



COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Forty-Second Session

"Making a Difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 12-15 October 2015

CFS AND ITS ROLE IN ADVANCING NUTRITION BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

I. BACKGROUND

1. Despite some significant achievements in many countries, progress in reducing malnutrition has been uneven and unacceptably slow in recent decades. One in every nine people goes to bed hungry and over 160 million children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, while more than half a billion adults are affected by obesity. Malnutrition, in all its forms, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight and obesity are now problems affecting people within the same communities. Malnutrition restricts the attainment of human potential, reduces productivity and has negative social and economic consequences.

- In November 2014, at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2), world leaders and nutrition champions came together to acknowledge these important issues and to commit to eradicating hunger and preventing all forms of malnutrition worldwide. They set out a vision of a world where everyone has access to affordable, diversified, safe and healthy diets and where children are healthy and achieve their full potential. The Rome Declaration on Nutrition, adopted at the conference, set out 10 specific commitments to action. To guide the implementation of these commitments, the Conference also adopted a Framework for Action that recommends a set of 60 voluntary policy options and strategies, which address the cross-cutting components of nutrition: health and sanitation, food systems, education, social protection, etc. Actions to improve nutrition through food systems, and agriculture and food related policies, are an essential part of the framework, which calls for enhanced political commitment and multistakeholder action to support country-led implementation. The Declaration calls for “the UN system, including the Committee on World Food Security”, to “work more effectively together to support national and regional efforts, as appropriate, and

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enhance international cooperation and develop assistance to accelerate progress in addressing malnutrition.”

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Summit last September sets ambitious goals. The second goal, “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”, involves ending all forms of malnutrition by 2030, in particular by “achieving by 2025 the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under five years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women, and older persons”. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda, led by countries, will require the support and action by all stakeholders, at national, regional and global levels.

2. The current context, in the wake of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the ICN2 commitments, provides CFS with an opportunity to step up its work on nutrition. To this effect, the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group initiated in the intersessional period a reflection on CFS’s role in advancing nutrition, taking stock of what has been done so far, and laying out options to go further considering the added value of the CFS model. In addition, the CFS Multi-Year Program of Work for 2016-17, submitted to CFS 42 for endorsement following a consultation process in which nutrition was identified as a priority, foresees the establishment of an Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on nutrition to shape CFS future work on the topic. This plenary discussion at CFS 42 will provide an important input to guide their work.

II. OBJECTIVES

- a) Provide CFS stakeholders with the political space to clarify their expectations on the role of CFS in advancing nutrition

CFS’ role in nutrition should be considered with due respect to the mandate and work conducted by other intergovernmental bodies and UN agencies, and with careful consideration of the reformed CFS’s roles and added value, as the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together in a coordinated way to ensure food security and nutrition for all.

- b) Identify preliminary priorities for CFS work as an input to the forthcoming work of the OEWG on nutrition.

The Framework for Action agreed at ICN2 provides a set of recommended policy options and actions to improve nutrition, which governments may incorporate as appropriate in their national plans. Through its policy products delivered in previous years and its future work CFS has the potential to contribute to the implementation of these recommendations on a number of aspects.

The forthcoming OEWG on nutrition will be guided in its work by the key messages emerging from this plenary discussion. Their work may include elaborating particular thematic topics and CFS contribution to them, and/or related to how CFS processes, composition and annual plenary sessions could evolve to address nutrition more systematically in its work.

III. SESSION FORMAT

3. The session will be moderated by the CFS Chair. The format will be as follows:
 - Welcome and introductory remarks by the moderator (5 minutes)

- Open discussion from the floor (3 minutes maximum for each speaker) (60 minutes)
 - Summary and closing remarks by the moderator (10 minutes)
4. The summary of discussions will be forwarded to the Drafting Committee for inclusion in the Final Report of CFS 42.

ANNEX

PAST AND ONGOING WORK OF CFS RELATED TO THE ICN2 OUTCOMES

(Extracted from Annex of Secretariat working paper BurAG2015/03/02/03 presented to the Joint Bureau and Advisory Group meeting 3 February 2015)

The outcome documents of the International Conference on Nutrition 2 (ICN2), the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and the Framework for Action, present a vision and recommendations largely aligned with those of CFS. Since its reform, CFS has tackled major food security and nutrition related issues, leading to the negotiation and adoption of concrete policy recommendations and guidelines. These can serve as useful tools for national multistakeholders to transform some of the 60 recommendations of the Framework for Action into policies and programmes (“from commitments to action”), and review the progress made in the various inter-related areas identified as the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition at national and regional levels.

1. A shared understanding of some of the most prominent root causes and factors of food insecurity and malnutrition identified in the Rome Declaration

CFS shares the recognition of the complexity and multiple dimensions of food insecurity and malnutrition in the world (including among others, poverty, lack of access at all times to sufficient adequate food, poor infant and child feeding and care practices, hygiene and sanitation and related factors (Rome Declaration, para. 5), “the impacts of climate change and other environmental factors” (Rome Declaration, para. 8), and “conflict and post conflict situations, humanitarian emergencies and protracted crises” (Rome Declaration, para. 9), and the challenges posed on the current food systems (Rome Declaration, para 10). It acknowledges the necessity for all stakeholders to address the challenge in a holistic way.

The CFS multi-stakeholder approach, in line with the vision expressed in the Rome Declaration¹, is at the core of the work and activities of the reformed Committee since 2009, as “the most inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together in a coordinated way”.

CFS shares with the Rome Declaration an approach “in support of country-led processes² that lead to food security and nutrition for all”.

The understanding of the complex and plural dimension of food insecurity and malnutrition has led CFS to develop a shared vision of multi-sectorial global action.

2. A shared common vision for global action to end all forms of food insecurity and malnutrition:

¹ “We recognize that (...)” “collective action is instrumental to improve nutrition, requiring collaboration between governments, the private sector, civil society and communities” (Rome Declaration, para 14.c)

² “international cooperation and Official Development Assistance for nutrition should support and complement national nutrition strategies, policies and programmes, and surveillance initiatives, as appropriate” (Rome Declaration para 14.a)

This vision, laid out in the CFS reform document, led CFS to undertake policy work in the form of independent scientific reports, negotiation and adoption of policy recommendations, of a global strategic framework, and of policy guidelines on a number of distinct but complementary issues. Many of these issues have been identified in the common vision of the Rome Declaration and in the Recommendations of the Framework for Action.

The areas previously addressed include:

- Responsible Governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests³ (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 14.d)
- Social protection (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 13.c, and Recommendations 22-24 of the Framework for Action)
- Price volatility (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 13.e)⁴
- The impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 8)⁵
- The crucial role of family farmers and smallholder agriculture for food security (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 14.f)⁶
- The crucial role of women and empowerment of women for better food security and nutrition (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para. 13.j and in Recommendation 9 in the Framework for Action)
- Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems⁷ (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 14.h)⁸
- Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 14.n)⁹
- (ongoing) Food insecurity and malnutrition in protracted crises (as mentioned in the Rome Declaration para 14.g¹⁰, and in Recommendation 12 of the Framework for Action¹¹)
- (ongoing) The role of water for food security and nutrition (as mentioned in Recommendation 50 of the Framework for Action¹²)

³ The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT) were negotiated by CFS constituencies in May 2012 (CFS 38 Special Session) and are currently implemented in 12 countries, with a further 18 countries having expressed interest for support for the implementation of the VGGTs.

⁴ “We reaffirm that (...) excessive volatility of prices of food and agricultural commodities can negatively impact food security and nutrition, and needs to be better monitored and addressed for the challenges it poses“

⁵ “We (...) Recognize the need to address the impacts of climate change and other environmental factors on food security and nutrition, in particular on the quantity, quality and diversity of food produced, taking appropriate action to tackle negative effects”

⁶ “We reaffirm that (...) family farmers and small holders, notably women farmers, play an important role in reducing malnutrition and should be supported by integrated and multi-sectorial public policies, as appropriate, that raise their productive capacity and incomes and strengthen their resilience”

⁷ The CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems were negotiated and unanimously endorsed by CFS constituencies in October 2014 (CFS 41).

⁸ “We reaffirm that (...) responsible investment in agriculture, including small holders and family farming and in food systems, is essential for overcoming malnutrition”

⁹ “We recognize that (...) food losses and waste throughout the food chain should be reduced in order to contribute to food security, nutrition, and sustainable development”

¹⁰ “wars, occupations, terrorism, civil disturbances and natural disasters, disease outbreaks and epidemics, as well as human rights violations and inappropriate socio-economic policies, have resulted in tens of millions of refugees, displaced persons, war affected non-combatant civilian populations and migrants, who are among the most nutritionally vulnerable groups. (...)”

¹¹ “Establish and strengthen institutions, policies, programmes and services to enhance the resilience of the food supply in crisis-prone areas, including areas affected by climate change.”

3. *Commitments and recommendations to facilitate country-led implementation*

Through its work, CFS is thus naturally contributing to the implementation of some of the commitments to action of the Rome Declaration, such as "*enhance sustainable food systems by developing coherent public policies from production to consumption and across relevant sectors to provide year-round access to food that meets people's nutrition needs and promote safe and diversified healthy diets*" (Rome Declaration para 15.c), "*raising the profile of nutrition within relevant national strategies, policies, actions plans and programmes*"¹³, and naturally as per mandate aims to "*strengthen and facilitate contributions and action by all stakeholders to improve nutrition and promote collaboration within and across countries (...)*" para 15.f)

The implementation of the countries' commitments stated in the Rome Declaration can usefully benefit from the foundations laid by CFS on these issues. In implementing the ICN2 commitments and recommendations, countries and multi-stakeholders will find useful tools in the CFS products, first and foremost the negotiated policy recommendations and guidelines on these topics.

These include a set of negotiated and adopted **detailed policy recommendations** directed at all stakeholders on:

- Land tenure and international investments in agriculture
- Gender, food security and nutrition (CFS 37: 2011)
- How to increase food security and smallholder sensitive investments in agriculture (CFS 37: 2011)
- Price volatility and food security (CFS 37: 2011)
- Social protection for food security (CFS 39: 2012)
- Food security and climate change (CFS 39: 2012)
- Investing in smallholder agriculture for food security (CFS 40: 2013)
- Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture for food security and nutrition (CFS 41: 2014)
- Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems (CFS 41: 2014)
- Water and food security (forthcoming)

As well as **voluntary, negotiated and unanimously endorsed policy guidelines or principles**:

- Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)
- Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems¹⁴

The **implementation process** of the above-mentioned policy recommendations and guidelines is ongoing at country-level, and supported by the various United Nations Agencies.

On these issues and any additional issue more specifically targeted at nutrition, following a request from CFS constituencies, the CFS annual Plenary Session offers a natural and suitable platform to present the FAO and WHO progress reports¹⁵, as well as to review on a regular, voluntary basis, progress made at national and regional level in the next years.

¹² "*Implement policies and programmes using participatory approaches to improve water management in agriculture and food production*"

¹³ Cf. Final Report CFS 41, Coordination and Linkages, "CAADP/NEPAD's efforts to mainstream nutrition in agriculture"

¹⁴ In particular, principle 8

¹⁵ Recommendation 60 of the Framework for Action