

CSM Contributions to the CFS meeting on the role and composition of the CFS Advisory Group (Recommendation 4) – 5 February 2018

Agenda item 1 – Processes of the Advisory Group

Before responding to the more specific questions on processes, it is important to recall the main purpose and spirit of the collaboration between CFS Bureau and Advisory Group in the reformed CFS.

As it was agreed that the CFS would not only include an annual global meeting, but a series of intersessional activities, the Joint meeting between the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group is meant to reflect this collaboration of members and the categories of participants that are participating in the Plenary.

The Terms of Reference and Structure of the CFS Advisory Group, adopted by the CFS Bureau in January 2010 reflect precisely the idea of the multi-actor, inclusive and participatory nature and structure that would reflect the reformed CFS Plenary during the inter-sessional period.

In this sense, the Joint meeting of the CFS Advisory Group and Bureau is a space of interaction and dialogue, a space for exchange and discussion on all substantial matters identified by the CFS Plenary and Bureau. The Advisory Group is not a group for unilateral support to the Bureau, but a space of collaboration and dialogue between the Bureau and Advisory Group, taking care of the whole CFS during the intersessional period as a joint responsibility.

In this context, it is important to recall that the mandate of the different CFS bodies in relation to the CFS Plenary.

- The CFS Bureau is the intersessional body that leads the implementation of Plenary decisions and prepares the process for the next Plenary decisions. The Bureau is not by itself the place of major policy decisions.
- The Advisory Group contributes within an interactive dialogue, exchange and discussion on substantive matters concerning CFS. The Joint meeting of the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group is, however, not responsible for all work to be done within the intersessional period.
- In fact, the most important and substantial work on policy convergence in the CFS has been done by the OEWGs which are the most inclusive spaces within the CFS and have negotiated the most important policy outcomes of the CFS mandated and approved by the Plenary.

Once this collaboration between CFS Bureau, Advisory Group and OEWG is clear, focused and delimited, the following proposals for a more effective Advisory Group could be considered:

- The joint CFS AG and Bureau meeting should start its meetings with a standing agenda item on critical and urgent issues. During this moment, substantive issues of concern could be brought to the attention of the meeting and be

discussed. The case of last year's CFS ad-hoc meeting on severe food crises and famines, as convened by CFS Chair upon request from members states is a good example for this need for including a space for debate on substantive critical and urgent matters into the agenda of Joint Bureau and Advisory Group Meetings, and to make the CFS more vibrant, responsive and connected to the realities on the ground. The Bureau could then decide if and how to follow-up on these issues, as appropriate.

- Once a year, one of the Joint AG/Bureau meetings should be entirely dedicated to exchange on the use and application efforts made by CFS members and participants in relation to CFS policy outcomes. The annual reports from AG members are a good start for such an exercise. This yearly space would not only exchange on past experiences, but also foster a stronger cooperation among the different actors at national and regional level in the future. In addition, all CFS members and participants could share periodically a written update on how they have used and applied CFS Policy Outcomes.
- The CFS Bureau could discuss the proposal from a previous Co-Facilitator of the CFS evaluation process (Iceland) who suggested to consider that AG members could be allowed to attend the Bureau meetings as observers, to enhance transparency of CFS decision processes.
- Preparatory documents for the Joint Meetings should be as short and concise as possible, and circulated with two weeks of advance, in order to allow for the needed translation, outreach and proper consultation of the different constituencies concerned.
- We would also like to propose that Bureau outcomes should be circulated within a week after the date of the meeting.
- In terms of the number of Joint meetings of the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group, we suggest that in years where there aren't an extraordinary number of meetings as it is the case this year on the CFS Evaluation, the joint AG/Bureau meetings should be held every second month for a total of 6 meetings throughout the year.

Agenda item 2 – Composition of the Advisory Group

- When discussing the composition of the CFS Advisory Group, the CFS Bureau should thoroughly assess their participation and substantive contributions to the meetings and the work during the past period. This was also suggested by the CFS evaluation report.
- We support the suggestion of Italy made during the AG/Bureau meeting last week to encourage all categories of participants to establish mechanisms for outreach and coordination. This could be particularly helpful to make the CFS Advisory Group more inclusive regarding the international financial institutions and the international agricultural research institutions.
- The concept of ad-hoc participants should be applied for the purpose it was created and established in the CFS Rules of Procedure: ad-hoc participants should be invited for specific meetings on specific items to which they can contribute with their specific expertise; it should be made transparent why

they are invited to the specific meeting, and no expectation should be generated that such participation would be automatically prolonged.

- In this sense, we suggest inviting CEDAW and UN Women as ad hoc participants to specific items of specific AG/Bureau meetings that deal with issues related to FSN and women's empowerment, gender equality and women's rights.
- In a more general way, CEDAW and UN Women should be invited to all OEWGs, to contribute to discussions with their expertise. All CFS Technical task teams should include a gender expert from the Rome-based Agencies, as proposed by FAO in earlier occasions.
- All actors with significant work on food security and nutrition are encouraged to participate in the CFS. In this sense, we warmly invite the colleagues of WFO to enhance their participation to the CFS by joining either the CSM or the PSM. As all participating institutions and organizations in the CFS, they need to first choose the family (category of participants) they belong to, and then coordinate with the respective mechanisms. They could also test the collaboration with CSM or PSM and see if and how this works in practice or not. It is very easy to join the CSM and all its Working Groups. All civil society organizations with work on food security and nutrition can immediately join the working structures of the CSM at any time.
- The CFS evaluation report has given its findings and recommendations on the composition of the CFS Advisory Group. They are all reasonable and well explained and should therefore be considered by the CFS Bureau in its further deliberations on this matter.
- It is important to take into consideration that the composition of the CFS Advisory Group should ensure that the voices of all relevant stakeholders, particularly those of the organizations that represent the most affected by food insecurity and malnutrition – are heard (as established in paragraph 7 of the CFS Reform document, and the TOR of the CFS Advisory Group).