



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition • FSN Forum

WORKSHOP REPORT
– EXECUTIVE SUMMARY –

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>

The **FAO's Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition** (FSN Forum) organized a two-day **workshop** to discuss the impact of online policy dialogues on the design, implementation and monitoring of food security and nutrition policies and processes and to strengthen the Forum's outreach, particularly at the regional and country level. The workshop helped identify ways for the FSN Forum to support a stronger engagement of decision-makers in multi-stakeholders policy debates on food security and nutrition and enhance linkages between FAO regional initiatives and projects via the FSN Forum's global and regional platforms.

The workshop brought together current and potential FSN Forum members from West and North Africa, Central Asia, Near East, Eastern and Southern Europe, Asia and Latin America. Senior officers and specialists from FAO-headquarters, regional and country offices also took an active part in the workshop.

The workshop 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 thematic focus areas with the following outputs.

1. The Forum's contribution to food security and nutrition policies

The first sessions laid the ground for a better understanding of FAO's role and work in support of food security and nutrition policies. Concrete examples on how policies have benefited or can benefit from online stakeholder dialogues were presented. Discussions highlighted how multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships are necessary to advance the food security and nutrition agenda and to strengthen the cross-sectoral approach needed to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The Forum has been facilitating policy dialogues and knowledge sharing between experts and practitioners from all over the world, thus expanding the spaces for public debate and action on food security and nutrition policies and programmes.

To contribute to the policy processes at the global level, the FSN Forum has been working closely with a number of strategic partners, including two key longstanding collaborations with the **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**¹ and the **High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of CFS**.² The FSN Forum conducted several debates for CFS, the outcomes of which contributed to the definition of the CFS programme of work and to key policy processes such as the guidelines on Responsible Agriculture Investments. For the HLPE reports, the FSN Forum holds online consultations, which allow to benefit from the knowledge and practical experience of a wide set of stakeholders and also help in widening the geographical coverage of contributions and improve the diversity of sources.

¹ The rationale for stakeholder engagement on food security and nutrition is embodied in the institutional setup of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) which, after its reform in 2009, represents the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.

² The High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of CFS works on the mandate of CFS to improve the robustness of policy making by providing independent, evidence-based analysis and advice on important topics related to food security and nutrition.

At the regional level, the FSN Forum's engagement with the **FAO Regional Office for Africa** and the **FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia** yielded positive results in terms of expanding FAO's dialogue with different stakeholders and fostering the debate on topics and issues of particular significance to the regions. During the workshop, a demand emerged for further engagement and for strengthening collaborations with the **FAO Regional Offices for Latina America and the Caribbean** and for **North Africa and the Near East**. In these contexts, the Forum should help enhance outreach, build on existing targeted initiatives; complement face-to-face meetings with online interactions and link regional debates to the global discourse.

It was also reiterated that food security and nutrition has different nuances and priorities in each region and that the FSN Forum should help to address them. Latin America and the Caribbean lies a particular focus on nutrition; Africa aims to strengthen linkages between family farming and school feeding/local procurement; the North Africa and the Near East region is concerned with food losses and food waste and nutrition; Europe and Central Asia needs to address harmonization of definitions, concepts and policies on food security and nutrition. Furthermore, it was felt that the FSN Forum in West Africa platform should expand to become an "all Africa" platform to include policies and stakeholders across the whole region.

Participants discussed how the FSN Forum can be instrumental in facilitating stakeholder participation throughout the policy cycle. They stressed the importance of involvement of different stakeholder groups from the early stages of policy formulation to strengthen ownership and improve the governance of the policy implementation and evaluation process.

Roles identified for the Forum are:

- Act as a conduit for information/data and for broadening the participation in policy pre-formulation and formulation stage;
- Build popular support for policy measures and identify policy issues;
- Support efforts to achieve coherence and harmonization of sectoral policies for food security and nutrition;
- Support policy monitoring and facilitate independent policy evaluation;
- Analyze the impact of online discussions on the policies and programmes they contributed to.

2. Engaging stakeholders and key decision-makers into food security and nutrition policy processes

On the second day, it was discussed how broader stakeholder participation into policy-related discussions can improve both the substance and the subsequent application of policies at both regional and country level. Opportunities for strengthening participatory approaches with various global, regional and country initiatives were also explored.

Some initiatives presented their approaches to stakeholder engagement and policy influence such as the **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** and the **Arab Spatial Food and Nutrition Security Hub**.

Several projects and institutions working on food security and nutrition in different regions have a component of stakeholder and partnership engagement that could find further synergies with the FSN Forum. They are: the **Red ICEAN** (network of experts on Nutrition Education in Latin America and Caribbean), the **Agriculture Information Institute (AII) of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS)** the **LANSAN Project** (Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia) and the **Eurasian Centre for Food Security (ECFS)**.

To further strengthen these and other projects and processes, participants identified a wide set of players involved in food security and nutrition policy making at national and regional levels.

3. Building partnerships and expanding expert communities

Participants discussed ways to expand the outreach of the FSN Forum and build partnership with key institutions and actors in the regions in order to bridge and integrate national initiatives on food security and nutrition issues linking them to regional and global policy debates.

Implementing a focal points systems to assist in the establishment of collaborations with existing initiatives and help animate the online exchanges was perceived as a mechanism that could enhance linkages with activities and events in the regions.

The need to increase language coverage in order to accommodate the main languages spoken in the regions was also emphasized.³

Conclusions

Three broad key messages were developed during the discussions and the presentations of the workshop.

- The FSN Forum is part of a greater and expanding group of actors shaping 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 food security and nutrition issues.
- Breaking silos between geographical and linguistic areas remains a challenge and the FSN Forum can be instrumental in fostering thematic and linguistic collaboration and integration.
- 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.

³ A few concrete proposals 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