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**COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY**

**Thirty-sixth Session**

**Rome, 11-14 and 16 October 2010**

**GLOBAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR  
FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION  
A CONCEPT NOTE**

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**The Committee is invited to:**

Endorse that a consultative process led by the CFS Secretariat in close collaboration with the Bureau, Advisory Group and HLPE be undertaken to develop and agree to a Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) by October 2012.

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. In spite of the recognized importance of ensuring food security<sup>1</sup> for all, global food and nutrition security has deteriorated and continues to represent a serious challenge for a large part of the world's population. Today more than 1 billion people suffer from chronic hunger, which is alarming and unacceptably high.
2. There is no time to lose to rectify this situation. Greater efforts have to be made in order to address the underlying causes of hunger and to strengthen coherence and convergence among policies and programmes of countries, donors and other stakeholders. Duplications and gaps at all levels in the governance of food security and nutrition need to be addressed for the system to function as a coherent whole.
3. How to address this issue has been the topic of a number of forums including G8, G20, UN General Assembly, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and the World Summit on Food Security in 2009. In response to the global food crisis, in 2008 the UN Secretary General convened a taskforce composed of senior officials of the UN system and Bretton Woods institutions to assist the chronically hungry and the poor people of the world.
4. In November 2009, the heads of state and government convened at the World Summit on Food Security declared that the increasing level of hunger and poverty.... "is an unacceptable blight on the lives, livelihoods and dignity of one-sixth of the world's population....we must collectively accelerate steps to revert this trend and to set the world on a path to achieving the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security....it is essential to enhance global governance building on existing institutions and foreseeing effective partnerships"<sup>2</sup>.
5. Among the initiatives to strengthen coordination and partnerships to combat hunger and food and nutrition insecurity, the most recent and promising is the reform of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS). This reform aims to enable the CFS to "... fully play its vital role in the area of food security and nutrition, including international coordination"<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, it was

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<sup>1</sup> Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

<sup>2</sup> Paragraphs 2 and 3, Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security, Rome, 16-18 November 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 2 of the CFS reform document.

agreed that .... “CFS will gradually take on additional roles such as, ...develop a Global Strategic Framework for food security and nutrition”<sup>4</sup>.

6. Simply put, collective experience over the past decades has shown that in spite of good intentions and considerable allocations of money, time, energy and political support, achievements in the fight against hunger and malnutrition have not met stated goals and objectives. At the same time, one of the primary causes of this failure can be ascribed to stakeholders working in isolation without a common platform to provide agreed yet flexible, forward thinking and participatory guidance towards coordinated and synchronized actions.

7. In light of global concerns about the unacceptably high levels of hunger and numerous efforts by many stakeholders to reverse this trend, this concept note proposes the basic elements of a process to develop a framework designed to help guide and synchronize policies and actions towards improving food security and nutrition for all.

## II. WHY A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK?

8. In order to provide a clear answer to this question, it is necessary to understand what is meant by a strategic framework and what would be its added value. A strategic framework is generally understood to include concepts such as: inclusive and forward thinking, vision and intentions; a summary of actions (global to local) needed to reach a desired goal incorporating different perspectives; a description of an organization, corporate culture, business, or technology in the future.

9. It can thus be argued that a committee such as the CFS, which brings together a wide range of organizations, programmes, taskforces and countries at different stages of development, working towards a common shared goal in a complex environment, needs such a framework to enable it to be forward thinking and visualize its future responsibilities and actions from different perspectives.

10. Stakeholders need to feel that they are part of something bigger than themselves. At the same time they need clear direction to know what “bigger thing” they are part of to willingly adjust themselves to the agreed direction. This coincides with the CFS reform document which recommends the...“creation of a framework to improve coordination and guide synchronized action by a wide range of stakeholders”<sup>5</sup>.

11. In developing such a framework it is useful to emphasize that:

- The GSF should serve to harmonize, facilitate and organize the work of the CFS in its newly identified roles
- As recommended in the CFS reform document, the GSF would be elaborated taking into account existing frameworks such as the UN’s Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security. The International Assessment of Agricultural knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), Scaling Up Nutrition and other relevant documents will also be considered. The Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Food Security, and the definition of food security, already agreed among nations, would serve as additional reference material

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<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 6 of the CFS reform document.

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 6 of the CFS reform document.

- Finally, and most importantly, the GSF will be developed through a comprehensive, participatory and transparent process including all CFS stakeholders and relevant UN bodies, other international organizations, international finance institutions, private philanthropic foundations, and private sector associations. The elaboration process will be led by the CFS Secretariat in close collaboration with the Bureau, Advisory Group and High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE). The GSF will be adopted by the CFS Plenary to ensure ownership by all.

### **III. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

12. The overall purpose of the GSF is to provide a dynamic instrument to enhance the role of the CFS as a platform to improve cooperation, catalyze coordinated action and provide guidance towards effective and synergized partnerships in support of global, regional and country-led plans and processes designed to prevent future food crises, eliminate hunger and ensure food security and nutrition for all human beings.

13. More specifically, the GSF is expected to help the CFS:

- Improve coordination and synchronized actions among all stakeholders based on comparative advantages and partnerships
- Strengthen coherence and convergence among policies and programmes of countries, donors and other stakeholders
- Add value through a harmonized process of demand driven (country-led) activities with scientific inputs from the network of professional expertise and knowledge (HLPE) and field experience (joint secretariat) by identifying focus areas, encouraging best practices, preventing duplication and overlapping, and filling the response gap
- Catalyze country level capacity building
- Strengthen CFS as a platform for communication and information exchange
- Create an atmosphere of trust, shared responsibility and mutually reinforcing incentives among all stakeholders.

### **IV. VALUE ADDED**

14. In simple, practical terms, it is anticipated that the GSF will increase the effectiveness and impact of a more inclusive and participatory CFS. Independent evaluations of the three Rome based agencies point to a number of key areas in which a GSF could contribute considerable added value. These include:

- Prioritization
- Partnership and coordination
- Accountability and ownership.

#### **A. PRIORITIZATION**

15. The GSF will help guide the work of the HLPE thereby assisting CFS to decide on priority areas and helping all stakeholders review their strategic objectives. By allocating resources to priority areas requiring attention, more will be achieved with a given level of human and financial resources.

## **B. PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION**

16. Fruitful partnerships rely on sound information, sincere intention, transparency and, in some cases, change of mentality which are often difficult to achieve. A GSF is expected to strengthen partnerships by encouraging CFS stakeholders to systematically share simple, concise, evidence-based information on:

- i) what they have done
- ii) achievements and success stories
- iii) challenges and difficulties
- iv) proposed solutions, plans and anticipated progress.

Such information would help the CFS identify:

- a) Best practices and success stories (to be adapted by others)
- b) Areas of overlap and duplication among all stakeholders (to be avoided)
- c) Difficulties and bottlenecks (to be diminished or removed)
- d) New areas for partnership and give and take (to be encouraged).

17. Even though providing such information would be voluntary, most stakeholders are expected to participate willingly as the final output will be submitted to the governing bodies of the Rome based agencies and to the UNGA through ECOSOC. Furthermore, at country level, a GSF would encourage coordinated action among the different ministries, department, agencies, or organizations traditionally responsible for different aspects of food security thereby promoting a multi-sectoral approach to realizing food security.

## **C. ACCOUNTABILITY AND OWNERSHIP**

18. The type of information sharing outlined in the previous section would help not only to prepare and update a GSF, but would also help regions, countries and other stakeholders evaluate the progress of their respective efforts towards food and nutrition security, an essential step towards self-accountability and ownership.

## **D. RISK OF NOT HAVING A GSF**

19. There would be at least three major risks in the absence of a strategic framework:

- Organizations and stakeholders continue working in isolation thereby failing to take advantage of synergies resulting from synchronized actions
- While a number of strategic frameworks exists that are related to some aspects of food security, there is currently no, comprehensive, broadly consulted, internationally agreed framework which provides guidance to country led processes to tackle food insecurity issues. The lack of ownership and political support resulting from this leads to overlaps and duplication on the one hand and to gaps on the other
- The danger that the CFS agenda would become overloaded and dispersed and attempt to undertake too much with limited resources. A GSF would help focus the work of the Committee, both in terms of contributions from stake holders as well as outcomes.

## V. THE WAY FORWARD

### A. PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE ELABORATION OF THE GSF

20. The following guiding principles could facilitate drafting, discussing and endorsing the GSF:

- The elaboration of the GSF should include a broad participatory process that will strive to “ensure the voices of all relevant stakeholders – particularly those most affected by food insecurity – are heard”<sup>6</sup>
- The GSF will be voluntary and thus will not constitute a mandatory requirement
- The GSF will be approved by CFS member states but will be endorsed by all stake holders. Neither approval nor endorsement will be binding; they will rather constitute an acknowledgement that the document is a sound framework to improve convergence and synchronized action in food security and nutrition governance
- The GSF will supplement other international frameworks for food security, each one of which has been created in response to a specific aim and context;
- The GSF will be a high profile, living document updated periodically by the CFS Plenary taking into account the most relevant, emerging issues affecting food security and nutrition
- The GSF will not address financing, but may recognize financial needs and point to ways of overcoming financial gaps
- The GSF should provide an information and policy base which can be used by governments and institutions as suited to local needs and circumstances
- The structure and content of the GSF should be consistent with the vision, roles and guiding principles as defined in the CFS reform document. The framework should be flexible to adapt to emerging priority issues.

### B. PROCESS

21. Ownership and broad participation are emphasized in the reform document and the process of developing a GSF should follow these guidelines to the maximum possible extent. A two step process is proposed, pending CFS approval to proceed.

22. Step one would focus on obtaining written contributions from key stakeholders to establish country-led principles and to strengthen ownership by those who are trusted with the implementation of the final product. Contributions from the HLPE and other organizations, such as relevant UN bodies, other international organizations, international finance institutions, private philanthropic foundations, and private sector associations to identify key elements will be a valuable input to the process.

23. Step two would consolidate inputs from step one in a document to be reviewed and commented on in a process led by the Secretariat in close collaboration with the Bureau, Advisory Group and HLPE, with a view to be adopted by CFS Plenary in 2012. This would give a GSF the necessary political backing and legitimacy in addition to validating its technical content. As indicated in the following table, each step is envisaged to take approximately one year.

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<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 7 of CFS Reform Document

Endorse the process to prepare a GSF.	CFS Plenary, October 2010
Obtain written comments from Member States and Participants through the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group on purpose, added value, basic principles and process of elaboration as well as structure and content for GSF. Identify the most important focus areas in the fight against hunger and malnutrition with particular inputs from HLPE.	November-December 2010
Based on the above, CFS Secretariat produces a zero draft of the GSF.	January-February 2011
Conduct a consultation process led by the CFS Secretariat in close collaboration with the Bureau, Advisory Group and HLPE to produce written comments on the zero draft of the GSF. All relevant UN bodies, other international organizations, international finance institutions, private philanthropic foundations, and private sector associations will be consulted.	March-May 2011
The consultation process leads to the elaboration of draft one by the CFS Secretariat and is forwarded to the CFS Member States and other stakeholders.	June 2011
Draft One, together with a process to adopt the GSF, is presented and debated in the CFS Plenary.	October 2011
Based on the results of plenary debates, draft two of the framework will be prepared by the CFS Secretariat	January 2012
The resulting draft two is reviewed in an intergovernmental negotiation process with the participation of other stakeholders, leading to a finally agreed document.	February-October 2012