



Date: 18 September 2018

Time: 09:00-17:00

Location: WFP

## Evaluation meeting of 18 September 2018

### Composition and processes of the Advisory Group Background document

#### Introduction:

1. It should be noted that the Bureaus have large autonomy to decide on the processes and composition of their Advisory Group (AG). The role of the AG is defined in the CFS Reform Document and Rules of Procedure (see Annex 1).
2. This document provides background information and a co-facilitator's proposal to guide the discussion towards the implementation of the response to Recommendation 4 of the CFS Evaluation, building on the outcomes of the evaluation meeting of 5 February 2018. The response to Recommendation 4 of the CFS Evaluation was endorsed at CFS 44<sup>1</sup>:

*"The importance of the AG in providing substantive input to the Bureau on FSN for the range of tasks which the CFS Plenary has instructed the Bureau to perform, and in outreach to constituencies was reiterated.*

*The Bureau does not currently take full advantage of the AG and the expertise and knowledge of the broad spectrum of voices of the constituencies it represents. CFS will review the composition and processes of the AG to ensure that it is able to perform its functions effectively.*

*The meetings in September 2017 highlighted the following elements for the Bureau's consideration in its review:*

#### *Process related:*

- *The Advisory Group should primarily contribute substantive work and provide advice to the Bureau on food security and nutrition, in line with the Reform Document and the Rules of Procedures.*
- *The Bureau should clarify the support required from the Advisory Group before appointing it and, during its two-year term, requesting specific advice on substantial issues and agenda items.*
- *Active engagement and participation in CFS work, either through physical attendance or other means, and yearly periodic reports of Advisory Group members on their contributions towards CFS are important.*

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<sup>1</sup> CFS 2017/44/12 rev.1

*Composition related:*

- *The quality and relevance of advice provided is an important factor to consider, which is reflected in the criteria listed in the Recommendation 4 of the CFS Evaluation for assessing the requests for seats on the Advisory Group.*
- *The five categories of constituencies remain relevant and the principle of inclusiveness should drive composition.*
- *The Advisory group should reflect the broad spectrum of voices of its constituencies and the Bureau should remain open to receiving advice from more stakeholders, considering the need for reviewing the number of categories and seats.*
- *The appointment of ad hoc participants with a mandate limited to a particular topic, a specific activity and a limited period of time, as per the Rules of Procedure, allows flexibility and inclusiveness to better respond to CFS priorities in agreed MYPoW.”*

<b>Action to be taken</b>	<b>Implementing body</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Further funding required (Y or N)</b>
<i>A4.1. Review the composition and processes of the Advisory Group, so that it can perform its functions effectively.</i>	<i>CFS Bureau, seeking additional inputs as needed</i>	<i>By March 2018</i>	<i>N</i>

3. In the context of the evaluation, the implementation of the response to Recommendation 4 will consist of identifying the actions that are expected to significantly improve AG effectiveness. It will then be up to each Bureau to decide whether to adopt the actions that do not require Plenary endorsement. Actions that require Plenary decisions will be presented to CFS 45 for endorsement.
4. The agreed outcome of the discussions on 18 September will be included in Annex H of the Evaluation Implementation Report that will be presented to CFS 45 for endorsement.

### **Considerations for improving the AG processes for more effective performance**

5. Each Bureau has the prerogative to establish the process of interaction with its own AG. Therefore process-related actions that are proposed in the context of the evaluation can be applied without delay, unless they require a Plenary decision.
6. The discussion during the preparation of the response to the Evaluation has highlighted several ways of improving the AG processes for better performance:
  - i. The Bureau to clarify its expectations from the AG in alignment with the CFS Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPoW);

- ii. The Bureau to inform the AG sufficiently in advance of meetings regarding specific advice that is requested from them, taking into account the AG's role in providing substantive inputs;
  - iii. Remote participation of AG members facilitated through the availability of audio or video conferencing facilities.
7. Regarding point ii. above, it should be noted that the role of the AG in providing substantive inputs is complementary to the High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) and Open Ended Working Groups (OEWGs):
  - HLPE: Para. 37 of the Reform Document says that HLPE will “identify emerging issues and help members prioritize future actions and attention on key focal areas”;
  - OEWG: the response to the evaluation (Para. 32 of the Consultation Report (CFS 2017/44/12 rev.1) states that:
    - (i) “The respective roles and responsibilities of the Bur/AG and OEWGs will be clarified, allowing OEWGs to focus on substantive issues;
    - (ii) the Bur/AG will manage inter-related, non-thematic issues”.

It is also important to underline the fact that AG members actively participate in the OEWGs where they provide substantive inputs.

### Considerations regarding the AG composition for more effective performance

8. The size of the AG and the distribution of seats among the five categories of the AG, within the limits set by the Plenary (currently 14 members – see Annex 2) are prerogatives of the Bureau. Each Bureau can allocate seats amongst categories to reflect priorities and select institutions representing categories. The Chair can also invite, after consulting with the Bureau, other important bodies/individuals to participate in Advisory Group meetings on an ad hoc basis on particular agenda items.
9. The composition of the AG should reflect the broad spectrum of voices of stakeholders. Whether there is a need to change the categories of constituencies as per the Reform Document and Rules of Procedure should be considered (e.g. to include new categories for Parliamentarians, Regional Organizations, and other constituencies not currently represented in the AG).
10. The Reform Document encourages the establishment of permanent coordination mechanisms for participation in CFS. Ways to encourage other mechanisms to be established, building on the experience of the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) and the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM), to ensure more inclusiveness should be considered.

11. It should also be considered if ad hoc participants - with a mandate limited to a particular topic, a specific activity and a limited period of time – are sufficient to ensure inclusiveness and adequate flexibility within the AG.
12. It is important to note that any proposed actions to increase the number of seats above 14 or change in the categories will require a Plenary decision. Other proposed actions on AG composition can be applied immediately.
13. Three proposals have been circulated to make the AG more effective: Iceland/ Egypt, Italy and the CFS Chair. All proposals are available on the Evaluation Meeting page in the CFS Working Space.

### Co-facilitators proposal for the way forward

14. Given the above considerations and the outcome of previous discussion, the co-facilitators suggest the following approach to bring the implementation of recommendation 4 forward:
  - reminding that each Bureau has the prerogative to take certain decisions about processes and composition of its AG for the following biennium;
  - presenting a more strategic proposal that does not include discussions/decisions about proposals to add new AG members (which remains a decision for the Bureau);
  - focusing on items on which there is consensus and that will not require a Plenary decision, recommending concrete follow up that will include a tentative timeline after CFS 45 (e.g. criteria for applying for being part of the AG, see below).
15. As each Bureau has the prerogative to establish the **process** of interaction with its own AG, regarding process, it is proposed that the Bureau could consider:
  - i. developing clear requests to the AG, as needed, to provide more substantive input, keeping in mind the role of the HLPE and OEWGs;
  - ii. clarifying the support it needs from its AG, encouraging the provision of relevant expertise in alignment with the CFS MYPoW, keeping in mind AG members actively participate in the OEWGs where they provide substantive inputs;
  - iii. informing the AG sufficiently in advance of meetings regarding specific advice that is requested from them;
  - iv. reviewing the calendar and schedule of meetings to develop more strategic timing/agendas of meetings to make better use of the AG;
  - v. ensuring remote participation of AG members through audio or video conferencing facilities;
  - vi. managing organizational issues as part of the Bureau meeting agendas.

16. Regarding the **composition** of the AG, in the 5 February meeting, the maximum of 14 seats was generally considered sufficient to be able to appoint a suitable AG, considering the provision for ad hoc participation. It does not seem that there is any consensus either to create new mechanisms or categories at this point in time. Therefore consideration should be given to making the best use of other instruments to enhance participation, such as:
- a) encouraging existing AG members to strengthen their **coordination roles** within their constituencies to enhance the two-way flow of information and viewpoints. This would keep the AG small and effective but included as much knowledge and advice as possible. It would also include a **review/revision of the AG reporting exercise** to attach more importance to coordination activities of members in general and more visibility to the work of the AG and their outreach and coordination activities within their constituencies. AG members should consider successful coordination experiences, e.g. research organizations which could lead to the formation of other mechanisms, building on the experience of the CSM and PSM, to ensure more inclusiveness.
  - b) establishing a **formal procedure for potential candidate organizations to request a seat** to allow as much inclusiveness as possible. In line with para ES56 of the evaluation, **concrete criteria** should be developed to assess requests for seats on the Advisory Group, along the ones mentioned by the evaluation. The criteria should be developed after CFS 45 by a Technical Task Team and presented to the Bureau and AG.
  - c) a possible request to be a member of the AG should start soon, e.g. no later than 3 months before the Plenary in the second year of each biennium, to leave enough time for consideration by the outgoing Bureau, followed by the incoming Bureau taking a decision, including on whether a permanent or ad hoc seat is more appropriate. The decision to offer a permanent seat would require a Plenary decision if the total number of seats is already occupied. The above proposal would allow for better handover between the outgoing Bureau and the incoming Bureau and would make more strategic use of ad hoc participation.
17. The proposed way forward by the co-facilitators:
- Include a new paragraph in the implementation report, following para 25:

“25. As outlined in the Reform Document, the Bureau, immediately following its election, will establish an AG and decide the working modalities, including the frequency and format of the meetings. The Bureau will request specific advice on substantive issues and agenda items from its AG.”

**Proposed new para 26: “The Bureau will strengthen the coordination roles of existing AG members and make more strategic use of the ad hoc participation by appropriate decisions to improve AG’s effectiveness and enhance inclusiveness. The Bureau will decide on criteria and timeframe regarding a procedure for potential candidate organizations to request a future seat in the AG.”;**



- Include the finalized proposal (after discussion and agreement) in Annex H of the Implementation Report;
- Include a timeframe for outstanding matters and further consideration after CFS 45.

Background documents available on the CFS [Working Space](#):

- Reform Document;
- Rules of Procedure of CFS, Rule IV Advisory Group;
- Proposals received from Iceland/Egypt, Italy, and the non-paper circulated by the CFS Chair;
- Outcomes of the evaluation meeting of 5 February 2018.



## **Annex 1: Role of the Advisory Group is defined in the CFS Reform Document and Rules of Procedure**

Reform Document, para 32:

*“The function of the Advisory Group is to provide input to the Bureau regarding the range of tasks which the CFS Plenary has instructed it to perform. Decision making will be in the hands of the member States. It is expected that members of the Advisory Group should be able to contribute substantive work and provide advice to the CFS Bureau”.*

Rules of Procedure, Rule IV, para 2 and 3:

*“The Advisory Group shall assist the Bureau by sharing with it the expertise and knowledge of the broad range of organizations it represents and its outreach to constituencies. It shall contribute regularly with substantive work to the intersessional activities of the Committee, and its members may propose issues to the Bureau for consideration.*

*Each member of the Advisory Group should be responsible for the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of regular linkages with organizations and entities within the category it represents with a view to:*

- a) Promote the engagement of interested organizations and entities that are represented in each of the five categories of the Advisory Group in order to ensure a two-way exchange of information during CFS inter-sessional periods;*
- b) Facilitate the participation and provision of inputs, comments and proposals regarding ongoing CFS activities from those entities represented in each category that could provide relevant contributions to CFS discussions;*
- c) Assist the Bureau in the identification of important developments in the area of food security and nutrition at global, regional and national levels and raise awareness towards the ongoing activities carried out by the different entities represented in each category;*
- d) Contribute to the dissemination of CFS outcomes and deliberations”.*

*[Rules of Procedure of CFS, Rule IV, para 2 and 3]*



## **Annex 2: Composition of the AG**

In accordance with paragraph 32 of the CFS Reform Document and Rule IV, paragraph 1, of the CFS Rules of Procedure, the composition of the Advisory Group reflects the following five constituencies of CFS Participants:

- a) UN agencies and bodies with a specific mandate in the field of food security and nutrition such as FAO, IFAD, WFP;
- b) Civil society and non-governmental organizations particularly organizations representing smallholder family farmers, fisherfolks, herders, landless, urban poor, agricultural and food workers, women, youth, consumers and indigenous people;
- c) International agricultural research institutions;
- d) International and regional financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, regional development banks and the World Trade Organization;
- e) Private sector associations and philanthropic foundations.

Currently the composition of the AG is as follow:

Category a: FAO, IFAD, WFP, WHO, UNSCN, UN Special Rapporteur on Right to Food;

Category b: 4 seats CSM;

Category c: CGIAR;

Category d: World Bank;

Category e: PSM, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation