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FAO REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Twenty-ninth Session

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Update on the Committee on World Food Security (CFS)

Executive Summary

CFS held two plenary sessions since the last Regional Conferences met. In line with its role in global policy convergence CFS endorsed the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS-RAI) and the Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS-FFA). Policy recommendations were made on the basis of the three reports produced by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE): Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems; Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition; and Water for Food Security and Nutrition. The Committee organized a High-Level Forum on Connecting Smallholders to Markets. Its outcomes were presented to the CFS Plenary together with identified areas to be further addressed by CFS.

CFS endorsed its Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for the biennium 2016-2017 and the guidance note for the selection of future CFS activities.

The Regional Conference is further invited to encourage the implementation of CFS policy products.

Lastly, further work was done towards a framework for monitoring CFS decisions and recommendations. The Committee also agreed on the request to carry out an external evaluation to assess CFS effectiveness since its reform.

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Matters to be brought to the attention of the Regional Conference

CFS invites the Regional Conference (RC) to take note of the CFS outcomes. In particular, the RC is asked to consider the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work and to encourage the active participation of all stakeholders in the activities to be carried out by the Committee in 2016-2017.

1. The purpose of this document is to provide an update to the FAO Regional Conferences (RCs) on the main outcomes of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) since the RCs last met in 2014, as well as on the main activities to be carried out by the Committee in 2016-2017.

2. Since the reform of CFS in 2009, the key features and outcomes of the Plenary Sessions of CFS were presented at the last three RCs in 2010, 2012 and 2014 with the purpose of enhancing food security and nutrition governance by strengthening linkages between global commitments and regional/national efforts.

I. Policy convergence

A. Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS – RAI)[1]

3. The Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (CFS – RAI) were endorsed by CFS in October 2014 following a two-year multi-stakeholder consultative process. The Principles address all types of investment – public, private, large, small – throughout the food system. They provide a framework that all stakeholders can use when developing national policies, programmes, regulatory frameworks, corporate social responsibility programmes, individual agreements and contracts. The Principles represent the first time that governments, the private sector, civil society organizations, UN agencies, development banks, foundations, research institutions and academia have agreed on what constitutes responsible investment in agriculture and food systems that contribute to food security and nutrition.

B. Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS – FFA)[2]

4. The Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (CFS – FFA) was endorsed in October 2015 following a two-year multi-stakeholder consultative process. The Framework for Action provides policy guidance by setting out experience-based principles and describing associated actions that can be taken. The Framework represents a global political consensus among a wide range of stakeholders on how to address critical manifestations of food insecurity and undernutrition, adapt to specific challenges that are magnified in protracted crises, and contribute to resolving the underlying causes of food insecurity and undernutrition in these contexts.

5. The intended users of the Principles are all stakeholders with a role in improving food security and nutrition in protracted crises, namely those providing both short-term and longer-term assistance, but also those with a role in contributing to their own food security and nutrition.

[1] http://www.fao.org/3/a-au866e.pdf
[2] http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1415/FFA/CFS_FFA_Final_Draft_Ver2_EN.pdf

C. Policy recommendations based on reports by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE)

6. In 2014, the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) presented the two reports that were requested by the Committee, namely: *Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems and Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture for Food Security and Nutrition*. In addition, the HLPE produced a note on Critical and Emerging Issues for Food Security and Nutrition, which was used to inform the discussions concerning the preparation of the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work for the biennium 2016-2017.

7. In 2015, the HLPE produced a report on *Water for Food Security and Nutrition.*

8. All HLPE reports, as well as the policy recommendations resulting from the Round Table discussions held at each Plenary session and endorsed by the Committee can be accessed on the following dedicated page of the CFS website: www.fao.org/cfs/cfs-home/products/en/. These recommendations constitute important policy guidance for further action by a wide range of stakeholders.

In the next biennium the HLPE will produce the following reports:

- *Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition, including the role of livestock (2016)*
- *Sustainable forestry for food security and nutrition (2017)*
- *Nutrition and food systems (2017).*

D. High-Level Forum on Connecting Smallholders to Markets

9. A High-Level Forum on *Connecting Smallholders to Markets* took place in 25 June 2015. The event was organized by CFS with the technical support of FAO, IFAD and WFP as well as with contributions by the Civil Society Mechanism and the Private Sector Mechanism to the preparation of the background document[3] that informed the discussions. The Forum represented an opportunity to discuss policy implications based on the realities faced by smallholders as market actors in a globalized food system as well as lessons from concrete examples of how farmers and farm groups have found opportunities to link to markets.[4]

II. CFS workstreams and activities

A. Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) 2016-2017[5]

10. In October 2015, the Committee adopted the Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW) for the biennium 2016-2017. As a result, the Committee agreed on the following activities:

- *CFS role and contribution to nutrition (2016-2017)*
- *CFS engagement with Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2017)*
- *Follow-up to the High-Level Forum on Connecting Smallholders to Markets (2016)*
- *CFS Forum on Women's empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition (2017)*
- *CFS Forum on Urbanization, rural transformation and implications for food security and nutrition (2016-2017)*

[3] http://www.fao.org/3/a-av042e.pdf

[4] http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs1415/Events/HLF_Small/CFS_HLF_Smallholders_Chairs_Summary.pdf

[5] http://www.fao.org/3/a-mo317e.pdf

- *Update of the Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) (2016-2017).*

11. The Committee also endorsed a revised guidance note for the selection of CFS activities for 2018-2019 (Annex 1, CFS 2015/42/12).

B. Towards a framework for monitoring CFS decisions and recommendations

12. At its 41st Session in October 2014, the Committee endorsed a methodological proposal for monitoring CFS decisions and requested the CFS Secretariat to conduct a baseline assessment of CFS effectiveness beginning with the implementation of an opinion survey of CFS stakeholders.

13. At its 42nd session in October 2015, the Committee acknowledged the findings of the CFS Effectiveness Survey,[6] which represents an initial snapshot of CFS effectiveness on, among other areas, CFS inclusiveness and participation; coordination and engagement; evidence-based decision making; and promotion of policy convergence. The Open-Ended Working Group on Monitoring was requested to develop in 2016 basic terms of reference to ensure participation, inclusiveness and regional representation in monitoring-related events and agreed to hold a global thematic event during CFS 43 to share experiences and take stock of the use and application of the "Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security". The Committee also invited volunteer member countries to pilot the implementation of voluntary in-depth country level assessments of CFS effectiveness, with support from the CFS Secretariat, and to discuss the results with the OEWG on Monitoring.

C. Evaluation of CFS effectiveness – 2016

14. At its 42nd session in October 2015, the Committee confirmed its request for an external evaluation to assess CFS effectiveness since its reform, to be carried out in 2016 subject to available resources. The evaluation will help CFS meet future challenges in the evolving global environment and position the Committee to build on its strength and comparative advantages. It will inform the evolution of CFS as it considers its role in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The evaluation is also expected to generate learning for the UN system, where different entities and actors are exploring ways to develop a multi-stakeholder approach to which CFS represents a possible model.

III. Matters to be brought to the attention of the Regional Conference

15. CFS invites the Regional Conference (RC) to take note of the CFS outcomes. In particular, the RC is asked to consider the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work and to encourage the active participation of all stakeholders in the activities to be carried out by the Committee in 2016-2017. The RC is further invited to encourage implementation of CFS policy products.

[6] http://www.fao.org/3/a-mo151e.pdf