COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-first Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 13-18 October 2014

UPDATE ON COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Matters to be brought to the attention of the CFS:

The Committee:

- takes note of this document and the ongoing CFS communication and outreach work;
- emphasizes the importance of communication to support effective implementation and realization of CFS recommendations and decisions;
- urges CFS stakeholders to take appropriate action to disseminate CFS products throughout their constituencies and to be active participants in raising awareness of CFS and its products;
- urges the Rome-based Agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) to actively disseminate information about CFS products and their uses throughout their organizations both in Rome and in decentralized offices; and
- encourages CFS stakeholders to ensure that communication activities are allocated sufficient resources.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This document provides an update on CFS 2013/40/4 “Communication Strategy for the Committee on World Food Security” presented at CFS 40. The Secretariat has continued to roll out the elements of that strategy, taking into account resources available, as well as taking advantage of ad hoc communication opportunities that arise. A proposed implementation plan and budget has been prepared and presented to CFS stakeholders at the CFS Information Session on 11 September 2014 at FAO, Rome.

This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page; a FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications. Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org
II. UPDATES ON COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES 2013-2014

A. Support to CFS Workstreams

2. Both the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investments (CFS-RAI) and the Agenda for Action for Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises (CFS-A4A) workstreams have used the CFS public website (www.fao.org/cfs) as their primary repository for background documents in the six official languages as well as other resources. It was also used for updates on progress and for communicating any changes in schedules. Initial outreach and awareness on endorsement of both these workstreams is included in the 2014-2015 implementation plan.

3. The Monitoring workstream has included the importance of communication and outreach as a precursor to monitoring the effectiveness of CFS decisions (CFS 2014/41/11). On endorsement, the communication approach will be revised to ensure complementarity.

B. Inter-sessional Events

UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon meets with CFS

4. The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, addressed CFS stakeholders on 7th May in Rome. In his address he recognized the importance of the CFS multi-stakeholder model in ensuring food security and nutrition for all:

“The CFS platform is unique, invaluable and, since the reforms of 2010, more robust than ever. Food security and nutrition is everyone’s business, and the CFS platform brings together positions and perspectives from all sectors.”

The Secretary General’s full statement is at this link:

VGGT Stocktaking Event and Sharefair

5. On 14th May 2014, FAO and the CFS Secretariat jointly organized a stocktaking event to mark two years since the endorsement by CFS of the “Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security” (VGGT). In the morning there was a multi-stakeholder interactive panel discussion chaired by the CFS Chair, Ms Gerda Verburg. Panelists included the Honourable Joseph Sam Sesay, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security from Sierra Leone as well as representatives from Guatemala and the Philippines. The CFS Civil Society Mechanism was represented through the Indigenous Indian Treaty Council and the private sector was represented by Coca-Cola. The event was webcast and, for the first time in a CFS event, questions for panelists could be sent in by Twitter or email. Positive feedback from those not in Rome was received on this innovation.

6. In the afternoon there was a Sharefair where VGGT related material was displayed and delegates were given the opportunity to ask questions. Throughout the day video interviews were made of the panellists and other stakeholders which will be on display at CFS 41. A summary of the event in English can be found at this link:

FAO Regional Conferences

7. Updates about CFS were requested by all the FAO Regional Conferences. The CFS Chair was invited to all such Governing Bodies where there were also opportunities to meet and engage with
regional multi-stakeholder groups and organizations. At the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference, the Chair was represented by the CFS Vice Chair.

**Strengthening the links with other UN Technical Committees**

8. The HLPE Report on Fisheries and Aquaculture was launched during the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and was Co-Chaired by the CFS Chair and the Chair of COFI. The CFS Chair was also invited to participate in the Committee on Forestry (COFO) where she stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder inclusion.

**C. CFS Chair’s meetings and travels**

9. The CFS Chair has responded positively to a great number of invitations (many from CFS constituencies) to conferences and meetings. Activity reports are now prepared following all travels or bilateral meetings and are made available to the Bureau and Advisory Group with relevant background documents. Her speeches are shared upon request when available. The contact details of the people she meets are routinely added to the CFS mailing list so they will receive further updates on CFS. Instant updates on the conferences attended by the Chair as a keynote speaker or panelist are available by following the Chair’s twitter account @GerdaVerburg.

10. In some cases when the Chair was not able to attend an important event in person, video messages were sent and subsequently published on the Videos page of the CFS website:

   http://www.fao.org/cfs/videos/

11. CFS products, communication material and HLPE reports were shipped, advertised and distributed to a number of conferences attended by the CFS Chair or other representatives.

12. The Chair is looking into gradually strengthening the linkages, including communication, between CFS and the representation in New York on such matters as the Post 2015 development process and ECOSOC.

**D. Rome-based Agency Engagement**

13. Notifications of CFS events are routinely distributed through the internal communication mechanisms of the three Rome-based Agencies. The CFS Secretariat and WFP have elaborated a communication plan, which includes interactive events and information sessions, to raise the awareness of staff in country and regional offices about CFS and the way CFS products can assist them in their work. Further campaigns in all three agencies are included in the 2014-2015 implementation plan.

**E. UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)**

14. The UNSCN is the bridge builder between the food security and nutrition community. Information about CFS workstreams and events are routinely included in the UNSCN e-letter and communicated through the UNSCN website. The CFS Secretariat and the UNSCN Secretariat developed a communication plan to raise awareness of CFS and its products within UNSCN’s nutrition community in countries and at regional level about CFS and the way CFS products can assist them in their work. Furthermore, all CFS products have been looked at under a specific nutrition lens and the analysis of this has been made available at the specific page on the UNSCN website at this link:


This page will be regularly updated. Further specific campaigns are planned.
F. Outreach to those not connected to the Internet

15. It has often been noted, including at CFS 40, that dissemination of information about CFS products and their uses should also include stakeholders with no access to the internet. An effective method of ensuring that key messages reach wide audiences is to use Entertainment-Education (E-E). E-E engages audiences by placing complex technical issues in an easy to understand fictional setting that both entertains and educates. It can be used to address sensitive subject matters because audiences identify with the conflicts characters face, the choices they make, and the values they promote. It is most suited to radio dramas with follow up activities including discussion programmes, phone ins, “town hall” style meetings and traditional story tellers. Radio penetration is high in areas not connected to the internet as it is more affordable and accessible particularly in rural areas.

16. The Secretariat is currently working with various CFS stakeholders to identify a suitable country to carry out an E-E pilot which, if successful, can be adapted for other locations. This activity is including in the 2014 – 2015 implementation plan.

G. HLPE Communication and Outreach

17. Former HLPE reports and the related CFS decisions are frequently presented and used in various international events. The HLPE reports are increasingly referenced in institutional documents, academic literature, as well as in documents and interventions of diverse stakeholders. The report on Investing in Smallholder Agriculture has served as a background document for various international conferences during the International Year of Family Farming. Raising further awareness of the HLPE reports is included in the 2014-2015 implementation plan.

H. CFS 41 Post Session Survey

18. Since 2010 a Post-Session Survey has been distributed to delegates so that their feedback can be used to improve future sessions. To promote increased participation, this year the survey is included as Session Document No 2014/41/Inf.6 available in six languages. All delegates are encouraged to complete the survey and send it to the CFS Secretariat by email to cfs@fao.org by the deadline of 29 October. A Word version of the survey in all languages is also available on the CFS 41 web page (http://www.fao.org/cfs/cfs41/)

III. OUTREACH AND MEDIA

A. The CFS website

19. The CFS website (www.fao.org/cfs) continues to be the first point of entry for those wishing to find out more about CFS and ongoing CFS activities. In 2014 a Download Centre was added (www.fao.org/cfs/download) which has all CFS products available in the six official languages. As well as the major products such as the VGGT and the GSF, the individual sets of policy recommendations have been extracted from all the Final Reports since 2010 and formatted for quick download. Any associated HLPE reports are also available from the same location. On endorsement, CFS-RAI and CFS-A4A will be added. A campaign to raise awareness of this easy availability of CFS products is included in the 2014-2015 implementation plan.

20. Two other pages on the CFS website have been published since CFS 40. They are the Videos page (www.fao.org/cfs/video), which has already been mentioned, and the Updates! page (www.fao.org/cfs/updates). The Updates! page, which is a pilot, allows for the automatic feeding of CFS Tweets on to the CFS website as well as notifications of events and other activities.
21. Analysis of the web traffic (see Section 4 Evaluation) shows that the English web site pages are receiving significantly more traffic than the other languages and that most of that traffic is from Europe and North America. Individual campaigns to raise awareness of CFS in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish have been included in the 2014 – 2015 implementation plan to improve this balance. Also included is awareness raising in English speaking countries not in Europe or North America.

22. The CFS Working Space (www.fao.org/cfs/workingspace) continues to be used, in conjunction with email, as the main tool for communications between the Secretariat and the Bureau, the Bureau Alternates and the Advisory Group. Feedback from the users of the Working Space is used to continually improve the interface, taking into consideration the resources available.

B. CFS Mailing List

23. The CFS Secretariat is now partnering with the Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum (http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/), the worldwide network of experts on food security and nutrition. The FSN Forum maintains and grows the CFS mailing list. Currently three electronic “CFS Updates” are sent per year as a pilot. The pre-existing ad hoc CFS mailing lists have been cleaned and consolidated and now new contacts are added routinely. Delegates are encouraged to sign up to receive CFS Updates by sending an email to CFS.Updates@gmail.com or visiting the Sign Up page on the CFS website (http://www.fao.org/cfs/signup/)

C. Social Media

24. CFS is now on social media using the Twitter handle @CFSUpdates which delegates on Twitter are encouraged to follow. The Twitter hashtag for CFS 41 is #CFS41.

25. Tweets for scheduled CFS activities are prepared in advance and live tweets are sent during events or other CFS related activities. As mentioned above, CFS Tweets feed through to the Updates! web page (http://www.fao.org/cfs/updates/).

D. General Outreach

26. Throughout the year there was an increase in the number of media mentions of CFS. Many of them were related to specific workstreams such as CFS-RAI or the VGGT. The UN Secretary-General’s address to CFS stakeholders in April attracted media interest. As also mentioned by the Secretary-General, there is a growing interest in the multi-stakeholder nature of CFS. This is reflected in this article in The Guardian published during last year’s CFS session: “World food security talks: challenges of bringing everyone to the table” (http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/oct/10/world-food-security-talks-hunger). There is also an increasing academic interest in the CFS multi-stakeholder model including a two day workshop organized in July 2014 by CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development) called “Global Governance: Lessons from the Committee on World Food Security and its Reform”.

E. Outreach to Specialist and technical media

27. The preparation of the CFS policy round tables and of the related HLPE reports creates multiple communication and outreach opportunities both with concerned stakeholders, knowledge holders and the wider scientific community. The consultations on the scope and the zero draft of the HLPE reports have resulted in many announcements, blogs and articles on websites and are excellent opportunities to raise awareness of CFS within the technical communities linked to the topics.

28. The launch of the HLPE report on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition during COFI in 2014 created additional opportunities to communicate with the fisheries
and aquaculture community. The main results of this report have also been presented in the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

29. The main results of the HLPE report on Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems have been presented in the annual plenary of CONSEA (Conselho Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional) in Brazil, at the RURFORUM in Mozambique (a consortium of 32 Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Universities for Capacity Building in Agriculture). Live TV Interviews were held on CNN World Business news and the BBC with the Chair of the Steering Committee of the HLPE, Mr Per Pinstrup Anderson.

F. CFS 41 Media Outreach

30. As has been the practice for previous CFS sessions, a communication and outreach strategy has been developed for CFS 41 in close conjunction with the media units of FAO, IFAD and WFP. It aims to engage with both general media and specialist and technical media that are following the outcomes of CFS-RAI, CFS-A4A and the two policy round tables. During the session video interviews will be made with delegates and used for future outreach.

IV. EVALUATION

A. CFS communication feedback indicators

a) Web site traffic
There has been a 20% increase in web sessions on the public website (approximately 100,000 sessions a year) which continues the steady increase of previous years. The number of page views has increased by 60% to 222,000 views with unique page views at 184,000. The average time spent on a page has increased by 15% to 2 minutes 20 seconds. The English language pages are receiving roughly four times the traffic of the French and Spanish pages. The Russian, Arabic and Chinese pages are receiving minimal traffic. Most of the English web traffic is from Europe and North America. The top five source countries for web traffic are Italy, USA, France, UK and Switzerland. 86% of users access the website on a computer, 7% on a tablet and 5% on a mobile phone.

b) Coverage in print and online news media during CFS 40
Total number of stories detected: 432
Number of those in top tier outlets: 45

c) The number of email addresses on the CFS Updates Mailing list
After the clean-up of pre-existing lists, the CFS mailing list contained approximately 2,500 high quality contacts. It is expected to double this number to 5,000 by the end of 2014.

d) The rate of increase of the number Twitter users following @CFSUpdates
CFS launched on Twitter in February 2014. By July there were approximately 350 followers. A campaign to increase the number will be held during CFS 41.

e) Number of invitations for the CFS Chair and other CFS stakeholders to participate in or contribute to food security and nutrition events, articles and other activities
As noted above, the CFS Chair is receiving a noticeable increase in the number of invitations to participate in events, write articles, make videos and deliver key-note speeches which marks a growing interest in CFS.

B. The Monitoring Workstream

31. The Open Ended Working Group on Monitoring has emphasized the importance of effective communication as one of the key drivers of success for CFS. The draft proposal CFS/2014/41/11 considers the successful implementation of the “CFS Communication Strategy” as one of the main
dimensions to focus on when assessing the effectiveness of CFS. It is proposed that effectiveness is gauged through the implementation of periodic opinion surveys of CFS stakeholders and in-depth country level assessments. The proposal also considers the organization of events aimed at sharing experiences and best practices in the adoption of CFS policy recommendations at country level.

32. On endorsement of this proposal, the elements of the existing CFS Communication Strategy endorsed at CFS 40 and the implementation plan will be reviewed to take into consideration the defined objectives and targets of the Monitoring Workstream.