BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

CFS Group of Friends – Implications of UNFSS on CFS

5 April 2022

Our starting point

UN-SG’s Statement of Action at UNFSS:

“The CFS remains an essential intergovernmental and stakeholder platform for all working together to ensure food security and nutrition for all through sustainable and transformative food systems. Engagement with the CFS to provide leadership to the follow-up to the FSS will be essential to deliver on its mandate.”

CFS-49 Plenary

The impacts and implications on the CFS of the UN Food Systems Summit has been subject of intense debates for the past months and was debated at length during the 49th plenary session, where diverse views on this issue persisted. The CFS membership decided the following:

“18. The Committee took note of the potential implications of the UNFSS on the CFS and its HLPE, and looks forward to further analysis and consideration of next steps within the Bureau, in consultation with all Members, the Advisory Group, and other participants.”

The process

The CFS Bureau, in its meeting of 29 October, discussed how this mandate from the Plenary should be carried forward by the Bureau, and agreed to establish an Informal Friends of the Chair Group.

An Informal Friends of the Chair group, open to all CFS Members and members of the ‘ad hoc’ Advisory Group, has been formed to support the Chair on the preparation of a Chair’s paper - including concrete actions and options - to be presented to the Bureau in early 2022, as a basis for a wider consultation with all Members, the (ad hoc) Advisory Group, and other participants, as per mandate of the Plenary.

The Informal Friends of the Chair Group met in November 2021, and again in January 2022, to consider and discuss ways for the CFS to be strengthened and provide leadership in the post-UNFSS context, in full respect and adherence to its vision and to the CFS reform document.
To this aim, the Informal Friends of the Chair Group conducted a brainstorming and open exercise with the objective to generate a menu of possible next steps and options. This exercise was facilitated through the use of a questionnaire, which all members of the Informal Friends of the Chair Group have been encouraged to respond to.

The exercise was anchored on two principles:

- There seems to be scope within the 2009 reform document to work towards improving the impact of the CFS at global, regional and national levels, in support of countries’ national efforts, working more closely with the RBAs. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that CFS is even more relevant than ever.
- The CFS should work in full synergy with the RBAs’ Coordination Hub, avoiding competition and overlaps, and observing the different roles that the agencies and programs play, vis-à-vis the CFS.

**Open Guiding Questions for the brainstorming exercise**

1. How can we increase the impact of CFS policy products? How can the CFS membership better disseminate and make use of the existing and future policy products in a way that they better inspire our governments’ policies and strategies, and empower all stakeholders, including as key reference frameworks for the FSS National Pathways and Coalitions?

2. How can CFS better support countries’ efforts to articulate and implement national food security, food systems and nutrition strategies, including the emerging National Pathways?

3. How can the CFS provide its platform to multi-stakeholder alliances, coalitions and initiatives to share progress, connect with each other, in a strategic way (including those that emerged from the FSS and already existing ones)? How shall the CFS consider the five action areas (plenary, special events, side events...)?

4. How can the CFS global science-policy interface represented by the HLPE be strengthened and well connected to other science-policy interface UN mechanisms, in view of the proposals in this area that emerged in the context of the FSS?

5. What is possible to strengthen accountability within and among all stakeholders?

**Way Forward**

The CFS Chair thanks the Members of the Friends of the Chair (FOC) group and welcomes the inputs which have been provided, in written format and through extremely rich bilateral exchanges.
Following this process of consultations, the CFS Chair would like to put forward a draft “Options Paper”.

These will first be considered within the Informal Friends of the Chair group, and then submitted for consideration, and eventual decision, by the CFS Bureau and the (ad hoc) Advisory Group.