



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

WORKSHOP REPORT

FSN Forum policy dialogues: contributing to food security and nutrition policy processes at the country and regional level

10–11 December 2015 • FAO HQ, Rome

All information on the workshop is available at
<http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/fsn-forum-workshop>

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop was organized by **FAO's Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition** (FSN Forum) with the aim to strengthen the impact of online policy dialogues on the design, implementation and monitoring of food security and nutrition policies and processes, particularly at the regional and country level.

Key FSN Forum members and stakeholders gathered to review challenges and identify ways forward for a stronger engagement of decision-makers in online policy dialogues, with a particular focus on the regional level.

Background

Over the past few years, the FSN Forum has increased its relevance to food security and nutrition policy processes by facilitating online policy dialogues for a growing community of experts and practitioners.

FAO's traditional policy work aims to support all stages of the policy cycle: the analysis of policy options; the formulation, negotiation, adoption and implementation of policies; and the evaluation of policies and the assessment of their impact – all of which can benefit from the FSN Forum's extended outreach by opening policy dialogue to actors who would not otherwise be involved through traditional means.

The FSN Forum online consultations are shifting towards more inclusive and transparent policy and governance processes related to food security and nutrition, and are introducing a new modality in the way FAO provides policy support at the global, regional and national level.

These innovative mechanisms for consultations and policy dialogue also respond to the increased expectations of citizens and other stakeholders to be involved in and informed about policy processes, from the design phase to implementation.

Since 2009, the FSN Forum has enabled several food security and nutrition processes to benefit from a wide range of input coming from numerous stakeholder groups and from increased outreach across sectors. For instance, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), its High-Level Panel of Experts (HLPE), and the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) at the global level; the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and the Regional Agricultural Policy for West Africa (ECOWAP) at the regional level; and food security policies in the Dominican Republic and in Kyrgyzstan, have all been supported by the FSN Forum.

In addition to the processes the Forum has already engaged with, there are more opportunities to improve the modalities by which outcomes of the FSN Forum activities influence policies and to advance knowledge sharing and policy dialogue at regional level, taking advantage of the existing wide network of experts affiliated with the Forum and of the regional platforms of the FSN Forum.

In particular, the **FSN Forum in West Africa** and the **FSN Forum in Europe and Central Asia** allow including the voices of a broad set of stakeholders in policy processes, programmes and events related to food security and nutrition in the respective regions. Both platforms take into account cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the two geographic contexts, and fostered knowledge sharing in contexts that are less accustomed to practices of inclusive policy dialogue among key stakeholders and institutions.

The workshop has brought current and potential FSN Forum members from West and North Africa, Central Asia, Near East, Eastern and Southern Europe, Asia and Latin America. A large number of senior officers and subject matter specialists from FAO-headquarters, regional and country offices took an active part in the workshop.

Content of the workshop

The workshop was facilitated and held in English with a simultaneous interpretation into French and Russian and included a mix of plenary and parallel (breakout) group sessions to allow for comparison and mutual exchange between the regional groups as well as for focused, in-depth reflection on the specificities of each regional network.

Presentations and working groups' sessions covered three focus areas of discussions:

- **Food security and nutrition policies:** What elements make food security and nutrition policy process successful? How can the FSN Forum contribute into food security and nutrition policy processes at regional, sub-regional and country levels?
- **Engaging stakeholders and key decision-makers into FSN policy processes in specific geographic areas:** Who are relevant stakeholders and decision-makers in the field of food security and nutrition? How the FSN Forum can increase the stakeholders' engagement and key decision-makers participation in online policy dialogue?
- **Building partnerships and expanding expert communities:** What would be an efficient mechanism of collaboration in the field of food security and nutrition between the FSN Forum and regional and country partners? What are incentives of FSN Forum members to take part in policy processes? What are new approaches and methods for better outreach?

Summary of sessions

Opening session

Rob Vos, Director of the Agriculture Development Economics (ESA) Division, opened the workshop by reiterating the great challenge ahead of us to end hunger and food insecurity which affects 800 million people worldwide.

FAO works with member states to support and strengthen conditions for intensified action to sustainably eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The inclusion of the broadest set of stakeholders in these processes has been at the core of the Organization's mandate and work for many years. This allowed FAO to be widely recognized as the foremost open forum positioned to **facilitate a true global debate on food security and nutrition**. Nonetheless, much of the potential for knowledge sharing remains untapped as many players are not in a position to participate in the main fora for such exchanges, such as international meetings and conferences and national policy dialogues. Especially, much of the knowledge generated by academia, civil society representatives, and practitioners goes to waste in the process of the design of policies and programmes for food security and adequate nutrition, when these players have no direct entry to such dialogues.

The FSN Forum plays an important role in helping to bridge these gaps by engaging experts and practitioners from all over the world in in policy dialogue. Today, eight years after its foundation in 2007, with 150 topics having been discussed, the FSN Forum is a thriving online community with 10,000 registered members from 175 countries.

The broad range of views gathered through the Forum's channels, such as online discussions and consultations, serves to inform the global debate on food security and nutrition. The Forum has become a repository for the diversity of approaches towards improved food security and nutrition. Its relevance for FAO and for the world at large has become increasingly visible and tangible and its engagement with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the High-Level Panel of Experts for FSN, the post-2015 development agenda, and the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) proved to be a source of impetus to those processes.

Yet, much more can be done to service the food security and nutrition agenda, especially at regional and country level; this workshop invites members and representatives from FAO regional offices to help guide the future development of the FSN Forum so that it stay effective, relevant and sustainable for the years to come.

Session 1: How is FAO's work on policy and governance contributing to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition?

The first panel laid the ground for a better understanding of FAO's role and work in support of food security and nutrition policies. Discussions highlighted how multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships are key to advance the food security and nutrition agenda and to strengthen the holistic vision and the cross-sectoral approach needed to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

How is FAO renewing and strengthening policy support?

Michael Clark, Senior Coordinator of FAO's Policy and Governance Unit intervened on how FAO needs to adapt to the changing landscape of development and development support. The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are probably the most visible outcome of this change, which challenges the way FAO works and supports its member states.

These goals are in many ways the aspiration of the world community, something that the member states want to take seriously. Each country will go through a process, defining among the many of possibilities, what its own goal and target is. The 17 goals and 169 targets are an attempt to create a policy space to give nation states and communities a sense of possibilities that can be pursued by adapting them to national circumstances and capacities.

Undeniably, the most relevant aspect of the SDGs is the emphasis that **development is about doing things that converge, connect and reinforce themselves**. Goals are interlinked and we need to bring them together through innovation and approaches that are more comprehensive. For instance, Nutrition goes far beyond SDG2 and relates to 18 goals and targets.

To promote innovation, FAO needs to renew the way it operates, develop a new culture, be an agent of change, and bring ideas together. Firstly, this means that the world cannot be seen as separate academic departments and, secondly, it is necessary to develop practices of working across disciplines and connecting.

FAO's support will have to continue to **adapt and understand** that is not about what we do, but about people working in the different countries at regional level in the crosscutting technical groups that are out there. **FAO has the role of a facilitator, enabler and promoter of actions.**

To contribute to the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, the major challenge ahead of FAO are:

- 1) Establish *mutual accountability* between FAO and Member States;
- 2) Develop strong *norms and evaluate guidelines* for the private sector to protect the five million small food producers from oligopolistic and monopolistic market control of large scale food companies;
- 3) Provide *public spaces* of dialogue between these two realities of food producers;
- 4) Make strong *investments* to realize these goals.

FAO has the chance to have a strong impact in the fight against hunger and malnutrition by seeing our world as something that others will have to build and by being committed and enabled to be the enabler of these kind of collective actions.

FAO's actions to enable effective food security and nutrition policies

Mark McGuire, Senior Programme Coordinator, presented FAO's renewed approach laid out by the Strategic Framework, which provides the Organization with a results framework around 5 main areas of work.

In particular, **Strategic Objective 1 is about the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition** and here FAO's efforts are geared towards the creation of an enabling environment for the implementation of effective food security and nutrition policies at global, regional and country level. Root causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition are well known and are mostly related to political and socio-economic aspects requiring engagement and evidence rather than technical solutions alone.

FAO's approach to contribute to the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition is to focus on four connected areas of work: 1) Policies programmes and legal frameworks; 2) Human and financial resources; 3) Governance coordination and partnerships; 4) Evidence-based decision-making.

For instance, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests adopted by the CFS provide a mechanism to support the issue at country and regional level. The extensive stakeholder discussions that helped in shaping them allowed gaining support and awareness across different stakeholders, which in turn facilitates country implementation.

The role of the FSN Forum in support of policies, processes and programmes on food security and nutrition

Max Blanck, Policy Officer at the FSN Forum highlighted the main features of the FSN Forum and opened the discussion on challenges and opportunities for the FSN Forum in the context of FAO's work on food security and nutrition.

Features of the FSN Forum:

- **A diverse and thriving membership** of over 10 000 experts diversified in terms of geographical coverage and professional expertise, which embodies true cross sectoral and multistakeholder knowledge exchange.
- **Activities** range from global online discussion, to targeted consultations, network building, surveys, webinars, face-to-face meeting all of which are aimed to open stakeholder policy dialogue.
- **The FSN Forum** embodies FAO's role as a facilitator of knowledge exchange and convener of multi sector and multi stakeholder dialogue.
- **A Regional approach complementing the Global outreach** two regional FSN Forum networks in West Africa and in Europe and Central Asia are active and based on the idea of a hub and spoke system, which enables a true dialogue between global and regional issues.

Examples of activities:

- **E-consultations for the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee on World Food Security and Nutrition:** online consultations are embedded in the process of preparation of the reports, in particular at the scope and at the first draft stages, allowing a large group of interested actors to take part.
- **Online consultation on the Food Security Action Plan for the Caribbean:** the first draft of the Action Plan has been discussed on the FSN Forum, enriching it **and allowing interested actor to contribute without travelling.**
- **Online consultation on the development of a Food Security Law for the Dominican Republic:** online discussion with broad participation from inside and outside the country as well as functioning as a central venue for gathering feedback from villages and face to face meetings.

Q&A: challenges and opportunities

The Q&A session emphasized some key opportunities and challenges for the FSN Forum:

- **Online discussions can truly influence processes and legislation.** The example of the Dominican Republic showed that inputs collected by participants and in particular CSOs changed the emphasis of the law from food security to food sovereignty.
- **Feedback from online discussion** is used and leveraged by those who promoted the discussion, to inform their projects, programmes and decision-making. How the specific contributions are used and influence policies and debates could be a further area to include in the FSN Forum workflow (though measuring the impact of online communities is challenging).
- **The FSN Forum is a truly open channel** which accepts topic proposals by both members and by FAO projects. A challenge remains in how to weight comments depending on the author while still providing equal visibility.
- **Global governance and the role that FAO plays** we have to bear in mind the paradox of sovereignty: the UN is not sovereign over its members and the quality and support that members give in the development of norms and guidelines works because the countries found these activities enabling. The role of UN is to strengthen the capacities of governments and not to bypass them but to work through them. That is the strength and burden of the UN as countries are accountable in the end. We have to be invited by governments and cannot come in by our own. However, the development of CFS and FSN Forum equivalent is an opportunity for open space dialogue: involving member states in the framing of guidelines and principles for effective policies and governance such as in the CFS (and in the online equivalent, the FSN Forum) there is a chance to raise awareness and contribute to an enabling environment. Laws and guidelines cannot be imposed. Dialogues are a way to push forward in the right direction.

Session 2: How can policies and programmes on food security and nutrition benefit from participation of global, regional and national stakeholders?

This panel presented concrete examples on how policies have benefited or can benefit from online stakeholder dialogues. The session featured both global and regional experiences.

On the global side, two key longstanding collaborations with the FSN Forum were presented: the **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** and the **High Level Panel of Experts of CFS**, which showed how broader stakeholder participation into policy-related discussions can improve both the substance and the subsequent application of policies at country level.

Cordelia Salter of the **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** presented this governing body mandated for looking into food security and nutrition issues: all member countries get together to identify and implement coordinated policies. In 2009 the CFS went through a reform which brought in two key elements: inclusiveness and evidence-base.

The reform allowed other stakeholders to participate in CFS discussions in addition to member countries, adding new voices to the debates: the civil society organizations and private sector in particular. The CFS is a new way to organize actions and policies on food security and nutrition at global regional and national level.

Opening up policy processes to a wider set of stakeholders holds the challenge of dealing with a very wide range of points of views, often producing a “cacophony” of opinions. Indeed, when a FSN priority is identified every sector has a view on what it means; CFS is there to listen at every angle.

CFS uses the FSN Forum for open online discussions which broaden even further the debate, beyond representatives of stakeholders taking part to global and regional face-to-face consultations and allowing other voices to be heard. It is then the job of the CFS to come up with consensus.

CFS used this open participatory approach with all its processes (including the Voluntary Guidelines on Land Tenure, the Framework for Action on FSN in protracted crises, and the guidelines on Responsible Agriculture Investments etc.).

The added value of having so many people involved at the development stage is that when the document is approved officially and it comes to the implementation stage there are already a lot of champions: people involved who know what the document is and have some ownership on it already (on the contrary of when decisions are top down).

CFS needs voices to know what’s going on in the field and to make sure important issues are picked up at the global level. CFS also needs feedback on the products produced, on how to improve them and encourages interested stakeholders to use the discussion forums of the CFS to express their opinion.

Vincent Gitz presented **the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE)** of CFS, an outcome of the CFS reform in 2009, mandated to provide the evidence base to improve the discussion between stakeholders and to provide them with access to the same information.

The HLPE works independently on the mandate of CFS to prepare the status of knowledge on important topics identified related to food security and nutrition. In addition to evidence, the HLPE Reports provide recommendations, which makes them very special products.

Since the first Steering Committee Meeting (STC) of the HLPE it was decided to hold two online consultations in the course of elaboration of each report: at the scoping stage (views and perspectives on the extent of knowledge and expectations) and at the drafting stage (comments and inputs to improve the elaborations).

The FSN Forum helps address the challenges to elaborate a common base of knowledge, in particular:

1. The diversity and complexity of issues; the variety of their relations with food security and nutrition in its four dimensions;
2. The multi-stakeholder character of the food system;
3. Multi-knowledge character of food security and nutrition;
4. Multiple contexts and tension between universality of issues and specificity of context.
5. Knowledge for action, given tension between broadly shared objectives and specificities (and multiplicity) of concerns and priorities of actors.

The process of preparation of the reports uses knowledge from a variety of sources including from stakeholders and practice based knowledge.

It is important to note that scientists do not like to put work in progress on the public domain and this open approach often puts the HLPE in a very difficult situation. However, CFS is open and controversy is inevitable.

What do the online consultations bring? 1) Expectations, concerns, points of interests, priorities, perspectives, main questions to be addressed, linkages between perspectives and issues. 2) Inputs, resulting. Evidence based. Stakeholders as knowledge-holders. Knowledge from social actors. 3) Feedback, perception and critics on a draft.

10 reports have been put for online discussions for a total of 20 consultations; the average number of contribution per report is 68 and the average number of pages of the proceedings is 128.

The Forum discussions also help in widening the geographical coverage of contributions and improve the diversity of sources. Comments can be corporate / collective or individual.

In conclusion, online consultations are used to: 1) identify and better define the main areas of controversies/contentious issues, underlying narratives, competing approaches; 2) source of evidence: listing of examples, case studies, references; and 3) systematic, line-by-line examination of each comment.

At the regional level, policy processes and policy priorities were presented by representatives of FAO offices working in four regions: **Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Near East and North Africa, and Latina America and Caribbean.**

It is worth noting that FAO is undergoing a decentralization process whereby country and regional processes become a priority for the work of the Organization. In each region, FAO's strategic objectives have been incorporated in regional initiatives, which reflect the reality and needs at the regional level and link to existing policy frameworks and processes.

Opportunities for collaboration with the FSN Forum, to improve stakeholder engagement and inclusiveness of projects and initiatives were identified by the speakers.

Key messages emerged from the discussions with regional offices are:

Beyond different levels concerning networks and platforms for knowledge sharing and policy dialogue on FSN, there is a demand for joining forces with the FSN Forum for: 1) enhancing outreach and build on existing or targeted initiatives, 2) complement face-to-face meetings with online interactions, 3) linking regional to global debates.

Thematic focus: Food Security and Nutrition has different nuances and hot topics to link to in the different regions: Focus on Nutrition in LAC, Family Farming and school feeding in Africa, food losses and food waste and nutrition in NENA, harmonization of definition, concepts and policies in ECA.

Specifically for Africa, initiatives presented very much resonated for an expansion of the FSN Forum in West Africa in an "all Africa" platform.

For a list of the Regional Initiatives, see the Annex.

FAO Regional Office for Africa www.fao.org/africa/en

The Mauricio Mireles presented the FAO Regional Office for Africa (FAO RAF). FAO RAF cooperates with many economic actors, which are key for the definition and implementation of policies.

The FSN Forum has collaborated with FAO RAF in particular through the FSN Forum in West Africa platform. An example was the online discussion "*How school food and nutrition activities can promote lifelong healthy eating habits*" which took place before FAO as an organization came up with a concept on what is that we understand as school nutrition. It was really enriching to see what academics and NGOs thought about school nutrition beyond the FAO setting. The summary of the discussion contributed to the FAO thinking and showed how communication with the public can be packaged in a meaningful way.

There are several processes in Africa which have or could benefit from broader stakeholder participation and to which the FSN Forum could contribute, including:

- School Food and Nutrition and local procurement from family farmers
- Social Protection Agenda + Agriculture + Nutrition in Africa
- Mainstreaming of nutrition at the policy-level, (CAADP) particularly in the context of Agricultural Investment Plans:
- Promotion and understanding of Family Farming in Africa
- Constitution of National Councils on FSN in CPLP countries (Portuguese challenge)
- Mainstreaming of Gender in FSN related issues;
- Overall engagement of civil society in FSN public policy design
- Engagement of parliamentarians on the human right to food

FAO office for Europe and Central Asia www.fao.org/europe/en

The FAO office for Europe and Central Asia (FAO REU) presented by Eleonora Dupouy covers a very complex and diversified region with 53 member countries and the EU (28 EU countries, Eastern Europe and Caucasus countries, Balkan countries, Central Asia countries).

Food security and nutrition is relevant to all countries that share many common problems such, growing overweight and obesity, unhealthy dietary patterns – leading driver for Non Communicable Diseases. A high prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies has also been registered in some of the countries covered.

However, conceptualization and approaches to food security and nutrition at country level, policies and outcomes are very diverse. The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) promotes food security with integrated food quality, food safety and environmental sustainability. Food self-sufficiency is promoted in some countries (BEL, RUS, KAZ, TKM, UZB), others focus on Food independence (BEL, KYR, KAZ, RUS, TAJ, TKM, UZB) while others on improved food availability, access for poor and higher quality diets (ARM, AZE, GEO, MOL, UKR).

There is clearly a need for better understanding of basic concepts and terminology of food security and nutrition by all stakeholders and to provide linkages between different sectors related to food security and nutrition, all of which can only be achieved through more and stronger dialogue. This is why collaboration with the FSN Forum is key and the setup and growth of the network of experts and practitioners in the region is one of the targets of the REU office for the next biennium.

Recent collaboration between FAO REU and the FSN Forum regional platform for Europe and Central Asia included: (i) the online survey “*Regional consultative process with civil society organizations and other stakeholders*”, (ii) the Workshop on “*Inclusive policy dialogue to make trade policies conducive to food security and nutrition*”, and (iii) the online consultation “*Addressing the main challenges of food security and rural poverty reduction by incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions*”.

The next steps are to enlarge and strengthen collaboration between the FSN Forum and the FAO REU office especially to help in understanding approaches to food security across countries and harmonizing concepts and frameworks.

FAO Regional Office for Near East and North Africa www.fao.org/neareast/en

Mohamed Aw Dahir presented the FAO Regional Office for Near East and North Africa (FAO RNE). The office deals with 19 countries and despite the homogeneity in many aspects, the region is one of the most complex in term of the status of the economy, political stability, governance system, natural resources endowment and poverty level etc.

The agriculture sector contributes about 10% of regional GDP and employs 21% of the population. The large and growing population and the political instability contributed to a setback in the fight against hunger as the number of hungry people in the region has doubled from 16.5M people in 1990–1992 to 33M in 2015. The region has limited and fragile natural resource base and relies heavily on food imports; highly vulnerable to quantity and price shocks.

The gap between food production and domestic requirement is widening which is worrisome given the opportunities present in the region such as a strong agricultural tradition, favorable geographical position, a dynamic private sector and food value addition activities that could benefit employment.

The main priorities of FAO in the region are:

1. Enhancing food security and nutrition.
2. Fostering agricultural production and rural development for improved livelihoods.
3. Sustainable management of natural resources.
4. Responding to climate change impacts and developing adaptation strategies.
5. Preparedness for, and response to, food and agriculture emergencies.

A number of policy processes to foster food security and nutrition are present at regional and national level.

- The New SDGs process led by Economic Commission for West Asia;
- CFS/RNE led Regional Multi Stakeholder annual forum;
- NERC-endorsed Regional Strategy to reduce Food Losses and Waste;
- Implementation of the ICN2 commitments in nutrition;
- Renewed efforts/rethinking of FSN problems and possible solutions. The KSA, Morocco, Sudan, Oman, UAE, Mauritian, Yemen and many others are in the process of designing FSRD strategies.

Potential synergies and complementarity between the NENA platforms and the FSN Forum:

- NENA has active FSN platforms and coordination mechanisms: (i) UN-LAS Regional Coordination Mechanism-Thematic Working Group on FSN, (ii) CFS/RNE Regional MSH Forum for FSN, (iii) Regional Network for Food Losses and Waste, (iv) Sub regional Network for the Syria Crises etc
- These networks and platforms have very large members including Governments, donors, UN agencies, Research Institutions, Regional organizations, CSOs, private sector, NGOs, academia and hold Regular consultations on FSN challenges, priorities, polices.
- Limitations: Limited online outreach, mainly inward looking, discussions mainly takes place through the physical presence, limited interactions on thematic issues etc.

The Global FNS forum can easily plug on to existing NENA networks. It can help bring global perspectives into regional/national discussions and allow best practices to be shared.

FAO Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean www.fao.org/americas/en

Giovanni Carrasco and Maria José Coloma joined through skype and presented the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and Caribbean (FAO LAC). FAO LAC works in 34 countries and the region is implementing public policies to eradicate hunger and malnutrition under a positive economic and political scenario. This allowed meeting the first goal of the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit Goal.

One of the main lessons from these positive results is the key role of the political commitment, expressed both at national and regional level (schemes of FSN governance in several countries: Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, etc. and interest of regional bodies: OAS, UNASUR, CARICOM, SICA, CELAC). Specifically CELAC (the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) gave the mandate for the implementation of the CELAC Plan for Food Security and the

Eradication of Hunger 2025 (CELAC FSN Plan) which contains lines of action in all 4 dimensions of food security and nutrition and proposed policy measures for enabling results in the short and medium term.

The CELAC FSN plan asks explicitly to FAO to develop a tool for knowledge sharing on food security and nutrition. This tool will be the Food Security and Nutrition Platform (www.plataformacelac.org) which aims to share information (policies, legislation, governance schemes and indicators) to promote south-south cooperation.

The FSN Forum could engage in collaborations with such networks to increase their outreach and enrich their membership.

Group work on food security and nutrition policies

Following the panel session, participants divided into groups to collectively discuss the necessary elements of successful food security and nutrition policies.

What elements make food security and nutrition policy process successful? How can the FSN Forum contribute into food security and nutrition policy processes at regional, sub-regional and country levels?

All three groups identified a number of elements that need to be taken into consideration when designing food security and nutrition policies. The early involvement of different stakeholder groups in the policy formation process was highlighted as being of paramount importance for good governance of the policy implementation process as it strengthens policy ownership. *Participants widely agreed that FSN Forum could be instrumental in facilitating this stakeholder participation throughout the policy cycle.*

In both the pre-formulation and formulation stage the FSN Forum could act as a conduit for information and data while broadening the participation. The FSN Forum should be used to build popular support for policy measures and to identify policy issues from the grass roots. In this context participants suggested a stronger collaboration with local players such as NGOs and research institutes.

Another perceived role for the FSN Forum was to support efforts to achieve coherence and harmonization of sectoral policies relevant for food security and nutrition. To support locally diversified strategies and policy actions, the Forum could establish an inventory of regional and national policy intelligence profiles as a reference service, to be periodically updated.

It was widely agreed that the FSN Forum has a larger role to play in the pre-formulation and formulation stage and participants saw a role for the FSN Forum in supporting policy monitoring and facilitating independent policy evaluation.

While the optimal moment for the FSN Forum to best support policy process will vary from region to region, it is important for the FSN Forum to continue its engagement even after the conclusion of the online exchange. In fact, participants shared the concern that the consultative process might stop once the discussion is analysed and summarised.

Connecting with other UN organisations and collaborating with mainstream media could help make the outcomes of the discussions better known, further increasing their weight and influence.

In addition, FSN Forum should also collaborate more strongly with country, regional and global networks already existing to maximize its outreach and impact.

Session 4: Engaging stakeholders and key decision-makers into FSN policy processes

In this panel session several projects were presented which have a stakeholder and partnership engagement component, to encourage reflection of participants on who are the relevant stakeholders and decision-makers in the field of food security and nutrition and how the FSN Forum can increase the stakeholders' engagement and key decision-makers participation in online policy dialogue.

Red ICEAN www.fao.org/red-icean/es

Melissa Vargas presented the Red ICEAN, which groups different actors and professionals interested in the exchange of experiences and best practices in Nutrition Education In Latin America. Red ICEAN acts through a web-based platform and includes as of today 827 members. Since Red ICEAN lacks tools and media for online interaction, it joined forces with the FSN Forum on two important topics which were discussed on the FSN Forum platform inviting both members of the Red ICEAN and the larger FSN Forum community.

Both discussions held on the FSN Forum were enriched by participation from other countries outside of the LAC region and gathered quality comments; they also enhanced visibility of both networks and summaries could benefit other regions.

Lessons learned from the collaboration between Red ICEAN and FSN Forum include:

- 1) The need to build on existing forums and complement each other, rather than creating small-scale space;
- 2) The opportunity of involving other regions, to share and compare experiences;
- 3) The opportunity to integrate with other interaction tools, e.g. webinars, to strengthen background and training of participants;
- 4) Follow up and evaluation = use this information and show how you use it to participants who took time in participating to the discussions

FEDS dgroups.org/fao/feds

Another recently created (September 2015) network is FEDS (Food educators' network), concerned with food, food behaviour and food attitudes. It deals with the whole food cycle and its social, economic and practical effects on diet. FEDS aims to open up discussion of some of the big food and NE issues, share materials, publications, articles and news of interesting interventions in progress. As of today 154 members are registered.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification www.ipcinfo.org

Cindy Holleman presented the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a set of protocols to classify the severity and causes of acute and chronic food insecurity and provide actionable knowledge by consolidating wide-ranging evidence. It was designed to inform actionable knowledge, to take complex information and make it available to decision makers to formulate responses, and to help build technical consensus among key stakeholders.

Possible synergies between the FSN Forum & IPC include:

1. Support IPC technical development multi-experts/stakeholders discussions
2. Support Lesson Learning exercises on IPC implementation and/or specific processes
3. Help with the regional/country dissemination of the IPC analysis and thus the use of the IPC findings to inform FSN policy and programming.

Food Security Policy Processes and Dialogue in the APEC context

www.caas.cn/en/administration/research_institutes/research_institutes_beijing/77772.shtml

Fengying Nie from the Agriculture Information Institute of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences presented food security policy processes and dialogue activities carried out in the context of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

In 2011, APEC countries established a Policy Partnership on Food Security (PPFS) to strengthen public-private cooperation to address food security issues in the region. In particular, the third APEC Ministerial Meeting on Food Security in Beijing, 2014, issued the Beijing declaration, outlining APEC's new plans for tackling food security. The plan foresees:

1. boosting agricultural productivity;
2. enabling agriculture to be more adaptive to climate change and resilient to disasters;
3. improving post-harvest management due to food loss, enhancing management of food safety and food quality;
4. strengthening prevention and control of trans-boundary animal and plant diseases, among others.

In 2015 the APEC Food Security Training and Workshop (CAAS, 2015) took place at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) in Beijing. The workshop gathered experts from APEC economies and International Organizations and young researchers from 12 APEC economies and nine non-APEC economies.

The innovation introduced was that the workshop was complemented by an online discussion on the FSN Forum. This was an innovative exercise in the Chinese context and its outcomes fed into the training while the results of the training benefitted the online discussion.

Ways forward include: 1) Cooperation with interregional networks; 2) Event based online consultations; 3) Multi languages development (majority of Chinese do not speak English); 4) Motivation of young professionals to interact with the rest of the world and capacity building.

Arab Spatial Food and Nutrition Security Hub www.arabspatial.org

The Arab Spatial Food and Nutrition Security Hub was presented by Clemens Breisinger. The hub is led by IFPRI along with other partners including FAO RNE and has three components:

- Database with statistics from various sources
- Interactive online mapping tool
- Arab food and nutrition security blog

Countries wish to use the tool and have different interest to use it for specific objectives. The tool is very easy to adapt to different contexts and regions in the world.

A collaboration with the FSN Forum could be functional to improve the interaction with users, to enhance the understanding and use of data through knowledge sharing, and to link with policy processes in the region.

Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia www.lansa.com

LANSA (Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia) presented by Sangeetha Rajeesh is a consortium led by M S Swaminathan Research Foundation looking at how agriculture and agri-food systems can be better designed to advance nutrition.

LANSA focuses on policies, interventions and strategies that can improve the nutritional status of children in South Asia – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. LANSAs is a kind of facilitator-type of consortium, as nutrition is not on the agenda of these countries, agriculture is mostly geared towards production and agriculture stakeholders need to be sensitized about nutrition.

The Consortium aims to achieve: 1) accelerated rates of reduction of under nutrition in the countries; 2) policies, programmes, initiatives are more evidence-informed and pro-nutrition; 3) policy & practice communities incorporate new knowledge into discourse, attitudes, and behaviors.

LANSA implemented different sets of multi-stakeholder approaches to engage with stakeholders and key decision-makers in the nutrition policy process at South Asia region level including and online discussion the FSN Forum. etc.

Challenges are that while stakeholders very appreciative for such opportunity there is a high need to engage agri-nutrition stakeholders and decision-makers at different levels. LANSAs is looked upon as a facilitator to bridge gaps at various levels of stakeholders, and foster attitude and behavior shift witnessed. A further collaboration with the FSN Forum could help LANSAs in strengthening this stakeholder dialogue.

Eurasian Centre for Food Security <http://ecfs.msu.ru/en>

ECFS (Eurasian Centre for Food Security) was presented by Alexander Makeev. It was founded as a response of the Russian Federation to the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative. The focus area is Central Asia Countries and South Caucasus.

The activities include conducting and supporting research in land management and agricultural economy, education (including e-learning), and expertise.

One of the main goals of ECFS is improving stakeholder dialogue to develop cross-sectoral linkages between Eurasian, Russian and International research and educational institutions. Target audience is academia, policy makers, extension services, the President's office of the Russian Federation and the public. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia are the four focus countries.

The ECFS and the FSN Forum collaborated on two joint e-consultations in 2013: (i) *Towards a Eurasian Soil Partnership for food security and sustainable development*, and (ii) *Food Security issues in the Eurasian region: major challenges and G8/G20 initiatives in relation with the regional situation*.

Ways forward: continue partnership with FSN Forum for conducting e-consultations and mutually supporting face-to-face events.

Group work on stakeholder engagement

Following the panel session, participants divided into groups to identify possible entry points for the FSN Forum and to identify potential partners for future activities.

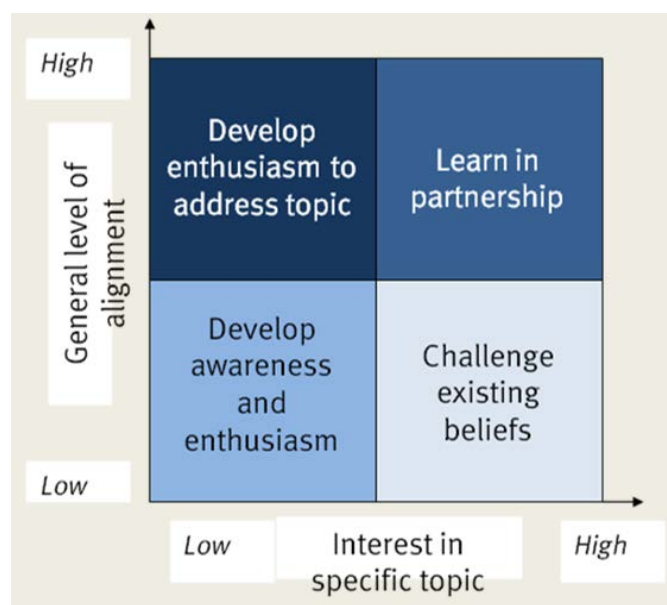
Engaging stakeholders and key decision-makers into FSN policy processes in specific geographic areas

Participants identified a wide set of players involved in Food security and nutrition policy making on both national as well as regional levels.

Despite some difference given by geographic and cultural context the types of stakeholders groups were quite similar across the regions.

While identifying the different stakeholders is an important first step, the real challenges lies in finding entry points and contacts to be able to include them into the FSN Forum's activities.

In order to map the interest of identified stakeholders and prioritize the target audience within these stakeholder groups, it was recommended to use a tool such as the Alignment, Interest and Influence Matrix (AIIM).



Group work on partnerships

Following the panel session, participants divided into groups to identify and to identify potential partners for future activities.

Building partnerships and expanding expert communities

The groups looked into practical ways to ensure participation to FSN Forum discussions by stakeholders and reflected on how to go about creating new, active networks in the regions.

Most regions are already served by a number of independently functioning networks many of which focus on very specific issues and serving a particular set of stakeholders.

Participants felt that FSN Forum can play a catalytic role as a partner and facilitator that bridges and integrates national initiatives on food security and nutrition issues linking them to regional and global policy debates.

In order to stimulate a more active and sustainable participation by country experts, participants suggested implementing a focal points systems that could assist in lobbying for collaborations with existing initiatives and help animate the online exchanges. To raise the profile of the FSN Forum's activities and the commitment of members it would also be necessary to increase collaboration with regional players such as CILSS, UEMOA and similar sub regional initiatives such as ECFS and CACAARI.

Linking FSN Forum activities to events such as conferences, workshops and meetings taking place would also benefit the profile of the Forum's activities while helping sustain the momentum created on such occasions. In this respect, it was suggested to create thematic subgroups in order to better focus the participation and the interest of members.

Finally, the language barriers, which are still existing were mentioned. The lack of availability of resources in the main language of a certain region or country can severely hamper the participation rate. In this context it could be explored if certain large countries (India, China and Russia were mentioned) would warrant the creation of dedicated sub communities to complement the regional FSN Forum activities.

This exercise also resulted in a concrete proposal for the setup of an FSN Forum for the Near East and North Africa by the regional office in Cairo in collaboration with regional organizations such as the League of Arab States, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Organization for Islamic Countries. In addition, this foreseen FSN Forum for the NENA region would collaborate with established initiatives such as Arab Spatial by conducting joint online debates, linking websites and ensuring the mutual promotion of partners' activities at country and regional levels.

Other concrete outputs of the session on the FSN Forum partnerships were: (i) concept for the establishment of an FSN Forum for the Near East and North Africa in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office in Cairo, the League of Arab States and IFPRI; (ii) enhancing collaboration with the Agriculture Information Institute (AII) of CAAS; (iii) conducting joint online-consultations with the LANSAs Project; (iv) jointly holding an online consultation with Assessment based national dialogue of Kyrgyzstan at country level; (v) establishing a focal-point with the Institute of System Research in Agroindustrial Complex of National Academy of Science in Belarus

Key messages from the workshop

Beyond the specific suggestions and proposals, three broad key messages came across the discussions and the presentations during the workshop:

- The FSN Forum is part of a greater and expanding space of policy processes that are increasingly looking into multi-sector and multi-stakeholder engagement to be better equipped to face the complexity and content specificity of FSN issues;
- The need to break silos between geographical and linguistic areas remains a challenge and the FSN Forum can move further in the breaking the barriers to further inclusiveness of non-English speaking communities;
- More efforts need to be made on all sides to track results of engagement and monitor impact that stakeholder dialogues have on policies, programmes, and technical outcomes for improved food security and nutrition.

Annex – FAO’s Regional Initiatives

- Africa’s 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge
- Asia and Pacific’s Zero Hunger Challenge
- Support to the Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative
- Integrated management of agricultural landscapes in Africa
- Asia and Pacific’s regional rice initiative
- Near East and North Africa’s water scarcity initiative
- Empowering small holders and family farms in Europe and Central Asia
- Family farming and rural territorial development in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Small-scale agriculture for inclusive development in the Near East and North Africa
- Value chains for food security and nutrition in the Pacific Islands
- Agro-food trade and regional integration in Europe and Central Asia;
- Improving food systems in the Caribbean
- Building resilience in Africa’s drylands
- Building resilience for food security and nutrition in Near East and North Africa