Policy brief

A Committee on World Food Security (CFS) coordinated policy response to the global food crisis

This brief has been drafted by the Global Food Governance Working Group of the Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) of the CFS building on evidence from consultations conducted this year in all regions. People's voices from the ground underline the sharp increase in hunger and inequalities resulting from interconnected structural issues, such as poverty, discrimination, climate chaos, war, conflicts and sanctions, debt, food import dependency and unfair trade and investment rules that reinforce and perpetuate the food and food price crises we are facing and which demand immediate and urgent actions.

1. WHY DO WE URGENTLY NEED A GLOBALLY COORDINATED POLICY RESPONSE?

The multilayered and multifaceted crisis continues to worsen dramatically. Increasing numbers of people continue to suffer and die every day, including children, women, the disabled and the elderly, and those who are discriminated against and marginalized.

The urgent action that is required to respond to immediate needs has to be coherent with the longer-term transformation of food systems. Addressing the systemic causes of the current food crisis requires a coordinated approach at global level.

Instead, responses at the global level continue to be fragmented and biased. The UN Global Crisis Response Group, the Rome-Based Agencies, the G7, the G20 and financial institutions frame the current global food crisis from a market and production perspective and attribute it largely to the disruption of global trade by a war involving two major agro-exporting countries.

These responses do not adopt a Human Rights approach in framing the problems and the solutions. They fail to address the causal factors of the systemic crisis: why have so many countries in the global south become dependent on imports? why do we continue to face unacceptable levels of hunger despite many years of record production?

There is a dire need for coordinated global action to stop hunger and take the necessary steps to ensure that there will be no more food crises. Where can it best be situated?

> *"Never in our lives, never in the history of this region, have we experienced such an accumulation of serious, deep, interconnected crises. We need structural solutions!"*
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> **- Ibrahima Coulibaly, President of the West African Network of Peasant and Agricultural Producers Organizations – ROPPA. Voices from the Ground, 2020.**

2. WHY IS THE CFS THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND LEGITIMATE SPACE FOR COORDINATING THE RESPONSE?

Global policy coordination needs to be urgently implemented within an inclusive multilateral governance mechanism that affords priority voice for most affected countries and constituencies in defining the responses. None of the bodies mentioned above fit this description. The UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS)[1] does.

The CFS has the necessary convening power as the foremost inclusive platform on food security and nutrition. It has the mandate to coordinate and strengthen collaborative action, to provide support

1. CFS is made up of countries that are members of the United Nations; UN agencies and bodies with a mandate on food security and nutrition; other relevant UN System bodies whose overall work is related to attaining food security; civil society and non- governmental organisations and their networks; international agricultural research systems; international and regional Financial Institutions; and relevant private sector associations and private philanthropic foundations.

and advice to countries and regions, as well as to monitor the policy uptake and implementation and their impacts on the Right to Adequate Food.

It benefits from the support of a uniquely inclusive and effective science-policy interface, the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) [2].

Policy responses need to be anchored in a comprehensive human rights approach, recognizing the agency of those most affected as rights-holders and the accountability of governments as duty-bearers. Such responses are ever more necessary to leave no one behind with the worsening impacts of the climatic crisis and the economic downturn.

Since the realization of the Right to Adequate Food is central in the vision and mandate of the CFS it is well placed to ensure that global responses are not framed by vested interests but respond to the rights and needs of the most affected. Responses that address both immediate needs and longer-term food systems transformations cannot depend on random good-will action of the wealthiest economies of the planet.

Global policy coherence and accountability are key to the governance of our food systems. States must ensure that their actions do not cause foreseeable harm beyond their borders, nor hamper the ability of other countries to honor their human rights obligations.

It requires States to uphold their obligation to cooperate in order to safeguard the rights of those most at risk and to guarantee an enabling environment to address the current crisis and prevent future crises, instead of acting solely in function of their own national political and economic interests or those of powerful economic actors.

> *"Keep using the CFS to push all of us to work together and develop a coordinated response to the food crisis. The CFS is the place of action. The CFS can be the place to focus everyone in a way that not only gets us out of the food crisis, but gets everyone on the right path to face the challenges of climate change, to adapt to the new normal."*
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> **- Michael Fakhri, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. CFS 50 Plenary Session, October 2022**

3. WHAT EXISTING POLICY OUTCOMES AND CAPACITIES COULD THE GLOBAL RESPONSE BUILD ON?

The CFS is able to build on the orientations of the HLPE 2030 Global Narrative report, its COVID-19 and Conflict in Ukraine policy briefs, as well as the other HLPE reports and numerous CFS policy recommendations which are highly relevant to addressing the current crisis.

These include the guidelines and recommendations regarding food security in a context of protracted crisis, food price volatility, social protection, responsible tenure, investing in smallholder agriculture, youth engagement and employment and connecting smallholders to markets.

The current CFS Multi-year Programme of Work (MYPoW) directly responds to other critical issues such as: women's empowerment and gender equality, reducing inequalities, as well as the need to ensure a sound analysis of the evolving nature of the crisis on the basis of evidence from the ground.

The CSIPM provides the CFS with privileged direct access to peoples' evidence. UN agencies participating in the CFS - WHO, ILO, UNCHR and others - can share policy orientations on a range of relevant issues, and FAO can contribute its significant data collection and analysis capacities.

Many of the pieces of the puzzle are there: they need to be fit together into a coherent whole and made accessible to government authorities and other actors at multiple levels.

2. The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) is the science-policy interface of the CFS. The HLPE is composed of a Steering Committee of 15 internationally recognized experts in a variety of food security and nutrition related fields, selected to analyze/report on specific issues and a Secretariat, hosted by FAO. The HLPE aims to facilitate policy debates and inform policy-making by providing independent, comprehensive and evidence-based analysis and advice through reports, issues papers and identification of critical and emerging issues, at the request of CFS.

Knowledge, evidence and experience from the ground should be an indispensable contribution to framing policies. Small-scale producers, family farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolks, workers, Indigenous Peoples, consumers and urban populations know their conditions and have pertinent policy proposals to advance.

More than any other international governance space, the CFS can count on the participation of various constituencies, first and foremost those who produce most of the food we consume and the most affected by the current crises.

The global report Voices from the ground 2: transformative solutions to the global systemic food crisis gathers evidence coming from the CSIPM Popular Consultations and documents peoples' solutions and proposals.

4. WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN BETWEEN NOW AND CFS 51 IN OCTOBER 2023?

The reconvened session of CFS 50 on 19 December needs to adopt a conclusion to the debate on the agenda item 'Coordinating Policy Responses to the Global Food Crisis' that explicitly endorses and launches the process of taking up the CFS's mandate and convening role to address the crisis.

The wording suggested by the CSIPM in consultation with a number of Member States calls on the CFS 'to engage in an inclusive Member-led dialogue to propose an approach for providing globally coordinated policy guidance to CFS51 to address the current and prevent future crises'.

This could take the form of developing over the coming months, with the support of the HLPE and the participation of interested CFS Member States and participants, having the ones most affected by food insecurity at the center, a proposal that would go to CFS51 as part of its programme of work (MYPoW) for the period 2024-2028, focusing on the strategic functions of policy coordination and promoting application of policy outcomes, which have not been adequately implemented in past years.

Now is the moment to act and build a coordinated global policy response at CFS by having an inclusive intersessional work with the guidance of the HLPE leading to a proposal that could be tabled at CFS51 and implemented as the coordination plan of the new programme of work (MYPoW).

The CSIPM

The Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM) for relations with the United Nations Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is the largest international space of civil society organisations (CSOs) working to eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition. Its purpose is to facilitate civil society participation and articulation into the policy processes of the CFS. The CSIPM is an open and inclusive space and hence does not have formal members, but participating organizations. Every organization that belongs to civil society and works on food security and nutrition can join and participate. All participating organizations in the CSIPM belong to one of the following 11 constituencies: smallholder farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, agricultural and food workers, landless, women, youth, consumers, urban food insecure and NGOs. Visit https://www.csm4cfs.org for more information.

The Global Food Governance Working Group

The role of the Food Governance Working Group is to support the CSIPM Coordination Committee, the Advisory Group, and the whole CSIPM transversally across other Working Groups on issues related to the role of the CFS in the overall food governance architecture. WWFor more information and to join the Working Group visit https://www.csm4cfs.org/policy-working-groups/global-food-governance/

Relevant links

1. Voices from the ground 2: transformative solutions to the systemic global food crises. (CSIPM, 2022)
2. Another perfect storm? (IPES FOOD, 2022)
3. CSIPM statements during CFS 50 Plenary Session
4. Preventing current and future crises through transformative policy proposals. (CSIPM, 2022)
5. The CSIPM response to the invitation of the Global Alliance for Food Security (CSIPM, 2022)
6. HLPE Reports

CSIPM
Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism
for relations with the UN Committee on World Food Security

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