



Statement by CFS Chair
Thirty-first Regional Conference for the Near East (NERC)
Rome, Italy, 14-18 May 2012

Date and Time: Thursday, 17th May 9 am
Location: Red Room, FAO

As Chair of the Committee on World Food Security, I'm very pleased to talk to you today about the progress made by the reformed CFS over the past two years and how this relates to this Regional Conference. In this regard I invite you to refer to the relevant documents for this NERC session.

CFS continues to work towards fulfilling its goal of becoming the foremost inclusive platform for different stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.

There are many challenges facing us in our effort to eradicate hunger and malnutrition from this world: food price volatility, the impact of climate change and the need for environmentally sustainable production in the face of dwindling resource quantity and quality. New issues will undoubtedly emerge so it is important that the CFS multi-stakeholder model continues to improve its effectiveness and influence.

The High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition contributed its first two reports on "Land Tenure and International Investments in Agriculture" and "Price Volatility and Food Security" which served as background documents for policy round tables during the CFS Session in 2011. Two further studies are currently being prepared for the October 2012 session. One is on "Social Protection and Food Security" and the other on "Climate Change and Food Security".

CFS has been very active during the intersessional period thanks to the enormous efforts by the CFS Bureau, Advisory Group and the Secretariat. The Near East is ably represented on the CFS Bureau by Egypt and Jordan.

I will now tell you about some of the key activities underway:

1. First and foremost, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, known as the VG GT. After extensive consultations and negotiations the VG GT were endorsed at a Special Session of CFS last Friday. The guidelines are intended to provide guidance to improving the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests with the goal of achieving food security for all. They are the results of the CFS multi-stakeholder process and show that by coming together we can achieve great things.
2. Another major undertaking has been the development of a **Global Strategic Framework for Food Security and Nutrition (GSF)**. The purpose of the GSF is to improve coordination and guide synchronized action in support of global, regional and country-led actions.
3. The CFS Session in 2011 called for a **High-Level Experts Forum on Addressing Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises**. The objective is to provide an open space for consultation and policy dialogue to increase understanding and strengthen collaborative efforts to deal with food security and nutrition in protracted crises. The HLEF is scheduled to be held in mid-

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September 2012 with a view to producing an “Agenda for Action for Food Security in Countries in Protracted Crises” for consideration by CFS.

4. Another activity is **Mapping Food Security and Nutrition Actions at Country Level**. The importance and relevance of mapping actions has been noted, and it was recommended that governments from the region be invited to discuss and share their experiences during the Regional Conferences.

In October 2011 CFS recommended that the Global Strategic Framework and Mapping Food Security and Nutrition Actions at Country Level be discussed at the FAO Regional Conferences this year. Accordingly, these items were discussed during the senior officers segment in a multi-stakeholder session and a side event. The major outcomes of these discussions could be considered as concrete recommendations from this Region.

There was broad support for the preparation of the GSF and the specific comments received will be taken into account when preparing the First Version. I encourage everyone to participate in the discussions on the First Version of the GSF to be held in Rome from 27th to 29th June.

Regarding Mapping, one of the outcomes was the recognition of the importance and relevance of mapping actions in order to strengthen coordination and alignment in support of national and regional strategies and policies. One recommendation to consider might be to invite national governments or regional bodies to present case studies regarding their experiences and lessons at the 32nd Near East Regional Conference.

In addition to these two activities, CFS has been exploring different ways to enhance linkages with regional food security and nutrition initiatives and to foster their active engagement in CFS. In October 2011 just before the CFS session, the Near East region hosted a Regional Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on Food Security and Nutrition in the Near East in Cairo. The policy outcomes of this workshop were presented to the session and the report of that workshop has been presented to this Conference. The Near East is the first of the regions to hold such a workshop and we hope that there will be more both in the Near East and other regions.

As well as this the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development was part of the Regional initiatives panel in CFS 36 and there was a country case study on Jordan. In CFS 37 the Mapping Food Security and Nutrition Actions as Country Level session included a case study on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We are very happy to see strong support from your region in CFS.

I wish to emphasize the importance of expanding and strengthening such exchanges including through a multi-stakeholder mechanism to address food security and nutrition in the Region. I would encourage delegates to continue pursuing this goal by considering:

- Ways to strengthen linkages between NERC, other regional food security and nutrition initiatives and CFS, particularly during intersessional periods
- Modalities to include CFS matters in future NERCs, allowing adequate time for multi-stakeholder forums and side events to ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard
- Ways to monitor progress in implementing key decisions concerning food security and nutrition.

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Food security and nutrition for all will be realized only if all stakeholders work together and CFS offers a unique opportunity to make that happen.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers of this Conference for their great efforts and support in including the CFS items on the agenda.

Thank you very much.