



CFS Chair's Statement for the FAO Regional Conferences 2014

Chair, Your Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen. This is the third time that the CFS Chair has had the honour to address this FAO Conference. You have already heard much about the good work and the multi-stakeholder structure of CFS from my predecessors, Noel de Luna and Ambassador Yaya Olaniran. Right now I'm here to tell you where we are and where we're going. When I say "we", I mean everyone in this room. One of the guiding principles of the reformed CFS is to build on, and strengthen, existing structures and linkages with key partners. This includes national mechanisms and networks for food security and nutrition, regional intergovernmental bodies, civil society and the private sector. CFS is the platform to promote collaborative actions between all food security and nutrition stakeholders. As I update you I would like you to reflect on which of the CFS priorities are relevant to your country and how the CFS policies recommendations and guidelines are being used.

Since the last Regional Conference there have been two very successful CFS Sessions. At CFS 39 in October 2012, Policy Recommendations were adopted on "Social Protection for food security" and "Food security and climate change" - two subject areas that are of great relevance. You will recall that CFS policy recommendations already have wide buy-in because of the CFS multi-stakeholder model. They are backed up by reports by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition so they have sound scientific grounding.

CFS 40 in October 2013 again tackled important topics which resulted in policy recommendations on "Biofuels and food security" and "Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security and nutrition". All of the High Level Panel of Experts Reports are available on the CFS website in all official languages if you would like to find out more.

CFS 39 also approved an inclusive consultation process to develop and ensure broad ownership of principles for responsible agricultural investments - known as CFS-RAI. [Responsible investments in agriculture is a top priority both from the perspective of donors and the recipients.] The expected outcome is a set of principles to promote investments in agriculture that contribute to sustainable and durable food security and nutrition. From 19th - 23rd May there will be a global meeting in Rome to discuss the final draft. We encourage you to participate in these discussions or to ensure that the relevant experts in your country are participating in the debate and their voices are heard. The final version of the CFS-RAI principles will be adopted at CFS 41 in October this year.

CFS 41 will also adopt an Agenda for Action for Food Insecurity in Protracted Crises that is currently under development and will be relevant to several countries. The Agenda for Action will be practical and implementable policy recommendations that combine CFS-endorsed policy guidance with context-specific recommendations. There will be a global consultation in Addis Ababa from 24 – 25th April. Once again I urge you to participate to make sure your experiences feed into the final product.

CFS has to do more than just produce sets of policy recommendations and guidelines. These products must be applied if they are to achieve the expected results. We are developing a framework that will enable us to monitor the application and implementation of CFS Decisions. We look forward to including feedback from your region on how CFS products are being used, what the success stories are and what lessons we can learn.

An important part of monitoring is communication. We are developing a communication and outreach strategy that will inform and engage CFS stakeholders. CFS has a website where all the documents and guidelines are available in the FAO official languages and we are also including a campaign to raise awareness amongst stakeholders who don't have access to the Internet.

Distinguished delegates, it's been two years since CFS adopted the "Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security" – the VG-GT. To what extent have the stakeholders who approved the VG-GT been implementing the recommendations they themselves approved? To help answer that question we are organizing a stocktaking event in FAO Rome on May 14th. The event will be webcast and we encourage you to participate or follow proceedings online.

Another stocktaking event will take a ten year perspective on the "Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security". This event will take place in FAO, Rome on 3rd July and will also be webcast. It is part of a campaign which will include an econsultation and other activities leading to a Plenary session where a decision will be made on the best way to our common future.

Looking forward to the next session, CFS 41 in October this year will have two policy round tables, backed up by High Level Panel of Experts reports, on "Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems" and "Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security" both of which are very important to this region. We look forward to you being part of the policy debate to ensure that the resulting policy recommendations are realistic, robust, implementable and results orientated.

To serve as a background document for CFS 42 in 2015, the High Level Panel of Experts is currently working on a report on "Water and food security". This is a follow up of major international events such as Rio+20 and the World Water Forum. Water has multiple impacts on food security and nutrition and a food security lens will focus its analysis on agricultural production and food security as well as taking into account gender-related aspects. The resulting recommendations will aim to improve water and food security policies as well as ways to coordinate the different actors, inviting them to cooperate for concrete results.

In 2015 we will be holding a round table on “Building knowledge, skills and talent development to further food security and nutrition”. People working in food security and nutrition should have the skills they need to support their work but disinvestment in extension services has diminished talent. How can this be rectified? There will also be a high level forum on “Connecting smallholders to markets”. In many countries the smallholder farmers face challenges when marketing their products – we will look at ways to overcome them.

Many of you will have been following the Post 2015 Development process leading to the Sustainable Development Goals. I recently returned from a fact finding trip to New York where I attended one of their Open Working Group meetings. CFS is now looking into how best we can engage with this important process. As we move forward, one important point has become very clear. There must be multi-stakeholder structures at all levels - whether it's local, national, regional or global. Building trust between all stakeholders is the way to achieve sound and sustainable results that will also serve the next generations.

As you can see, CFS is a busy Committee! Since the reform in 2009 we have built momentum around our multi-stakeholder model that allows us to tackle challenging issues. The exchange of views is often frank and there is not always consensus. But there is the will to find a way forward which is why we have made such good progress.

So how many of the CFS priorities that I have mentioned are relevant to your country? How is your country using the CFS policy recommendations and implementable guidelines? Are they improving policy convergence leading to results at the grass roots level? These are the questions that our monitoring and evaluation system will be asking.

I would like to end with an appeal. An appeal to each of you in this room to reach out at all levels to help spread the word about the work and impact of CFS and what we are trying to achieve. By working together and reaching out, to include all those concerned, we can fulfil the CFS vision of ensuring food security and nutrition for all people at the local, national, regional and global level.

So let us work together to make this happen. It is our honour and our responsibility to leave this world a better place for our children and grandchildren.