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COMMITTEE ON WORLD FOOD SECURITY

Fifty-third Session
"Making a difference in Food Security and Nutrition"

Rome, Italy, 20-24 October 2025

CFS SUMMARY REPORT ON COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR COORDINATED POLICY RESPONSES TO EMERGING GLOBAL FOOD CRISES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

I. Background

Within its workstream on *Collaborative governance for coordinated policy responses to emerging global food crises towards sustainable agriculture and food system transformation,* the CFS holds biannual discussions between 2024 and 2027 to take stock of the evolving global food and nutrition security situation.

These Collaborative Governance Dialogues aim to share experiences, data and information on existing initiatives and to identify key actions needed towards enhanced policy coordination and collaborative governance. The workstream leverages the convening power of the CFS, its focus on the realization of the right to adequate food, and its ability to mobilize and engage relevant stakeholders in discussions on food security and nutrition priorities and actions. It pays particular attention to the voices of the most affected countries and constituencies.

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org
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Based on the discussions at the two meetings held in 2024 and a set of selection criteria agreed by the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group[1], the topics for two thematic meetings in 2025 were identified.

On 15 April 2025, the third *Collaborative Governance Dialogue on financing for food security and nutrition* took place at FAO headquarters in Rome. The event featured fifteen speakers, including representatives of national governments, farmers' organizations, private sector, civil society, philanthropic organizations, the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) and international organizations[2].

On 24 July 2025, the fourth *Collaborative Governance Dialogue on food security and nutrition in protracted crises* was held at WFP headquarters in Rome. A total of thirteen speakers participated in the event, including country and regional representatives, multiple UN agencies and initiatives, the HLPE-FSN as well as civil society and private sector representatives[3].

Collaborative Governance Dialogue on financing for food security and nutrition

Discussions during the third Collaborative Governance Dialogue highlighted various aspects regarding financing and investment for food security and nutrition objectives, focused on current challenges as well as potential solutions and policy responses to address these challenges. Key messages included:

More and better financing and investment needed for food security and nutrition

- Food security and nutrition are essential elements of development and as such the provision of sufficient funding from public and private resources for these objectives is critical.
- Most current investments originate from producers themselves, not governments or donors.
- The required investment is modest compared to the potential economic and social benefits.
- Public funding is limited and declining. Yet domestic funding is critical for catalyzing other sources of financing.
- Diversified funding sources and an emphasis on innovative finance to connect different and new financing mechanisms are needed. However, levels of blended finance are low and have failed to scale.
- Alternative sources like climate finance, impact investing, remittances, and agricultural subsidies need to be mobilized and coordinated effectively.

[1] These are: the extent to which the topics address the structural causes of food insecurity and malnutrition; the potential for linking the CFS to other relevant international and UN institutions, fora and initiatives, including the timing and location of other events; and the extent to which the topics are relevant for the most affected countries and constituencies.

[2] The full list of speakers and meeting agenda can be found here: https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2324/Collaborative_Governance/20250415-Prov.Agenda_6Lang/CGD-Prov.Agenda_EN.pdf

[3] The full list of speakers and meeting agenda can be found here: https://www.fao.org/cfs/workstreams/collaborative-governance/fourth-collaborative-governance-dialogue-on-protracted-crises/en/

High levels of debt pose a challenge for food security and nutrition finance

- High debt burdens and debt servicing requirements limit the ability of some developing countries to invest in food systems transformations.
- Recommendations included national audits of debt, sustainable tax systems, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms facilitated by international collaboration.

Central role of public policies

- Governments play a central role in providing the required policy support and enabling environment for ensuring required levels of financing and investment, ensuring both the quality and quantity of required investments.
- Financing from the public sector should be prioritized to support the investments of small-scale producers and provide finance in support of public policies that protect and strengthen local food production.
- Governments should ensure sustainable public finance, through appropriate instruments such as appropriate taxes and tariffs, particularly because many countries are fiscally constrained by servicing high levels of public debt.
- Governments at all levels should create enabling conditions for investment and the mobilization of private resources through appropriate policies. CFS policy products can provide guidance for developing and implementing policies.

Smallholder farmers should be placed at the center of financing solutions

- Smallholder farmers are crucial actors for food security and nutrition at national and local level. However, only a minority have access to adequate credit.
- Policies must shift toward supporting farmer-centered approaches such as agroecology, local production, and reducing dependence on external aid.
- National food plans and participatory governance are critical for inclusive policy design and financing.

Better coordination and systemic approaches are required

- The fragmented financing landscape needs integration across sources (public, private, philanthropic, etc.), instruments (grants, loans, guarantees, etc.), and enabling conditions (market demand, governance, etc.).
- Cross-sectoral cooperation, especially between agriculture, health and environment sectors, is key.
- Coordination depends on shared common definitions, policies, and standards. The CFS is widely recognized as a key platform to facilitate dialogue, coherence, and provide guidance.

Areas where views diverge and more dialogue is needed

- Food sovereignty.
- Roles of the public and private sectors and relations between them.

II. Collaborative Governance Dialogue on food security and nutrition in protracted crises

The fourth Collaborative Governance Dialogue underscored the urgent need for action to address severe and acute food insecurity and malnutrition in protracted crises situations, which are one of the major drivers of hunger. Discussions outlined the challenges currently faced in protracted crises situations and elaborated on potential solutions to alleviate acute hunger among affected populations and build resilient food systems that could withstand crises and shocks. Testimonies from representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Palestine were heard. Key messages included:

Addressing food insecurity and malnutrition means addressing protracted crises

- The continued relevance of the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (FFA), in particular because it is based in a human rights-based approach, and the urgency of its implementation, including by states, inter-governmental and humanitarian organizations.
- Almost 80% of food insecure people live in contexts of crisis. As such, comprehensively addressing hunger cannot be done without addressing these ongoing crises which have far reaching consequences for the environment, health, sanitation and lead to the adoption of harmful coping mechanisms[4].
- The use of food as an instrument for political or economic pressure in conflict settings is deeply concerning, as it intensifies suffering and destabilizes already fragile food systems and is in contradiction with principle 3 of the CFS FFA. Recent events in Gaza have drawn international attention due to the rapid deterioration of food security, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated humanitarian and policy responses.
- Conflict and displacement are among the key drivers of protracted crises, especially where a deterioration in the security situation impedes access for humanitarian assistance.
- Crises are increasingly concentrated in particular countries, where prolonged emergencies – especially those related to food security and nutrition – continue to recur, deepening vulnerability among affected populations over time.

The right to food framework is a cornerstone in analyzing and addressing protracted crises

- Analysis of a food security and nutrition crisis as well as the identification of root causes need to be framed around a right to food approach that embeds obligations and accountability.
- The right to food is a vital framework that identifies early signs of stress and breakdown within food systems. By applying a systemic lens, it enables timely analysis of vulnerabilities, helping to anticipate and address disruptions before they escalate into full-blown crises.

The UN and humanitarian systems are challenged as never before to respond to food security and nutrition needs

- Protracted crises often require negotiated solutions that are beyond the mandate of the CFS. Nevertheless, the CFS still has an important role to play in upholding the right to food in

[4] FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2024. *GRFC 2024*. Rome. https://www.fsinplatform.org/grfc2024

protracted crises and promoting the use of the CFS Framework for Action for Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Crises (FFA).

- Humanitarian workers are at risk as never before and the international community must take steps to protect them.
- The failure to prevent severe and extreme cases of acute food insecurity in certain contexts has significantly undermined the authority and role of the UN system. There is an urgent need to strengthen international mechanisms for early warning, accountability, and decisive action. Upholding the UN's foundational commitment to human rights and the protection of civilians must remain central to its mission-especially in times of crisis.

Providing emergency relief and assistance is essential

- People living in conflict zones and those affected by protracted crises need access to emergency assistance and relief. During conflicts, it is essential that all involved parties guarantee unhindered access to humanitarian aid.
- Interventions during emergencies require timely and needs-based services that could include, in addition to food and nutrition support, emergency agriculture services, health services, water and sanitation, and shelter. Where possible, emergency assistance should pave the way for increased resilience and accelerated recovery after the end of a crisis.

Building resilience among crises' prone populations as one solution

- Protracted crises are a symptom of underlying structural and systemic issues. Long-term solutions demand confronting these root causes directly.
- Building resilience requires a reduction of people's vulnerability and an increased capacity to adapt, through strong social protection programs, crises preparedness and investment in data systems.
- Private sector engagement in crises' contexts can help increase resilience through long-term commitment, which strengthens food supply chains and encourages higher levels of production.
- Resilience building efforts should include vulnerable population groups such as women and smallholder farmers in rural areas, focusing on capacity building, strong partnerships and good governance in alignment with national development policies.
- Data and information, which improve market transparency, help farmers in making better production decisions, enable informed consumption choices and improve government response and policies in crises' situations.

Sufficient funding for crises' response and resilience building is needed

- Funding for food security and nutrition support in crises' settings is declining despite rising needs and alarming malnutrition trends.
- New and innovative financing models should be explored to address food security and nutrition in protracted crises and close current financing gaps.

III. Role of the CFS in fostering collaboration

As indicated in the Multi-Year Programme of Work 2024-2027, the workstream "draws on the convening power of the CFS, its focus on the realization of the right to adequate food, and its ability to mobilize and engage relevant stakeholders in exchanges on food security and nutrition priorities and actions". The workstream aims to identify key actions needed towards enhanced policy coordination and collaborative governance.

Through the two thematic Dialogue sessions held in 2025, CFS stakeholders provided several suggestions on how the Committee can further leverage this convening power to enhance policy coordination and collaborative governance.

With regard to the roles of the CFS in enhancing policy coordination and collaborative governance, the following proposals were made during the two Dialogues:

Financing for food security and nutrition

a) convene relevant actors to agree on definitions, classifications and standardized approaches related to specific food security and nutrition issues such as financing and investment;

b) convene relevant actors on a regular basis to report on their activities, share best practice examples and to increase transparency and accountability in the international financial system;

c) advocate for more structured and collaborative engagement between financing and implementation partners, including for financial assistance in crises' contexts; and,

d) promote targeted finance for food security and nutrition outcomes in broader financing for development discussions with the overall aim of the progressive realization of the right to food.

Food security and nutrition in protracted crises

a) call on relevant agencies to develop and implement an early warning system on violations of the right to food and provide regular reporting from the CFS to the UN General Assembly; and,

b) increase uptake and use of CFS policy products to advance the progressive realization of the right to adequate food and in situation of challenging food security and nutrition conditions in protracted crises,

c) promote the implementation and monitoring of the CFS Framework for Action (FFA).