rome home" is still very weak, and reinforcing that ability should be a priority for participating organizations. There is a lot of eagerness for the CSM to do more at national level, notably in terms of training, awareness or advocacy or as watchdogs of state implementation. At the same time, there is a lack of clarity on how the CSM as a space could facilitate efforts by participating organizations to 'domesticate' CFS outcomes. In the views of the CSM participants, Working Groups could play a stronger role in the dissemination, use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes in the future, together with Sub-regions and constituencies (see Box 14).

Box 14 Dissemination, use and implementation of CFS outcomes by CSM actors (online survey Q 38)

Here is how the CSM participants ranked the actors who lead CSM work on dissemination, use, and implementation of CFS outcomes

1. Working Groups
2. Sub-regions
3. Constituencies
4. Coordination Committee members
5. Secretariat
6. Individual organizations

Two priorities emerge from these survey results, that are reinforced by interviews. First, the CSM should work towards ensuring some level of continuity at the end of the Working Group life cycle, to facilitate the transition from policy elaboration to implementation, and enable Working Groups to play a bigger role in terms of dissemination. Second, the CSM should work towards reinforcing sub-regional and constituency engagement with CFS outcomes, as well strengthening the articulation of Working Groups, sub-regions and sectors. We see a clear opportunity for CSM

participating organizations to create more synergies at national and sub-regional level, and better articulate with FAO and other Rome-based agencies and processes at those levels.

With regards to Working Groups, a number of suggestions were made that facilitators and coordinators could look into, such as: producing, at the end of the policy cycle, a short synthesis brief with key points emerging from the negotiations; ensuring that there is discussion within the Working Group about how to facilitate and encourage follow-up outside of CFS; and engaging, in collaboration with constituencies and sub-regions, with efforts to 'translate' CFS outcomes in ways that make sense for people who do not know what the CFS is. In light of the fact that the people who participated in negotiations are best placed to explain issues and gains, it appears important to ensure that these people play a key role in efforts needed to translate policy documents into a language and formats that can turn them into accessible tools for peoples' struggles. For this to happen, the CSM needs to reflect on how to put in place processes to capture the knowledge accumulated in policy negotiations, before people leave. In addition, further thinking could go into how to embed CFS policy outcomes into processes outside of CFS. A good practice here could be to encourage CSM participants to use their engagement in other policy processes (at the UN or elsewhere) to organize side events and share information about what has taken place at CFS, as this was done for example at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples.

With regards to building more synergies at the regional level, we encourage the Coordination Committee and Working Groups to look into ways for sub-regional Coordinators to play a more active role in organizing joint activities for using and applying CFS outcomes and monitoring their implementation. Sub-regional Coordinators could build on the many networks, alliances and processes that already exist at sub-regional and regional levels to facilitate more discussions, debates and encounters, in a more inclusive fashion. Collaborations could also be furthered with global networks such as the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC), Alianza, Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition). FAO regional consultations could also be approached as more strategic spaces for enhancing the use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes. We note a few challenges here, however. First, FAO consultations are conducted in ways that provide less opportunities for active and inclusive civil society participation than the CFS. Second, several interviewees complain about the difficult nature of relations between CSOs and FAO country offices. Third, FAO regions do not always match CSM sub-regions. In addition to FAO there also seems to be more opportunities for the CSM to work with IFAD to support implementation and update at the local level.

However, Working Groups, sub-regions and constituencies will not be able to play any relevant role in facilitating the use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes without the actual leadership and involvement of individual organizations. We are therefore surprised to note that survey respondents did not identify individual organizations as key actors in that collective effort. While we understand the need to work as a collective through the CSM, we suggest that this discrepancy be discussed within the Coordination Committee, to ensure clarity and enhance impact. Clarifying the role of the CSM Secretariat would also seem useful, since they view their role as limited to interactions with CFS, which may not be congruent with what CSM participating organizations imagine or expect. Finally, the CSM should consider how to support and monitor the use, application and implementation of CFS outcomes by CSM actors in a

more concerted and consistent manner across constituencies and sub-regions, to ensure accountability and enable feedback mechanisms within the CSM. This would also enable better documentation and critical reflection of what different CSM participating organizations have done and achieved.

Summary of recommendations

Following the evaluation, we have identified 20 recommendations for the Coordination Committee to consider:

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement a 'buddy system' that links new CSM actors to more experienced CSM actors to ensure smoother integration, including for Coordination Committee members.

Recommendation 2: Continue reflecting on how to deconstruct patriarchal power relations within the CSM and consider developing gender equality guidelines and related training for application across the work of the CSM.

Recommendation 3: Develop quotas to enhance youth involvement in the Coordination Committee and Working Groups.

Recommendation 4: Develop a strategy to invite more people to participate in the CSM, selectively targeting organizations, sub-regions or constituencies that are under-represented in the CSM.

Recommendation 5: Identify strategies to more strictly enforce balance requirements (youth, gender, constituency, sub-regional) in all CSM processes, notably by better collecting data about civil society participation in the CSM forum.

Recommendation 6: Consider asking for a financial contribution from self-funded participants to support the attendance of under-represented participants and enhance the inclusiveness of the CSM space.

Recommendation 7: Continue to develop and implement guidelines and strategies to streamline and clarify CSM processes.

Recommendation 8: Address over reliance on a small number of individuals by developing a strategy towards a more diversified distribution of Working Group coordinators and facilitators to address over-reliance on a small number of individuals. Streamline communication across Working Groups. Explore ways to address imbalances in social movement involvement in different CFS work streams and intersessional activities.

Recommendation 9: Develop a strategy to increase the institutional memory of the CSM Working Groups, assigning clear responsibilities for this task and laying the ground for efforts towards the use, application and monitoring of CFS outcomes. Develop protocols, including leadership strategies, to support the transition from policy to implementation.

Recommendation 10: Develop communication pathways, or feedback mechanisms, between the Working Groups and the Coordination Committee to ensure political coherence and focus.

Recommendation 11: Consider devoting more time in Coordination Committee meetings to developing a political strategy outlining clear priorities and areas of focus.

Recommendation 12: Further clarify the roles and identify the skills needed for sub-regional Coordinators to be effective, and consider providing more targeted training or support to strengthen them. Develop Terms of Reference for the sub-regional Coordinators outlining expectations for communication, as well as use, application and monitoring of CFS outputs.

Recommendation 13: Develop a strong statement on how the CFS should, in line with a human rights-based approach, better prioritize the voices of the organizations representing the most affected within the context of a 'multi-stakeholder' platform. Clarify the use of the term 'multi-actor' platform by CSM actors.

Recommendation 14: Continue active engagement with the Friends of the Right to Food group to create stronger relations with states to put the right to food and nutrition more strongly on the CFS agenda.

Recommendation 15: Develop a more concrete strategic vision for the CSM to selectively engage with targeted priority policy processes.

Recommendation 16: Reflect collectively on the negative perceptions of the CSM by other CFS participants and develop strategies to address these without compromising the important political role and function of the CSM.

Recommendation 17: Identify and implement strategies for Working Groups to play a stronger role in the dissemination, use, and application of CFS outcomes in the future, building on the knowledge and expertise acquired by CSM participants in the negotiation process.

Recommendation 18: Identify a small selection of priority CFS outputs to translate into peoples' manuals and disseminate through CSM participating organizations.

Recommendation 19: Create more synergies at national and sub-regional level, and better engage with FAO and other Rome-based Agencies where appropriate, to enhance dissemination activities.

Recommendation 20: Develop and implement strategies for capacity-building for participating organizations to effectively lobby national governments to take steps towards the implementation of CFS outputs.

Appendix 1: Key documents analyzed for evaluation

Although many more documents were reviewed, this table represents the documents that were identified as being of primary importance. They were coded and analyzed using Atlas.ti, a qualitative software analysis program. Codes were based on the Terms of Reference of the evaluation and key themes that emerged from the survey and interviews.

Date	Title
2009	CSF Reform Document
2010	CSM Founding Document, CFS:2010/9
2017	CFS Evaluation Final Report Executive Summary
2014	CSM Evaluation
2014-15	CSM Annual Report 2014-15
2015-16	CSM Annual Report 2015-16
2016-17	CSM Annual Report 2016-17
2017	CSM Welcoming Kit
2017	Initial Draft Terms of Reference for CSM Food Governance WG for discussion at CSM Forum
2017	Definition of Protracted Crises and its Social Category Amended Draft Proposal – May 2017
2017	Draft Concept/Guidance note on CSM communication work
2017	Technical Instructions for CSM CC members for the Reporting and Renewal Process 2017
2017	CSM Reporting and Renewal Process 2017 Template A: List of Participating Organizations in the CSM (includes template b)
2017	CSM Reporting and Renewal Process 2017 Template C: Written Report about the Consultation Process on the CC Renewal
2013	DRAFT Terms of Reference for the Coordination Committee
2015	CSM Guidelines on Internal Functioning on transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, selection and decision making processes in the CSM
2013	DRAFT Guidelines for facilitating common policy positions and messages through the Civil Society Mechanism
2014	Terms of Reference for CSM Finance and Administrative Working Group Members
2014	Terms of Reference for CSO member of the CFS Advisory Group
2016	CFS at the Crossroads, 7 Years after the Reform. CSM Draft Reflection Paper on the State of Health of the CFS in 2016
2017	Key political debates at the CFS in 2017 - a brief overview
2017	IITC Board of Directors Resolution for name change CFS-MSM (en English y espanol)
2015	An Open Letter to the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) on Internal Functioning of the CSM.
2017	Call to invite organizations of communities living in protracted crises, of refugees and internally displaced people to participate in the Civil Society Mechanism for relations with the UN Committee for World Food Security.
2016	CC meeting on CSM Workplan Issues- Timeline and Responsibilities for decisions taken
2017	CFS budget information 2011-2017

2017-18	CSM Priorities for Workplan 2018, for discussion
2018	Friends of the Right to Food in Rome – Concept Note
2010-2017	CSM Forum data (excel spreadsheets)
2010-2017	Data on CC members

Biographies of Evaluation Team

Priscilla Claeys, PhD

I am a Senior Research Fellow in Food Sovereignty, Human Rights and Resilience at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR) of Coventry University (UK). I received my PhD in Political and Social Sciences from the University of Louvain (UCL) in 2013. While doing research on legal mobilizations within the transnational agrarian movement La Via Campesina, I worked as a Special Advisor to the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier De Schutter, from 2008 to 2014. My research areas include: the right to food and food sovereignty, agrarian movements, global food governance and human rights. I have done research on the creation of new human rights - right to land, biodiversity and seeds - by transnational peasant movements and have been involved in the negotiations of a new UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas.

Jessica Duncan, PhD

I work as an Assistant Professor in Rural Sociology at Wageningen University (The Netherlands). I hold a PhD in Food Policy from City University London (2014). My research areas include: food policy; food security; global governance; environmental policy; and participation. I research relationships between global governance mechanisms, food provisioning, the environment, and the actors that interact across these spaces. More specifically, I am interested in better understanding ways in which non-state actors participate in supra-national policy making processes, and analyzing how the resulting policies are implemented, shaped, challenged and resisted in localized settings. I sit on the editorial board for the journal *Sociologia Ruralis* and work as an associate editor for the journal *Food Security*. I also act as an advisor and researcher with Traditional Cultures Project (USA).