

CFS OEWG-Monitoring #1

Date: 3 February 2016

Time: 9:30-12:30

Location: German Room, FAO (Building C, 2nd Floor)

OEWG on Monitoring – Background Note 20 January 2016

This note summarizes the discussions and recommendations of the OEWG on Monitoring that are relevant to the work of the OEWG in 2016. Most recommendations have been endorsed by CFS during plenary sessions. The decisions of CFS on monitoring are provided in annex for CFS 40 (October 2013), CFS 41 (October 2014) and CFS 42 (October 2015). Most information provided in Sections I, II and III of this Note is extracted from the materials prepared for the workshop organized by the OEWG on Monitoring on 18 July 2013, unless otherwise indicated.

I. OEWG-monitoring work organized along two work streams

1. The OEWG on Monitoring decided to work along two work streams in its first meeting in January 2013:
 - (i) Stream 1: Monitoring of CFS decisions and recommendations
 - (ii) Stream 2: Facilitating monitoring the outcomes related to food security and nutrition at country and regional level (by recommending approaches to be implemented)¹
2. While recognizing that the two streams were important, the OEWG on Monitoring recommended taking a stepwise approach beginning with a **focus on the first stream**².
3. *The OEWG on Monitoring recommended to conduct periodic assessments (every 4 or 5 years) of CFS to gather a collective sense of the state of policy development and coherence from stakeholders regarding both streams as well as the effectiveness of CFS in this regard. This would imply the need to have some sort of a baseline survey, to ascertain the current situation from which to assess progress in the future.*

II. STREAM 1

¹ This stream refers to one of the roles of CFS which is identified in the CFS Reform document for Phase II: *Promote accountability and share best practices at all levels. ... The CFS should help countries and regions, as appropriate, address the questions of whether objectives are being achieved and how food insecurity and malnutrition can be reduced more quickly and effectively. This will entail developing an innovative mechanism, including the definition of common indicators, to monitor progress towards these agreed upon objectives and actions taking into account lessons learned from previous CFS and other monitoring attempts. Comments by all CFS stakeholders will have to be taken into account and new mechanisms will build on existing structures (CFS: 2009/2 Rec.2, para6ii).*

² OEWG-Monitoring gave priority to Stream 1: *The Monitoring function in the context of CFS is firstly about determining how well the Committee is meeting its overall objective of contributing to the improvement of food security and nutrition at various levels. Secondly, it's about recommending approaches to monitoring by members countries, sub-regional and global bodies in order to ensure that monitoring mechanisms lead to more accountability and improvement in programme delivery (Ref: OEWG Workshop on 18 July 2013 – Background Document).*

4. The OEWG on Monitoring recognized the fact that monitoring CFS decisions and recommendations pre-supposes that stakeholders are aware of CFS products and outputs, thus, there is a crucial link to effective and targeted communication and outreach strategies³.
5. The OEWG-Monitoring proposed a categorization of CFS decisions and recommendations, as the wide range of CFS decisions and recommendations imply different kinds of actions by various stakeholders as well as different approaches to monitor their application/implementation:
 - (i) CFS Products – Final Outcomes: this group includes the final outcomes of CFS multistakeholder processes, such as the VGGT;
 - (ii) CFS Policy Recommendations: this group includes primarily the outcomes of the Policy Convergence Round Tables sessions held during Plenary. These will be periodically included in the Global Strategic Framework on Food Security and Nutrition (GSF) to help guide monitoring efforts;
 - (iii) Process-related Recommendations: these are more specific recommendations addressed to the CFS Secretariat, Bureau, Advisory Group, and/or the HLPE. They include specific tasks or reporting requests.
6. There was broad agreement within OEWG-Monitoring that Stream 1 should focus on Group (i) of CFS decisions and recommendations, i.e. CFS Products – Final Outcomes. It was recommended to develop a light survey instrument (Vs rigid framework)⁴.
7. The OEWG on Monitoring noted that CFS Policy Recommendations of Group (ii) had not necessarily been phrased with a view to future monitoring. The OEWG-Monitoring recommended to ensure that *future recommendations are concise, actionable, time-bound if feasible and indicate who would be the main actors*.
8. The OEWG on Monitoring considered using GSF as a basis for developing a framework to assist the monitoring process of Group (ii) but this would require further investigation as GSF was not designed as a monitoring tool.
9. The OEWG-Monitoring recommended to assess CFS effectiveness. It was proposed to first conduct a light, simple, baseline survey to understand the extent to which stakeholders are aware of CFS and its products. The results of the first CFS Effectiveness Survey were presented at CFS 42 in October 2015.
10. The OEWG-Monitoring recommended to devote time during Plenary sessions for regular sharing of experiences and lessons learned in the application/implementation of CFS decisions and recommendations.

³ The importance of starting with a strong communication strategy was reiterated. *The CFS Communication Strategy, currently under development, will assist in planning for systematic dissemination and awareness building of CFS outputs, a crucial component of the identified monitoring process* (Ref: OEWG Workshop on 18 July – Background Document).

⁴ *CFS should not attempt to monitor all decisions and recommendations but rather focus its monitoring efforts on major strategic and catalytic outputs, like the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VG GT) and the Global Strategic Framework (GSF). The criteria to determine which recommendations CFS will monitor needs to be discussed and agreed* (Ref: OEWG Workshop on 18 July – Background Document).

11. The responsibility for monitoring process-related recommendations was given to CFS Secretariat, together with Bureau and Advisory Group by the OEWG-Monitoring⁵.

III. STREAM 2

12. It came out of the discussions within the OEWG on Monitoring that monitoring mechanisms within the context of multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral frameworks should ideally be consistent with the principles set out in Global Strategic Framework (GSF) for monitoring and accountability systems:
- (i) They should be human-rights based, with particular reference to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food;
 - (ii) They should make it possible for decision-makers to be accountable;
 - (iii) They should be participatory and include assessments that involve all stakeholders and beneficiaries, including the most vulnerable;
 - (iv) They should be simple, yet comprehensive, accurate, timely and understandable to all, with indicators disaggregated by sex, age, region, etc., that capture impact, process and expected outcomes;
 - (v) They should not duplicate existing systems, but rather build upon and strengthen national statistical and analytical capacities.
13. A number of key elements and characteristics emerged from the analysis of existing monitoring mechanisms and frameworks that was conducted in preparation of the 18 July 2013 workshop. The mechanisms should:
- (i) Be locally owned by the countries/regions as part of their institutional frameworks and mechanisms;
 - (ii) Include appropriate multi-stakeholder platforms at various levels;
 - (iii) Be grounded in a cross-sectoral policy frameworks to support comprehensive monitoring;
 - (iv) Ensure adequate country capacities and resources (e.g., human and financial resources, avoid reporting fatigue, access to timely, relevant and valid information);
 - (v) Monitor both qualitative and quantitative aspects;
 - (vi) Be transparent and easily accessible (through databases/networks) and specific to the county situation.

Note: Regarding the CFS Evaluation that is planned to be carried out in 2016, subject to available resources, the OEWG-Monitoring clarified the fact that it should be taken forward under the guidance of the Bureau and Advisory Group, rather than the OEWG-Monitoring.

⁵ For these the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Bureau and the Advisory Group, will report to CFS on the status of progress (Ref: OEWG Workshop on 18 July – Background Document).

ANNEX - Main decisions made by CFS on monitoring during plenaries

CFS endorsed all recommendations of the OEWG on Monitoring that resulted from the OEWG meetings in 2013 at **CFS 40** (CFS 2013/40/8), in particular:

- Endorsed the proposal for a **plan of action to disseminate CFS decisions** in the context of the CFS Communication Strategy⁶;
- Endorsed the proposal to focus CFS monitoring on the Committee's major, strategic and catalytic products, which include the outcomes of the major workstreams as per MYPoW;
- Endorsed the conduct of **periodic assessments**⁷ of the CFS effectiveness in improving policy frameworks **especially at country level** and in promoting participation of and coherence among stakeholders on FSN. Specifically, it recommended carrying out a baseline survey to set the basis for assessing progress;
- Underlined the need to use monitoring and evaluation to improve the work of CFS and formulation of future CFS recommendations bearing in mind that they should be **simple, precise, concise, actionable and time-bound**;
- Reiterated the need to continue to **provide a platform for CFS stakeholders** to share their country, regional and global experiences and best practices on monitoring work in these strategic areas;
- Elaborated on possible **use of GSF for policy and programme monitoring** which provides principles on monitoring and accountability (art.92-93), guidance for country level action and strategies (art.72 and 75) and the content of policy decisions to be monitored (Chapter IV);

Main decisions at CFS 41 on monitoring:

- Endorsed the methodological proposal "Towards a framework for monitoring CFS decisions and recommendations";
- Requested that the CFS Secretariat, in collaboration with the OEWG conduct a baseline assessment of CFS effectiveness, beginning with the implementation of an opinion survey;
- Requested that the CFS Secretariat, in collaboration with the OEWG, implement in-depth country level assessments on a voluntary basis subject to available resources;
- Encouraged CFS stakeholders to continue to share their experiences and best practices⁸;
- Recommended to continue to work on Stream 2;

Main decisions at CFS 42 on monitoring:

- Recalled the decisions on CFS monitoring taken at CFS 41 to continue developing an innovative mechanism built on existing structures and, subject to available resources, invited

⁶ CFS 2013/40/8 states that: *The CFS Communication Strategy represents a **crucial step** for the monitoring process. Before monitoring the impact on the ground, all interested stakeholders should be made aware of CFS products and outputs. In this regard, a plan of action for the dissemination of CFS decisions should be prepared in conjunction with the Communication Strategy as well as encouraging working in partnership with all CFS stakeholders and making use of the extensive networks of the Rome based UN organizations, namely FAO, IFAD and WFP.*

⁷ The text mentions every 4 or 5 years but with no rationale.

⁸ *In addition ..., CFS stakeholders should continue to encourage events aimed at sharing experiences and best practices at all levels to inform on progress towards the application of CFS main outputs. The CFS Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, should explore and promote ways to organize such events, which might take place during CFS Plenary Sessions and/or during other events relevant to food security and nutrition..*

volunteer member countries to pilot the implementation of voluntary in-depth country level assessments of CFS effectiveness;

- As endorsed at CFS 41, encouraged CFS stakeholders to continue to share their experiences and best practices and requested the CFS Secretariat, in collaboration with the OEWG on Monitoring for the monitoring aspects, to explore and promote ways to achieve this, including within CFS sessions and through organizing events at global, regional and national levels, subject to available resources;
- Agreed that the OEWG on Monitoring should, as part of its work, take into consideration the implementation of the CFS work streams as outlined in CFS MYPoWs in order to develop best practices for future monitoring activities;
- Moreover, the Committee agreed, with respect to the events mentioned above, that the OEWG shall develop basic terms of reference in 2016, to be approved by the Bureau and adopted by the CFS Plenary, to ensure participation, inclusiveness and regional representation in these events. In this sense, the Committee also agreed to hold a global thematic event during the CFS 43 Plenary to share experiences and take stock of the use and application of the VGGT.

CFS also requested that the CFS External Evaluation of the effectiveness of CFS since its reform in 2009 be completed by 2016, subject to available resources.