

CFS Food Systems and Nutrition OEWG meeting

8 March 2019 – 14.00-17.00 – German Room

OUTCOMES

The meeting was opened by the Chair of the CFS OEWG on Food Systems and Nutrition, Dr Liliane Ortega (Switzerland), who raised everybody's attention to the celebrations of the International Women's Day.

1. Preliminary Version of the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition

An overview of the Preliminary Version of the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems and Nutrition was provided.

It was highlighted that, in line with the indications provided at CFS 44 in 2017 and in the Terms of Reference endorsed at CFS 45 in 2018, the main findings and the conceptual framework of the HLPE report were used as the basis for the preparation of the document, which uses the three constituent elements of food systems as policy entry points as well as the policy relevant areas that were identified in the report.

CFS stakeholders were reminded that the process is still at a consultation stage where it is not expected to reach consensus between different positions and they were invited to provide inputs and feedback on the content of the document with a view to identifying any gaps and highlighting any crucial points.

The document was positively received by CFS stakeholders who stressed that this represented an important starting point towards the development of the document that will be negotiated next year and provided a relevant number of useful inputs and suggestions on how to improve it.

It was requested to clarify the scope, by further articulating the various issues at stake, the problems to be addressed and the motivations for actions. This exercise should be carried out by making reference to the evidence base, as per the HLPE report, and to the existing knowledge produced by the different agencies involved in this process.

The need to properly address key cross-cutting issues that are relevant to the different elements of food systems was highlighted along with the importance of implementing a cross-sectoral approach aiming at addressing the existing policy fragmentation.

Concerns were raised on the references to policy areas that are under the mandate of other bodies and institutions or under discussions in other fora. In this regard, it was also mentioned that it is key to make reference to all those sectors and domains that have an impact on food systems in order to promote better policy coherence.

A number of interventions dealt with the level of details of the Zero Draft. CFS stakeholders took note that Chapter 3 presents initial ideas regarding the issues and topics to be considered and that it is important not to include an already defined set of recommendations in the Zero Draft to allow adequate space for discussions during the regional consultations and in the next phases of the process. At the same time, it was requested to explore the possibility to slightly expand the content of the policy relevant areas by making reference to potential interventions building on available evidence.

Some stakeholders mentioned the importance of using agreed language and definitions. In this regard, it was also raised that CFS has the legitimacy to discuss terms and concepts that are relevant for this exercise, in line with its mandate and the expectations of its Members.

A number of matters and thematic areas were highlighted during the meeting as requiring further attention and/or stronger articulation. The OEWG Chair and the CFS Secretariat took note of them for their possible inclusion in the Zero Draft of the Voluntary Guidelines.

CFS Stakeholders were invited to provide their written inputs with specific suggestions on how to improve the document to cfs@fao.org by Friday 22 March 2019.

2. Update on the process

An overview of the process was provided by the OEWG Chair and the CFS Secretariat.

CFS stakeholders were reminded that following the inputs received during the meeting and the written feedback expected by 22 March, the CFS Secretariat will work on the finalization of the Zero Draft which is expected to be ready by the end of April. The language versions should then be circulated by the end of May, in order to feed into the regional consultations taking place between July and October.

It was requested to try to have the language versions on time also for the next OEWG meeting which has been anticipated to 30 May.

With regards to the regional consultations, the audience was informed that the CFS Secretariat is in regular touch with the FAO Regional Offices to define and address the logistical and administrative aspects behind the organization of the consultations. A plan defining the dates and venues of each consultation will be circulated soon.

It was confirmed that the regional consultations will follow the CFS multistakeholder model and that pluralistic participation will be encouraged.

A Chair's Summary will be produced at the end of each consultation and posted on the dedicated webpage. The CFS Secretariat will consolidate the inputs received into the first draft of the Voluntary Guidelines that is expected to be finalized by the end of 2019.