

CFS Bureau and Advisory Group meeting & CFS Bureau meeting
Date: 17 April 2020 (9:30 – 12:30 and 14:00 - 17:00)
Venue: virtual meeting (via ZOOM)

Bureau and Advisory Group Meeting Outcomes With Bureau decisions

Agenda

1. Briefing on the uptake of the CFS VGGTs and CFS RAI principles
2. CFS business continuity in the context of COVID-19
3. CFS 47 Final Report Preparation
4. CFS 47 Theme
5. CFS Advisory Group composition (*Bureau only*)
6. CFS Food Systems and Nutrition OEWG – Chair’s appointment (*Bureau only*)
7. Budget update
8. Workstream updates
9. Any other business

1. Briefing on the uptake of the CFS VGGTs and CFS RAI principles

CFS Chairperson, Mr Thanawat Tiensin, opened the 17 April virtual meeting and called for the approval of the provisional agenda. Under AOB, CSM asked to read a statement on the participation of youth in the CFS Advisory Group.

The CFS Chair informed that, consistent with the goal of including at least one substantive discussion item for meetings of the Bureau with its Advisory Group, he invited two FAO experts to brief on their respective work on the CFS VGGTs and the CFS RAI Principles. The CFS Chair proposed, if members were interested in the topic, to organize a more in-depth, open webinar later this year to further explore utilization and uptake of two of the Committee’s most important policy products. CFS Chair underlined the importance for CFS members to keep focused on how such CFS products are having impact at regional, national, and local levels.

FAO experts Michael Riggs and Javier Molina presented updates on their work helping countries to utilize the CFS VGGTs and the RAI Principles. Their work focuses mainly on capacity building, creating enabling policy and legal environments for uptake by countries, and awareness-raising. The experts underlined the relevance of the VGGTs and RAI to advance progress in achieving the SDGs. The experts pointed at regional work being done with the ASEAN Secretariat to support application of the RAI Principles in ASEAN countries, in coordination with Grow Asia. Likewise, the experts noted work led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during its 2020 G20 Presidency to support the implementation of the VGGTs and RAI Principles. Last, the experts pointed to the importance of the VGGTs and RAI Principles in the context of recovery from COVID-19 and efforts to reverse its negative impacts on food security and nutrition.

CFS stakeholders welcomed the initiative and commended the work of FAO in supporting the uptake of these important CFS policy tools, further welcoming future discussion among the group on the impacts of CFS products at country level. PSM noted work done by IDLO on a legal guide being developed on land tenure issues, directly relevant to the VGGT, and encouraged members to be familiar with their

work. CSM called attention to a “People’s Manual on the Guidelines on Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests” that it developed to support advocacy and to build capacities at the grass-roots level. IFAD added that they are soon completing an open database of CFS policies and principles that can be used to foster further uptake, especially as it will be utilized when preparing future country plans, COSOPs¹, and other IFAD loan/grant instruments.

2. CFS business continuity in the context of COVID-19

CFS Chair opened the discussion recalling the preliminary conversation with CFS stakeholders during the meeting of 31 March 2020. CFS Chair underscored that while COVID-19 was certainly unanticipated and must be addressed, the MYPoW is the approved workplan of CFS and it sets the Committee’s priorities. CFS Chair confirmed that, according to the latest updates from FAO, in-person meetings are not possible through May, and possibly beyond. CFS Chair underlined that the two OEWG meetings held on 14 April were well attended, despite being organized virtually, and he thanked the two OEWG Chairs for their commitment.

CFS Secretary described preparations for further virtual meetings using the ZOOM platform, that would allow interpretation in FAO’s official languages and offer other features that could enable virtual negotiations to commence in May, as had been scheduled for both workstreams. He further described preparations for governing body meetings of other multilateral institutions, including the three Rome-based agencies, for which no legal impediment stood in the Committee’s way, according to FAO Legal Counsel. An open discussion was then held on how CFS should address the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on food security and nutrition, and on whether the Committee should commence scheduled negotiations on its two ongoing workstreams in May.

With agreement that in-person negotiations would be the preferred option, there was broad recognition that virtual meetings were the “new normal,” although current conditions do not permit this option. Considering the importance of moving forward, participants disagreed over when and how to begin negotiations, posing many questions regarding specific modalities of such. Some participants sought a clearer understanding of the modalities under which “virtual negotiations” could take place, underlining that these would require discussion and agreement by the CFS Bureau. There was broad recognition that the Voluntary Guidelines on Food Systems for Nutrition, having commenced in late 2015, are at such an advanced stage that it would be desirable to continue advancing in the process, without compromising the quality of the negotiated text. Several members and participants called for the postponement of negotiations scheduled for May to later dates, preferably when in-person meetings can be held. Furthermore, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on food security and nutrition, some argued that the CFS should focus its attention primarily on that topic for now.

Bureau decision:

CFS Bureau did not reach consensus on commencing virtual negotiations in May on CFS’s two ongoing workstreams. Nonetheless, CFS Bureau agreed on the importance of continuing moving forward on the workstream processes, preparing for negotiations to commence at later dates.

CFS Bureau agreed on next steps for the two policy convergence processes:

Food Systems and Nutrition:

- CFS stakeholders will be given the chance to provide text proposals in tracked change format to the CFS Secretariat, to provide precise indications to the new OEWG Chair concerning their respective priorities (deadline mid-May).
- Food Systems and Nutrition OEWG meetings the last week of May will discuss proposed amendments by CFS stakeholders, to begin informal discussion on how to address divergent positions and prepare for negotiations and next steps of the process.

¹ Country strategic opportunities programme

- Following the OEWG meetings in late May, the CFS Bureau will further debate dates and modalities for negotiations, whether virtual or in-person.

Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches:

- CFS stakeholders will be invited to participate in a series of informal consultations chaired by the process Rapporteur throughout May and early June, to help prepare the groundwork for eventual negotiation. The purpose of such informal discussions is to address the outstanding issues contained in the Summary of the Main Areas for Reflection shared recently with CFS stakeholders in order to develop a First Draft that supports greater understanding of, and convergence around, those themes and issues. The consultations will also discuss considerations around COVID-19 that are relevant to this policy process.

With reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CFS Bureau agreed to further utilize CFS's role as a unique UN platform for policy convergence discussion and debate among its Members, institutions, constituencies, and other stakeholders, and to hold an extraordinary meeting on 6 May to further discuss the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on food security and nutrition. The Committee will seek the advice and experience, first and foremost, of members of its own Advisory Group and High Level Panel of Experts, in this regard.

The CFS Secretariat will circulate a provisional agenda and background documents for that meeting which will include short discussions of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment workstream and the 2019 Advisory Group reporting exercise. A proposal from the Secretariat to organize a "simulated virtual negotiation exercise" on May 6, for stakeholders to negotiate a brief text related to the pandemic, was not agreed.

3. CFS 47 Final Report Preparation

The revised version of the document was well received by the Bureau and Advisory Group members, with minor changes suggested.

Some stakeholders suggested that, in order to ensure that the substance of plenary discussions is captured faithfully in the final report, a working group made up of representatives of CFS Members and Participants and Secretariat staff be tasked to prepare a first draft of the report which will then be presented to the Drafting Committee.

CFS Secretary, in responding to a question, explained that delegation statements under the SOFI item will be treated as per past practice. They can be delivered in person on the first day of plenary, they can be submitted in writing to the Secretariat for posting online and circulated by email, and/or they can be video-recorded if they do not conform to the anticipated timing restrictions for plenary.

Bureau decision:

The CFS Bureau considered the different proposals and approved the document with the following minor amendments:

- It should be mentioned consistently throughout the document that draft conclusions and decisions will be finalized by the Bureau, after consultation with the Advisory Group;
- With reference to "Type C" documents, it should be clarified that draft text will be submitted directly to the Drafting Committee, and the words "for consideration by" deleted.

4. CFS 47 Theme

CFS Chair recalled the inconclusive discussion during the Bureau meeting in January 2020. Advisory Group members expressed their preference for using the 2020 SOFI theme for the theme of CFS47.

Some Members requested that any theme for CFS 47 Plenary reflect the context of the current pandemic.

Bureau decision:

After a debate over the various options presented by the Secretariat, the Bureau agreed – pending a silence procedure for one Bureau member to seek approval from capital - to the suggestion to use the CFS's slogan - “Making a difference in food security and nutrition” - as the theme for CFS 47, while also drawing attention in the Secretariat's planning documents to the SOFI theme – “Transforming Food Systems for Affordable Healthy Diets to End hunger and All Forms of Malnutrition.” During the silence procedure, the Bureau member informed the Secretariat that his capital did not agree to the proposed theme, hence the issue remains undecided, and will be added to the agenda of a future Bureau meeting.

5. CFS Advisory Group composition

CFS Vice-Chair presented a background paper and recommendations based on the deliberations of an Informal Bureau Working Group that he chaired. The background paper recommended continuation by the most recent Advisory Group (2018-19) for the current biennium, noting that only the three UN Rome based Agencies constitute the present Advisory Group as “ex officio” permanent members. The paper further recommended better usage of the Chair's authority to invite guests to attend Bureau meetings alongside Advisory Group members. This would allow the Bureau to engage more regularly and constructively with stakeholders that have expressed interest and expertise in specific areas of relevance to CFS. The background paper also suggests some operational criteria to more regularly involve “ad hoc” Advisory Group members, while considering ways to engage a broad spectrum of farmers, youth, and others more directly.

CFS Bureau took note of the background document and commended the progress made by the Informal Bureau Working Group. Nevertheless, due to the short time available, Bureau was unable to agree on the composition and structure of the Advisory Group. Various proposals focused on making CFS truly inclusive and representative, to include such groups as parliamentarian unions and/or social protection mechanisms, were not agreed, although the Chair informed that he will use his authority to invite such groups to future CFS meetings, as and where appropriate.

As a provisional way forward, CFS Vice-Chair suggested that all new applicants for the CFS Advisory Group be considered eligible, along with other stakeholders which might be considered, to be invited by the CFS Chair as “ad hoc” members in future meetings, depending on the agenda of those meetings and the relevance of those organizations and their mandates. In the meantime, the Chair and Secretariat will communicate to those who have expressed interest in joining the CFS Advisory Group, to inform them of the status of their applications, and to invite their participation in CFS workstreams and open meetings such as the upcoming Bureau and Advisory Group meetings of 6 May.

Members agreed to continue discussions on this matter, especially regarding the proposed recommendations and draft decisions, in a future Bureau meeting.

6. CFS Food Systems and Nutrition OEWG – Chair's appointment

Bureau decision:

The CFS Bureau appointed Ambassador Hans Hoogeveen, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN Organizations for Food and Agriculture, as new CFS Food Systems for Nutrition OEWG Chair.

The CFS Chair, on behalf of the Bureau, congratulated Ambassador Hoogeveen for his appointment, and warmly thanked his predecessor, Ms Liliane Ortega, for the hard work and great results accomplished under her leadership. The new OEWG Chair was invited to join the remainder of the Bureau meeting, to hear debate on the question of business continuity.

7. Budget update

In providing an update on the status of final income/expenditures for 2019 and projections for 2020, the CFS Secretary invited participants to address any comment or question on the budget update paper to the CFS Secretariat, given limited time for discussion. Responding to a specific question on funds remaining in CFS's accounts at the close of FAO's financial reporting biennium, CFS Secretary provided details on late (and reduced) payments of RBA contributions that had created significant challenges for 2019 financial planning purposes. He also recalled a decision by the previous CFS Chair to positively respond to requests from CSM and PSM to support their participation in CFS events. A decision taken by the Bureau to not pay interpretation costs of a 2019 CFS event on forestry was in no way linked to this issue, the Secretariat reminded CSM. CFS Secretary underlined that the postponement of FAO's Regional Conferences had limited the CFS Chair and Secretariat's ability to raise awareness and mobilize funds for CFS workstreams. They, therefore, called upon all CFS Members and Participants to support their fundraising efforts and to continue supporting CFS in the Governing Bodies of all three RBAs. CFS Secretary provided a clarification on a 2018-2019 voluntary contribution of Switzerland and confirmed that budget updates will continue to be provided, with the possibility of any funding shortfall flagged for members.

8. Workstream updates

CFS Chair suggested to send any comments or questions on the background document to the CFS Secretariat. A specific question was raised on a scoping paper on gender commissioned by the CFS Secretariat to be provided by CARE USA. The CFS Secretariat will provide details at the next Bureau meeting. Another question was posed on the role of CFS in the context of FAO's revised nutrition strategy, which the CFS Secretariat will discuss bilaterally with the concerned Member.

9. Any other business

CSM expressed concerns over a new FAO "Youth Council" that they said was proposed by "PSM youth" and the idea of establishing a separate seat for "Youth" within the CFS Advisory Group, noting that CSM had not been consulted on the topic. They noted that they did not see the need for a new seat for youth, as their engagement was adequately addressed within CSM. The PSM noted that there was no such group in PSM, and the initiative was separate from the CFS. In concluding, the Chair pointed out the importance of including youth voices, as was done at CFS 46 in a plenary "Special Session," and that youth voices extended well beyond CSM and PSM.

Annex 1: Attendance list Bureau and Advisory Group meeting

CFS Bureau Members:

Mr Thanawat Tiensin (CFS Chair / Thailand); Mr Felipe Carlos Antunes (Brazil); Mr Mario Arvelo, Ms Julia Vicioso, Ms Diana Infante (Dominican Republic); Ms Delphine Babin-Pellier, Mr Jean Guedon (France); Mr Rommakanti Rajender (India); Ms Nona Gae Luna, Ms Agnes Rosari (Indonesia); Ms Traore Halimatou Kone (Mali); Mr Don Syme (New Zealand); Mr Ilya Andreev (Russian Federation); Mr Sean Cox, Mr Paul Welcher, Mr Tommie Williams (United States).

CFS Bureau Alternates:

Mr Nazareno Montani (Argentina); Ms Elsa Simoes (Cabo Verde); Mr Fernando Ceciliano (Costa Rica); Mr Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Iran); Mr Baye Mayor Diop (Senegal); Mr Rafael Osorio (Spain); Mr Tim Kränzlein (Switzerland).

Advisory Group:

Mr Máximo Torero, Mr Mark McGuire, Ms Marcela Villarreal, Mr Michael Riggs (FAO); Mr Shantanu Mathur, Ms Jordana Blankman, Mr Sundeep Vaid (IFAD); Ms Stephanie Hochstetter, Mr Jacopo Valentini (WFP); Ms Hilal Elver (UN Right to Food); Ms Stineke Oenema, Ms Alessandra Mora (UNSCN); Mr Rodney Cooke (CGIAR); Mr Fabrizio Moscatelli (Gates Foundation); Mr Martin Wolpold-Bosien, Ms Ramona Domicioiu, Mr Luca Bianchi, Ms Teresa Maisano, Ms Azra Sayeed, Mr Valentin Brochard, Ms Nora McKeon, Ms Emeline Siale Ilolahia, Mr Thierry Kesteloot, Ms Cristina Brovia (CSM); Mr Brian Baldwin, Ms Rosemary Navarrette (PSM).

Observers:

Mr Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands); Ms Serena Pepino; Ms Silke Stralkamp (Germany); Ms Federica Veschi, Ms Supajit Sriariyawat (Thailand).

CFS Secretariat:

Mr Chris Hegadorn (Secretary), Ms Françoise Trine, Ms Giorgia Paratore, Mr Emilio Colonnelli, Mr Fabio Isoldi, Ms Chiara Cirulli, Mr Waiganjo Njoroge, Ms Sylvia Orebi, Ms Tatiana Moruz.

Annex 2: Attendance list Bureau meeting

CFS Bureau Members:

Mr Thanawat Tiensin (CFS Chair / Thailand); Mr Felipe Carlos Antunes (Brazil); Mr Mario Arvelo, Ms Julia Vicioso, Ms Diana Infante, Ms Liudmila Kuzmicheva (Dominican Republic); Ms Delphine Babin-Pelliard, Mr Jean Guedon (France); Mr Rommakanti Rajender (India); Ms Nona Gae Luna, Ms Agnes Rosari (Indonesia); Ms Traore Halimatou Kone (Mali); Mr Don Syme (New Zealand); Mr Ilya Andreev (Russian Federation); Mr Sean Cox, Mr Paul Welcher, Mr Tommie Williams (United States).

CFS Bureau Alternates:

Mr Nazareno Montani (Argentina); Ms Mi Nguyen (Canada); Ms Elsa Simoes (Cabo Verde); Mr Fernando Ceciliano, Ms Amarili Villegas (Costa Rica); Mr Mohammad Hossein Emadi (Iran); Mr Baye Mayoro Diop (Senegal); Mr Rafael Osorio (Spain); Mr Tim Kränzlein (Switzerland).

Observers:

Ms Federica Veschi (Thailand); Mr Damien Kelly, Ms Argenti Beatrice (EU Delegation); Mr Hans Hoogeveen (Netherlands); Ms Silke Stalkamp (Germany).

CFS Secretariat:

Mr Chris Hegadorn (Secretary), Ms Françoise Trine, Ms Giorgia Paratore, Mr Emilio Colonnelli, Mr Fabio Isoldi, Ms Chiara Cirulli, Mr Waiganjo Njoroge, Ms Sylvia Orebi, Ms Tatiana Moruz.