

## PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS CONCERNING CFS THEMATIC WORKSTREAMS

### PROPOSAL C

#### **Water management for FSN in the context of climate variability and extreme weather events**

##### **a) Proponents**

Germany and Bangladesh

##### **b) Outputs associated with the proposed thematic workstream**

The proposed workstream is intended to contribute to output 1.1 (inclusive discussions) and 2.1 (global policy guidance).

##### **c) Rationale for including the proposed thematic workstream, based on the prioritization criteria and building on CFS main comparative advantages, as described in Annex B of the CFS Evaluation Implementation Report**

Climate change increases variation in weather events, as well as more frequent weather extremes and mitigation and adaptation options become more urgent. A new IPCC report on Global Warming of 1.5°C describes new evidence on regionally differentiated risks to food security, water resources, drought, heat exposure and coastal submergence, all putting agriculture and associated livelihoods at risk. Similarly, the 2018 SOFI report again highlighted the adverse impacts from increased climate variability and extreme weather events on food security and nutrition, as well as on food production and livelihoods of farmers.

All of these impacts are mediated through water. Water management, in general, and in particular in agriculture will be key to adaptation to climate change. With growing water shortages and variability as a result of population growth, changes in food demand and climate change, food security and nutrition – especially of the most vulnerable – is declining and opportunities for economic development become more limited. Smallholder farmers and other rural dwellers are most vulnerable to climate change and associated water challenges, and in particular rainfed farmers and pastoralists, but smallholder irrigators and fishermen and women are also adversely affected. According to the 2018 UN Water SDG 6 Synthesis Report on water and sanitation 3.6 billion people already live in potentially water-scarce areas during at least one month a year. Moreover, the number of people, the share of food production and share of economic activity subject to water stress is going to grow dramatically. Identifying guidelines that all sectors of the economy and society can sign up to on more sustainable water management and governance is therefore a matter of urgency. Policy guidance is also essential for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 6 and for the many other water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda--as sustainable and equitable water management and governance is linked to all other SDGs.

This work stream will address water management and governance with a view to facilitate more sustainable and equitable allocation of scarce water resources to assure food security and nutrition.

The workstream will contribute to all three CFS MyPoW Strategic objectives: water management and governance are intrinsically linked to the involvement of the broadest possible range of stakeholders; the work will reinforce CFS' convening power as the foremost inclusive and consensus-based platform on FSN issues with a view to developing and promoting the use of policy guiding tools.

As water is key to human food security and nutrition, as laid out in the 2015 HLPE report of CFS, and as agriculture is by far the largest water user globally, CFS should take on the corresponding responsibility and develop further guidance on water management governance. Such guidance would also help link the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) and the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028).

Based on expertise jointly provided by the three Rome Based Agencies (RBAs) the Committee is well placed to build an inclusive policy dialogue involving all stakeholders with a view to addressing this urgent issue.

#### **d) Expected results and how they will contribute to the achievements of the CFS MYPoW Strategic Objectives and FSN-relevant targets of the 2030 Agenda**

The CFS policy recommendations on Water for FSN of 2015 represent the starting point for the guidance. The Declarations of the agricultural ministers united at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture as well as at the G20 Agricultural ministers meeting in 2017 in Berlin provide further impetus. The objective of the workstream is therefore to give guidance on the design and the implementation of water management and governance systems and to develop voluntary guidelines, so that countries are better prepared to adapt agriculture to climate change, water scarcity and increased competition for water resources in an equitable and sustainable manner with the objective of achieving food security and nutrition.

In 2015, coinciding with the adoption of the Agenda 2030, the Committee approved a set of recommendations in relation to water for food security and nutrition. Issues of governance, rights and tenure were prominent in these recommendations. Of particular importance was the promotion and implementation of international human rights obligations, closely linking access to water with food security and nutrition. In the light of ongoing efforts in the context of the Agenda 2030, the workstream would follow up on these recommendations and explore in more detail pathways enabling governments and stakeholders to implement water management and governance reforms.

Based on the understanding that water management needs to be integrated and inclusive, requires coordination and strategies adapted at all levels of water management and governance and should give due consideration to cross-sectoral approaches to address the synergies and trade-offs between the goals of food production, protection of water, land and biodiversity, nutrition as well as energy use through enhanced dialogue, collaboration, coordination and policy coherence guidelines should spell-out criteria for the design of water governance systems, in more detail addressing questions of allocation and access to water in a systematic, evidencebased manner.

The work would profit from ongoing activities such as under the Global Framework on water scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG) and FAO's work on a framework on action on water tenure.

**e) Potential activities that could be considered after the adoption of the CFS policy product to promote its use and application**

Voluntary guidelines for water governance for FSN can be broadly disseminated through the organization of conferences, workshops and training programs, also in New York linked to the

HLPF and the review of the implementation of the Agenda 2030. Activities should reach out to multi-stakeholder platforms for follow-up and review on the progress of SDG 6, which does not directly relate to agriculture, and other water-related targets of the 2030 Agenda. The guidelines should reflect on the evaluation and of their use and application in line with CFS' framework for monitoring CFS decisions and recommendations.

**f) Budget estimate, human resources and timeline**

Timeline: Presentation of FAO Framework on action on water tenure to FAO's Committee on Agriculture in October 2020; intersessional discussions following CFS plenary session in 2021 with a view to start negotiations on policy guidelines in 2022 after CFS 49.

Costs: for two intersessional meeting app. 100.000 USD

**g) Indications on whether the preparation of a HLPE report is foreseen and its potential contribution to the proposed CFS thematic workstream**

No HLPE report required.